

MNF

THE HUMAN PROCESS

(SUMMARY)

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His face was hidden
and no one recognized Him...

The words "Revolution" and "Counter-Revolution" are employed in this work in the sense given them by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in his book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, published in 1959

NOTICE

The MNF – the three first consonants of the word Manifesto – was a commission of studies that met for decades to analyze the Revolution in all its aspects. The goal was to make a manifesto to publicly denounce the gnostic and egalitarian character of the ensemble of the Revolution. The meetings started in 1956 and were held three times a week with Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and three of his friends. In 1973, he invited six other friends to participate, including Atila Sinke Guimarães, who, soon after, became the commission’s secretary. Those meetings continued until Prof. Plinio’s death in 1995.

The system of studies constituted in having one of the participants preparing a lecture on a pre-determinate matter and the others – mainly Prof. Plinio – discussing on it, expanding it and raising other questions, which oriented the next step of the studies,

Until 1973 only a summary of the conclusions of these discussions was recorded after each meeting. Thenceforth, the entire meetings were tape-recorded and later type-written. These texts were classified by subjects, which gave birth to a General Index. Later, they were compiled in summaries. Forty five encompassing summaries of these topics were made. One of them is reproduced in the present volume. Hopefully others will follow suit. Our wish is to make all this treasure accessible to the public.

The summary that starts here, made by Atila Guimarães, tries to present the topics following a logical order. Given the fact that this is a compilation of meetings addressing a variety of themes in a regime of discussion and conversation, the topics are not exposed as a fluent scholarly dissertation. Rather they form a collection of excerpts concurring to resolve the problems as they were tackled in those meetings.

The ensemble, presented here under the name *The Human Process* did not mean to be the final thought of Prof. Plinio or the MNF Commission. It is rather a first draft under the responsibility of the author, which TIA decided to publish with the hope that many Catholics shall benefit from it.

The language is also the language of discussions and conversations, not of classes of scholarly exposés.

The publications of these MNF summaries are intended to give Catholics the principles to form a new Christendom, the Reign of Mary predicted by Our Lady in Fatima, when she said: “In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph.” This is the reason we give this Collection the name *Victoria Virginis*, the *Victory of the Virgin*.

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PRESENTATION

(Written in 1971)

About two years ago I was asked by Prof. Plinio to prepare a summary of the MNF. At that time, he gave me a complete program for five years of studies on Public Opinion, which in the first two years included a good notion of what the MNF is.

It gave me great happiness to be able to help compile a subject matter that is very harmful to the Revolution. Another fact that also gave me joy was to reach the end of something that I had started. And, thus, to have given Our Lady the glory that at the beginning of the study I had imagined: "Someone needs to grind and sort the treasures of the MNF so they can be more readily accessible."

The order I gave to this study perhaps will not correspond entirely to the way of understanding of a person with a markedly Latin mentality. But, I also think that it is a first step so that some persons may know the content, lucidity, breadth, profundity, subtlety and originality of the material in the MNF.

This work is divided into three parts that aim to present a logical tie among them.

Under the title of "**Fundamental Notions**," the reader will find the concepts of human contingency and its thirst to be completed in the absolute. Also in this part will be analyzed the aspiration that comes from the being and leads to its quest for the absolute. Finally, the influence of the tendencies on a man's will be studied. The analysis of man's tendencies is more developed in another commission of studies parallel to the MNF, the Commission on Public Opinion. But, since the MNF deals with them, I included the related material of that Commission here so that the picture offered on this topic may be as complete as possible.

Having outlined the idea of what man's contingency is and what his impulse to seek the plenitude that can satiate this contingency, I will go on to present how the soul seeks the absolute by a **process of knowledge** and, then, goes on to reject or accept it by a **process of hatred and of love**. These are the second and third parts of this work.

The **Introduction** will give a general idea of what the MNF is.

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The principal objective of this compilation is the description of the Human Process. Also, it aims to show that, by the natural order of things, inequality and the dependence on one's natural superior or alienation¹ come from the order of the being. This development is not fully explained in any part of the work, but underlies it throughout.

This volume will not deal, except in passing, with the role of grace, of the Angels and Devils, and of the invisible battle between the supernatural and the preternatural to influence every thought, deliberation or action of man.

¹ For more on alienation understood as the necessary deliverance of one's will to his natural superior and the consequent dependence on him, see A.S. Guimarães, *Servitudo ex Caritate* online edition Chap II, pp. 33-65.

Therefore, this summary is limited to study the Human Process under the prism of the natural order.

The problem of the *new generation*² is not dealt with, but only the normal process of man to know and love God.

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A word still needs to be said about the method.

The MNF Commission addressed the various theories it studied in a system of conversation. And conversation, even when directed, is often dispersive. Thus, many times in the same conversation parallel questions – or even matters off the topic – were raised. Therefore, it was necessary for someone to order the various conversations.

What I have tried to do was to arrange the Human Process logically. In this first draft, my concern was not to order it psychologically or to make it didactic.

I was moved by the desire to describe the Human Process as it is in itself, so that, in a second stage, someone else could find a more adequate pedagogical way to present it.

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There are some questions that should be clarified before beginning a reading of this volume.

1. The reader will find an apparent repetition in the beginning of the three parts of this work. The three parts do not stand alone. The central theme, which is the notion of contingency, will be enunciated in the first part, since it is the key to everything that follows; then, it will overlap on the beginnings of the second and third parts. They are successive developments of one same *leitmotiv* in the sphere of the intelligence, which is the Process of Knowledge, as well as in the sphere of the will, which is the Process of Hatred and of Love.

2. Sometimes items will appear that will not be directly linked to the heart of the matter at hand. I thought that including a reference to them, even a brief one, would improve this summary. In addition, their relationship to parallel themes can only enrich an understanding of the subject matter, broadening the horizons of the reader.

3. Whoever will read this work will find a great variety of styles in the various items. In one place, he will find a broad development of a thought; in another, a simple concept; yet in another he will come across an outline of a meeting.

This is due to the fact that often the part that is annotated refers only to the end of the meeting, where a synopsis of the subject matter was dictated. At other times the notes of the meeting are complete. In this case, often I will present a summary of the essential parts.

4. It is necessary, finally, to consider that **Part I: Fundamental Notions** will try to follow a rigorously logical order. In this part I will seek to give the indispensable elements for following the

² *New generation* is an amiable way within the family of souls of the disciples of Prof. Plinio to refer to the multiple psychological defects that, after 1935, the successive generations are increasingly experiencing as consequences of the “technological progresses” such as movies, radios, televisions, internet and social media.

subsequent parts, with the concern of establishing a close connection among them. These are the presuppositions.

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Asking Our Lady that she make this doctrine known.

Ad majorem Mariae Gloriam

December 13, 1972

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE MNF? ³

1. General & specific ends

We can consider two types of ends of the MNF: general and specific.

- **Presuppositions of the general ends**

The general or remote ends are the same as those of the Counter-Revolution.

The presuppositions for the ends of the Counter-Revolution are:

- The imminence of taking over the world by the Revolution;
- The work made by the Secret Forces is an artificial work and, if we deliver well-aimed blows, we may break it;
- Once broken, the world may escape from the clutches of the Devil and the *Grand Return* (great conversion) may take place;
- Beyond these factors, there is the supernatural action.

- **General ends of the MNF**

- To break this revolutionary plot;
- To take advantage of the movement and graces of the *Grand Return* and lead the world to the Reign of Mary.

The essential objective is to crystallize the reader by unmasking the real face of the Revolution. The principal aim of this operation is not the salvation of those who have completely delivered themselves to the Revolution, but rather to stop the revolutionary process in the minds of its victims. The capital reason for this primacy is tactical because that mass of the victims is more powerful and numerous than small groups of isolated extremists, who without the masses, can do nothing.

The work of the MNF is not only to crystallize the reader against the Revolution. It also aims to show him that, according to logic, the correct theses that he adopts oblige him to go further, to go until the Reign of Mary, about which he denies some principles and, above all, he is ignorant of the whole.

The MNF, therefore, imposes two options:

³ What is written henceforth, even if it was not reviewed by other members of the MNF Commission, was taken directly from the portfolios of the MNF. The titles, subtitles and conclusion were made by the compiler.

- Between the *status quo* and complete evil;
- Between the *status quo* and complete good.

- **Specific ends**
- The MNF should be a study primer of the Counter-Revolution, that is, the foundational, key-book for the formation of our members.
- The MNF is an operation of ideological action that touches the V standing on its vertex.⁴ This principle is the presupposition of our tactic. In function of this and taking into consideration that our few forces cannot be dispersed, therefore, by the principle of the economy of strength, our tactics are almost always to give blows “to the V standing on its vertex” in preparatory processes of the Revolution.

This ideological action has these aims:

- A. To make known that the ideal order desired by us is the only order that a Catholic logically can desire. He should desire it for its metaphysical and theological fundamentals. Thus, a Catholic who takes his principles to these final consequences can only be counter-revolutionary.

The ideal order desired by the Secret Forces is exclusively the gnostic order, which already exists in its essence in attenuated forms of the Revolution. Therefore, the Catholic has to be against all attenuated forms of the Revolution and can only be counter-revolutionary.

- B. To expose the conspiratorial character of the gnostic movement. To show how it has used the art of building and destroying in order to teach the dynamics of this art. To show how this dynamics has been followed in History. To show how the tactic of temporization is wrong and only that of the frontal attack gives results.
- C. To achieve an important tactical objective: Since this book is a tactical book that has a determined objective, then its central point should be defined in function of that tactical objective we want to achieve. There is something that we want to achieve and to show.

I have the impression that this something that we want to achieve can be determined above all in view of “white heresy”⁵ – in fact, to move “white heresy” persons is the main tactical purpose

⁴ From time to time the Revolution is obliged, by its own internal dynamics, to take larger steps than its legs permit. On these occasions it presents itself as particularly fragile, and a well-directed blow can ruin at its birth the process that it aimed to bring to a term. This instability of the Revolution is comparable to that of an enormous “V” set on the ground on its vertex. A relatively light blow could cause the edifice to fall. This is the principle of the “V standing on its vertex”

⁵ *White heresy* is a term in the internal jargon of Prof. Plinio’s disciples that refers to the emotional preparation made by the Revolution in Catholic piety to accustom spirits to Modernism and Progressivism – the *black heresy*. The sentimental preparation in the tendencies is called *white heresy* because it does not define explicitly any doctrine, but rather implicitly induces minds to abhor militancy as brutal, hierarchy as a manifestation of pride, nobility as a fruit of exploitation, aristocracy as arrogance, pomp as worldly, logic as cold, controversy as

of this work. Implicitly it gives the best blow to attain our objectives, which is to refute the progressivists, liturgists, etc. and to attract to our group those counter-revolutionaries who are being formed inside the Church.

The “white heresy” mindset leaves out the panoramic vision of the doctrine and spirit of the Church, and this omission leads to a general position of unbalance and the admission of all the errors the Revolution desires. Thus “white heresy” prepares the field for the Revolution to plant its seeds.

The bulk of the theme should be conceived in a way that always tries to propagate that which “white heresy” silences.

2. How was the MNF formed?

I would like to say some words about how the schema of the work against egalitarianism that we are projecting was formed.

- **Inequality is a principle of the universal order**

The first phase of the work emerged as something limited to a 1st thesis. The thesis is to demonstrate that there must be inequality among men, thus proving that this is a principle of the universal order.

- **The idea of nobility confirms the principle of inequality**

This thesis gave rise to a 2nd thesis: to show what nobility is and, by this means, to give a confirmation of the principle that there must be inequality among men.

On the purely intellectual level, the thesis would unfold like this: There must be inequality: *first* for such and such reasons of a general character; *second* because the order of the nobility is the best expression of inequality for men, and it consists in this and that.

By the simple fact of stating what nobility is, one understands that human society cannot operate and culture cannot exist except in function of a determined idea of nobility.

This complementary proof has the apologetic advantage of being yet another proof, but it also has the advantage of presenting inequality in its most expressive, typical and incisive aspect, with the effect of exorcising even more profoundly the egalitarian spirit in the reader.

For the first thesis enunciated only in a very general way does not fully expurgate the egalitarian mentality from the reader's spirit. However, insisting on the question of nobility – and even more of

uncharitable, and rational piety as unsuitable. A whole movement has been installed in the Church since the 18th century presenting the Saints in this way and consequently influencing the formation of seminarians and the clergy. In the 19th century, Sulpician iconography (born in the Church of Saint Sulpice in Paris), for example, was characteristically *white heresy*.

a hereditary nobility – we would set the philosophical principle in concrete terms so that either egalitarianism is renounced or logic must be denied.

Should the thesis of nobility issued from the thesis of egalitarianism be presented apologetically as one more proof in this work? Tactically, without the thesis on nobility, the work would not create the crisis that it should, or, at least it would create a much weaker crisis. What must be done is to establish things in terms that will create a crisis, to stop minds from remaining in the middle ground. Our policy is to constantly make the middle ground uninhabitable for coherent and logical minds.

- **Importance of the study of ontology** ⁶

From this consideration on the importance of the nobility came the idea of studying nobility as a metaphysical value, and not only as a social class with its own characteristics. It is something that should be included in an actual treatise on nobility and placed in an exposition against egalitarianism.

From this consideration of nobility as a metaphysical value, the topics of super-excellence and sublimity as metaphysical values also arose.

Next, we envisaged the question of nobility as it is traditionally conceived, consecrated in common language in the various meanings that the word noble has, in various degrees of analogy. We looked at the word noble in this sense, and we saw that it has a certain metaphysical concept behind it. To make this implicit concept explicit, we had recourse to the divisions of ontology, searching in the depths of the being for a concept of nobility.

As we dedicated ourselves to this work, we arrived at a better clarification: The study of ontology should not only help us to make explicit what is the most profound sense of the word noble, but should give us even more.

In the hierarchical order of the universe,⁷ there are two things to study:

A. This order or scale – according to the rules of Fr. Ramière ⁸ – should obey the principle that the difference between the 1st or the 2nd steps repeats itself in a proportional way in the other steps. There is, therefore, a type of criterion that explains the relationships, that shows a harmony between the various successive inequalities in a way that supposes a thinking that ordered those inequalities and constitutes a criterion.

B. But there is something more profound. If one takes these beings placed on a scale, the relationship of the beings on a higher step with those on a lower step are multiple. And in all these relationships, the principle of inequality operates and one finds the foundation to prove the

⁶ Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of the being, the becoming, the existence or reality, as well as the basic categories of the being and their relations.

⁷ This hierarchical order of the universe is described in the 'Porphyrian tree,' a classic device for illustrating what is also called a "scale of the being."

⁸ Referring to the work titled *Laws of the Aesthetics of the Universe* by Fr. Henri Ramière, S.J..

necessity of inequality. When the matter is well-studied we verify that either there are almost no relationships between beings or these relationships are necessarily relationships of inequality. For us to understand all the fields to which these inequalities apply, I think that it should be said that, having studied the relationships of higher and lower beings in what concerns the composition of the being, the division of the being and the causes of the being, we have the whole sphere in which inequality exists.

From this we see that not only is the need for inequality proved, but we become very aware of how inequality acts, and this awareness makes the need for inequality become even more evident. There is here a process of demonstration that repeats itself: To explain something from its metaphysical point of view by describing the relationships among beings, and then to apply that metaphysical principle to human relationships gives twofold proof that inequality is really something necessary.

By doing this, the role of nobility also stands out in a very special way. And what we want to prove about both the need for inequality and the need for nobility – not only as a social class but as a value of culture – is perfectly demonstrated with extraordinary force.

What is behind the whole modern egalitarian conception is the abandonment of the idea of nobility. It was abandoned, vilified or denied because it was not aware of its own values. Making persons aware of that value is to make evident the order there is in it, which becomes irrefutable. There is a principle of dialectics in this, one that is fully valid.

Someone might ask what relationship this has to our idea that the aim of our study is the sublime. In fact, if our mission is to make people love the sublime, and to make it something that men accept and strive for as the goal of their culture and lives, this consideration proves, *in the first place*, the need for the sublime to be established as an ideal. *In the second place*, it describes the content of the sublime and, through this, makes its notion alive and accessible just from the fact of making it explicit; with this it becomes dialectically very strong.

THE GENERAL VISION

There are, therefore, three theses, one dialectical principle and one strategic objective.

The three theses are:

- A. The need for inequality.
- B. The need for nobility – hereditary nobility – as a principle .
- C. The awareness of the ideas of inequality and nobility give us the criterion that differentiates these degrees of inequality, and shows us where and how the dynamism of these inequalities unfolds and, further, the static and dynamic relationships of these inequalities.

Once these theses are proved, it should become clear to any person with good sense that the first reasoning about the need for inequality was legitimate and necessary. It is a kind of appeal to good sense.

The three theses aim at the ultimate end, which is to justify the establishment of a political, social, ⁹ cultural and economic order dominated by sublime values. This installation will be accomplished by an acceptance that it should be like this and by understanding the content of how it is. This understanding of the content is given to us in a super-eminent way by the study of the philosophical framework, because all of this is based on the being.

- D. As a consequence of these three theses, we can make the accusation of Manichaeism and of Gnosis against the Revolution and the revolutionaries. Because if everything comes from the rules of the being, then if someone denies this, in fact he denies the being itself.

Here is the whole mountain range. But it is such that it is already the synthesis of the MNF. Because everything studied in the MNF was studied closely or remotely tending toward this demonstration.

When we studied Society of Souls, ¹⁰ Symbolism, etc. our aim was closely or remotely to destroy the objections that the modern man could have about these ideals. Why a Society of Souls? Why the Law of Love?¹¹ We end by seeing that the most important point of these matters is to remove wrong ideas that deny some of the premises of this immense mountain range.

We may possibly revise this question, but, in my opinion, this is the plan of the MNF.

DIALECTICAL PRINCIPLE

What do these theses have of the dialectical? It is their process of argumentation that proves through metaphysics that these theses must be so, as deduced from the laws of the being. When we describe how the theses are proved based upon metaphysics, it will awaken a type of common sense in the individual. He will see that having been metaphysically proved to be true, common sense tells him that it is evident. It is a type of confirmation, a very precious one, of that which was previously proved.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- A. The first strategic objective comes from the idea that the concept of nobility either has been implicitly or explicitly forgotten and buried more than actually refuted. Further, all the opposition and refutations against it came from a false idea of nobility that has replaced the old implicit concept of nobility. But, from the moment when that correct concept is again made

⁹ On this new order to come, the Reign of Mary, see pp. 5, 11,

¹⁰ See p. 21.

¹¹ See pp. 21, 143.

explicit, the whole dialectic against it falls to the ground, pulverized, not because it is refuted, but because it has completely lost its footing.

In this case, if the adversary starts to adopt the other dialectic, we simply say: "You are a Gnostic and a Manichaeian." That is it. There is, therefore, a type of operative explanation that comes into play here.

- B. But, for the philosopher or the theologian, this is not just an elucidation, but a construction of a whole set of principles that he admits, but had not ordered in his mind; for that reason he was silent on the topic.

In both cases there is a philosophical explanation that philosophy and theology have to accept, and a descriptive part that is the reality, which is evident. What I call a description, an elucidation or an explanation is the work of showing how these relationships of inequality occur in the composition of the being, of the elements of the being, in a proper sense and an analogical way.

The proper sense is for the intellectuals, the analogical sense is for the common man. The intellectual will be less receptive to the latter, but the common man will hail it. This is a strategic objective regarding the soul of the person to whom we address ourselves.

This constitutes a good provisional closing, after having provided proofs of our works that have reached the point they should in this phase.

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THE HUMAN PROCESS

PART I

FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS

Chapter I - Initial Considerations about the Human Process

Chapter II - The Study of Human Contingence

Chapter III - What Is the Quest for the Absolute?

Chapter IV - The Influence of the Tendencies on Human Actions

CHAPTER I

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE HUMAN PROCESS

1. Fundamental importance of the study of the Human Process

The study of the Human Process sets up, with great precision, the logical itinerary of various parts of the MNF.

It is from the Human Process that we understand how the movements of the **Society of Souls** are established. Once it is seen that a Society of Souls exists, the Human Process allows us to understand that which constitutes a Society of Souls, because the Society of Souls in essence is nothing more than an ensemble of souls that are following their own process. Therefore, the Human Process is the actual study of the essence and functioning of a Society of Souls.

The great law of the Society of Souls is the **Law of Love**, through which the Human Process becomes extraordinarily clear. In the study of the Human Process we will see what love is, why the Human Process is love itself and, also, egoism itself. Viewed in this light, all the rules of the Law of Love assume an enormous profundity, cohesion and certitude on how to apply it with clarity and agility. The road of love is in fact the road of the Human Process in both its true and false meanings.

The **Aesthetics of the Universe¹² and its Ethics** give us the ideal by which we must transform ourselves.

The study of **Symbolism** is one of the means – undoubtedly the most powerful – by which this transformation takes place.

We should first prove all the laws of the Aesthetics of the Universe in the Society of Souls and, then, prove them in other domains of the universe.

So then, from the heights of these laws of the Aesthetics of the Universe seen in the Society of Souls, we will better know what to do with the laws of a temporal character, the organization of society, the forms of government, the administration, the economy, etc. Everything in the Society of Souls will be modeled from a higher and more elevated pattern.

Ecclesiastical life, the spiritual life of the people, the true role of the Church and of spiritual life – all of this in view of the Society of Souls takes on a new relevance.

Ideas of the love of God surge, ideas so new and so simple to apply to our lives that it could not be easier.

I stress this point: Through a method that does not require much erudition and is tremendously encompassing, the various domains of knowledge join together and harmonize with an unprecedented elevation.

¹² See also "The Aesthetics of the Universe and Consecration to Our Lady" and "Revolutionary-Counter-Revolutionary Spirits" by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.

- **Interest of the Study, viewed in two refractions**

It is important to note that methodologically the Human Process can be seen in two refractions.

For the interest of the Church in all times and places, it is interesting to explain the Human Process because a multitude of things that the Church deals with become clearer and more evident. Thus, even if there were not the Revolution, it would be worthwhile to make a study of the Human Process.

However, more specifically, we were called to combat the Revolution. And the Revolution is nothing but the falsified Human Process as lived, not by an individual, but rather by a part of civilization, by a society. Since the Human Process is something that takes place in society, that society has its own Human Process, which is a Milky Way of human processes, harmonic and correlated. In its most profound depths, the Revolution is defined as the falsified Human Process of Western Catholic Civilization.

2. Strategic importance of this study

Every organic process has as its starting point the inner constitution of the being and certain internal forces in the being that can be unleashed – at times for construction, at other times for destruction. What characterizes the organic process is that it is turned toward the inner constitution of the being and the unleashing of certain forces that play within the being and are stimulated by an action from outside. What dominates here is a type of natural law of the process, which makes it the propulsion of the forces of nature.

Thus, the art of governing the universe is the art of unleashing certain forces, which then go on multiplying themselves by acting one upon another.

This presupposes that nature is constructed in such a way that it moves by processes and that the juncture points that connect the various elements of the cosmos interact in a chain reaction. One juncture point is born from another, which generates another, and so on, in such a way that if a disjuncture occurs, it also causes another, and another, etc.

This takes place in the moral order down to the most elemental physical order. As the cosmos is the enchainment of harmonic things, the disruption of one of these things results in an alteration in another. By knocking down one column in that chain, the other columns all fall; all are correlated.

This can happen in a process of construction as well as in a process of destruction.¹³

3. Definition of process

Process, as used here, is the linking of the phases in a being animated by its own energy in such a way that the effect corroborates and develops the cause, so that a determinate fact reaches the

¹³ About the strategic importance of the study of the Human Process, see also "Philosophical Self-Portrait of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira."

plenitude of itself insofar as it achieves itself. It feeds itself from its own effects to reach its plenitude.

4. The Human Process

The human process is the ensemble of the following elements: an essential contingency¹⁴ or something that is lacking in man's essence, the appetite to satisfy this contingency, the quest for the absolute to satisfy it, union with the absolute, and transformation into the absolute.

This process is the central point of the history of a man. To the measure that this process can be a social phenomenon, we have the central point of the history of a people. And, on a higher scale, we can have the History of mankind.

This process can be seen in its good aspect – the march of man toward God – and in its bad aspect – the flight of man from God when he links himself to false absolutes.

5. Types of processes

- There are processes of a psychological character that involve the state of peoples as well;
- There are the biological processes;
- And, in the terrain of inanimate things, there is something that is not properly speaking a process but that we would call a process, which is a movement to maintain the order that exists inside certain conjuncts, such as the movement of the waters and the air that keeps the Earth in its place; that is, maintaining the grand physical equilibriums that have something of a process in them.

6. The perfect process

The integral element of the notion of process is something that has a beginning, a development and an end. Therefore, the process *par excellence* would be something that starts and whose movement becomes increasingly intense as it reaches its end. The end where the process is realized is not death, but rather the obtaining of its proper end and fixing itself in this end, in such a way that the apogee of the process is something definitive. It is fixed in the apogee of itself.

This is the process *par excellence*. I believe that in Paradise life would have been like this. The human energies would develop more and more to reach the plenitude of the man, and when the man would reach the plenitude of his physical and moral perfection and union with God, there would be an apotheosis that would bring him to Heaven. It is like an arrow that is shot, reaches the

¹⁴ This contingency is proper to all rational creatures. It is opposed to God's absence of any lack, which is why we call Him Absolute. So, all men as well as all Angels have this innate contingency, which cries out to fulfill itself in the Absolute,

target and fixes itself in the target. The stopping at the goal is not the death of that process, but the apogee of the process. The perfect process does not have the mortal element.

In History there are images of this process. In some way this is sanctification. The sanctification of the humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ reached its apex at the moment in which He pronounced the "*consummatum est.*"

It is something that begins and that harmoniously, without any defection, reaches an end that is not death but the glorious realization of its own perfection.

7. The imperfect process

There is another process that is linked to things that become corrupted and die. Everything has a beginning, a middle and a destruction. It is the imperfect process as it exists on Earth.

8. Two types of processes: the ascending process & the process in struggle

The Human Process can be seen in two different ways. One is the process of the person who was always faithful and who never deviated from the path. The archetype of this process is the Humanity of Jesus Christ, who the Evangelist says grew in grace and holiness.

On the other hand, there is the process in which the bad also enters, and which consists of a kind of battle for recuperation fought against the hostile element that must be expelled from the process for it to continue.

The latter is a process in struggle, which is different from the process in simple ascension, just as there is a difference between a man who climbs the Alps and another who climbs it with a cat on his back – scratching, biting and hurting him – and as he climbs, the cat grows. Evil also has its own process, which should also be studied.¹⁵

9. Fundamental law of any process

The laws inherent to any process are but a thousand formulations of one single law: There is a movement where each stage corroborates what was done in the previous ones, completing and uniting what was done before, thus giving a new impetus to a higher stage.

The process of virtue is this, like the process of the chick that comes from the egg.

10. Two orders of degrees ¹⁶

Descending to the most profound psychology of man, we note that in the human appetencies there is a type of correspondence to the natural order created by God. The characteristics of all creatures

¹⁵ See also "Considerations regarding R-CR - II" by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

are susceptible to degrees: There are degrees of brightness, softness, rigidity, darkness, smell, etc. In nature everything has characteristics subject to certain degrees.

Concomitantly, the same phenomenon occurs in the opposite sense. Man's way of experiencing things is also subject to degrees. We can, for example, see a light and then gradually become accustomed to it. Initially its brightness causes a shock, but afterwards we become accustomed to it.

Likewise, we can accustom ourselves to something soft. After a certain time, then, we would be willing to accept something even softer. Because it is not just the softness that has degrees, but we ourselves progress by degrees in our taste for softness. In the highest degree of softness, our appetency for it would also reach its maximum.

As we pass through each degree, we develop an appetency for the next one. By this process we pass from the asceticism of a bed of boards to the softest mattress by successive degrees.

There are two orders of degrees: the degree of softness that is in things, and the degree according to which our appetite increasingly desires softness.

So, there is a gradualism at play in the characteristics of the various elements and a capacity to gradually move toward attaining the extreme end.

11. The law of apogee in the processive movement

St. Thomas says that one sin necessarily prepares for another similar and more serious sin, just as an act of virtue prepares for another act of virtue.

By the dynamism of sin, one sin attracts another sin along the same lines until it reaches the paroxysm of that sin, which will necessarily cause the paroxysm of all sins; thus also an act of virtue, even a small one, prepares the spirit for another and more generous act of the same virtue until man reaches the plenitude of that virtue and the plenitude of all virtues. This is why the man who practiced all the virtues in a heroic degree is a saint.

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CHAPTER II

THE STUDY OF HUMAN CONTINGENCE

What in man causes him to know and love God?

What hidden mechanism in the order of the being makes him tend toward the absolute?

What is the special beauty in this in man and in the whole of Creation?

1. The notion of contingence is born with the first notion of the being

When the being has the first notion of his own being, in that same gaze he sees his being and the contingence of his being; therefore, he perceives he is contingent. This is the reason why, when I look at a man, in the same gaze I see the man and I see the form of the man. At the same time that I see that he is, I see that he is limited. Therefore, this perception of his contingence, which is embedded in the notion of his own being, leads the man to turn toward the Absolute.

2. The matrix of the Absolute is prior to the actual notion of contingence

Man has a matrix inside his spirit that contains the elements to form the idea of the Absolute Being. If he did not have this matrix, he would not understand the notion of contingent being. Therefore, this sleeping notion of the Absolute Being inside him comes prior to the actual notion of contingence that he forms.

- **The notion that in the Absolute Being there is no distinction between essence & accidents**

Collaterally he perceives that it suffices for a man to have something accidental, that is to say, something that in his own sphere does not have a plenitude of being, for him to note within himself a gradation of being, a greater plenitude of his essence compared to his accidents and, therefore, a weakness of being.

Through this, he understands that the one who possesses Absolute Being possesses in his essence his own accidents, and that this would be what we call the Divine Being.

This, which takes place in the essence–accidents relationship, occurs in all the other gamuts of relationships.

3. The need for man to know & love the Absolute is born from the need to know & love his own being

Every spiritual being has a proximate, immediate need to know and love himself because he is intelligent and capable of willing. This makes up part of the totality of the being. The possibility of knowing and loving is the very life of the spiritual being, and this faculty to know and to love is why the being is spiritual. It is something so inherent to his being that we could say that he could not exist without this faculty. It is this faculty to know and love that gives rise to the intelligence and will.

The being, while relative, while contingent, is not fully known except in its relationship to other beings and, above all, in its relationship to God, who is the Being of all beings.

If a man refuses this relationship, this knowledge, he places himself in a wrong situation regarding everything. The movement that sprouts from him, as it were, flows back to him in a wrong way, producing in him a pain, a sensation of complete unhappiness, of which, humanly speaking, the only adequate image is failure. It is the being that feels that it has failed in everything, without remission, that has failed completely. He has a type of ominous discontent that is an actual earthly image of what the pain of loss is in the other world.

Here we see the link between the ontological order – the upright order of the being independent of its end – and the moral order – the ordering of the being toward its end. That is, for a man to have his faculties ordered ontologically he needs to be turned toward his supreme end; otherwise, his soul falls into disorder.

Someone can object that, according to this reasoning, the basis of Morals is egoism and this cannot be.

Morals is based on the idea that man has to renounce to himself to progress. It is a path whose presupposition is the Original Sin and its consequences over human nature. So, Morals presents the exclusive love of self as egoism and something that should be avoided. The only thing that matters is to destroy one's egoism so that man can tend toward God.

There are nuances that must be considered in this position. It is perfectly true when we deal with the bad egoism. However, there is a good egoism, which is based on the idea that each man is an image and likeness of God. Consequently, to achieve the plan of God for each man, he must love his own self and try to fulfill his contingency by means of the quest for the Absolute that he lacks. So, although Morals is correct in rejecting the bad egoism, Metaphysics is also correct in encouraging the good egoism to develop and seek its plenitude in God.

4. In practice, how does one reach God by the diversity of appetencies?

With myself as the departure point, I am seeking in every creature something that satisfies my contingency, and I, so to speak, open myself to all, like a fan. But in this contact with all, I gradually perceive that they all come together in a supreme being that is God, and that everything gradually tends toward a closing at another point.

There is, then, a type of opening and closing regarding the relationship of man with God.

The multitude of my appetencies is an expression of a fundamental lack that there is in me as a creature and that seeks many different satisfactions. After having sought to satisfy them all, I gradually unite them all in one supreme satisfaction that is destined to fill my fundamental contingency. This movement would have more or less the shape of a diamond or rhombus.

5. Absolute perfection is the cause of limited perfection

There are limited perfections.

The limit is something that repels the being.

Then, for these limited perfections to exist, it is necessary that there exist a being in which these perfections are unlimited and infinite. The nature of the relationships that are established in this way between a limited perfection and the Divine Being also explains all the commonly known relationships between creature and Creator. A limited being cannot sustain itself. For the same reason by which it is evident that the contingent being calls for an absolute being, it is also evident that the absolute perfection is the cause and the end of the limited perfection.

6. The two great transformations that lead man to the idea of the absolute

There are two great transformations through which man passes.

The *first*, which is not really a transformation, is his birth, the fact that he was not and comes into being. This fact that he was not and now is, and that there is a whole past behind him that existed before him that he can know, but from which he comes and in which he has no participation, is obviously something that gives him a sensation of the contingency and limitation of his own being.

To know, moreover, that this movement by which he was born is a movement that also repeats itself in a thousand others and drives the whole universe, where things are continually being born, shows a unity in birth that is a factor that not only indicates his contingency, but also a type of unity of action that operates outside of all the beings he knows. This in some way prepares his spirit for the concept of the Creator, which is the first movement.

But more profoundly than the thought of his birth, the *second transformation* – the idea of death – acts in him. Death is transformation *par excellence*. The sensation that the man has an end gives him an idea of the immense transformation that he cannot avoid and that is outside of himself.

Man perceives that he has a beginning and an end, but he also perceives that what is proper to the being is to not have a beginning or end. Therefore, by virtue of the principle of contradiction and the axiological principle,¹⁷ a being exists somewhere that does not have a beginning and an end, and which necessarily created the beings that have a beginning and end. And, it is by virtue of this

¹⁷ The axiological principle: In each being a profound order exists regarding its proper essence and existence, which impels every being to fundamentally reach its end.

principle that takes form by attentively considering these aspects of birth and death that the man is led to the principle of an absolute being.

- **Application to culture**

For cultural purposes, I find it interesting to say that God did not give man only a beginning and an end, but, in all the changes of life, everything is always in the process of beginning and ending: A morning that begins, the flower in the field that fades, these meetings of ours that end. A thousand processes follow the shape of a rhombus or diamond with a beginning that expands until it reaches its apogee, and then fades, moving toward its end – unless it ends in an explosion, which is abnormal to the process.

Everything is constantly being born, changing and dying, and this movement is an element that leads to its death. If an automobile passes at this moment between this building and the Church on the next block, there is in this moment a type of reality of that automobile and this street that dies at the moment the automobile passes the city block. Another example would be the beauty of a tree's shadow on the ground in a garden that follows a certain movement. There are a thousand such images of beginning and ending that give man a lively notion of how precarious everything is.

7. Stability in man is, as such, desirable & a foreshadowing of eternity

Along with this idea of the precariousness of everything, we introduce something that we do not always hear in sermons: All these things march toward a certain stability. Every process, like human life, has a provisory and stable apogee, which can truly be a certain *raison d'être* of all that exists in life.

The tree has, as its *raison d'être*, the production of fruit in abundance, to such a point that man can be compared to an immense tree in which all the birds of the air come to rest, and the works of man give fruit for the Reign of God, according to the words of the Gospel. These plenitudes exist in the life of man and it is normal for him to want to realize them. It is not because such works are ends in themselves, but because they have similarities of an eternal end, like a small image of eternity. Man has the taste for that which is stable and definitive so that he might aspire to the eternal stable and definitive.

We can say that life would be nonsensical if there were not eternity, and we affirm that it is normal for man to have an appetency for this plenitude insofar as his nature and also his perfection call for it, as a type of first form of eternal perfection.

In the process that constitutes all of life, there is the high point, the widest and largest part of the rhombus, which is the epoch of stability, a circumscribed, defined time, after which comes decadence.

- **Profound notion of sensuality**

Sensuality is not to take a sip of wine and say, "How enjoyable." Rather, it is to close the process of drinking the wine in itself: For example, to say, "If I could stop my life now, in this circle of friends, drinking and enjoying this wine, I would not want anything else." In this there is an absence of the metaphysical; there is a turning toward pleasure in itself that constitutes a sin of denying all metaphysical values and adopting the irreligious sense of things.

The danger of all the pleasures is not their intensity, but rather their lacking any reference to the metaphysical. The intensity of the pleasure is dangerous when it deviates from the metaphysical. There are good pleasures and, when their intensity follows the line of the metaphysical, they lead to God.

8. The sense of mystery comes from the notion of contingency & prepares for Faith

The individual perceives that he has slight notions of what the being is in its plenitude.

It follows that he is left with a kind of backdrop of mystery in his head. This backdrop of mystery is that sense of mystery that every man carries with himself. It is a mystery that should not be seen as something contradictory to the nature of the contingent being, but as something that has a world of harmonies toward which the contingent being has a loving appetency.

Man, then, perceives the *raison d'être* of a revelation. Revelation would not have a *raison d'être* if the human mind were capable of knowing everything that exists in the notion of being. But since he is not capable of doing this, a revelation is something that enriches man so harmoniously that he seeks it avidly, and from this comes the spirit disposed toward the Faith.

On the contrary, when man does not accept the contingency of his being and his knowledge, there is a revolt against the Faith.

This explains quite well the difference between us and protestants, who are revolted at the mysteries of the Faith.

It also explains well the decadence of Europe in modern times, especially the decadence of Italy. In the time of Dante, Giotto and Fra Angelico, there was a beauty that always reflected the harmony of an insinuated and underlying mystery: at times a malevolent mystery, as in Venice; at other times, a most beautiful mystery, as in Fra Angelico. That is to say, these are realities that are not spoken of, not described, but rather they are insinuated in the background.¹⁸

The Italy of the 15th century broke with the mystery. An example is St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, which is a church without mystery. A culture without mystery is a culture that has become mediocre.

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¹⁸ See "The Renaissance - II" by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THE QUEST FOR THE ABSOLUTE?

1. The process of seeking the absolute: The theory of the hypothetical artichoke

I would like to comment on the way the word "absolute" is used among us.

Someone can do the following things: He looks at a green sofa and likes it; in a second operation, he looks at several sofas and prefers the green ones; in a third operation, he says: "I like all green sofas." Afterward, he will say that he likes every object that is green. He finally reaches the top of the mountain when he says the following: "I like green."

Liking green, he already likes something abstract that is not connected to any of the concrete realities around him. This abstract thing ends by being the green in itself. Now, what is green in itself? It is a reflection, an analogy – whatever it may be – of a person.

The ancient pagans made persons of autumn, spring, summer, the dawn, glory, fecundity, agriculture, etc. They were not wrong in the idea that, in final analysis, these abstract realities should be personalized. They were wrong in saying that they were personalized in many gods. We as Catholics know that all this is personalized in only one God. In this conception, we can say that the absolute is a person, God Our Lord, whom we seek in all things.

From here I pass to a figure that I would call the hypothetical artichoke. It is a thing chosen to show how, through the various contingences and relativities, the person seeks the absolute. I imagine an artichoke with the structure that we know, but with one peculiarity that artichokes we know do not have. We are going to imagine that the outermost petals of the artichoke had a lighter flavor than its inner ones, and that to the degree that we enter deeper into it, the taste of the petals became more intense.

I would say that the person, eating petal by petal, attracted by the taste, moved by the appetency to taste the innermost part of the artichoke, would continue on until he reached the final inner layer, the heart of the artichoke. Then, I would say that he went through the contingencies to the plenitude, to the absolute, which is God. The following degrees would thus appear: the love for the concrete thing, the love for the thing as a reflection of something else; the love for an abstract thing and the consideration of a purely intellectual thing. In this way, successively, we would reach God.

- **Precision of language**

We can use the word *absolute* as long as we reserve it for the innermost part of the artichoke. The various layers of petals of the artichoke would represent a lesser or greater participation in the absolute.

2. Sins against the absolute

We could then consider various sins against the absolute. One of them is to remain in the various stages of this process. We already noted that the man who belongs to the new generation is very lazy in this regard. The old generation man makes abstractions; he enters into this process, he eats some of the petals of the artichoke, but he does not reach to the very heart of the artichoke, which is personalization.

We could see the sin against the absolute in another way: It is the principle of totality applied here to the problem. If I love a certain virtue, for example, I cannot love only one modality of this virtue. A serious love for this virtue forces me to love the whole virtue. Then, a serious love for one virtue obliges me to love all the virtues. Therefore, a man cannot love – without sinning – only a single absolute. He can love the absolute of his primordial light preponderantly. But he has to love with all his heart all the absolutes, because all of them form in the end only one absolute.

3. The three orders to consider in the quest for the absolute

The quest for the absolute of the existence of God must also be applied to each of us as an internal being. We would not understand the idea of being if we did not have the sensation of our own being. If we were to feel a contradiction between everything we know about the being and ourselves, we would not think things about ourselves the way we do.

There are three ways for men to think, or three realms in which the order of the universe can be considered: in the *first place*, the order of the universe as considered in the external beings; in the *second place*, the order of the universe as considered in the inner being and in my being. They are analogous orders, one overlapping the other in some ways. In the *third place*, the two overlap at the summit of the universe, which is the order that exists in God.

So then, there are three orders to be considered to have a full view of everything that exists. The various proofs of the existence of God correspond to the various doors of the soul through which man can see the absolute. A well-ordered intelligence must have all the doors of the soul and of the heart open to this.

The whole material universe is an image of the human soul. All things that exist in matter, even their own movements, are analogies of the human soul, which is the highest reality. All things should reflect the human soul as a mirror, a means of verification, of knowledge of self, etc. In turn, all human souls are reflections of God. Hence, we arrive at the conclusion that the material universe also is a likeness of God.

If this is true, we can say that the individual has three ways of undertaking the quest for the absolute:

- *The first* is when he considers material things;
- *The second* is when he perceives in them the representation of values that only have meaning in the human soul insofar as they exist in man. For example, when the individual speaks of the glory of the setting sun or of the joy of the rising sun, it is clear that the sun, as

a ball of fire, is incapable of glory or joy. But it expresses, it represents as an inert being, some things that are in the human soul. The individual, for his part, considers in the glory of the sun something that exists in man.

- Then, *the third* way is when he elevates his spirit to a higher level and reaches the idea of glory *per se*, and the idea of a glory that subsists in itself, which is God Our Lord.

So, to be quite clear: We can say that every absolute is a virtue considered in the *first degree* insofar as it is symbolized by inanimate nature, the *second degree* when it exists in man, and the *third degree* when it subsists personified essentially in God. So, we conclude that every absolute is, necessarily, a moral virtue.

4. The universe sings of the glory of God & of man in two ways

In Creation we note two ways by which these moral virtues can be expressed: a static way and a dynamic one.

In the static way, we consider the beings in themselves. In the dynamic way we consider the beings as relating to one another. These relationships constitute a special way of indicating virtues and of singing the glory of man and of God.

We could go further. The glory of man as a creature of God and the glory of God in itself are things that the universe sings by two types of orchestration:

First: By the symbolism of things;

Second: By the symbolism of the relationship between things.

For example, I can see the virtue of fortitude in a standing column; in the emblem of the Colonna family these words are inscribed under the column "It stands by its own force," a splendid representation of the virtue of fortitude. Here is an isolated element that in itself already represents fortitude.

But another being could also represent strength to me by its relationship with various other beings. For example, a chain that holds a heavy weight is a relationship that gives the idea of fortitude. Then, according to my own type of spirit, I can see the absolute better in a certain being or in a relationship of beings. A classification that might come from this would not be a final one, but rather a classification of certain types of spirit by which one sees the absolute.

5. Love of self & love of neighbor related to the notion of the absolute

Man does indeed always search for the absolute, but the absolute that he seeks is not only sanctity and goodness, but it can also be the being. That is to say, when man loves the absolute, he also has an absolute inside himself, and in this regard he loves himself. And in the love he has for himself, he loves those who are closer to him, inasmuch as he is himself and loves himself.

There is also the love of those who have other titles of proximity to us, such as likeness. Let us say, for example, I love a friend who is similar to me inasmuch as he is similar to me. So my love for him is a reflection of the love I have for myself.

Or, another example, a man who is my benefactor: He conserved my being or he helped to increase my being, and so I love him. We esteem our wet nurses because they are thought to have in some way contributed to the development of our being.

Thus, I think the various titles of proximity fit together harmoniously in this theory of the absolute, which also establishes a bridge between the absolute in itself and it as reflected in each one of us.

This approach ends by providing a justification for the quest for the absolute in ourselves for the good "egoism," which is what the Secret Forces would like to destroy in our days.

6. Five modalities of the absolute

The *first modality* is the absolute as an abstract idea or a purely intellectual concept. There is a resemblance to God in the way this reasoning is born: The Father is represented by the being, which engenders an idea of itself that evokes the Word; then the being loves the idea of itself, and this love resembles the Holy Spirit. However, this Trinitarian analogy has a more or less independent value, not to be confused with the content of the idea of absolute.

In addition to the idea, there would be a *second modality*, that is, a person can also translate the absolute by a symbol. For example, a lawyer went to Ars to study St. John Baptist Vianney; when he returned, he was asked what he had seen in Ars. He replied that he had seen God in a man. Man can be symbol of the absolute.

Third, the absolute can consist in movements, in the linking and succession of facts, in the way things move or walk and, finally, in the whole dynamics in which a certain absolute can appear. This is the case of the military parade where soldiers march to the sound of marches played by bands. These marches may express the past glory of a nation as well as its courage, patriotism and readiness for war.

The absolute can appear in a *fourth modality*, which is that of scenes or episodes. For example, the meeting of Our Lady with Our Lord on the Way to Calvary in the Passion is one episode. It is an episode in which an ensemble of relationships instantaneously attains fixity, constituting an immortal scene where a thousand absolutes appear.

The *fifth type* of absolute is formed by irrational things as far as they mirror certain ambiances. For example, the play of water in the fountains in Versailles expresses the elegance, refinement and rationality that were considered absolutes by the French *Ancien Régime*.

Perhaps there are other variants but there are at least these five, in which each is very different from the other.

7. Rules relating to the transmission of the absolutes

From these considerations, we come to see how these absolutes are transmitted from one person to another. For, if our objective is to know how to infuse certain absolutes, three elements must undoubtedly be considered here:

- The thing in which the absolute mirrors itself;
- The person who will see the absolute;
- The one who serves as the transmitter of one thing to another.

Thus, a *first rule* was established: These absolutes can only be understood and transmitted at a certain level of perfection and plenitude when there is some affinity between the transmitter and the recipient, by means of their primordial lights, which should be akin to the absolute that is to be transmitted.

This rule does not contradict the *second one*, which is that all the absolutes of a certain elevation in their general lines are perceptible to all men.

We then fixed a *third rule*, which would be the difference between the *two* ways of transmitting the absolute. The *first way* would be when one simply makes the thing shine in itself. For example, a writer who describes a scene in a splendid way, a soprano who sings a musical piece splendidly transmits the absolute in that song.

The *second way* would be the critic who knows how, through judicious words, to show to another person a whole firmament of thoughts that were half-stranded in the mind of the latter for lack of definition and expression. He finds the right words to bring them to the limelight in such a way that his interlocutor says, "Yes, that's it!"

8. The false absolutes ¹⁹

There are false absolutes that are illusions produced by our own vices, or myths artificially made by the Revolution in order to divert us from the true quest for the absolute.

What we will see now refers to the false forms of the absolute.

A. The absolute of the sensual

The sensual appetite seeks to satisfy the soul by sensuality as if it were an absolute. It is not that the sensual seeks the absolute, but sensuality plays a role as if it were the absolute of his soul. In what sense? The sensual individual has a lively impression that, in satisfying his appetites, he reaches a certain absolute by means of a kind of a paroxysm, which is ecstasy. This paroxysm, which tends to be complete, continually seeks a greater pleasure that would give man, at a certain moment, the

¹⁹ See Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Chap VII, 3.

completeness of fruition. It would be like someone who impulsively were to drink the cup of pleasure and then would no longer need it, because he would possess it in a permanent way.

One of the most curious things in the history of the human soul is exactly this search for something in its plentitude, for something that would give it so much that it would never again have to look for anything else. This is so true that Our Lord, desiring to attract souls to the Holy Eucharist, made the promise that one could find this in the Holy Eucharist.

Once I read an article about Casanova where the author said that people only looked at Casanova under one aspect: Casanova climbing a silk ladder to reach the balcony of his beloved lady, who awaited him adorned and perfumed. But no one saw the weariness of Casanova who, after a thousand adventures, unsatisfied and old, was still climbing up balconies in search of a pleasure that he never found. What was the pleasure that he sought? He wanted to find a woman who would fulfill his desire to not need anyone else because he would be in full possession of her and the pleasure received from her. No one sees Casanova after his "Mardi Gras," but the "Ash Wednesday" of Casanova is a quite true fact.

And so the person goes from one apex of pleasure to another to see if he can reach this point, but there is in the depths of human nature such a thirst that it cannot be satisfied with anything but the true absolute. This is not to say that external beings do not satisfy, but that there is still something more. The human soul is unable to find full satisfaction even if it finds itself satisfied with something. It wants to be inebriated in such a way that we see that it was made for the infinite; without the infinite it is not satisfied by anything.

In the end, nothing satisfies the person who seeks the infinite in the sensual, the absolute in the ecstasy.

B. The absolute of the proud

As for the proud, there are two types: the introvert and the extrovert.

The introvert has a lack of some absolutes that he wants to possess and enjoy as if he were eating a fruit. He thinks that if he were once in possession of them and "eating" them, then he would become such an extremely elevated being in his own judgment – which for him is worth much more than the judgment of others – that he would be oblivious to the approval of others. Inside himself is lit the lamp of an inaccessible superiority. Even if others spit upon him, it would be of no import; his head is in the stars while his feet are on the ground.

This type of proud man immerses himself in the arts, books, philosophy: a proud theologian, certainly a proud artist. Thus in this way he goes seeking another form of the infinite, a value so high that he almost divinizes himself in it.

Then, there is the proud extrovert who seeks the applause of the multitude, even if he plagiarizes or copies what others have done, even if he uses tricks and artifices, etc. Thus he seeks to make others have such an astonishing admiration for himself that is tantamount to adoration. He seeks to be adored by the others.

In both the introvert and the extrovert there is a phenomenon of a fundamental lack that seeks satisfaction in the quest of a certain ecstasy. Such an ecstasy will give the person the impression that he has reached a certain absolute.²⁰ These are false absolutes.

C. Lay absolutes

There is also another wrong form of absolute, which come from moral laicism. Here the person tries to identify himself with probity; he is honest. Another seeks to identify himself with kindness, he is kind. etc.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century and the anti-clerical movement of the 19th century presented many of these lay absolutes to their followers. The ideal of fraternity, for example, which generated so many brotherhoods of Masonic inspiration, is a false absolute that dies in itself. When several men follow an ideal – let us say, Patriotism – they have a natural pleasure in gathering together. When their country is attacked, the sentiment of brotherhood becomes more accentuated and generates enthusiasm. The lay military ideals live from these sentiments.

This exaltation of fraternity is not a novelty of the 18th century; it has existed as long as man has existed on earth. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries, it took a revolutionary twist and turned toward gathering together to fight against hierarchy, nobility and Christendom. This revolutionary fraternity is, therefore, bad. But even had it not taken on this bad connotation, it would be a frustrated ideal if it were not directed toward a higher absolute, which is God. Fraternity in itself is a false absolute that withers, rots and dies because it does not fulfill its entire process.

D. The absolute of the practical spirit

What was the sin of Esau? He sold his birthright, a thing of great moral value and, therefore, of much greater worth in view of absolutes than a plate of lentils, which is a practical thing. What we see in this episode is a type of condemnation of that practical spirit that seeks its satisfaction in the pragmatic sphere and is incapable of seeing the absolute.

E. The absolute of the lazy

We should study how the lazy man seeks the absolute in laziness. He wants to do nothing, absolutely nothing. For the lazy man the ideal is not just an absence of making an effort to do something, but there is a kind of sin of *acedia*.²¹ By violating the laws of life, he has little appetency

²⁰ See also, "The Human Spirit Has a Hunger for the Absurd and for Sin," D. Cortez, *Circular Letter to Members and Militants*.

²¹ *Acedia* is the Latin term referring to the sin of the man who knows everything and has everything but becomes indifferent to this. It is said to be the sin of Solomon who, after striving so hard to have all the gifts of spirit and matter – wisdom and earthly wealth – and achieving it, lost interest in God and virtue. It will also possibly be the sin of those who will have all the gifts in the apex of the Reign of Mary, but who nonetheless will become

for the things that he should. Feeling himself simply living in idleness gives him a pleasure that suffices. In this he seeks to find the absolute. But instead he finds a frustration, which is, precisely, a punishment.

F. The absolute of the *blasé* or indifferent man

I have forgotten the *blasé* or indifferent man. At the root of the man who prevaricates and seeks false absolutes, there is a bi-partition. His reason sees that these absolutes are not absolutes, but internally he has an illusory impression that they are absolutes. This bi-partition between impression and reason can deceive him into thinking that reason is presenting false things to him. Instead of following reason, he follows that false intuition.

The *blasé* man is one who takes these lively impressions as far as he can but never reaches complete ecstasy. He has had enough experiences to understand that this way is wrong, that it will never give him what he thought it would give. He not only sees that ecstasy does not satisfy, noting that, by the natural order of things, it does not contain what he thought it did.

For example, the country man who comes to the city thinking he will find something marvelous; afterwards, he sees that the city is not such a marvelous thing. And so he becomes *blasé* and, at the same time, addicted and cannot manage to leave the city.

Thus the way of the *blasé* man is to become attached to something even though he knows that it does not have what he supposed it would have.

9. The deep roots of the quest for false absolutes

All false absolutes are like those we have described. This quest for false absolutes has its root in a strange, but very deep problem. The root of every sin results from the fact that the person does not want to follow reason and instead wants to follow a series of lively impressions or *vivências* (living experiences). The person creates the habit of distrusting reason and following these impressions. This habit debilitates the intelligence: The criteria for knowing certainty and uncertainty, good and evil, become lost because the person turned away from the normal way the human mind works. The person falls prey to mere impressions.

It appears to me that today's pedagogy leads the child to adopt impressions as the supreme criteria and to distrust reason. Thus, we can understand the apex of abomination that is being prepared for us.

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indifferent, which will start its quick decay. In the Apocalypse Our Lord refers to this kind of person as "neither hot nor cold" and sternly condemns them. (Apoc 3:15-17)

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF THE TENDENCIES ON HUMAN ACTIONS ²²

1. The theory of the vectors ²³

Let us look at the line of an individual's development through his life. Afterwards, we can apply the same observations to peoples. Now, from this line of development, let us take a point x, which we highlight, analyzing all the elements that determined it, examining all the forces that influenced the man to act as he did. Let us then take a photo of the man on that point, trying to know at that moment what tendencies or forces are pulling him up or down and to determine in what conditions point x reaches point x¹.

To make this study we need to abstract ourselves from free will and inquire: If there were no free will, where would these impulses lead the individual? Where would these forces take him?

There are, then, a number of forces that we will represent graphically by vectors. What are the vectors?

One force that acts to bring the man down is, of course, original sin, which is the *first vector*.

The *second vector* is the Devil, also a force acting to draw him down.

The *third vector* is the man's nature, which is inherited from his parents, a force that goes up or down.

The *fourth vector* is the ambience in which he finds himself.

The *fifth vector* is his individual history which, according to the graph, may be an ascending or descending vector. In this history, it is necessary to distinguish and sub-distinguish the practices and actions that still have not become habits. These habits constitute acquired nature.

The *sixth vector* is grace, with all its elements, the intercession of the Saints, the help of the Angels, grace itself, etc., which will be forces that influence him to go up.

These forces will have a resultant vector, which would fully express the impulse to which the individual is subject. It would indicate the direction he were to go should he deliver himself to the resultant of these forces without exercising his will.

Once this resultant vector is determined, it still cannot be said that the individual will necessarily act following the direction and intensity of the vector. At this point enters free will, which will choose whether to assent or not to the request of the resultant tendency.

²² See also *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Chap V, 1, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

²³ See also *Revolution A and Revolution B - IV*, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

2. Nomenclature

First nature, or fallen nature, is human nature after original sin with the defects and bad tendencies common to all men.

Second nature, or inherited nature, is what the child receives from his ancestors. They can be good or bad.

Third nature, or acquired nature, is the set of habits that every man forms in his life, through the influence of the ambience, his actions, others, etc.

3. The action of the hereditary factor

In heredity the biological factor comes first. It is the factor of human concupiscence. Concupiscence has degrees, and if it is very ardent in the parents, then in the children it has a degree of spontaneous ardor that is greater than if the parents were temperate. We therefore affirm here the principle of the influence of the biological inheritance of the parents' habits on the habits of their children, on the tendencies of the children.

Scripture expresses this in a very picturesque way by saying, "Our fathers sucked sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Jer 31:29)

We have, then, a certain set of dispositions, of tendencies, that at times give rise to a violent intemperance when the parents have been intemperate; on the contrary, they can give a great temperance when the parents were temperate.

When the parents were good, this can give a true propensity for good, and vice versa. For example, in the case of anger, the instinct that leads man to be cruel or bloodthirsty, the very irascible parents transmit ire to their children. Very benign parents transmit to their children a natural sweetness of temperament, which does not incline them to wrath. It may even lead them to have a certain aversion to bloodshed, fights and so on – and this to such a degree that this aversion to fighting can at times be unhealthy and excessive in certain temperaments. Here, then, is a first action, a *first factor* which is a *first hereditary factor*.

A historical example that comes to mind is the inherited refinement of civilization that we saw in Christendom. It had good and bad consequences. The good consequences are obvious, since they improved the cordial treatment among men, protocol in private life, and solemnity in public life.

The bad consequences of this supreme refinement, however, are not sufficiently stressed. One of them is the fact that the Kings and nobles became so delicate that they lost the capacity to fight when necessary. Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were in many ways models of the highest refinement of Catholic Civilization. However, Louis XVI lacked the necessary fortitude to face the French Revolution. He wanted to resolve all the problems with goodness and tolerance. This absence of firmness and combativeness led to a political and social defeat, the end of the Monarchy and the death of both the King and the Queen. Had the royal formation been more vigilant, the spirit

of the French Crusader Kings would have been more present in Louis XVI, and History would have been different. The hereditary factor played a bad role in this case.

In order to understand every aspect of this factor well, we should recall that St. Thomas Aquinas said that God creates all souls equal and that the psychological differences we notice in man come from the bodies. In this we can see the importance of the physical factor – not in the deterministic sense of hindering free will, but in the sense of strongly influencing the exercise of free will.

4. The role of the cultural ambience

Alongside this, we have what we might call a cultural inheritance. It is the whole cultural ambience in which a man lives and thus shapes his first impressions since he enters this ambience in his childhood. This influence naturally functions as a kind of *second hereditary factor*.²⁴

5. Stages of compressing the instincts

There may be certain states of extreme barbarism where the spontaneous impulse of human defects is so great that a man can only practice a great number of virtues through an heroic effort of intelligence that allows him to perceive what is virtue and a great effort of will that lets him dominate the ardor of his bad tendencies and establish an empire of virtue.

Then, there is a *second stage*, in which the impulse of a bad spontaneity is no longer so great; at this point we are in the presence of a serious struggle, a prolonged struggle, but one that may not necessarily be heroic. The man can make some heroic blows from time to time, but it may not necessarily be a heroic fight.

Next, we have a *third stage*, where the fight is a serious fight, but it is no longer a struggle with such dubious, uncertain results. It is the common struggle of every man.

There can be still another different stage in which the majority of the instincts are at a neutral point, not leading to evil. It is only one or another instinct that tends toward evil.

Finally, we have another stage where one or another instinct tends toward evil, but the majority of them are already typically leading to the good. They do so in such a way that there is a real difficulty for man to not follow his well-educated instincts, which in their spontaneity already produce suave fruits, and to practice evil.

For example, it is possible that a very remote ancestor of King Louis XVI, let us say Hugh Capet, was a man who had to exercise a great strength of will to not kill people. Louis XVI, his distant descendant, falls at the opposite extreme. His spontaneity, from this point of view, was so refined, even super-refined, that he ended by sinning, failing in his duty as King, by not killing those who would be guilty of the brutal bloodshed of the Terror in the French Revolution.

²⁴ See *The Church and the Communist State: The Impossible Coexistence and "Revolution and Counter-Revolution,"* Chap X, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

That is to say, instinct itself can lead to a refinement that – when it is not exaggerated – lies within the path of virtue.

This immense range of instincts leads us to the affirmation of a law: Bad instincts and good instincts are susceptible to a very great compressibility, but they are never extinguished.

No matter how perfidious and decadent a man or a people may be, there is in him a certain tendency toward the good. This is true also in the opposite sense: No matter how much a people or a man rises in the path of virtue, some tendencies for evil are always present.

6. Fallen nature

In studying the nature of Adam, St. Thomas says that his nature consisted of three elements:

1. The constitutive elements;
2. The inclination to virtue;
3. The original justice.

With sin, Adam lost the original justice and much of the inclination to virtue. The constitutive principles remained intact.

So then, all the variants of fallen nature – progressions, regressions, developments, roads to barbarism, etc. – occur within the field of the inclination to virtue. The constitutive principles are inalterable. Original justice, we can no longer attain. What we should do, then, is to study the inclination to virtue. Where this inclination is greater, fallen nature will be more perfected; where it is less perfected, it will be in decay.

7. What is the inclination to virtue?

Here arises the problem of knowing what the inclination to virtue is. And we have to face two very confusing problems that must be delineated in due course.

There are two things that seem to be an enrichment of nature in this sense. On the one hand, there is what we could call the natural gifts; on the other, there is what we would call an inclination to virtue properly speaking.

The natural gifts are exemplified by Churchill. He is a person who had very little inclination to supernatural virtue, but had many natural abilities of intelligence, culture, etc.

In what sense are the capacities of Churchill virtues? In the sense that they are well ordered inside his soul. In what sense are they not inclinations to virtue? Insofar as this ordering does not have the absolute as its objective, but rather is for his own advantage.

8. The vectors & grace

Someone could try to destroy our theory of vectors by showing that there is always a proportion between grace and the dominant vector, because the temptation would never be greater than the grace. Therefore, the theory of the vectors does not have the force we claim for it. For if it is true that the pull of material forces is very great, it is also true that pull of grace is very great. Thus, there is always an equilibrium, and we are exaggerating the importance of the theory of vectors.

This is false. It is false because man has grace in the proportion that he prays. If he does not pray to receive grace, the graces do not come in proportion to conquer the bad tendency. Grace does not come to him when he does not pray. It is not always like this, but, at the least, the graces may not come. Very often man falls for lack of grace not because grace was denied, but because he did not pray. Thus enters the whole evaluation of prayer and of free will, because prayer is an action determined by free will. This is our answer to the objection.

What one must consider in the theory of the vectors is that man often receives graces thanks to the prayers of others. This in itself would merit a study: the ensemble of prayers that surrounds the life of a man. And with these prayers are also the merits that that man has acquired in the past and that God takes into account even if he no longer corresponds to the grace. This could be counted as a separate vector.

Such considerations do not detract from our chart of the vectors, but, on the contrary, enrich it all the more.

9. The sin of Revolution

Another factor that weighs in the decisions of the individual and that would act as a vector is the burden of Revolution with which each man is born.

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THE HUMAN PROCESS

PART II

THE PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE ²⁵

Chapter I - The theory of the first vision

Chapter II - Problems of conscious and subconscious

Chapter III - What is the "obscure chamber" in the soul?

Chapter IV - The process of thought, its mechanisms, its deviations, its correction

- 1. Contributions of animality in the formation of thought**
- 2. The first and second heads**
- 3. The role of *conversio ad phantasmata* [return to images]**
- 4. Abstract and symbolic knowledge**
- 5. The importance of the "problem of life"**

Chapter V - How should the normal knowledge of man be?

- 1. Good sense and Catholic sense**
- 2. The theory of a living metaphysics**

²⁵ Although in practical reality, the acts of the intelligence and the will are intertwined, in the case of the process of knowledge and that of hate and of love, it seems to us that, for the sake of clarity, it would be convenient to separate them.

CHAPTER I

THE THEORY OF THE FIRST VISION

1. In the first vision the soul sees the being in its totality

In the human spirit the rules of logic are subconscious. Logic does nothing more than to make these rules explicit for man. A man who would not have these rules inherent in him as things connatural to his spirit would be crazy. A mind can be extremely primitive and, at the same time, completely logical. In the human subconscious, there can be treasures of philosophy and knowledge that, however inexplicit they may be, are the conditions for mental sanity.

This leads us to admit as plausible that, besides the knowledge of logic, there are also many other things inherent and connatural to the human spirit.

The human mind perceives very clearly the connection that exists, *first*, among all the rules of morality; *second*, among all the rules of goodness; and, *third*, among all the rules of beauty. Man perceives the connection that these rules have among themselves and the link that they have with all the principles of the being and of metaphysics. The fact that he perceives this connection is what causes him not to become crazy, because if they were three separate worlds that had no relation to one another and there were not an apex among them, then he would become crazy.

There is unity in what a man sees, what he wants and what he feels; there is unity in various ways in which he sees the exterior world – that is, in the order of truth, in the order of goodness, in the order of beauty. If such unity did not exist, man would go crazy. There necessarily must be a prior and subconscious knowledge in him, which is the knowledge of something by which all these things are just one.

What is this knowledge?

It can only be the being. In fact, this culmination point is the notion of the being. Hence, the legitimate claim that the human mind is capable of knowing the first principles of order, goodness, truth and beauty departing from the highest summits of metaphysics. The human mind perceives how all this is linked to the being. There is, therefore, a kind of first notion, or first vision of the being in its totality, which projects consequences to the various fields of human knowledge, willing and feeling. It is this first vision that constitutes the first, simplest, inexhaustible and extremely rich object of all human knowledge, as well as of every human will, and also of every human feeling.

The notion of the being is extremely substantial to man and is the actual food of the human intelligence; it is the proper aim that Wisdom seeks in the earthly order. Here I do not address the notions of God and the supernatural, because the notion of the being dies if it does not reach God Our Lord.

2. The vision of the order of the universe is implicit in the first vision of the being

Because man is ordered, he would become crazy if the universe were not also ordered. It would be impossible to have disorder as the normal and fundamental condition of the universe, not in the sense of a collateral disaster such as a scar on a beautiful face, but rather as something that completely disfigures it. The being and disorder are antithetical, and the human mind does not accept them as existing together by the principle of contradiction.

Consequently, the individual perceives that there must be order in the universe: one of those super-eminent and fundamental orders that cannot be abolished even by the disorder that he can perceive in himself.

He perceives that he has a tendency toward the absolute. This tendency would be a disorder – not one of those disorders of the weakness of the flesh, but of the essence of his being – if there were not something or someone in the universe that could satisfy that tendency. By reason of the axiological principle –which is a kind of unfolding of the idea of the being – by the principle that the being is ordered, by the fact that man notices in himself this tendency towards the absolute, he also notes that the external reality must adequately correspond to this tendency. An absolute must exist.

This is a proof that becomes implicit in the mind of the person and that very easily can be considered as a feeling, but it is not that.

3. The feudal structure of the first visions

When we consider the conjunct of truths, either received or natural, we see that they constitute groups that are subordinated to one another. And, every time the human intelligence comes into contact with a particular being, there is a kind of first vision with regard to that being: A vision that is a feudal servant in relation to the first vision of the being properly speaking.

Human life, then, becomes a series of feudal acts, of first visions feudally subordinated to the great first vision. From this comes the notion of process. Every time the human soul comes into contact with a being, there is a first vision.

4. An inherent sense impels a man to make things explicit

We see in matters of philosophy the truth of the maxim: “If you don't know what you are looking for, you don't know what you will find.” That is to say, whoever plunges into the philosophical terrain without having previous philosophical questions to resolve will find nothing and becomes lost in the “*silva rerum*” (forest of things) of philosophy, instead of truly orienting himself.

These questions are related to a first vision of the universe, which is natural and upright. It is a calm, multiform view by which the human mind, since it is the image of the outer reality, is led – with innocence, chastity, temperance and calm – to view the external world as it is in the depths of its being, with all its buttresses, aspects, pluralities and super-eminences.

There is, at the very depths of all this, a position of soul that is a serene, placid, agile and flexible vision, at the same time very mobile and very immobile regarding the universe, which represents the health of the soul. Seeing the thing as it is, the person also sees the common and abstract base to which things are reduced.

This is, properly speaking, a virtue that makes that a person undertake the study of philosophy because he sees reasons to do so; he seeks in philosophy an explanation of himself and tools to explain himself much more than to learn some new terms and facts. In this sense, the study of philosophy is completely different from the study of chemistry or history, where a person applies himself to learn about things that are not in himself.

We see this quite well with regard to the logical sense. Logic is nothing but an explanation of the health of the soul, which is the logical sense. This logical sense is what gives man the capacity to study logic, which he would not have if he did not have an inherent logical sense.

This virtue is a first and polyvalent virtue, different from the tremendously unilateral approach of the man who delivers himself to personal passions and becomes stiff, bristled and turned toward seeing things partially.

I have the impression that what happened in the passing from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance was the loss of this very chaste and very unique flexibility of spirit, which later caused the many forms of passions to surge.²⁶

5. True knowledge & true intelligence

The first vision corresponds to my old idea that knowledge is something that springs from the depths of a man's head first as something imprecise, and then becomes a sketch, then a draft, afterwards a statue and, finally, it speaks. It is not a trajectory that goes from one reasoning to another like a person who travels from one island to another in an archipelago; rather, it is more like one who pulls things out of a box that already contains everything.

Hence, my propensity to consider that true intelligence is, first, a capacity and, then, a moral quality where there is a great richness in these first perceptions and a great fidelity in analyzing everything in function of the first perceptions. This is Wisdom.

Then, the intelligent man is not the verbose man who makes many rational arguments, etc. This is why I do not acknowledge a great intelligence in Rui Barbosa²⁷ who, for me, is the prototype of the man who in his first glance saw very little and, above all, saw things unilaterally, and afterwards

²⁶ See also "The Renaissance - II and III," Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.

²⁷ Born in Salvador, Bahia, he was a federal representative, senator, Minister of Finance and diplomat. For his participation in the 2nd Hague Conference, defending the principle of equality among nations, he earned the nickname "Eagle of the Hague." He ran unsuccessfully for the Presidency of Brazil in 1910, 1914 and in 1919.

spoke and reasoned endlessly about the parcels of truths he saw. From this also comes the anti-“university”²⁸ and anti-Cartesian cultural approach that is ours.

6. What is the relationship between the first vision and the Faith?

When the person has the first vision in the speculative order – that is, he knows the truth – and in the practical order – that is, he knows the good, then he has the will in order – that is, he loves the good that he knows. And, through faith he learns about Catholic doctrine. To the measure that he understands each point of doctrine, he notes its perfection because of its consonance with those first metaphysical principles that he has.

He finds one thing perfect, then something else, etc., and he understands that the totality is perfection itself. When he has a kind of first global picture of Catholic doctrine, he comes to the realization that since God exists, the Catholic Religion must be the Religion of God because it alone teaches everything concerning the universe and God in a deiform way. From this comes an act of reason that, enlightened by grace, can produce an act of Faith. One sees the profound harmony between reason and Faith.

Faith confirms this metaphysical sense. Not only because the Faith contains metaphysical teachings in itself, but because it would be impossible to preserve the notion of order without the support of the Faith, especially in a chaotic world like ours today.

7. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to restore the first vision

The Church stirs up this first vision in the souls of people. I have the impression that its unity *par excellence* is the work of the Holy Spirit. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit, considered together, produce this state of mind, so much so that the work of the Church is to restore it. And the great conversions only are conversions when souls are restored in their first visions.

All this is, therefore, a type of explanation of what is the virtue of Wisdom, which is the opposite of dullness and agitation. It is that type of chaste calm of the Middle Ages of which men have lost even the memory.

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²⁸ Prof. Plinio considered that most of the contemporary university education is detached from reality, giving students knowledge that is unnecessarily theoretical and abstract. This education creates a class of learned people separated from the organic life of society.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS OF THE CONSCIOUS & THE SUBCONSCIOUS

1. The current meaning of the word subconscious

The subconscious is one the richest parts of the soul; however, the current meanings of subconscious are bad. Various teachings about the subconscious tend to give it an occult meaning.

These doctrines consider the subconscious something like a second "I" living within myself, a second "I" in a state of penumbra, reduced to slavery by the conscious side.

The subconscious is considered an inner "I" that is much richer, more refined, more responsive and agile than the conscious. The subconscious is reduced to a kind of captivity when a man receives a cultural formation.

This erroneous meaning of the word subconscious is related to spontaneity. According to this meaning, the subconscious is spontaneous by nature, whereas the conscious is artificial. And because it is spontaneous, it is sincere, for the sincerity so lauded today is nothing but the authenticity of what is spontaneous. Consequently, the artificial conscious is hypocritical and smug.

So then, the subconscious is sincere and brings to light the whole truth, the complete truth. But when we stop to examine this subconscious, it is no longer only the "ego" that appears, but a universal being that exists in all of us and is capable of being raised to higher spheres of Pantheism through the use of mescaline and other drugs that "liberate" the subconscious.

Thus this meaning of subconscious has a door open to the occult.

When we analyze how subconscious is normally understood today, we find this meaning.

However, there is a legitimate meaning for the zone of our mind that is different from the conscious. Let us try to describe it.

2. The various spheres of the subconscious

In the subconscious we distinguish not only that which refers to operations of thought, but we must note other things in it, for example, the memory. In my subconscious I have many data from the memory that I am not invoking at the present moment because they are of no interest to me. But I possess them even though I pay no attention to them.

For example, as I am speaking, I do not remember the name given to the phenomenon of the waters of the Amazon River when it flows into the ocean only because my attention is not turned there and does not grasp the term. When I focus on it, I remember that its name is *pororoca* [the encounter of the waters], but before that it remained forgotten in my memory as in a kind of database. It was in my subconscious only because my attention had not turned toward it.

At times some piece of information remains even deeper in the subconscious, and, even when I want to, I cannot grasp it; then, suddenly, that datum jolts into my mind.

There are also laws of logic. The laws of logic are subconscious. Every individual necessarily thinks in accordance with the laws of logic, even if he does not know theoretical logic.

Another subconscious thing is the mechanism of image association. It is a kind of machine that produces associations of images in a very well-ordered way, even though we don't know exactly how this order functions.

Still another thing is unfinished thoughts. This corresponds to the *tacho de goiabas*²⁹ of which we customarily speak. The person has a thought that he begins to make, and because he is unable to go forward or lacks sufficient time, he does not finish that thought and just keeps going.

Another thing is the germination of ideas. Ideas are slowly forming in the human mind, more or less like the lines in the first sketch, then in relief, then the statue, and afterwards it moves. This gradual formation of ideas ends with many of them being more or less incomplete in the subconscious. We then have incomplete ideas from another perspective. They are, therefore, ideas that are in the subconscious tending toward consciousness.

But there are also ideas that are in the subconscious in a morbid and lazy way of being because the person does not want to bother to make them explicit, or the person has erroneous presuppositions in the subconscious.

We close, emphasizing that it is impossible to make a leveling or homogenization in the subconscious, as if it were just one thing, for there are many mansions in the subconscious.

3. Two types of 'conscientization'³⁰ of subconscious things

One type of conscientization is only relative. It is, for example, the conscientization of an artist who plays music. By the fact of having played music, he expressed a certain interior thing that was in him, which was subconscious, and took it, in his particular way, to a certain degree of consciousness.

The artist also does this when he arranges various things together in a panorama and emphasizes a facet that he could not find adequate words to explain. Thus we can see that he accentuated that aspect in the panorama with great finesse to express his feeling for it.

We have, then, a type of half-conscientization that in many cases cannot or should not reach its final point. But, without a doubt, at times men of great talent manage to find the words to express that certain thing in the subconscious and achieve an even greater degree of conscientization.

²⁹ *Tacho de goiabas* – literally a *pan of guavas*. It is a Brazilian Portuguese idiomatic metaphor that comes from the process of making guava jam, in which the cook uses not only good guavas but also those that are still green or some that are over ripe. The expression is used to refer to preparation processes that employ materials of different degrees of quality.

³⁰ *Conscientization* and to *conscientize* – we are creating English neologisms based on the Portuguese *conscientização* and *conscientizar*, which means to bring something to the degree of consciousness, to make something explicit.

4. The interaction between logic & the subconscious

Between the subconscious and logic there is an interesting relationship. We see, by logic, a series of things; afterwards we consult the subconscious. For the formation of the premises, the subconscious gives various other elements that enter through the associations of images and that can present clashes with the logic. Then the individual, using data that are in the subconscious, rectifies the elements of logic. But, in its turn, logic is ordering all the notions that are in the subconscious, and conscientizes them in a way that establishes a type of harmony between logic and the subconscious.

For example, consider a man who has in his subconscious, like most men, a strong attraction toward laziness. When he learns some of the demanding rules of logic, such as the principle of contradiction, which tells him that things cannot be and not be at the same time, his subconscious clashes with them. It feels that things should not be so rigorous because of a fear that it must change and stop being lazy.

On the other hand, the subconscious is telling the conscious not to change too much because it is good to keep things as they naturally are. So, the conscious has to order that tendency to laziness without denying the good part of that appeal, that is, nature should only be changed in what is wrong, and should be conserved and conformed to in everything else. By listening to that appeal and distinguishing what is wrong from what is upright in the subconscious, the conscious realizes the foundation of another principle of logic – the axiological principle – which tells it that Creation is naturally good and normally will accomplish the end for which it was created,

5. The harmony in man comes from the control of the conscious over the subconscious

Psychoanalysis, insofar as it seeks to govern the subconscious, acts wrongly by pretending that it only manage to orient the patient by means of tricks. The trick can have some legitimate role to play, but the true solution is to be able to detect the mechanism of the conscious over the subconscious to make man govern his whole being. This is, properly speaking, to restore harmony within the man.

Today's psychiatry and psychoanalysis – I leave aside the enormous number of errors of the latter discipline, which is based on the erroneous presupposition that great problems come from the repression of the sexual instinct as well as the other instincts – are presented as normal avenues for persons with nervous problems to take. Then, these doctors tell their patients that the solution for their problems is to relax, to look for distractions or – the latest trend – to practice yoga.

Now then, most nervous problems are caused by the bad formation a youth receives in his home and in the modern social environment – school, university, television, movies, etc. The youth emerges from this crushing machine with their souls completely broken. The solution is not to relax, to look for some superficial diversion or to take up an occult Eastern practice, but rather to reestablish the harmony in the soul that the Revolution destroyed.

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CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THE OBSCURE CHAMBER IN THE SOUL?

1. Verification of a region behind the intelligence & the will

What is the origin of the human process? The starting point is a tendency that the soul has, as a being, to complete itself. It is obvious that it uses its faculties for this. It is also clear that insofar as the faculties of soul are also the soul, they are also part of a process. The human process is not fully explained in the intelligence or the will; it is explained in something that is behind the intelligence and the will.

Thus, even in morals we can speak of defects in the will – for example, an individual has a weak will. We can speak of defects in the intelligence – the individual is lazy to think. But we can speak of certain defects that lie behind the intelligence and will, such as bad faith, that is, bad-willed. Bad faith is a defect that is exercised in the intelligence, but that exists in the will; it is a combination of the two.

So, we see that there is another reality, deeper than the acts of intelligence and will, to which bad faith belongs.

2. What would be this obscure chamber?

In the soul there is a certain mysterious region that could be compared to an obscure chamber where the deepest elaborations of the acts of intelligence and of will take place, where what is commonly called intelligence and will are nothing but extensions or prolongations.

This obscure chamber, then, is called obscure because it is immersed in the obscurity of the subconscious, of the operations that man does without clearly perceiving what he is doing.

When philosophers speak of intelligence and will, they understand some things correctly, but they think only of the conscious phenomena of the intelligence and the will. We also think about the subconscious or semi-conscious phenomena of the intelligence and the will that are inside this obscure chamber.

Instead of an obscure chamber, we could call this region of the soul a semi-obscure chamber or an able-to-be-clarified chamber, because what is really in it is a penumbra, and not obscurity or darkness. It is a matter of wanting to see it and knowing how to see it.

Another image that could facilitate the treatment of the topic would be if we would consider the intelligence and the will as two sides of a triangle. We would see that there is a certain vertex where these lines meet. This vertex could also be called the obscure chamber.

3. Can what is in the obscure chamber be conscientized?

The affirmation that what is in the obscure chamber can be conscientized encounters two objections:

1. Man is not capable of knowing his essence by a type of direct inner gaze, like God. So there is naturally in this fine point of the soul – the expression St. Francis de Sales uses when speaking of the obscure chamber – a certain mystery, and man does not have a totally clear knowledge of himself, as God has of Himself.
2. Since the human attention and memory are not able to retain absolutely everything that takes place inside man, the obscure chamber always will conserve some remnant of the shadow or various new shadows.

This is not to say that the man with a strong spiritual life cannot govern himself completely – to govern himself in the sense of fully selecting his ideas and ordering his impressions.

Therefore, the obscure chamber cannot be considered as a kind of garbage bin where dirt enters no matter how much we clean it. Rather, it has a type of sacred obscurity like that of a tabernacle. Incidentally, it is so elevated and so noble that it could be called the tabernacle of the soul.

It is there that we probably find that region of the soul of which St. Paul spoke, where the sword of the word of God enters and works.

4. What other things are in the obscure chamber?

To the obscure chamber belongs a series of things that the person did and even things that he thought with all the rules of conscious reasoning and that of themselves belong to conscious reasoning. For example, a man is paying conscious attention to various cars in order to get a taxi. However, his attention is distracted in that it does not fix on the details of each car, but only observes what is necessary to see whether it is a taxi or not. Those observations, which were conscious, will be placed in an area of the memory in which they remain in darkness and will not be recalled to the consciousness unless something happens to jar his memory in his life. Those observations will be there sleeping. There are many facts like these that are initially conscious, although they are not situated at the apex of consciousness.

The same can happen with a series of moral obligations that the person let pass to the obscure chamber behind the intelligence and will. A man can let moral rules slide to the obscure chamber when they should be conscious because he does not want them to be calling him to his duty. In this case he bears the responsibility for them becoming obscure because:

- A. They were conscious acts and should be such;
- B. He has a remote responsibility for the fact that those moral obligations are not more conscious than they are.

These things belong to the obscure chamber because they are situated in the domain of the shadows.

Something else that is part of the obscure chamber is subtle facts for which the man lacks the intelligence to conscientize. Only very intelligent and very gifted men are capable of conscientizing these things. For example: the painting titled *The Panic* by Goya. Goya knew how to conscientize in that picture what an enormous number of people feel about panic. These are things that are able to be conscientized by men of great observation and talent, which the common man cannot do.

There is a special aspect of the obscure chamber that follows: Technically speaking, we could say that man, when he makes a deliberation of a general nature, he does so very consciously and that the small applications are subconscious.

However, in many cases, the contrary is true. Man makes certain deliberations of a general nature without giving due attention to the importance of this action; afterwards, he acts in such a way that shows he forgot that deliberation, although it is still present in his obscure chamber. He adopts these general norms in his way of thinking and proceeding.

For example, since childhood an individual found it amusing or convenient to not face frontally things and problems. He acquires a mental vice: he does not face things frontally. The individual sees a water stain on the wall. To repair it would necessitate tearing down the wall, but he does not want to make the effort to see the danger. He tells himself, "These things regarding humidity are very complicated, it is better not to touch the wall." If someone were to advise him that the wall should be knocked down, he would feel offended. He had made the bad deliberation to not face problems frontally.

At a certain moment he will explain: "It is disagreeable to face things head-on. I don't want to see."

This proves there was a *de facto* deliberation in his soul. He had made that deliberation and even transformed it into a small system.

The greater number of the sins against Wisdom occurs in this way, as well as the greater number of the acts of virtue.

In the obscure chamber the various types of reasoning unite with the various symbolic perfections, along with a series of attractions and movements of the sensibility and the other faculties of the soul.

5. The obscure chamber is the region where unity of spirit resides

In this zone man perceives precisely what the unity of his spirit is. It is so elevated a zone of the soul that, by a very simple act of knowledge and love, the soul perceives that very simple truth, or that very simple goodness of God, which he was principally called to love.

St. Augustine mentions in the *Soliloquies* several times the reversibility of the faculties of the souls: "I love by knowing, I know by loving and feeling..." etc. When he does this, he is indirectly referring to this region of the soul where the three faculties join together. When the soul acts from the depths of this obscure chamber, its action encompasses the three faculties, because it is their point of origin.

6. The notion of being is in the source of the intelligence and the will

We said that the great general truths are those that constitute the foundation of the entire operation of the intelligence, and, as such, are the base of the entire operation of the will.

In this order of ideas, we have the notion of the being. Everyone has this notion and has it well fixed, because, without it, it would be impossible to think. On the other hand, this notion is so complex that it is necessary to take a class of philosophy for the person to have the notion of the being.

The idea that the being is good and the idea that the being must be loved are dispositions so initial that they are in the source of all the operations of the will.

Then, the source of the faculties and these preliminary facts are all connected to one another.

It is very natural that the faculties in their source should work together with the truth and the good, which are the departure point of all the rest. All of this is very harmonious.

7. Is the sensibility in the obscure chamber?

We know that will and intelligence are in the obscure chamber. As for sensibility, it is very difficult to affirm that the root of the sensibility is in the obscure chamber.

The sensibility of man, simply put, is not the mistress of the intelligence and the will. By its nature, it is commanded by the intelligence and the will. Even when it dominates, it is because the intelligence and the will allowed and desired it to do so. It is not by its own strength.

Thus, it seems that the sensibility lies outside the obscure chamber.

8. The role of intelligence is to formulate the riches of the obscure chamber

The obscure chamber is the custodian of the greatest resources and treasures of the intelligence and knowledge. It is, at the same time, grand and silent. Then the intelligence takes these things, formulates them, conscientizes them, etc.

This is a fact that partisans of traditional philosophy have not spoken about and that the esoteric try to use in a malicious way.

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CHAPTER IV

THE THOUGHT PROCESS

1. Contributions of the animal part of man in the formation of thought

A. The profound tendency of the intelligence to believe in the senses

There exists in the human mind a first order, profound and fundamental, by which the human intelligence, by its presuppositions and more profound demands, has the tendency to believe in the senses and to give value to the data of the senses, admitting them as true. Above all, it has the tendency to treasure the most cognitive of all the senses, which is the sight. Man's tendency to believe what he sees and to take things as he sees them is enormous.

Because of this tendency, when man perceives that there is some conflict between what he sees and what the intelligence presents to him, this creates a painful situation in him, which is a kind of internal laceration.

The most banal example would be that of the individual who puts a staff into the water and has the impression that the staff is broken. He sees that the staff tilts when it enters the water, giving the impression that it is broken, although his intelligence tells him that it is not broken. In fact, he can only have peace of soul when he runs his hand over the staff in the water and he notes, through the confirmation of another sense, that the staff is not broken. Then, the other sense, depending on what the intelligence provides, offers some appeasement. Afterwards, the intelligence learns the reason for this and is thus calmed.

But if the intelligence were faced with an inexplicable conflict between the data presented by the senses and the rational data, the intelligence would have the sensation of being turned against itself, suffering the drama of which Our Lord spoke: "Every kingdom divided against itself will perish."

B. The notions of *cogitative* and *estimative*

In our studies we are seeing that everything that happens in the animal is like an image of the intellectual process. So also, in the animal zone of man, something analogous to the intellectual process of man takes place.

We could say that the data provided by the senses are directed toward something that is called the *single sense*, the *common sense*, which is a single sense that coordinates all the sensations in order to form a whole. This formation of a whole is something architectonic that already has something of wisdom in it.

The datum furnished by this common sense is used by the *estimative* through a series of correlations, comparisons and differentiations, whereby that one fact obtained by common sense is susceptible of an indispensable extrinsic enrichment through a series of contrasts and similarities.

It is the *cogitative* that does this in man and the *estimative* in the animal. Departing from this *estimative* the animal is oriented and acts.

For example, when night comes the dog processes in its *estimative* data informing it of this external change: its eyes register the waning light of day, its ears a decrease of noise, its nose and its skin register a decrease of the temperature. When these data are presented together to the dog's *estimative*, it instinctively realizes that it is time to sleep. The ensemble of data is coordinated by that unitive sense that we call the *estimative*.

This is extraordinarily similar to the mental process because we are seeing how things are understood in the being, and then forming an idea, a notion of the being. Once this notion is formed, we must differentiate it from others, that is, define it and establish guidelines and take a position in face of it. So that the cognoscitive cycle, so to speak, of the animal is the image of the mental cycle of man himself.

C. The common note to be worked by the intelligence

This shows that in his intellectual life man is constantly using data supplied to him not only by the senses, but also, as noted, by the unified data of the *cogitative*. When I try to understand a chair or a radio that emits sound, I am using those sensitive data, which come together to form a common note. And on this common note it is the intelligence that more particularly makes an image of the whole.

Thus, the proper object of my intelligence analyzing the data of the senses is not so much the data of the senses, but rather this common note given by the *cogitative* that connects the data and presents them as already unified in its own animal nature for the formation of the notion of the thing by the intelligence.

A metaphor may help to explain this. Let us take for example the French sailor, a retired sea wolf of Marseille if I am not mistaken, who made the first *Bouillabaisse*. That soup has become one of the well-known plates of the French cuisine. But that old sailor who first made it probably just put together some fish, seafood and local herbs that he liked without any other concern than to make something good to eat. His long experience on the ocean informed him what type of fish and seafood to put together. He used the local herbs he knew and cooked everything together.

So, let us suppose that the fish, seafood and herbs that the sailor collected were the data of the senses, the common sense was his long experience that put them all together, and the result after cooking everything together would be the *cogitative*. When all these things operate harmonically, we have the result that is presented to the intelligence to feed a man's process of thinking like a *Bouillabaisse* presents itself to the palate of that sea wolf in order to agreeably feed his body and provide a tasty meal to him.

D. Figures, images & fantasies

When I make comparisons of contrasts and analogies, I am also employing another sensorial and physiological tool, which the animal also has. Even when I create something with the intelligence, I am served by an analogous mechanism to that which the animal has when it uses its instinct and is able to capture and produce images. The images man produces in his imagination in order to represent contrasts and analogies are more or less adapted to the temperament and individuality of the person and the things that he sees. In each step in my purely psychological process, I am applying processes that are provided to me by a parallel elaboration of figures and images.

This makes me better understand the richness and simultaneity of the human action working inside myself and also makes me understand my final end.

2. The *first & second heads*

A. What are the *first & second heads*?

This division does not correspond to the classical divisions of conscious and subconscious, body and soul, but it is a division that adjusts itself to all of them.

What we call the *first head* corresponds to what would be the part of the man who has something in common with the angel, or the part of the knowledge and action of man that has something in common with the angel. Whereas the *second head* would correspond to what the knowledge of man has in common with the animal instinct.

Therefore, before anything else, it is interesting to look at the difference that exists between the angel's knowledge and human knowledge.

The angel is a knowing being turned toward itself in such a way that he does not need any external object in order to know himself. He sees himself, and in himself he sees everything, including material things. Everything that God does, He does in a way that passes through the knowledge and nature of the angel. If God, for example, moves a bottle here on Earth or permits a man to move a bottle, this action of God before reaching the bottle passed through the intelligence of the angel. Thus, the angel sees everything inside himself.

For man, it is different. Man is a being turned toward outside himself and is able to see everything except for himself. Thus, he can only know the things that are outside of himself. Now, the "outside of himself" here must be understood in the sense of outside of knowledge as such, not outside of the human body. He can, for example, perceive an act of will in its consequences, or an inner manifestation of the imagination – but always turned outside of knowledge. Even that which pertains to knowledge, he does not see *in* himself, he sees it in its consequences.

If I can know, for example, what my way of reasoning is, I do not know this from a direct view of my soul, of my intelligence that reasons. Rather, I see it by the manifestations of my intelligence, and,

therefore, in its consequences. This is the essential difference between human knowledge and angelic knowledge.

After we have seen what man has in common with the angel – the abstract knowledge – as well as the difference – the angel's knowledge is inside himself while the man's is outside himself – let us look at what man has in common with the animal.

Both the man and the animal have all the tendencies of the merely sensorial order, the merely animal. But there is a great difference between the two. It is that the principle that informs all this sensorial and, therefore, animal action of man, is a principle of the rational order. Thus, man feels, sees and hears like the animal, but in the feeling, seeing and hearing of man, these actions are informed by the rational principle. What the animal does by mere instinct, which is a blind force, is done in man by a rational principle, imbued with coherence, illuminated by the light of a spiritual nature.

A consequence of this is that we cannot make an absolute division of man, creating a line between the rational nature and the animal nature, for the spiritual nature of man is fully embedded in the animal nature. Also, the animal nature in man is united in such a way with rationality that even that which is mere instinct is already replete and dense with rationality.

This creates the two principles very clearly: man as angel and man as animal, without being an angel but similar to the angel, without being an animal but only having some resemblances to the animal.

All this does not prevent us from legitimately making that division of which we spoke at the outset. The *first head* is considering man in what he has in common with the angel, and the *second head* is considering what he has in common with the animal. The error of Descartes was to divide the two things, making a purely angelic man.

B. Why is the word *head* used here?

With this word we want to indicate that each of these modes of human functioning is so complex that it could be considered almost as if it were the whole man who is acting. When the angelic aspect predominates, there is a predominance of the angelic, even though it is the whole man that functions. On the other hand, when the animal part predominates, there is a certain clear animal influx, but it is the whole man that is functioning.

C. The proper way for the *first & second heads* to function

The *first head* functions mainly by using the "then – therefore" principle. That is to say, it reasons. It sets the premises and from them draws conclusions. This is its proper way of functioning, and bears a certain resemblance to the angelic intuition, with the angelic vision.

As a consequence, it belongs to the *first head* to have global perspectives, universal visions. Thus, the first head, through its syllogisms and reflections, does not want to ascertain only one or another

truth, but it tends toward a universal, harmonic and unifying understanding of the universe. This is due to a fact that it is imprinted in the depths of human nature, as it should be, because man is made in the image and likeness of God - and in such a way that the *first head* tends first of all to this general picture of the order of the cosmos.

On the other hand, the *second head* has a completely different way of functioning. What is proper to the second head is to perceive reality and to be impressed by it, to taste it and live from it. Thus, for example, a person who sees a very beautiful flower has a movement that is at the same time a movement of the imagination, with everything symbolic in it, but it is a fantasy that is at the same time filled with rationality. The person has that movement of attraction and admiration for the flower not based on any reasoning, but because of an action of co-naturality of the *second head*, of the sensibility illuminated by reason.

The *second head* is endowed with a capacity to discern material things – not as an animal does, but to see in material things what they have of symbols, images and resemblance to spiritual things. Thus, man has this capacity to perceive spiritual things in material ones, and to pass from material things to spiritual ones in a proper way, which is the symbolic way. This capacity strongly characterizes the way of perceiving of the *second head*.

From this, we can see how the action of the *second head* of man differs from that of the animal.

It also shows very well how the *second head* retains truths. It retains them as embodied in their symbols, present in their symbols, and in this way touches the sensibility of the body and the sensibility of the soul. The vibration in contact with the symbol is the vibration with the sensibility of the soul as that symbol is understood. It is, I believe, a special way of the *second head* to carry out its intellectual operations.

D. The *second head* is aware of the manifestations of the vegetative life of man

The inferior part of the *second head* suffers repercussions from things that take place in the merely vegetative life. For example, the action of heat can provoke in man a reaction of a merely vegetative order; this is known by the animal part of man.

Thus also the effect of a calming tea can relax the temperament of an agitated person and make him more attentive to the symbolic aspects of his environment.

The same would be true of the vegetative life regarding mineral elements.

Certain medicinal waters are good to set unhealthy biological systems in order and restore them to the balanced condition in which a man can normally use his second head

Of course, all these divisions that we are making do not separate the man into distinct beings. They are just various stages of the process of knowledge. It is like the life of the chick that has several phases, but there are not several chicks because of this.

E. The *second head* & the primordial light

Just as the cat has something by which it is a cat and everything in it takes place in a way different from the dog, and just as from cat to cat, if we observe well, we will find differences of individuality; so also in man's second head there is a certain constitutive and distinctive note that gives it a characteristic and individualizing note. This individualizing note exists in my animal part. This conditions my whole mental operation. This animal thing that is in me is something that leads toward a certain virtue, a certain form of perfection and holiness. And the grace given to me is already related to it.

So then, I have my primordial light, which is something toward which, in its good aspects, all the individualizing notes of my animality were already oriented and created.

Here we understand in depth what the primordial light is in an individual, in a race, etc. Here we understand the whole plan of God by means of second causes: the divine interventions in creating the soul, in creating grace, and also the highest plan of God for the world. It is really the highest direction of the world. We know the inner constitution of the beings that will play a role that He wants them to play in His plan. Here are very rich elements for a good and well constructed vision of what constitutes the primordial light.³¹

F. The transitional system between the *first* & the *second heads*

In the case of the person who sees the flower, we can ask ourselves if there is already something of the *first head* involved in this act of seeing and admiring the flower. In fact, if we study the phenomenon better, we see that in this act made by a pure act of co-naturality in relation to the flower, a principle already enters that affirms general norms, a principle that affirms something abstract. Indeed, the notion of beauty already enters: "Beautiful things exist," "What beautiful things there are in the world!" This is already theoretical; it is already the *first head* acting.

If we study this phenomenon more closely, we shall see that, in fact, we can rise from the flower to the purely abstract action of the first head. It is a flight up the stairs by very slow degrees. The person observes a very beautiful flower, a very beautiful building, a very beautiful cathedral, a whole series of very beautiful things, and, in each of them, a theoretical pre-principle is being enunciated.

These pre-principles, by an action that still is in the *second head*, will constitute some fragments of systems, not yet with the clarity of the reasoning, but rather as very strong impressions that dominate the person. Finally, one day, they will burgeon in the *first head* like a true system of principles about the beautiful. This was prepared by a long series of observations, meditations and even feelings that were gradually being ordered, precisely because the *second head* is impregnated with rationality.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that, between the *first* and *second heads*, there is, in fact, a very clear difference. The transition is made by a very slow but continuous process, like the transitions

³¹ About the primordial light, see pp. 109, **109-111**, 131-132, 134.

of all Creation in general are. Thus, the chick, upon leaving the egg, makes a very important transitional act, because it was an egg and came to be a chick; but for the keen observer, the whole chick already existed inside the egg. That transformation took place through a very slow transition until at one moment it broke out, passing into a higher stage of life. The same occurs between the *second* and *first heads*. It is a very slow transition until a moment when those observations are transformed into the enunciation of a principle, of a thesis of the *first head*.

G. Who chooses between the solicitations of the *first & second heads*?

The solicitations of the *first* and the *second heads* are involuntary; they are, let us say, blind. And there must be someone who chooses among the diverse tendencies. This someone is the man, the free "I" and master of self. He has the liberty to make the *first head* predominate or allow the *second head* to dominate and overcome.

So, simply put, the one who dominates the man and who dominates in those heads is the "I," or, the "eye" that observes the two heads and chooses between them.

H. Which of the *two heads* is the most important?

To this question, I make the following response.

The *second head* in many ways is superior to the *first*. This is because it has a much more lively contact with reality. It can often correct the *first head* when the *first head* wants to simplify something. By its living contact with reality, it will have an almost immediate perception whether some conclusion is true or not true.

But, considering the matter in the ontological order, the *first head* is superior to this proof of experience. The capacity of theoretical reasoning is on a higher sphere and actually dominates the other. Thus, between the two heads, the one that has preponderance is the *first*. The proof of its preponderance is that even when the "eye" gives an adhesion to the *second head*, it goes to the *first head* to look for a pretext for its adhesion to the *second*.

For example, the diabetic who eats sugar knowing that this is wrong will arrange for an excuse in the first head, such as: "Medicine has been wrong so many times that it is possible it is also wrong in my case." If the man did not have this excuse or something similar, he would not be able to eat sugar. That is to say, the *first head* would not cede way.

I. The conflict between the conclusions of the *first & second heads*

The *first head* has such a directive function that, when it is placed before a certain truth that presents itself to it in an indisputable way, it exercises a kind of dominion over the decision of the "eye."

Now then, where does the possibility enter for the individual to have certainties and at the same time to escape the rule of these certainties taking another direction?

Certainty has degrees. And evidence is a certainty that closes all the exits other than it. But when there are lesser degrees of certainty – even though certainty remains certain – since the certainty is less than the evidence, a door remains open. This allows the *second head* to maintain some impressions in the opposite sense, ones not completely dominated. Then, a type of duality of certainties appears. As long as the "eye" considers the *first head*, it has a certainty, but when it looks at the *second head*, it finds an ensemble of data that the certainty of the *first head* was not strong enough to extinguish.

This creates a situation of conflict for the "eye," which on one side apprehends a certainty, but, on the other, finds a set of impressions that seem to weaken that certainty. They live in the flanks of that certainty more or less like some small fish live inside the mouth of a whale. Or, like small parasites or harmful microbes that live inside a man's body. This is the way this kind of certainty with crepuscular shadows lives in the individual.

These two phenomena constitute a source of perplexity for the "eye." The "eye" is placed in the situation of the man inside Religion. Pascal said that there is enough light in Religion for the man who really wants to see the truth to see it, but there are enough shadows for the man who does not want to see it to not see it. This can be applied not to each of the datum of the *first head*, but to the whole production of the *first head*.

J. The defect of each head & the position of man before them

The position of the person who thinks that he always has to give preference to the *first head* rather than the *second head* on the pretext that it is always necessary to follow reason rather than the senses is wrong.

There is a degree to which this is true when dealing with those objections from the shadows, those shadowy certainties that lodge the incorrect phenomena of the *second head*.

But the *second head* also has the legitimate function of regulating and complementing the *first head*, because the *second head* is not a defect in man, but rather a richness. It is not a fruit of original sin, although it has been vitiated by original sin. But reason was also struck by original sin.

What man should do is to take the data of the *first* and *second heads* and confront them largely through the process of *conversio ad phantasma*.³² After that, he should crosscheck one with the other in order to form a complete and full human certainty. One of the things that I think is very

³² The process of *conversio ad phantasma*, or the plural *conversio ad phantasmata* [return to the image(s) or phantasm(s)], is commonly used in Scholastic language. The intellect has three operations: apprehension, judgment and reasoning. Simple apprehension is the first act of the intellect wherein by the acts of our senses we mentally grasp a thing without affirming or denying anything about it. This act of apprehension has three steps: in the face of something the intellect *first* makes an abstraction; *second*, forms a concept; *third*, returns to an image (*conversio ad phantasma*).

In practice it consists in providing a real or imaginary example or a metaphor to make an abstract concept more understandable. Some paragraphs above, Prof. Plinio gave the example of small fish living inside the mouth of whales. This example is a *conversio of phantasma* to understand the uncertainties that the *second head* can cause inside of the certainties of the *first head*.

important in the intellectual life and the interior life is to know how to ensure the collaboration of the two heads. In every study, every work, these two heads must work together.

- **The "eye" has the function of tempering both heads**

There are many people who, by relaxation or negligence, allow some impressions in the *second head* that contradict the conclusions of the first head. Some are valid, others are not. To allow wrong impressions is a very bad action of the soul. It is necessary for one head to always share its conclusions and data with the other.

Sometimes it is necessary to go to the *second head* to oblige it to abandon certain habits or mental categories that, after being tested, show themselves to not be valid. At times it is necessary to make a kind of re-education and oblige it to accept things in another way. It is a type of pedagogy of the "eye" in relation to the *second head* that is very necessary for ordinary minds.

K. The person following the *second head* tends to close in on himself

The world of the *second head*, when it is not controlled and dominates almost completely, forms a kind of closed universe, obeying its own dialectic with its own criteria, whose ultimate aim is the satisfaction of the instincts. It makes a vision of the universe related only to its own existence with the data provided by the *second head*.

The classical model of the Don Juan, the conqueror of female hearts, the skirt-chaser, is a man turned toward his passions. His almost exclusive concerns are to maintain a good appearance and physical shape to fulfill such an infamous ideal. As he gets old and loses his good looks, instead of converting, he goes on to live from his memories and to present himself to youth as a model. We see that throughout his life he paid no heed to the calls of the *first head*, but lived almost exclusively satisfying the requests of his bad instincts living in the *second head*.

L. Consequences of wrong positions

If man does not adopt a balanced position between the *first* and *second heads*, he assumes a wrong position toward all the problems of life. If he allows himself to be guided by this false dilemma, he easily falls into error since in this lies the germ of all heresies. For example, Idealism affirms that only the truths of the interior world exist – the *first head*. To the contrary, Realism asserts that there are only the truths of the exterior world – the *second head*. Behind both is Gnosis.

3. The role of *conversio ad phantasmata* (return to the images)

A. Concept of *conversio ad phantasma*

Man, because of the unity of his whole being, needs to harmonize the ideas of the *first head* and the sensibility of the *second head*. For this reason, his abstract concepts only reach their final elaboration when they are later converted into images or figures. This conversion to images is what we call *conversio ad phantasmata*.

For example, when a concept of the order contained in something is reduced to a certain image we have beauty, which gives man, in the *second head*, a sensation of order. We have, in this *conversio ad phantasma*, the formation of beauty coming from inside that order – from an order that, when presented in an image, gives a particularly rich idea of that order.

B. *Conversio ad phantasma* is indispensable

It is of no avail for the *first head* to see things only speculatively. So long as this is not transposed for the *second head* in a way that it can apprehend it and taste it, the abstract concept exists as if there were a second man inside the man who remains fundamentally dissatisfied.

- **Is this phenomenon unhealthy or defective?**

Everything leads one to believe that, before original sin, the transition from one head to the other occurred in perfect harmony. The fact that there are now disharmonies has something defective about it. But these disharmonies exist in the soundest men after original sin and, therefore, are not unhealthy, although some illness can accentuate the disharmony resulting from original sin. But the process is not in itself absolutely unhealthy or defective.

C. Some examples

Camões's statement that "a weak king makes a strong people weak" (*um fraco rei faz fraca a forte gente*) is also a kind of *conversio ad phantasma*, because the rhyming phrase in Portuguese speaks strongly to the *second head*. The philosophical principle enunciated here, stated dryly, would not speak to the *second head*. This principle would be: Such is the role of the king in the State that, if he is weak, the whole State weakens.

Another example would be Churchill's phrase, "Never was so much owed by so many to so few." This saying has a paradoxical, radical contrast that reflects well the heroism of those pilots who defended London in the air bombings of World War II. It triggers the beauty of that action which strongly speaks to the *second head*. It would not speak if the principle were expressed in this way: "It was hard to bear that situation, but we did so even though we were small in number." The content of the two statements is the same for the *first head*, but the former speaks to the *second head* as well. This is the reason it is much more complete and puissant.

D. What is the link between the sensibility of the *second head* & *conversio ad phantasma*?

What relationship does the sensibility of the *second head* have with the process of *conversio ad phantasma*? I would say that this part of the soul – by the mechanism of analogies, by the fineness of its perceptions, by the delicacy and acuity of its views – prepares the knowledge through a series of analogies regarding the sensible things that it observes. Thus it prepares large ensembles that are so clear and well-constructed that they give rise to a well-constructed theoretical notion. These depictions are harmoniously prepared for the intelligence so that it produces splendid and very rich abstract notions.

It would be like the grapes whose juice produces wine, and whose skins, when distilled, produce grappa, which is a spirit that comes from the same grapes. The wine would be the result of putting together the observations of the sensibility; the grappa would be the abstract concept that was prepared by them.

There is a kind of process from the *phantasma*, the image, to the principle, which is harmonically contrary to the process of passing from the principle to the *phantasma* or image, and which causes one to nourish the other. One process is not opposed to the other, but is supported by the other, like the centrifugal and the centripetal forces. The two things should be harmonized and walk together.

- **Role of all sensible things in culture**

This verification takes us further, because it helps us to better understand the role of art and the role of all sensible things in culture. This is to say, it is something analogous to what the reasoning conveys to the reason, but in its own language, which is almost untranslatable, like the language of the images speaking to the senses.³³

One of our criticisms of modern art is that it does not respect this need for harmony between the two heads. For example, a table made of a block of extremely heavy wood set on very thin legs, which, even if they are made of a very strong material, clashes with that part of the soul that is the *second head*. It sees the thin legs and feels anxious, believing that the thin legs will break and the heavy table top will fall.

E. The final end of the mental process

From our considerations of *conversio ad phantasmata*, we see that it is a very subtle operation because it is the application of the general concept to a concrete, individualized being, in such a way that the individual being can be understood by its relationship with the general concept.

From this point of view, what is the final end of the mental operation?

³³ See pp. 89-95, the role of *The Living Metaphysics*

Let us look at an example for the answer: I know what the general concept of a chair is; I analyze a concrete object and see that it is a chair. Then, when I say that this is a chair and form a judgment about it, I end my mental operation here. But it must be said that this *conversio ad phantasmata* still has some reversible points. At the same time that I say that this is a chair, I say a chair is this, in the sense that, by knowing a particular one of a species, whose generic concept is in my mind, I somehow enrich the concept that is in my mind. The universal concept itself is in some way strengthened by the fact that I recognize that which is concretely before my eyes.

This consideration is even clearer in the example of courtesy. I can have a general notion of what is courtesy. If I see a person making a very polite action toward another, I say that the act was one of courtesy. But, on the other hand, I also say: Courtesy is this. Having seen courtesy in action, as practiced by someone, it acquires in my eyes a richness of understanding that it did not have in the purely abstract concept. The *conversio ad phantasmata* is not just something that dies in the particular case or in the image, but rather it casts a final reflective and indirect light on the general idea.

F. The end of the mental process, starting from the *second head*

The final end of the mental process that departs from the data of the *second head* is analogous to what was described above. The *second head* gives the data that come together in its common sense or *cogitativa*. Intelligence takes these assembled data and operates on them, drawing a general concept from them. Then, once this general concept has been achieved, the intelligence again delivers the result of its work to the common sense, which in turn will check that concept with the reality. Thus, the *second head* is able to see concrete things in a more intellectualized way.

G. Wisdom & the mental process

Here we understand what wisdom is applied to the mental process. It is said that wisdom is the tendency to take things to their final end, but it is also said that wisdom is the harmonious and integral course of the whole mental process regarding a certain thing, the habit of duly following this whole mental process with regard to each thing.

How can it be explained that these two things are wisdom? It is because to follow the whole course of the mental process about a certain thing to its fully mature and finished end is to seek the end of the mental process. A mental process that stops in the middle of this course lacks the virtue of wisdom that calls for each thing to reach its end. Thus, we understand a kind of double play of the word wisdom. In final analysis, whenever a person commits an error, he has a lack of wisdom, for if the mental process had been followed with due evaluation and maturity, he would not have fallen into error.

4. Abstract & symbolic knowledge

A. Abstract & symbolic knowledge in themselves

The objective of man is to know things both abstractly and symbolically, and in such a way that he only has the complete idea of a certain thing or a certain moral virtue when he becomes aware of everything in the thing that is abstract and symbolic. When he considers a moral virtue, as long as he does not know some symbols related to this moral virtue, his knowledge is also not complete.

So, we could say that to reach the total knowledge of a thing, there are two ways: the abstract and the symbolic. The abstract way is that which, through reasoning, arrives at the truth; the symbolic way is that which, by operating on the fact and seeing that determined forms, colors, sounds, sensations, etc. have a mysterious relationship with the dispositions of the human soul, seeks to know the symbolic values that exist in this thing.

B. The stages in forming an abstract concept

Let us suppose that our abstract process is going to operate on these demitasse cups of coffee that are here in front of us. Then, in the first phase I have a merely animal perception of the cups and we receive these first data by a sensory apparatus – the *cogitative* – that receives all impressions in their due measure and value.

The next step is that I realize that there is a certain proportion, a certain harmony in these demitasse cups and I affirm: they are harmonic. Then, I compare the impression of the harmony that I saw in the cups to that same impression that I had already seen in other things, and I see that all are harmonious. In a given moment, the application of the same adjective to many diverse objects raises in my mind a doubt: How can the same thing be said to describe such different things? Is there an error? Hence the question rises: What is harmony? Can one use the word harmony for so many different beings?

To answer, I make an analysis of harmony as concretely considered in one being and apply it to other concrete beings to see if it is appropriate. I see that there really is something in common among them, but it is on a higher plane. So, I go on fumbling from one being to another, taking the data to this higher plane in order to have the correct idea of the concept common to all the beings I saw. With this process of rectifying the concept and the impressions, I clear it of confusions and drudge.

The result is the formulation of a crystalline abstract concept about harmony.

Once the concept has been formed, I make a final reordering of the impressions, and then compare the new concept to the other concepts I have in two gamuts: comparing it with very similar concepts and very contrary concepts. Then, I make the decision to never again use the concept

except in that precise sense, to always qualify something that is harmonic as such, and never classify something that is not harmonic as such.

Once the process is closed, I let the concept rest in the obscure chamber so that I can use it when needed.

C. The *second head* & symbolism

The equipments of the *first* and *second heads* do not exclusively focus on symbolism or abstraction, but have a number of other purposes. However, in analyzing the operations of the *second head*, one notes that there is a propensity to admit the idea that the symbolic aspect of a thing reveals its hidden essence. Thus, when the individual looks at something, he has the sensation that the exterior aspects of that thing reveal to him, through the senses, an essence of the symbolic, mysterious and hidden character inside the thing. If not inside of all things, at least in a great number of things man has this sensation.

D. Symbolic knowledge & magic

It is this mistake that takes place in magic: There is the idea of the presence of certain more or less divine properties inside the thing, properties of which the thing is the symbol. From this comes a sort of magical operation inside that thing, which sets in motion certain realities of a higher character by means of that thing.

For example, consider the diamond and other precious stones that are very beautiful and symbolize different aspects of God, Magic wrongly considers that these divine aspects symbolized by the stones actually live inside them. So, it tries to use them for this or that end as if they had occult divine properties. This wrong assumption has led occultist physicians to use a diamond hanging from a pendulum to hypnotize their patients.

The point of interest here is to explain the functioning of the *second head*. An exact interpretation of how it works makes it easy to disprove and refute the magic perspective.

E. Symbolism & original sin

Everything leads us to believe that things in Paradise were very rich in their symbolic aspects. This aspect made the symbolized abstract value and the essence of the thing perceptible.

Passing to this land of exile, man came to have a much less clear idea of symbolism, because this essence of things is much less transparent. And because of this poorly expressed symbolic character in which we only glimpse what was once seen clearly, man has the sensation of an immanence inside the thing.

Here we understand the power of Adam in giving each thing its name. The name of the thing does not correspond only to the philosophical definition of the object or being, nor just to its physiology or its biological constitution, but it also corresponds to the symbolic meaning of each thing. This is

because this essence was very clear, very coherent, very ordered to Adam. And it was from discerning this essence of each being very clearly that Adam gave the proper name for each thing.

It is natural that, in this land of exile, man, having undergone some weakening, and nature also having become less brilliant than the paradisiacal nature, these things all became duller. From this lack of discernment some people adopted the false idea that there is an immanence of God in things.

F. Before original sin, man had a much keener perception of things

The difference between nature, as it existed before original sin, and nature as we see it today should correspond also to a difference in the internal character of man. That is to say, in addition to nature having had a clearer symbolic meaning, the inner senses of man also had a much keener perception of things, which allowed him to better grasp all these symbolic meanings that repose in large part in the nuances of things. Therefore, the keener is the sensibility, the greater the capacity to distinguish the nuances and, therefore, the greater the capacity to interpret the symbols.

But, what is most important is that man had a certain keenness of the inner senses by which the combination of all these data and the distinction of the symbolic meaning of them was made in a much better way.

This greater acuity of the inner and exterior senses is what perhaps explains the thesis of Anne Catherine Emmerich that in Paradise man had a sixth sense, of which hypnotism and telepathy are vestiges.

To be exact, it must be said that it should not be a sixth sense, but a keenness of the senses that provided a kind of sixth sense; for in fact we all think that the human senses in Paradise must have been the same five senses we have today.

G. Relationship between symbolic knowledge & vibrations

Everything has a symbolic value and, based on the objective and real analogy between the thing and certain states of spirit in the human soul, a vibration can be produced.

The symbol is not primarily vibratory, but underlying it there is a subsidiary phenomenon of a vibratory character. That is, everything produces a vibration in man. Thus, a symbol that awakens in him a world of analogies also generates in him a certain vibration.

Clearly, by the very principle of the order of the universe, there must be a relationship between the two phenomena, so that the vibration is conditioned in its modalities to the symbol. This produces a nervous sensation of a secondary character which is, in its own way, the symbol of the symbol itself.

This takes place when a symbol is very well apprehended and captured by a man. In addition to a whole unleashing of associations of images, he has a kind of living experiential sensation, vibrant and violent, that gives him a *vivência* (a living experience) of the reality grasped at its very depths.

Some military marches expressing grandeur, dedication and a call to heroism cause this emotional vibration when they have a well written score that corresponds to its music: for example, the march of the regiments of the Duke of Noailles, a brilliant general of 17th century France.

H. After original sin, there is disequilibrium in the rational & sensible sides of man

Every man conceived in original sin has in himself a disorder. He can be compared to a tablecloth that is a bit smaller than the table; if one side is covered, the other is uncovered. The two poles of man are, on one side, reason, and, on the other, this zone of sensibility, a psychological–physical zone – almost more physical than psychological – where the vibrations occur.

It happens that when man strives to act in accordance with reason, by the very disorder that exists within him there is something that enters half artificially and half forced, in that it imposes something that appears to be inorganic and makes the other part of his personality complain.

Then, alongside this disequilibrium is a corresponding ordering in the sphere of reason.

Man has to live according to principles, but many times the imposition of these principles seems artificial to him because it bruises the disordered tendencies. Nonetheless, it also injures other tendencies that are not disordered. So, the ideal – difficult to reach but which we should relentlessly pursue – is to have the reason follow the principles, but also help the good tendencies to develop. These good tendencies are those proper to the *second head*. Again, there should be a harmony between the *first* and *second heads*.

I. What does psychoanalysis attempt to do?

Now, what does psychoanalysis try to do?

It exploits the sensation of disequilibrium that the practice of virtue can produce in these deep zones of the soul. It exploits this to be able to decree that this practice of virtue is a phenomenon that causes neuroses and produces complexes. Then, the solution it presents is to pull the tablecloth to the other side. It does not make a man follow the path of reason or place importance on the knowledge of the outside world; the important thing is to satisfy this secondary part of the soul.

An example of this is the common diagnosis of psychoanalysis that most psychological problems come from repressing sexuality..

So, the ideal of the Secret Forces in this field is to establish an external procedure compatible with the nature of things and, at the same time, to allow the individual not to be injured in that part of the soul and not be seen by society as a madman.

This explains why today Hindu and theosophical techniques are successful in instilling a kind of equilibrium and inner well-being, which for many people is the aim of life. Needless to say, the Devil enters these exercises, creating illusions to produce a provisory natural good feeling. Happiness in life for them is neither to win eternal happiness nor to reach the truth, which is reduced to general principles useful to all men, but rather it is to deliver themselves to inner

dreams whose final end is to obtain that personal happiness. There is a fundamental egoism in this position, which is the opposite of Catholic charity.

J. One thing can symbolize many things

The symbols are not so unequivocal that a thing symbolizes only one other thing and that alone. A given object can symbolize one thing and, secondarily, with less propriety, it can symbolize other different things.

Perhaps if one were to observe a particular being in Paradise and see all the things it can symbolize, the relationship between the principal and the accessory symbolizations would constitute an assembly of data to understand more profoundly the being. It would be an interaction of analogies, which would give a deeper understanding to symbolism.

This could give an insight into something as in a song where we have the *leitmotiv* and then the unfolding of all the themes.

The same would be true of a certain abstract moral value; we could see all the values that are related to it, all the concrete things related to it; we could bring them together and see how each one represents that abstract value. We would also have, in this case, a whole commentary on that abstract moral idea.

The universe also has something of this. When we consider the universe, we see that it is an enormous conjunct of harmonic symbols that fit together and ultimately provide a commentary on certain virtues and excellences of God.

5. Importance of the *problem of life*

Let us go further and analyze an important factor that can help man to correct his defects and even to abandon the wrong path he chose to follow in life.

A. It is necessary to distrust the *second head*

The external senses of man are infallible in relation to their proper object. When a man touches a hot surface, the information giving by his tactile sense is infallibly objective. The same can be said of the data coming from the smell, palate, ears and eyes. Naturally, he can have some sickness that distorts the data: If he has myopia his eyes will give imprecise information about what he sees; he needs to correct this defect with glasses. But if there is no sickness or defects, the senses are infallible. This greatly increases man's propensity to believe with certainty in everything that the senses tell him.

This applies in some way to all that concerns the *second head* and thus creates a problem that really is tremendous, which is how the *second head* can dominate the man in an almost invincible way if he does not have virtue, a very solid habit of distrusting it.

It is, therefore, an element that further strengthens this tendency of man to be entirely guided by the *second head*.

Before original sin, in fact, this infallibility was absolute, not only in regard to the senses but also in regard to the interpretation of what the senses say. This no longer exists in that proportion. What remained is only man's tendency to believe in this infallibility.

B. Importance of the *problem of life* to harmonize the *two heads*

The *problem of life*, as we conceive it, consists in the following: Every man at a certain moment of his existence or, in general, from his early infancy, is placed before a great problem that life presents to him. It is a problem that can be of a more emotional order than intellectual. What is life? Where am I going? What are the torments I am suffering or am going to suffer?

This *problem of life* plays a very important role in the relationship of the *first* and *second heads*.

In fact, it is easy for a man to deliver himself to the *second head*, abandoning or greatly distrusting the *first*. Or he can do otherwise, surrender to the *first head* and put aside the *second*. This would be the type of *square* person, according to our jargon. But even more commonly, he can deliver himself at times to the *first head* and at times to the *second*, living in a *square* way at times and at other times purely by the senses. He does not establish the relationship between the two, acting as if the *first* and *second heads* referred to two different worlds that do not relate to each other.

In all these cases, the *problem of life* is what forces man to establish this relationship. For a long time a person can deliver himself to the dream of *square-ism*. But, if he really has the *problem of life*, life calls him to face reality and he will recognize that he cannot continue to be like that. He will actually enter the reality and harmonize the *two heads*.

This often is considered as a phenomenon of the spiritual life with something of the metaphysical, but actually it is a lack of harmony between the *two heads*. The false options at a certain moment are confronted by the *problem of life*, which presents itself to the person and says: "Let's stop fooling around." That is to say, for a long time he allowed himself to be carried away by dreams or impressions, he played with fire. But, at a certain moment, he faces the *problem of life* and heals. That relationship between the *two heads* is then established in a solid way.

C. If man refuses the invitation to face the *problem of life*, he falls into false dilemmas

A man can refuse the invitation to face the *problem of life*, either delivering himself to the *first head* while trying to kill the *second*, or delivering himself to the *second* while trying to dominate, or almost kill, the *first*.

The person who delivers himself to these false dilemmas passes his life jumping from one side to the other without ever resolving his situation. For the solution is above and beyond any of the solutions normally presented. This produces the consequence that those exceedingly *square* people,

on certain occasions and in certain activities or stages of life, are the more infantile and those who are more carried away by feelings and first impressions.

This matter of the *first* and *second heads* in man is something so profound that it really represents the starting point of all man's positions before the problems of his existence. And if he allows himself to be led by this false dilemma, there is already the germ there of all later errors and heresies.

D. The *problem of life* is at the heart of all the criteriological problems

The rejection of the *problem of life* is at the center of all the criteriological problems.

What is a criteriological problem? It is a difficulty to accept the correct criteria of a method to resolve a situation, which can range from how to live, how society should be ruled, how religion should be understood, and even how God exercises His Providence. It is not a problem directly related to the truth, but to the way things should be conducted.

Generally speaking, when a man questions or misinterprets some basic ways of acting of God or of His Church, he gives birth to a criteriological problem. For example, Romanticism induces people to believe that the application of God's justice is not what the Church always taught. Its followers have a criteriological problem, which is to exaggerate goodness and to reject justice.

On the other hand, Catholics converted from Protestantism question the ease with which the Church interprets Sacred Scriptures; they have a criteriological problem with this. They see contradictions in everything in Scriptures that cannot be explained at first sight, while the Catholic Church does not have any problem in living for a long time with a mysterious text.

In particular, applied to our topic of the *two heads*, once the man delivers himself only to abstractions without taking into account concrete reality, or the opposite, he delivers himself to sensations and concrete things without considering values of the soul, the criteriological problem of facing life will rise in him because he already took an eminently erroneous position.

E. The first attitude taken facing life is fundamental

We see here that the principle whereby a man first forms his ideas in books of philosophy and afterward molds civilizations is completely false. He believes that everything is formed in the mind of the man. This is a wrong position taken regarding the order of the universe.

We have often said that the problems of society can be reduced to the problems of the families or the individuals who compose it. Here we are going to a point prior to all this, which is the first attitude man takes regarding his own faculties, regarding his own life.

F. The false dilemma & the ungoverned instincts

A problem that has not yet been well-resolved among us but that should be kept in mind regards a mysterious relationship that would need to be studied better. The one who falls into this false dilemma ends by having his lower instincts ungoverned. So, in one way or another, which can vary infinitely, he will fall into a true sensuality that will completely enslave him.

G. The *problem of life* & true culture

The *problem of life* and its solution are at the center of the whole problem of culture.

What is true culture? It is a culture that leads man to the resolution of this problem. This allows a great variety of legitimate resolutions, given the differences of the make-up of spirit in the history of peoples, etc. But a real culture is one that tends to resolve this question.

H. The *problem of life*, the apostolate & education

The question of the *problem of life* also has great importance for the apostolate. One of the preliminary measures in every apostolate is to broach the *problem of life*, to make the question very lively for the person. And in certain classes where it is very difficult to do apostolate, this is generally for the reason that the *problem of life* does not exist because of an abundance of money or a wholly material way of being. That is why the *problem of life* in these classes often does not present itself.

Naturally, the *problem of life* also becomes very important in homiletics and pedagogy. That is, one must know how to form the faithful and the children in a way that they can find a good solution to the *problem of life*.

Many times in a child's formation, the parents want to prevent him from being placed before the *problem of life*. Then, from the time he is very small, they present the world to the child as if evil did not exist, as if there were no misfortunes or unpleasant things, giving the impression of a world of happiness. This formation is completely erroneous.

The child grows without the notion of good and evil, without the notion of great misfortunes and tragedies that necessarily exist in this life. What is the result? In the child the *problem of life* assumes completely erroneous terms. The child will perceive the evils and misfortunes of this life at the wrong moments, either long before or much later than he should, with everything taking place in an entirely wrong way. The result is that the person ends up having a false solution to the *problem of life*. And this problem in the man is so profound that, if he finds a false solution for it, his whole life will enter a false path. Repairing it later is very difficult. Perhaps only a great grace can do this.

I. The Church & the *problem of life*

Since the Church exists, the *problem of life*, that is, the solution for the disharmony between the *first* and the *second heads*, acquired a new and entirely different form.

Before the Church existed, man could resolve this disharmony only partially. Once she entered the picture, the solution became so complete that there is even the risk of forgetting it, which would lead toward a total dominion of the *second head*, which could lead to a return to barbarianism.

Indeed, if we could make a rapid history of the *problem of life*, we would say that among the pagans this problem never had a full solution. In the Middle Ages it found one with the perfect harmonization of the data of reason with the data of sensibility, as magnificently expressed in the gothic churches of Europe in that period. But, even with this fully resolved and the solution already found, men continued to have to face a real *problem of life* and resolve how to feel it in themselves and live it.

The great sin of the Humanism and Renaissance was to make the *problem of life* disappear, to forget it. In fact, the Church's solution was so full that men abused that fullness. Throughout modern and contemporary times this false solution has been escalating. With the new generation, however, we are seeing the opposite problem.

Indeed, for the new generation the *first head*, reason, in many ways ceased to exist; what matters is only the data of the *second head*. But, even here what counts most is the entire freedom given to the passions. Paul VI defined it as the generation only moved by images that produced the civilization of the image. However, this does not explain the correlated laxity of customs, which was expressed in the Sorbonne with its motto: *It is forbidden to forbid*. In short, it is the return to the tribe.

The true solution that the Church brought has been so greatly abused that the sense of a fully resolved problem has practically disappeared. Man feels himself in chaos, in a world of disorder, as happened with the barbarian tribes and the pagans.

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CHAPTER V

HOW SHOULD THE NORMAL UNDERSTANDING OF MAN BE?

1. Good sense & Catholic sense

We speak of good sense, we speak of Catholic sense. We speak of *sentire cum Ecclesia*, sensing with the Church etc.

The role of these various senses in the cultural life and the life of the intelligence of the soul, in the life of the intelligence of a people and of an individual, is very important. However, it has the grave inconvenience of corresponding to vague and inexplicit notions which, for this reason, end by falling more or less into the terrain of the arbitrary. When someone wants to invoke good sense as an argument, another can say that this is your good sense and not his own personal good sense.

Common sense is something that today is completely discredited also because of the deviations of public opinion and the complete decay of common sense.

The whole problem of the senses should be studied in its natural and its supernatural aspects.

A. Natural common sense

We should begin by saying what natural common sense is. Natural common sense is, first of all, profoundly logical, with an inexplicit logic for those who have it.

A person faithful to the first vision has a very lively sense of the first principles of reason, not in a conscious, defined way, but rather in an inexplicit way. They live like the principles of logic live in the head of a person who can die without being able to make them explicit but nonetheless possesses them in a very real, dynamic and profitable way.

a. Popular wisdom

These principles are utilized in popular wisdom. For example, they are used by persons who are facing certain problems to which the principles evidently apply and also are resolved with great evidence and security. They constitute a treasure of an inexplicit logic that flourishes in short pithy maxims that have a flavorful common sense that is deeply felt by the evidence of things, by the consonance of things with the human mind, and because one perceives that it is a thought that sets a series of other things in order. This is, therefore, a kind of principle, a defined element of a more undefined wisdom.

But it is not defined in abstract terms, but rather in parabolic, analogous terms, which play with concrete figures that have within them a true wisdom. What appears to be a set of disconnected truths in the conscious corresponds to a contextualization and to a subconscious systematization that makes the person very wise, even in matters in which these principles do not arise.

The emergence of these principles gives a certain force to everything that is in the subconscious, which constitutes a true system of wisdom.

We can understand this better by seeing some of the maxims of common sense used in various languages and peoples:

- Don't put the cart before the horse;
- A bird in your hand is worth two in the bush;
- You can't teach an old dog new tricks;
- Constant dripping of water wears away the stone, or little strokes fell great oaks;
- A closed mouth catches no flies;
- An old monkey doesn't jump onto a dead branch;
- In a house without bread everyone fights and no one is right;
- Who runs after two hares at the same time, catches none.

There is a kind of affirmation or utilization of obvious truths. But there is also a kind of elaboration where the number of obvious truths grows by the fact that they relate to one another. Hence the evidence of the popular spirit also increases and constitutes a people's wisdom.

b. Our Lord utilized popular wisdom

If we consider the way Our Lord preached, we see that what we are describing is the wisdom Our Lord used in the Gospel when teaching not only the Jews, but men of all times.

Our Lord arranged a way to clothe the highest notions of morals and theology in simple images that allowed the listeners to understand many things beyond the images. For example, in the parable of the Good Shepherd, through the image of a figure common in the daily life of the people, Our Lord made us understand the highest truths of Divine Providence.

The soul of the little people is capable of playing with analogies. By analogies they glimpse on a much higher terrain a whole series of things that they cannot explicitly attain and otherwise would not glimpse. They really do glimpse, understand and even live this higher reality. There is in this a kind of sound earth of wisdom that permits many observations.

c. Are there abstractions in this wisdom?

There is a true abstraction in this wisdom. If there were not, it would not be possible to order the thoughts. The parable of the Good Shepherd, because it is a parable, while not being entirely abstract, already has something of the abstract in it. Concretely, it tells the story of a man-type. The type already contains something of an abstraction. There is a true march towards abstraction

taking place in its own way, not in the common way. This is something very precious, without which scholarly abstraction properly speaking would not be understood.

We have spoken much about *conversio ad phantasmata*. The images or phantasms are ordered to serve the scholarly abstraction when they are elaborated by the reasonable reason (*raison raisonable*)³⁴ to make them somewhat malleable and adaptable to scholarly abstraction.

It is in this state that scholarly abstraction takes advantage of the image and uses it for an example, its point of repose, its instrument of work. This can be likened to those caves that have stalactites and stalagmites: the two points end by meeting. So also the reasoning reason (*raison raisonante*) and the reasonable reason (*raison raisonable*) meet exactly at the point of the *conversio ad phantasmata*, closing the circle of the intellectual operation.

d. The base of true popular culture is the possession of wisdom & not education

All true popular culture is based not on education, but rather on the possession of wisdom. One of the indiscernible drawbacks of education is to invite those who do not have the maturity necessary for the reasoning reason (*raison raisonante*) to an abstract system. It opens the doors of the reasoning reason (*raison raisonante*) to those who should still remain in the paradises of the reasonable reason (*raison raisonable*).

This is not to say that we restrict some people to a low level, unless one were to affirm that the spiritual, intellectual and moral atmosphere in the Gospels would be low level, since they were situated entirely on this level. For a pretentious cretin who thinks like this, it would be an anti-popular work to want the population to acquire before all else the reasonable reason (*raison raisonable*).

e. Popular wisdom & the elites

Regarding the elites, it seems to me that the little people have a very important role to play here. As the elites normally use the *raison raisonante*, they are easily led off track, losing the humus of this popular wisdom, which is for it as Sancho Pancho is to Don Quixote, maintaining it in a state of equilibrium, a condition indispensable for the elite. Therein lies the contribution of a life of popular wisdom to the discerning man.

I believe that if Leibnitz or Descartes had lived in villages heavily imbued with the *raison raisonable* and were in close contact with the people of the village, the world would have been spared a great deal of stupidity. This is a point that must be strongly emphasized.

By affirming that this popular wisdom and this wisdom of the *raison raisonable* is the contribution that the people render to the work of the elites, I say that this acts as a guard of the *raison raisonante*.

³⁴ The terms *raison raisonante* and *raison raisonable*, borrowed from the French language, are employed here to indicate the ways of operation of the *first* and *second heads* respectively.

I am not saying that the elites should not have *raison raisonable*, which would be a serious mistake. Even here, they must be models and masters, drawing inspiration from the popular wisdom, checking their wisdom with that simple wisdom of the people. That is why I think that the nobleman who lives in the countryside is an example of equilibrium, because the noble who also has that contact with the country establishes in himself the reasonable reason in an extraordinary way. The noble should have this in an eminent degree, but the contact with the people strengthens it and facilitates his mission to be excellent in this point.

f. Equilibrium between the *raison raisonante* & the *raison raisonable*

What is the role of the *raison raisonante* and the *raison raisonable* in the elites, in the educated man? The learned man who has a very strong *raison raisonable*, will build his castle of the *raison raisonante* with the immediate evidence, but conferring always with the *raison raisonable*.

When he does not confer, an alarm sounds and he stops; he does not go forward and accept the thing until he confers and receives the seal of the *raison raisonable*. The *raison raisonable* is a kind of security guide for him, like an aviator who flies in the sky but guides himself by a map of the earth, referring to it to see the mountains and rivers to know which way to go in the sky. He checks the indicators of his super-technical flight devices with the map and what he sees below him. This gives a special security to the use of the map.

In this there is a recognition of original sin. If man were not fallible, he would not need to do this. It is precisely in this humility and in this implicit recognition of original sin as seen in its effects on the human mind that irritates the pretensions of many philosophers who came after Scholasticism. They wanted something majestic composed only of elegant abstractions, without descending to the earth of the people's wisdom.

This philosopher, removed from popular common sense is, in the order of philosophy, like the nobleman cut off from the people's life. Just as the nobleman displayed a very refined elegance, but without the ballast of a popular grounding, so the philosopher made a refined philosophy, but without good common sense. Thus did the sacred orator and theologian prepare a theology and an oratory that were not inspired by the themes, problems and perfumes of the living, concrete and minute daily reality.

This gave rise to an inorganic element in society, an in-organicity and weakness in the elites that led to their destruction. Egalitarianism, the Revolution – all this should be seen as a first rupture with that concrete, minute, popular, real life on earth, without which nothing has an authentic living sap.

These considerations, which subordinate intellectual operations to the operations of good sense, which are considered as a mountain range of *vivências* (living experiences) that are wisely concatenated and guided by wisdom, explain why Thomistic philosophy should be considered as a philosophy of good sense.

g. An important explanation

They also explain why all that we are expressing here, as far as we are aware, is being made for the first time, giving it a citizenship and a capacity to be used for one to defend himself, in human terms, against the lunacies of the *raison raisonante*, in a way that up to now could not be reduced to words and argumentation. The logical result was that the *raison raisonante* subdued and crushed the *raison raisonable* with its brilliant but unconvincing speeches, producing decadence in culture. To reduce this process into usable terms, defining and expressing it, is a highly important operation so that man, faithful to the *raison raisonable*, can realize the reasons for his fidelity and then use them for his stability. Thus he is able to defend himself against the *raison raisonante*.

The criteriological side of this seems to me to explain very well why the Ultramontane School of the 19th century –Joseph de Maistre is a shining example of it – were made of men who relied on the two reasons rather than brilliant theoreticians like those of previous centuries who, fabricating utopias, held to the line of *raison raisonante* in their deliriums, lacking knowledge of the Faith and original sin. To some extent the socialists continued along the same lines.

B. Catholic sense

Let us look now at Catholic sense.

Catholic sense is the expression of a fidelity to the first vision and a well-constructed metaphysical structure, incorporated to a type of good sense regarding the Faith. Afterwards, all the thoughts of the Faith are crosschecked with this Catholic sense of things.

It is that first part that we call Catholic sense: It is good sense with regard to matters of the Faith that, with the help of grace and working with these evident first truths, serves as a pattern to rule the others.

Common sense and Catholic sense are not the same thing, but are analogous things in different planes – in the natural and the supernatural planes – corresponding to the same way of operating of the human spirit in the two points. This is something that should be well understood.

C. The treasure of man

In the learned man, this mixed operation of common sense and reason accumulates a whole series of pictures, views, panoramas, etc., which constitutes a kind of firmament for certain truths that the individual uses to construct others and orient his life. All this is a man's treasure of wisdom.

The cultured man is not just constituted by common sense, but he adds to it the best products of the *raison raisonable*, which form a kind of architectonic ensemble around wisdom. This wisdom is

man's great treasure, since it is not only known but also loved, operating in man the transforming union.³⁵

Here we see the human process in one more aspect, as part of the first vision in two different mental categories: that of the learned and of the ignorant man, in two orders, the order of nature and of grace.

D. The use of the word sense

I would like to use the word sense in order to demonstrate what is legitimate in it.

Why is it, in the general consensus, called sense?

Because the evidence with which this knowledge operates has something of the sensible. It is only when this knowledge takes place in an operation of evidence that it can be called a sense.

When the construction of the *raison raisonante* is solidly based on the *raison raisonable*, I would say grafted onto it, bringing together the saps of both reasons, the *raison raisonante* participates in something of the sensibility of the *raison raisonable*. There is thus a type of higher sense, which is the sense of the truth in man, which collides with its opposite. When the man constructs such a panorama by the conjugation of the two reasons, he forms an architectonic view of the whole. This view, by its simplicity and unity, reemerges in the terrain of the *raison raisonable*.

Thus, on the other end of the losangle or diamond, there is a return to simple data and a confirmation of such data. In this it participates again in sense.

For me, it is where wisdom –which is always architectonic, always a vision of the whole, no matter how much it elevates itself to the heights –lovingly brings us back to the terrain of evidence. There we have a type of certainty of soul, which truly is capable of giving rise to a Civilization. Without this certainty of soul, there is no complete Civilization. It is not necessary to emphasize that the sanity and coherence of this process give vigor to the Catholic Faith.

- **The new generation**

A person of the new generation does not have these things because he is created without *raison raisonable*. They live in the world of the arbitrary fantasy/image of the *raison raisonante* and are caught in the false dilemma of choosing between one thing and another. To be educated in a purely technical world without any contact with nature indisputably influences this situation.

³⁵ An explanation of the transforming union can be found on pp. 125-128.

2. Theory of a living metaphysics

A. Introduction

We were studying metaphysics, seeking the metaphysical aspect of all created things, the search for the absolute as it is, etc. departing from that first vision and first act that we already analyzed.

In the first vision the individual knows his own contingency because at the same time that he sees that **he is**, thus having a notion of the being, he also sees that **he is not**. From this comes an idea of the absolute being, through the principle of contradiction and the axiological principle. This idea projects itself outside of the individual and is the first notion that he has of God.

This operation, which in fact takes place like this, nonetheless does not happen philosophically like this. It occurs through a human process that will be developed through a living metaphysics.

How can we explain a living metaphysics? The man notes in the beings that he knows and in himself a series of attributes. He perceives the contingency or limitation of these attributes. And it is in this contingency and limitation of attributes that he perceives the contingency and limitation of the being. This is very reasonable because man does not have a direct notion of the being, but has a notion of the attributes of the being.

He can only see in a living way the metaphysics of the contingency of the being through the contingency of the attributes of the being.

B. Living metaphysics in the Human Process

A process begins whereby a man sees, for example, the color blue. He notes that this blue is beautiful, but notes that the blue could be more beautiful. He tends to imagine or tries to find some more beautiful blue than that particular one.

Thus begins a march from the knowledge of the first blue that is beautiful toward the blue that is perfect. He has an idea that there should be a blue attainable in this world and that is sought in the various blues that he knows; it is an idea of the perfect blue. From the moment that he finds a blue which he considers perfect, or at least he conceives in a negative way as perfect, he reaches the apex of the real and begins to pass into the unreal. It is an imaginary tree, an imaginary blue, an imaginary panorama, an imaginary being, which is so excellent that it does not even exist in reality, and that it is much less a nostalgia of the Terrestrial Paradise than a longing for Paradise.

In this we find the whole domain of the fabulous and the fairy world. Man strives to make fabulous palaces, fairylike things, not for a vile delight, but in order to realize a certain idea of God, Whose notion he conceived in his spirit and Whom he loves as a good blind man loves the beauty that he can no longer see.

From that moment on, the spirit of the man is ready for the consideration of the Celestial Paradise, where material things in fact exist, where there are in fact created things, but where such things have a transcendental and metaphysical beauty that is prototypical, perfect within the pattern of

Creation. This beauty gives the idea of the excellent characteristics of God in a very limpid and admirable way.

Between the perfect thing and the absolute that is God, between created perfection and uncreated perfection, there is the highest degree of proximity that can exist between the finite and the infinite. It is from this conception that the soul becomes able to comprehend something in God.

C. The beatific vision does not destroy this process

Someone could say that this search for archetypes is extremely rough because the beatific vision far surmounts all this. This would be tantamount to materialize God.

To this person I respond that this is a very rough conception of the abstract. In fact, when man sees God face to face this gives him an infinite happiness. But this is because he has a full knowledge of God. God in His Wisdom judged indispensable for the full happiness of the elect that they have the full knowledge of Him.

The happiness of the elect lies in the knowledge of Him, deemed indispensable for the Celestial Paradise to exist.

Now then, to have the full knowledge of God, man needs to fulfill his human process on earth through this mechanism of living metaphysics and the search for the archetypes of things.

By considering the archetypal and perfect forms of things, the individual more easily rises to God. Therefore, it is legitimate on this earth, which in itself is a deformed picture of the Celestial Paradise, for man to prepare for himself some visions of Paradise, while at the same time, through the cultivation of the Faith, the study of Revelation, etc., he prepares his soul for the beatific vision that God will give him in Heaven.

This is the role of culture, the role of civilization. A role that is of the march from good to better, from the better to the best, from the best to the most excellent, from the most excellent to the perfect, from the perfect to the most perfect order imaginable, not achievable on this Earth, and in which man will have a special consideration of God.

D. The medieval sovereigns inside this vision

This explains well the monarchical and aristocratic vision of the social organization in the Middle Ages. Taking into account the impossibility of elevating all things and all men to this ideal, what it sought was to achieve perfections. The palace of the King with his court was for them an image of the Paradise. And this – the palace and the King's life of court - constituted the joy of all the people of the kingdom.

In that epoch this was the elaboration of a mental category that was considered the highest social service that can exist.

What remains of this phenomenon explains the jubilation of the multitudes when they see the Pope in his pomp, when they see the Queen of England in her splendor.

To medieval men, a King or a Pope who did not appear like this would sin seriously against his duties.

From this also comes the enthusiasm for the great man who is not the man of the masses, but who is the opposite of the masses, who surpasses them and who is admired because he is a living image – a living ontological image or moral image – of God Our Lord.

Behind this is the conception of an absolute and transcendent God, Whom man seeks through efforts that constantly rise above the common patterns.

E. The approach of the egalitarian spirit

It is from the height of this point that the opposite side – the egalitarian regime – is born. It is based on the consideration that God is immanent, that he is not to be sought in these “dreams,” in these so-called transcendent utopias. Then, the ideal of happiness has to be realized on this earth, with the exclusive consideration of the things of this earth and not of the future paradisiacal goods, which we have a foretaste of here.³⁶

So, pleasure is not to see the King pass and to applaud, nor to see a great orator of matchless skill. Rather, pleasure is no more than having a refrigerator, a radio, a television. It is to be completely like everyone else, to lose oneself in the multitude, to disappear in it, to become the mass man. This concentration of pleasure exclusively on material things is the world of gnosis, of the immanent god.

Thus we have the two sides of culture.

F. Culture before the French Revolution

A restriction needs to be placed on the monarchical culture or traditional culture as it existed before the French Revolution.

A thousand aspects of the French Revolution involve the rupture of humanity with this life of the spirit. When the revolutionaries stormed the Tuileries Palace and smashed all the precious objects there, they were breaking a world of symbols that spoke of a transcendent God, and expressing their desire to embrace the cult of the immanent god. It was a river that changed course and moved to the other side of culture.

But there was something of this rupture already in the *Ancien Régime*.

In medieval culture all the aspects of beauty reached their apex when they ended by having something of the unfathomable and extraordinary that spoke of an order of unreal beauty that must exist beyond our reality.

³⁶ About the paradisiacal tendency, see also *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*, “Baldeação Ideológica Inadvertida e Diálogo,” Chap IV, 2, 1, by Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira

Each color in one of those stained glass windows was a color not entirely exhaustible by the human eye as the sun passed through the stained glass and struck the floor. To say that it was a world of jewels is not correct; it is a world of jewels from another Earth, from another world. It is a kind of dream of something else that must exist beyond our reality and that was reflected in those stained glass windows. It is a dream that has an aspect of reality; in this sense the dream is an idea of Paradise.³⁷

The people of the *Ancien Régime* wanted to do away with this, to bring to an end all the aspects of unreality that invite one to the beyond; they wanted to make a beautiful world with the aspects of the reality that lies below. It is a sort of aristocratic utopia, to look for happiness on this earth with everything that is explicable and earthly, with nothing in it that speaks of another world in order to show that this world is very beautiful.

Since they still retained a flash of the previous notion, they ended up putting something that resembled the uncreated order in Versailles.

Certain Americans can completely extinguish this flash of the paradisiacal in the things around them, and the Russians reach the unimaginable in this sense.

G. The role of the utopias

There is an emptiness that comes from renouncing this ideal order. The role of utopias in the Revolution can be understood here. Man always has an ideal of happiness inside himself. When he has this quest for the absolute, he is really not so concerned about material earthly happiness. This is what Marx was referring to when he said that religion was the opium for the people. He was referring to this lack of concern for earthly things when man has the hope of Heaven. Actually, Marx was wrong; religion is not the opium, but the consolation of man.

But when this march towards the absolute has no such meaning, it is necessary to construct a utopia on earth. Then we have Thomas More (*Utopia*) and Tommaso Campanella (*The City of the Sun*). When we read More's *Utopia*, we see that all happiness consists in the quiet possession of earthly goods as they are. There is no thought of anything outside of this, nothing of a human order that would go beyond this and for which man feels a longing. It is what these utopias have of the profoundly atheist, socialist, etc.

H. A living metaphysics: the abstract concept & the prototype

Collaterally, an addition to this doctrine that deals with the quest for the absolute, it must be established that it is through abstraction that one reaches the absolute. Abstraction, as it is philosophically conceived, is one of the stages, one of the ways to catch and express the absolute.

When a man sensibly catches the perfect concept, he incarnates it, he clothes the abstract with flesh. The abstract idea of house, which goes from the palace to the simple house, obviously is not

³⁷ *Ibid.*

exhausted in the idea of the palace. But the fact is that the palace is the realization of the house with everything that it can have and should have in all its accidents. In that sense it becomes a prototype, which in itself has something of an abstraction.

There are two ways to reach the absolute that complete themselves: one by abstraction, another by the symbolic realization of that absolute in a prototype. By relying on both, and taking from each something proper to it, each delivers some aspects of wisdom that the other does not give, and man has entirely what he is supposed to reach as a man.

So, to the abstract idea of house, we should add the prototype of house, which is found in the palace. Of course, each one of us can choose this or that particular palace as his own model ideal of the prototype.

This would be a needed addition to our topic.

Thus we have the idea of a living metaphysics: It is that continuous appetite for perfection, for the perfect image of the absolute and, therefore, the appetite for the absolute. This quest is made in a spirit of joy, adoration and respect, with a modest pleasure for the man.

Living metaphysics is the appetite for the absolute in an ideal hierarchical, monarchical and, above all, aristocratic order.³⁸

I. Man was not made for pure metaphysics

Metaphysics cannot be achieved in a mental process that is interrupted in the abstraction process and thus does not reach its final end, which is the *conversio ad phantasmata*. That is, for human understanding to be complete there is something that must be added to the abstraction. Man must complete himself in his own human way – through the *conversio ad phantasmata* – the intellectualization of the object of metaphysics, which is the being. Anything else is to make a metaphysics that would be for angels, not for men, whose knowledge does not consist only in abstractions.

The study of metaphysics should be completed by successive *conversiones ad phantasmata*, a sort of track that constantly turns to the abstract track to give a starting point for a living wisdom.

J. Living metaphysics & the symbols

This so-called living metaphysics plays with symbols, and the symbolic way is another path to reach metaphysical knowledge. It is a way proper to man because it uses the senses, and through this direct sensible knowledge, it leads to something metaphysical.

³⁸ The terms monarchic and aristocratic orders are employed here to designate theoretical principles. They do not refer to social-political regimes. When referring to the latter, we adopt the traditional thinking of the Church expressed by Pope Leo XIII in *Au milieu des sollicitudes* and *Diuturnum* and by St. Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* (I. II, q. 105, a.1, e), and his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* (Book 51, lesson 7) regarding the three forms of legitimate governments: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.

A series of symbols always have as their final end metaphysical values that we call absolute, when we speak of the quest for the absolute. I do not say that each symbol has a directly metaphysical content, but that it already has some incipiently metaphysical content. Because when an object symbolizes a man, it symbolizes something of that which is metaphysical in that man, of that man seen metaphysically. There are different metaphysical densities in the various symbols, depending on how closely they symbolize a person, or how they symbolize something of the absolute, according to the angle of vision from which they are seen.

The seal of Simon de Montfort, which is a galloping horseman blowing a horn, can have many meanings, depending on the vantage point adopted. Analyzing that horseman *per se* can symbolize a call to the hunt, but it can more properly symbolize a call to the crusades once we know that Simon de Montfort was the great hero of the Crusade against the Albigensians in the South of France. If we take just this first step, we can transcend the accidents and say that it represents a call to courage and heroism. This is a more abstract meaning.

When we link the symbol closely to Simon of Montfort and his historic role, we can say that his symbol represents his holy intransigence, which did not spare any Albigensian in the siege of Montpellier. So, when we think of the holy intransigence needed to fight against the Devil and the enemies of the Church, we think of that seal. It becomes a symbol of a moral virtue and a summary of the historical role played by the Catholic hero.



There are many metaphysical elements represented in just one personal symbol.

Thus, symbolism is a way to catch metaphysical principles and moral values.

If these considerations were false, then it would be false that external worship must exist. If man were able to make metaphysics only on the abstract track, he would be able to pray without external worship. All the reasons that make external worship legitimate demonstrate that because man is a rational animal, he demands something that is sensible in the metaphysical order, as in the order of piety. Hence, it is important to have symbols in external worship.

External worship is filled with symbols to make present to man a number of abstract concepts that he sets in motion in his prayer and to assist him in his prayer through concrete images. Just as the Church did not make her piety for pure spirits, but for men, there must be a culture that has a metaphysical order and whose apex is a living metaphysics.

THE HUMAN PROCESS

PART III

THE PROCESS OF HATRED & OF LOVE

Chapter I - The Process of Love

- 1. The first act of the will**
- 2. Egoism, interested & disinterested love**
- 3. The primordial light, vital flux & mountain springs**
- 4. Certainties**
- 5. Contemplation**
- 6. Transforming union**

Chapter II - The Process of Hatred & the Process of Vice

- 1. Observations on the capital vice**
- 2. Criteriological problems**
- 3. Complacency with Satanism**
- 4. Doctrine of Execration**

CHAPTER I

THE PROCESS OF LOVE

1. The first act of the will

We have studied the theory of the first vision in Part II. To that first innocent vision a first act of will corresponds, which we will study here.

A. The adhesion of the child to order

Man in the deep roots of his being, from his earliest childhood and in his first movements where he perceives the existence of other persons, faces an evidence that clamors in him. It tells him that he is not sufficient to himself, that he needs something more to be satisfied. It is precisely this that we call contingency.

This notion of his own insufficiency is what causes the child to begin to take a position with regard to things that are lacking to him.

This perception is confused, although the first act has a certain order that governs the relationships between himself and that which he lacks.

He may have the perception that his being does not accept that order, that the order is painful to his being and he wants a different order. Then, at the moment of catching the ball, of picking up the rattle, the problem comes to him: "This is not the right moment to catch it, it is not ordered to do so, but I want to." Then, if he kicks or cries, he is making an act where he is asserting the absolute in himself. He is the rule and the measure of all things.

If, on the other hand, he calmly accepts those contingencies and acts according to order, he places his center of gravity in a point outside himself, following the principle that he must submit to that order. In this case, he bends himself to an extrinsic absolute. He then goes on to consider himself as a player in this order and that his reason for being is to function in the service of that order, and to impose on himself the sacrifices necessary for that order to function. He does this in the name of order.

It is not, however, directly God that enters into account here, but rather something that has the place of God. It is something that is an aurora of the idea of God in his head. It is not yet the sun, but it is a light of the sun that gives him the idea of an absolute, which leads to the idea of God.

So, one position is: My good lies in participating in that order and I will make any sacrifice to serve this order that is more than I am. The other position is: This order bothers and torments me. I need to destroy it in order to have a tranquil life. My good does not lie in anyone outside of myself, but rather in myself.

B. These acts are crystallized & orient life

These first positions of the child are engraved in a zone of the soul that is the region where habits are formed. When the child takes a position in face of the order and it goes to this region, it crystallizes as a habit that will give the orientation for his entire life.

There are children who have great lucidity and responsibility in face of the actions they make either for the good or for the bad.

C. What understanding does the child have of good & evil?

From the beginning, the child has a vision of a point that contains in itself, almost intuitively, all the other points of life. It is, therefore, a first understanding of good and evil. This justifies what certain Saints say about children who are in Hell. They can go there precisely because of the very profound denials that these children make.

D. Intermediary positions

When it begins to awaken to life, the soul is placed before a conjunct of truths and goods that represent truth and goodness for it. Most souls have a certain compatibility with truth and virtue, but they have a deep antipathy to the truth and to the good seen as a whole.

In order not to accept the truth and the good in their fullness, the soul strikes its transcendental principles³⁹ and deforms them. In most cases it is not a complete refusal, but partial refusals and acceptances. From this first position, this state of indefiniteness can overtake the whole life of a person.

These children take intermediary positions between the full acceptance of order and the full rejection of it.

E. Somehow a child has a greater possibility to choose between good & evil than an adult

It should also be noted that in the child the possibility of choosing between good and evil is, in a sense, much greater than in an adult. To the measure that the child chooses evil, for example, his whole spirit is orientated along this line. As a consequence, the choices that come afterwards will already fall within that path. The same is true for good. The adult, therefore, already finds predispositions so strong in his spirit that his choice – which in principle may have limitless variations – in the concrete order of things falls within that already fixed path. Thus his choice normally will be made along that path.

Of course, this is not absolute, or else it would deny human freedom. It is, however, a very strong probability that he will follow this path, because these solicitations toward that same path increasingly capture and bind the man. Within these possibilities we have, in the beginning, a range

³⁹ For more on the transcendental principles, see pp. 134, 135.

of variations that are infinite, then this range diminishes throughout life and, finally, is fixed at death.

But it is indispensable to note that this is not irreversible. A conversion, for example, is a turnaround, a breaking out of that vicious circle in which the person has placed himself.

F. The question of the child's culpability

As soon as the notion of good and evil reaches the child's awareness, the child can be culpable. The principle that the Church affirms that mortal sins can only be made at age seven does not contradict this thesis. Although the child already has a notion of good and evil, this notion is not sufficiently clear, conscious and licit for the sin to be mortal until a child reaches the age of reason. But venial sins, and even mortal sins, can be admitted in the mind of a precocious child. On the other hand, this works also for the good: It is possible that in some cases Communion for children under age seven is allowed because of their mental development.

G. How does the child concretely decide to do good & avoid evil?

In the spiritual life, when the child makes the general resolution to do good and avoid evil, there are two ways by which this resolution helps the child: the symbolic or analogical way, and the logical way.

Before anything else, at the root of these two ways, we must show that to see the abstract thing in the concrete in a living state is very different from passing abstractly from a principle to its conclusions.

Let us say that the child adopts the principle that evil should be avoided and good practiced through a set of good dispositions of soul, which come from education, natural rectitude, equilibrium and a thousand other data. Thus, the child, seeing a good thing, realizes that it is the good of which he had a more or less abstract notion. In concrete this is the good, and he does nothing other than see the good there and then concretely carry out his resolution. This is not properly speaking reasoning; rather it is to translate into concrete concepts what he had seen in abstract.

For the child to be able to see this in concrete he applies some processes that I can point out. One of them is experience.

H. Experience

As the child grows, but even since he was very small, he has some experiences by which he comes to know things more completely and is better able to see good and evil in them. For this reason it can be said that the child, from the dawn of reason, can grow in grace and holiness, as the Gospel says of Our Lord.

I. Analogical & symbolic process

Alongside experience, there is an analogical process and a symbolic process: Both enrich experience, shine on it, and are not distinct from it. The child has a certain facility to make correlations and analogies, to perceive how one situation is like another. Also he can realize how the good existing in one situation is a good that repeats itself in another and, likewise, how an evil repeats itself in another situation. This is not something anti-logical although, strictly speaking it is not based on a syllogism. A well made syllogism could justify this, even though one does not usually make a syllogism in such cases.

For example, a child sees one of his aunts having a reaction of envy when she comments on the new purse his mother acquired; he registers that reaction. Then, months later, at his birthday party he sees one of his cousins reacting with envy when he cuts a slice of the cake and gives it to another person instead of that cousin. The child then asks himself: Are these two reactions related? In this simple question there is already an embryo of logic, although the question was not born from a syllogism. It was born from the experience and from the recollection of the child.

The same is true of symbolism. Some things symbolize others very well, and the child easily perceives this symbolic relationship. Through it he also enriches his field of concrete knowledge of good and evil, of which he has an abstract notion.

The role of formation here is very important. A formation that is always relating everything to the idea of good and evil will help the child to live the principle that he should serve the good and avoid the evil.

J. The reasoning

These symbolic and analogous processes are not anti-logical processes because the person, in applying reasoning, would soon find reasons to justify them. This is not to say that the person has employed a deductive method in the matter.

What characterizes analogical and symbolic processes is that they are not fully conscious, and to be complete they are not even asked to be conscious. It would not even be totally balanced if a man were doing this in a fully conscious way at every moment. A good mental functioning does not require it.

When a person has very good dispositions, he generally does not find it difficult to use this system well. The assimilation of knowledge in the mind by means of symbolism and analogies is more or less like the process of assimilation of foodstuff by the human body. The body assimilates the food naturally, without the need of an external interference from other factors.

But there are some points where every person is torn by original sin and where these symbolic and analogical processes are twisted, either by contradictions or obscurities.

Here reasoning intervenes to solve the anomalies of the problems in the process. Then the abstract process enters. Above all, the role of meditation and a fully conscious reasoning enter to play a role.

The reason enters here to assist a broken symbolic process, similar to a doctor who recommends his patient to change his eating habits, because his bad habits are harming the normal digestion of the food.

Thus we see that processes of symbolism and analogies, by their very nature, may not be conscious. But, in theory, their perfection benefits from becoming conscious, whereas in other analogical and symbolic operations, this kind of extrinsic perfection is entirely dispensable.

K. How the notion of a personal God is born in a child, underlying the notion of good & evil

There are two ways by which a child can personify the good. One is when the child notices personal rudiments that exist in the general rule that good should be done and evil avoided. Another is when he meets various people and goes on to personify some virtues in them. Afterwards, with the virtues that he saw in them, he will compose a general idea of the good.

These are the two different ways of personification regarding the object at hand. The first way has as its immediate and direct object to glimpse at once the rudiments of the person of God in this very generic rule that good must be done and evil avoided. Another is to make the rule in its various principles live in concrete persons, so that afterwards the child forms a higher abstract notion.

Therefore, before all else there exists in the child a first generic idea of good, by virtue of which he conceives the various goods. Later, he, so to speak, forgets this generic idea of good because these early general ideas are conceived but soon forgotten and go to live in the obscure chamber. Then, the person will continue to exercise this forgotten notion in his subconscious. It moves on to a "*recherche d'une notion perdue*," [quest for a lost notion] by means of meeting various good persons in order to reconstitute that abstract notion.

They are two processes that meet like two arms of the Gothic arch.

We can say, however, that a child who was already faithful to the first flashes, such as St. Therese, for example, does not go through this phenomenon of forgetting, although she cannot give an entirely explicit idea of that generic good she grasped. For this reason, her whole moral sense is much fuller, much more complete, than that of a person who is already walking on the second path because his moral sense was lost and lives only in the subconscious.

L. How does the child discern God through creatures?

Just as a child perceives that even the most perfect wax figures are not living people but something else – and this comes from a wisdom the child possesses intuitively – so also, by an analogous psychological mechanism, when he sees persons, he perceives that there is another person of another stature, another substance, transcendent, that flickers beyond them.

One can say that the child intuits this in the following way: The child intuits the principle that good should be done and evil avoided, as well as the splendor of goodness and truth present in everything, even in himself, as an omnipotent principle. It is a moral value that exists on another

sphere with properties so characteristic that it does not fit into any of the categories that he can enunciate.

This does not lead directly to the idea of God, but to the rudiments of the idea of God. One can explain this only at the end of life. Humanly speaking, a man could even die without making it explicit if God did not reveal it to him. But this is the road by which the person, going from the design to the relief and from the relief to the statue, can reach God.

2. Egoism, interested & disinterested love

The first knowledge the child has implies, as we have seen, a first act of acceptation or rejection, which is a first act of love or hatred. Let us enter into the specifics.

A. Difference between instinctive & rational love

Before we study egoism, interested and disinterested love, we must distinguish between instinctive and rational love in man.

There is a sort of instinct of conservation that man has in common with others beings, which is not love properly speaking. This instinct comes from a mandate that God gave to each created being to exist. And it comes accompanied by a tendency in the being to defend its very existence. In this sense, the ant, for example, has an instinct of conservation. We see that this instinctive love for self-conservation has something to do with the problem we want to study, that is, the question of interested and disinterested love, but we also see that this is not at the heart of the problem. For this reason, we will set it aside for now.

The object of our study is more the act of the intelligence by which man understands that he must love himself, he must love the beings extrinsic to himself, and, above all, he must love God.

Then, we formulate the problem: In this act that man makes, to what extent does interested and disinterested love enter?

B. What is interested & disinterested love?

Before all else, what is interested and disinterested love?

There is a false way of placing the problem that makes it insoluble, which is this: Interested love is when some love of myself enters. Disinterested love is when love of myself does not in any way enter.

Philosophically speaking, love is always a relationship that involves two beings and, therefore, it is always a harmonic and satisfactory relationship of two beings. So, it cannot have only one end, which is God. There must be two ends, of which I am necessarily one.

Therefore, the most disinterested love also has a love of myself inside it. If disinterested love admits, as one of the two terms, a love of myself, then, how is the disinterested love born?

To resolve the question, I must consider the nature of my being. In this nature I consider essence and accidents. I am led to have a love for my own essence, because otherwise I would cease to exist. I cannot fail to have this love because it is linked to my own condition of being. This love is linked to the principle that every being loves his own being by the fact that he is. If he could not love himself, then there would be an explosion a thousand times worse than the atomic bomb.

Besides this, I have a love for my good accidents. And what is this love? The achievement of my accidents is to my essence as the end is to the means. My essence is only able to exist as long as it completes itself with the accidents proper to it. Hence, the goodness of the love for my good accidents is justified. By contrast, we can understand well the Gospel example of the salt that loses its savor. The essence of salt that does not flavor the food is good, but because it does not salt, it must be thrown out. So also with the barren fig tree, whose essence remains intact; but it must be cut down because it does not realize its accidents. We see, then, that it is through the achievement of the accidents that the essence reaches its end.

When I love my essence I understand two things. My essence in that which is innermost is just the reflection, the product of another essence, one immensely denser and immensely more my own essence than my essence. Thus, without denying the infinite transcendence of God, I could say that God is more I than I am myself.

It is as if my photograph were capable of meeting me. It would love me more than itself, recognizing that I am more the photograph than it is itself. It does not mean that I have an ontological relationship with my photograph; my photograph is not a man, but because it is the image of a man, it loves the man more than itself.

We also have another way by which interested love arrives at God. I know God and I know that He is the personification of these accidents that I must love. So, because of the love for these accidents, I end up loving God more than myself.

When St. Teresa of Avila said to Our Lord: "Even if there were no Heaven, I would still love Thee, and even if there were no Hell, I would still fear Thee," she made an act of the highest and most complete love of her own essence. This act has no other meaning than the love of the divine essence itself.

What is a true interested love in this picture? If my photograph met me, it would note that in a certain sense the fullness of it is I. But, on the other hand, it would see that it is different in relation to me. And, being different from me, it can have some interests that are never contrary to mine but somehow are not mine. In this sense I can have an interested love of God when I consider God as giving me happiness, well being, etc. This in a certain way is something different from the love of God, although at depth it is imbued with the love of God, because I cannot have an upright love of myself without having, at the same time, love of God.

Here we have the relationship of interested love and disinterested love.

C. Disinterested love

We will try to understand the feeling of disinterested love in situations where man selflessly serves another because he sees in that other an archetype of himself.

For example, let us go to the Catholic theory that all superiority should generate love and obedience. What is behind this theory? A man who is superior to another is somehow an image of God for the other. When this superiority is on the same line of the inferior's vocation, the relationship becomes very clear.

I mention here the farewell of King Charles X of France to his faithful followers in the courtyard of the Château de Maintenon. As he said his farewell, a soldier stepped out from the line and fixed his gaze on him. The King asked the soldier what he wanted. "Lord, that I might still admire you for a while longer," replied the soldier. He saw in the King a splendid and sublime archetype of a portion of the things of which he was a miniature. Because of this, he loved the King more than himself, since he loved his qualities more than he loved himself.

This theory of disinterested love has at its root a conception of humility. It is the love of the man who understands his own limitations and, therefore, has this immense love, necessarily unlimited and duly excessive, for one who represents literally that perfection which he should adore in God. And to adore is exactly this. Here is the definition of love and adoration. To adore is to recognize this supreme value in a determined thing.

D. Egoism

From here we enter into a conception of egoism. What is egoism?

There is an incompatibility between some things a man thinks it is enjoyable to do and all the marvelous things that he sees. This incompatibility causes man to be obliged to curtail, at all times and sometimes violently, a certain zone of his soul that cannot attain these values of which we speak. He is obliged to discipline this zone in accordance with the things that the other part of the soul sees. So the soul becomes split into zones.

It is like a house with two façades. Upon one the sun of the absolute beats fully. But there is another façade which this sun does not reach, which is the *second head*. In this part, the sun of the absolute does not penetrate and it establishes its own dialectic and perspective. This goes so far that at times, the man ends by having the impression that his "I" is there, and not in the zone illuminated by the absolute. Thus, a false idea burgeons in him that the absolute is not the "archetype of his own self," but it is something entirely distinct from himself. The *ego* for him resides in this zone where the sun of the absolute never enters. That is why there is a need for man, at every moment, to intervene in this zone and put it in order.

This wrong position of the *second head* is the starting point of egoism. When a man has a faded idea of the absolute, he feels much more himself in this part where the absolute sun does not enter. Thus, instead of God being for him another himself, God is the other. And He is an other who ends

up being to some extent an enemy. Yes, an enemy. Because, from the moment when God is considered the other who demands something, who bothers him, then He is an enemy.

From this bad *alterity* or otherness⁴⁰ with God, it happens that, since the person only feels himself in that darkened part of the house, a false criteriological position emerges where truth begins to appear to man as what he feels in this obscure part of the house. The result is that faith appears to him a hard and difficult thing because it pulls him out of that den where he willingly dwells. Thus, faith itself is seen also as an enemy. From this comes a position of rupture that, in my view, is typical of Protestantism. Protestantism begins with the man who denies this absolute, who wants to live in this dark zone and to establish his abode there. Thus, in some way and at some times, the *second head* acts in rebellion as if it were a Protestant inside oneself.

E. The law of the spirit & the law of the flesh

It is in this zone of the soul, which is not in itself affected by the love of the absolute, that the passions unfold. Thus, for example, a man may note all the beauty of temperance, but he does not change his inclination toward gluttony. And all the beauty that temperance can have is not enough to eliminate his disordered appetite to eat. Then, his soul finds itself divided between two opposing forces: One is the force that leads to the absolute; another is the force that tends to disregard the notion of the absolute, however high it may be. This is what St. Paul calls the law of the flesh that opposes the law of the spirit.

The part of the soul that is under the law of the flesh is independent of any reasoning, independent of anything of an intellectual order; it presents itself as an attraction and something capable of justifying itself. It is curious that, for this part of the soul, the satisfaction of the passions functions as if they were absolutes, in such a way that, for example, for the sensual man, delight is a fact. This fact in itself is so overpowering and brutal that it ends by constituting, from a certain angle, the *raison d'être* of his life, the only thing that makes life worthwhile.

So, there are two absolutes in contradiction. Although, on one hand, the soul sees things that are very elevated, sublime and extraordinary, it has a part which tells it that, on the other hand, there is something that is a value in itself and that it is necessary for him to be completely engulfed by it. There is this type of dark, irrational but tyrannical caricature of the absolute on the side of the passions.

Thus, we understand how a person can frenetically deliver himself to pleasures, as if this would justify his existence. And even in the face of disgrace and death, he tries to justify himself: "It is true that I shall die and that before I die I will be blind, poor, etc., but at least I tasted that cup and drank from it." This functions as an absolute in itself. It is a caricature of the absolute, functioning in opposition to the true absolute.

⁴⁰ *Alteridade* is a Portuguese word derived from the Latin *alter* = other. *Alteridade* is the opposite of *identidade*, identity. It is the philosophical transcendental principle by which one person is different from the others. Other Latin languages have variations of this word: Thus, French has *alterité*; Spanish, *alteridad*. Although English has *otherness* to express almost the same idea, from now on we will refer to this concept in English as *alterity*.

F. The need for effort

It is necessary for the person to make an enormous effort to break this tendency in this zone of the soul and to subject it to the empire of reason. What is eminently characteristic of this zone is that the love it develops takes us inside ourselves. The other love takes us outside ourselves. When I say I want pleasure, I say I want it for myself, because I am I.

There is, therefore, behind the pleasure purely of the senses, an associated absolute. At a certain point, the person who follows this path will commit a sin of the spirit, the sin of thinking that he lives for himself and not for God. There is, therefore, in every sin of this type a zone of egoism, which is the enjoyment and the delight, but already there is something of gnosis.

G. Two ways to justify egoism

When the person realizes that he has fallen into the sin of egoism, he begins to tend toward a more profound sin. This is when he seeks to justify his first sin, constructing a kind of metaphysics of himself. He then tries to prove that what he did was right, that it is right to be closed in on himself.

Those who take the apex of their passions as absolutes in a certain way reach the plenitude of egoism.

There is another way to reach this same point, which is the path of pride. This is the path taken by the man who is proud of feeling himself, his own qualities, his talents, and enjoys having them and mastering them.

Then, in relation to God, he places himself in the position of a small feudal lord who is inebriated with his existence and by the fact that he is a feudal lord. He wants to isolate himself from the King and the suzerains to have the pleasure of maneuvering by himself the resources he has received. From this comes a position of revolt against God. It is almost as if he says: "For me it is enough that God not take away that which he gave me: I exist and ask nothing from Him. I would accept every torment and horror, but I prefer to be myself than to be a being dependent on someone, loving someone and turned toward someone."

We can say, then, that these are two ways of egoism and their justifications.

H. Love of God & true love of creatures

Love of one's neighbor and creatures is not very different from the love of God as we explained when we studied disinterested love.

But in common language sometimes it seems that there is a dichotomy, I love God and, then, through a series of methods and steps, I can laboriously pass from the love of God to individuals, thus managing to love those who are in themselves detestable. In this way of seeing things, there is an effort that must be made to love individuals.

I think that those who love the being that is in the individuals and things as they legitimately deserve to be loved, who know that God exists and that everything should report back to God, to love creatures is already to practice an act of love of God. Because acts of love of God and of creatures are not as different from each other as normally thought.

I consider this very important for a whole conjunct of our conceptions, which are the opposite of revolutionary conceptions of the love of God. For example, I am looking at a decorative ornament in the garden. If I love it for what it has of the good, and if I love it with a disinterested love that I should have for things, and if I also love it with a legitimate interested love without letting a bad egoism enter, I will be loving what in it represents God. To love such a thing in itself is a stupidity; if it did not represent God, I could not make that act of love. Ultimately I love it because I know it is a representation of God and what I love in it is that which is of God. Therefore my love already reaches God by means of the garden ornament.

Whence comes the conclusion that everything which is beautiful, grandiose and even rich can powerfully help man to progress in virtue, provided he has the upright love of these things.

Of course, a man who is not upright makes bad use of such a thing and it will be an element of perdition for him. But what is not an occasion of perdition for a man who is not upright? For the upright man, however, these things elevate him. In this sense I maintain that the upright luxury, refinement, richness and grandeur elevate the soul of the just man. Because in the love of these things there is already an implicit and underlying act of love of God.

If this is true for creatures in general, it is truer for the admiration we have for our fellow men. To analyze and admire the souls is also indirectly an act of love of God. We certainly should refer that love for our neighbor to God, but both the love of God and of our neighbor are analogous acts, which pass from one to another effortlessly.

3. Primordial light, vital flux & mountain springs

Let us go a step further in our studies and focus on what is the primordial light and other correlated topics.

A. The primordial light

A subject that is very important for us to have clear is the concept of primordial light. How do we see the primordial light?

a. Presupposition for the primordial light

St. Thomas Aquinas says that all human souls in themselves are equal, and that the differences among them come from their bodies. But for us to understand all the concrete difficulties that exist in souls, it is necessary to take also into consideration the different regimes of supernatural life in souls. That is to say, in addition to the inequalities that come from the bodies, there is also the fact

that God calls souls to different spiritual paths, showing them His attention and love through supernatural favors, favors regarding the intelligence, special circumstances and a thousand other factors, so that each soul is called to realize a special type of holiness. This holiness is neither opposed to other sanctities nor different from them, for Catholic holiness is one, but the mode of realizing this holiness varies according to each soul.

b. Each soul has a particular appetency to consider certain perfections of God

If we establish this principle, we see that each soul has an individuality that gives it a tendency to better understand certain perfections of God that correspond more to its own being. For this reason, it is more inclined to consider certain absolutes, to understand certain aspects of Revealed Religion, all within the line toward which the soul tends more by its natural movement, originating from the physical, the spiritual and also the supernatural. Thus there is an appetency of the soul for a certain point.

c. The role of intelligence & of Faith

Now the intelligence enters. In the order of the knowledge of the absolutes, because of this appetency, the soul has its attention particularly drawn to certain metaphysical absolutes. Then grace comes and reveals to man the Catholic Faith. The love of each man is also specially illuminated by certain truths of the Catholic Faith.

Then, we have a kind of line of affinity between the metaphysical absolutes and the truths of the Catholic Faith which, in final analysis, meet – as we have seen – at a single and simple point. It is toward this supreme point that man, or the soul, tends with all its forces, more than toward any other point.

d. What is the primordial light?

So, what is the primordial light? It can be viewed from two perspectives: objectively and subjectively.

Objectively, the primordial light is the conjunct of perfections of God that a man knows with the help of grace and Revelation and also by the examination of nature, which corresponds to the most ardent point of the application of his intelligence and love.

Subjectively speaking, the primordial light is a very personal appetency in every man. The subjective primordial light is a true light, because not only does it exercise the visual function, comparable to that of the "eye," but it is also that which illuminates things, making them comprehensible to the person. It is necessary for the hierarchical dynamism of the highest appetencies of the person and his highest understandings to find satisfaction.

Thus, the greater and better the intellectual curiosity of the virtuous man, the greater and more keenly the appetency of the will is applied with all their forces toward knowing his objective primordial light.

e. The unity of the primordial light

It is a fact that there is a determinate perfection of God that, in the final and most supreme instance, is the object of the particularly tender, ardent and intense love of each man.

But it happens that when a man loves the perfections of God, it cannot be said that he loves only one perfection in God. All the perfections of God are aspects of the same perfection. The individual must love, therefore, all the other perfections, otherwise he does not love that primordial perfection he is specially called to love. And the perfection of God that appears to him as the objective primordial light in God is only the portico for that man to ultimately enter into the love of all the perfections of God. This is logical, because if I love a determinate perfection, I love, by a constellation system, the various others that are corollaries or close developments of that one. Then, I go on to love more and more groups of constellations hierarchically ordered among themselves.

Thus, concretely, it can be said that a person who is not yet conscious of his full primordial light, notes in himself several appetencies that can seem somewhat different from one another and that are bound together by a golden thread, which is in the subconscious and must be ascertained to know the one point from which this thread proceeds. At this point he will find the type of supreme thing that he seeks. But the revealed primordial light ends by being one, even though it shines in very different secondary aspects in certain stages of the person's development.

B. The vital flux

Parallel to the primordial light, another point we should study is the vital flux of a person, which in some ways conditions the former.

a. The vital flux & the primordial light

I would like to clarify what is understood by vital energy or vital flux., Taking the word vitality in its current meaning, every man has a type of vitality that is his own and that shows itself in the make-up of his spirit and his intelligence, in his abilities, in his way of being pleasant, agreeable or disagreeable and in his way of being courteous, conversing, walking, etc., In all this there is a certain unity characterized by a kind of rhythm, or vivacity, or vitality, which is proper to that person.

In this sense each man is distinct and cannot be identified with any other man, no matter how great the similarities can be.

This vitality is associated with the primordial light. Vitality is to the primordial light what the violin is to the violinist. The violinist has a talent for playing the violin, and the violin is an instrument to

be played by the violinist. If there were not this adaptation between the vitality of man and his primordial light, there would be no possibility of an internal unity and coherence in him.

An important point is that the person must govern his vitality to be able to recollect himself, think and make abstractions. From this comes the difficulty for the new generation to make abstractions, because that generation has a whirlwind of disordered vitality.

b. Vitality & the defects of man

There is a relationship between the vitality of man and the defects that come from original sin and life as it is, that is, a life of exile, struggle and difficulties. Man achieves an equilibrium when he honestly and positively accepts the external reality as it is, with its troubles, obstacles and ugly sides, and that which he does not understand well. In this way he forms an objective picture of the external world and situates himself inside it.

But, there is a position that tries to avoid the reality of the world as it is. This leads to creating two kinds of unreal worlds:

- *First*, the dream world, which produces megalomanias.⁴¹
- *Second*, the habit of the soul of only considering some aspects of reality and not others, becoming dull and insensitive to some aspects of reality. This is also living in unreality.

The effect of this upon vitality is to make the person live in a sort of artificial world in which he vibrates and feels only one way. He establishes himself only in one way instead of having the harmony and great force that he would have if he were to react to the whole external world. His vitality becomes as if he would have developed only the left arm, because it is the only order of reality that he knows, and all the other parts are atrophied. It is a defect that I see a lot in Latinos and I do not see in Germans, so long as they do not follow Kant. Kantianism is the opposite defect in Germans.

C The mountain springs of man

The primordial light and the vitality lead the person to look for the absolute under three different prisms. However the figure of a prism only reflects the light, not the vital flux. This is better expressed by the figure of a spring that gushes from a mountain and flows through a part of that mountain. The springs are different just as the types of waters – the classes of objects – that gush from them are different.

⁴¹ See also "Megalice" by Plinio Correa de Oliveira – *Mega* and *megalice* are terms of the internal jargon used among the disciples of Prof. Plinio to refer respectively to megalomaniac and megalomania. According to this jargon, a person who is habitually boasting about his own deeds is qualified as *mega* and his defect is called *megalice*. So, there is some exaggeration in saying that a simply proud man is a megalomaniac or a *mega*, but it seems justified if one takes a pedagogical exaggerated approach in order to avoid this type of vice in the life of a group.

a. Why is it called a mountain spring?

There is a whole series of things that are drawn by a kind of law of gravity to the same central point.

One could call it a prism, because it really constitutes such, in the sense that it is an angle by which the primordial light is seen. The mountain spring is the way the primordial light develops following the person's vitality.

b. What do these mountain springs do?

Properly speaking the mountain springs are not about the object of the primordial light – the object of the primordial light is always a virtue – but they are related to the object in how this virtue is considered by man. For example, a man may have strength as a primordial light, but he may prefer to consider this primordial light in one certain category of objects and not in another.

c. Different mountain springs

What are the objects in which man habitually considers his primordial light?

We establish a distinction: Either the object is supernatural or it is natural.

The supernatural object (the religious mountain spring) is God as the One Who reveals, that is, the God of Faith and of Revelation, and not the God of philosophy. It is also everything concerning the supernatural life, grace, Heaven, etc.

This mountain spring is different from another, which considers more the natural objects.

That is to say, man can follow his primordial light preferentially in the social-political sphere, considering how societies are constituted, etc., and, more especially, when he considers the macro-society – society as a whole – or the intermediary micro-societies, the family, etc. We call this the social-political mountain spring.

He also may have a tendency to follow the primordial light in psychology, that is, considering the man and the soul individually. Entering into this is everything concerning pedagogy, psychology, certain types of spiritual direction, etc. We call this the psychological mountain spring.

Other variations of mountain springs include a man who has a make-up that prefers the consideration of the absolute as realized in metaphysics (the philosopher), or another man can turn toward the arts to find his absolute: the fine arts, mechanics, etc. Then, in principle we could call these a metaphysical mountain spring and an artistic mountain spring.

However, usually we simplify these different mountain springs and just say man can have three mountain springs: the religious, the political-social and the psychological mountain springs because they contain in themselves the others.

d. God as the final & exemplary cause of Creation & the three mountain springs of man

In our days – and for a long time now – God is considered much more as the final cause of the universe than as an exemplary cause. In this there is an error because, in conceiving God only as the final cause, there is an incomplete way of loving God. Human nature asks that God be known as well as an exemplary cause. The act of human love is not complete unless man takes this into consideration. To consider God only as the final cause is something fundamentally incomplete. It is necessary to link the two causes.⁴²

e. The consideration of the universe according to the religious mountain spring

There are certain persons who follow the religious mountain spring. But here we consider the religious mountain spring in a special meaning, that is, looking at man as he considers the universe and not taking directly into account Revelation and the supernatural.

The religious mountain spring is one that has a very vivid notion of everything that the universe has of the fleeting, transitory and perishable, everything, therefore, that Creation has of the weak.

A man like this departs from this consideration and moves toward the highest thoughts about God in the metaphysical line. He is a person who ascends to the superior order of realities and then considers God, first and foremost, as the final cause of the universe, and everything as passing, transient, mere steps to reach God.

The other two mountain springs depart from a different prism, which is God considered as the exemplary cause of the universe and less as the final cause.

For a person of this spring, evil is principally an action inspired by the Devil to prevent Creation from reaching its end, that is, from achieving the glory it should give to God and from making its harmonic transition to the Celestial Paradise.

f. The consideration of the universe according to the political–social mountain spring

In this mountain spring, the individual has what we would call a *weltanschauung*, that is to say, a whole conception of the external universe. He delves deeply into the study of Creation in what it has of the positive, the beautiful, its good side, etc.

While the person of a religious mountain spring normally sees History from the moral perspective and sees in it the fidelity or infidelity of the peoples to the call of God, the person of a social-political mountain spring sees the general march of History as a great parade in which each people and each era reflect some characteristics of God. He also admires the architecture of the forms of government of each people and how they mirror aspects of God's governance of the universe,

For a person of this spring, evil is whatever prevents society from reaching a harmonic and hierarchical development; whatever prevents Christendom from being established in the world;

⁴² Regarding exemplary cause, see "The Aesthetics of the Universe and the Consecration to Our Lady" and "Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary Spirit" by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

and whatever prevents History from achieving its glorious completion in obedience to God and mirroring Him.

g. The consideration of the universe according to the psychological mountain spring

In the psychological mountain spring, the person does not consider so much the external world, but rather considers himself in his internal world, having God as an exemplary cause. He studies his own soul, the harmonies or disharmonies inside himself, the relationships he has with God and with the universe.

For a person of this spring, evil is whatever disturbs the internal psychological peace and harmony from reigning in the human soul; whatever harms the health of the soul and especially whatever can cause a permanent trauma to it.

4. Certainties

Now that we have the instrumental tools to understand how the human soul operates, let us focus on how the certainties are formed.

A. The formation of certainties in the human mind departing from a deep conviction

How does man form his convictions?

According to Descartes' conception, the man who is seeking truth can be compared to the blind man who cannot see and gropes about in a room full of furniture, looking for a certain object that he desires. This view is radically opposed to the Catholic conception on this subject.

According to the true Catholic conception, it is different. There are certain truths that are accessible to every mind from the time a child enters this world. The things to which he has access are ultimately extensions of the transcendental principles: for example, that the being cannot be and not be at the same time, that good should be done and evil avoided, etc. These truths are accessible to all minds and the upright spirit progresses by means of an ever deeper conviction of these truths. This deeper understanding gives him greater light in knowing the truth that he already possesses.

To the measure this conviction increases, his mind becomes more vigorous in drawing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and nth deductions from this fundamental point and from that absolute truth he possesses. This takes place following the also evident principle that **the human spirit is all the more intrepid in drawing conclusions the more it is persuaded that those premises are true. The less he is persuaded of those principles, the more insecure he is.**

Now, the great premises of all the reasonings that a man makes are the transcendental principles with which he is born and the absolutes to which he tends to fulfill his contingency. Thus, when these are weak in the mind of man, the spirit of doubt and the spirit of uncertainty enter. From this point on, he can really do nothing but search for the truth in a Cartesian way.

According to the Catholic way of conceiving things, this takes place as I described, because all the truths, by way of consequence, are contained in those first truths, which produces the possession of all truth by means of a legitimate reasoning.

B. The loss of certainties

Let us imagine a man who has deduced a series of consequences and ramifications from an absolute he had loved initially. At a certain moment, it can happen that his soul experiences what can be said to be the disaster of all disasters in the spiritual life: He loses the love for that determinate absolute. From the moment this occurs, what happens?

On the one hand, the ramifications stop growing and his doctrinal convictions become stagnant because he becomes incapable of making them fructify.

On the other hand, a type of reflux starts. That is to say, the extremities of the tree of his reasoning, start to wane and wither away, and, in many branches, the only life that remains is a kind of leftover sap still left on that extremity. But the whole is waning.

Then, when the branches are dried the soul is prepared for a true apostasy, which will not be the apostasy that comes from an outside inward reasoning, but it an apostasy that comes from the perishing of his internal sap, his inner energies.

In a second great stage, then, an outside reasoning, like the ax that hits the root, can cut down the tree.

But this does not happen immediately, nor do the enemies of order do this quickly. What process do the enemies of order follow?

To hasten this depletion, they act in two ways. First they act upon the root itself, or upon the actual trunk, causing it to perish as much as possible. How is this done? By inducing a man to softness so that he no longer desires to reach his true end; a softness whereby he no longer wants to turn toward the things that are the truth. Instead, he is induced to turn toward himself, to his own delights, pleasures, mediocre habits. Then, naturally, a vice is introduced in the man, and this vice will gradually lead him to apostasy.

At the same time that this is happening, the Secret Forces are, so to speak, spraying their poison from outside, from the leaves and branches to the trunk. For example, by means of sophisms they make the man's extreme conclusions fall. But a person in these conditions still has some love for what he sustains. And, from the love that he has for this, he in fact does not like to be placed before the hypothesis of apostasy. For this reason, if such an apostasy is set before him very clearly, he is still capable of a reaction.

C. Crystallizations

The reaction of the person to the hypothesis of apostasy can rekindle in him the absolute. And, with this rekindling of the absolute, the reaction can provoke a kind of reinvigoration of everything.

So, the Secret Forces are very cautious when spraying poison on the extremities of the tree. They are careful as well in how they produce that phenomenon of making it perish, because at some moment a bell can ring. And that bell can cause the whole work of evil to fall and the work of good to flourish again.

D. How is the edifice of certainties constructed?

There is another ensemble of figures that can express a very important aspect of our subject matter.

It refers to the strength needed to support firm premises. Let us imagine, for example, a reasoning based on a completely firm premise. The certainty one has of this departure point communicates itself to all the rest. It can be compared to a well-constructed tower where all the elements are perpendicular or vertical to the ground and thus the tower is securely fixed. The weight of the tower is an element that increases its stability.

But, if we imagine something like the Tower of Pisa, in which the walls are not entirely perpendicular to the floor, to the degree the Tower of Pisa becomes taller, the more likely it is that it will fall because the weight of the extremities would increase the instability of the building. So also, a weak certainty in the premises generates some small uncertainty in the first conclusions. The uncertainty grows to the extent that the tower of conclusions becomes more complex. An extreme moment can occur when everything falls. The man no longer has certainties.

So then, we could compare the edifice of a man's certainties to the actual Tower of Pisa, where the initial certainty gives rise afterwards to an ensemble of other certainties. If the initial certainty is not very firm, the whole edifice starts to incline.

And where is the firmness of the initial certainties? It is not in the intelligence. It is in the love with which the individual is deeply convinced of these certainties. So we have, at the base of everything, a problem of virtue.

5. Contemplation

We are seeing that intelligence and will act together to form the edifice of certainties. Another field in which they are also associated is in contemplation.

A. The influence of contemplation on the formation of the personality

Regarding contemplation in the natural sense of the word, we distinguish the following points:

The soul is born with a propensity to or a capacity for a particular primordial light. In addition to this capacity, it also has the capacity to contemplate a set of absolutes.

This capacity exists generically in the soul and it will be determined later, throughout life, by the various concrete circumstances through which the soul will pass. Thus it cannot be said that a

person, equally faithful to the primordial light in different cases, ends by having exactly the same personality in every matter.

For example, let us take a man who was created by God with a determined primordial light. He is a prince but was abducted as a boy. Unaware of who he is, he was educated as a bourgeois, as a merchant. He can be very faithful to his primordial light, but it will come to fruition in him in a different way because of the circumstances of his life as a merchant than it would have been if, in equal conditions of fidelity, he had been formed as a prince and would have governed as a prince.

We have to admit different stages with regard to contemplation. There is a certain axis of contemplation that always remains the same, but some concrete modes of achieving the personality follow different paths.

How is this linked to contemplation? A man has the need for the absolute, for knowing the absolute. He then begins to consider the exterior world around him and to seek the absolute in this exterior world. When he is in the presence of an absolute value, he stops, he considers, he analyzes, he judges, he compares it with other similar things that he had already seen and considered. After all of this, he stops in the consideration of that value through an action that is an action of love. By this impregnation he assimilates into himself that which he loves and that he desires in a disinterested way.

This is what we call contemplation. It is a fixation of the human attention, of the human intelligence, on a certain absolute object. And alongside this fixation, it is a love of the human mind for the concrete way in which that absolute presents itself to him. In this way, his personality is shaped by the circumstances of his life.

This is what I imagine as contemplation and the influence that this contemplation has on the modeling of the human personality.

B. Contemplation & the new generation

What is the sin that the individual of the new generation commits in the order of contemplation?

We could say that St. Thomas considered that the individual could have two types of intemperance: by excess and by deficiency.

Intemperance by deficiency is the sin we call indifference. That is to say, in the face of a certain object which naturally should provoke desire, the individual who is intemperate by deficiency has an apathy that causes him to be indifferent to it.

If we try to see the substance of this sin of indifference, we see that it is based on several elements. *First*, in disordered love many elementary feelings take a place of preeminence. *Second*, one of these feelings is a laziness by which the soul refuses to make a movement from the more elementary to the less elementary. Then, the combination of these two things causes a person to place himself in a position of intemperance by total insufficiency.

We can add that, in this attachment to inertia, to these very elemental values, a man can have a great intensity, in such a way that should someone try to draw him away from it, he explodes. So, we can say that although he does not have the virtue of fortitude, he has the explosive violence of a great vice.

We could say that King Louis XVI was like that. His inertia made him resist all the Kings of Europe, his wife Marie Antoinette, the deep contempt of the nobles who had emigrated to Belgium and were waiting for him to take a position against the French Revolution. He resisted the actual evidence of the facts that required him to act; he even resisted his own instinct of self-preservation that should have made him fear the danger he was running.

He resisted all these factors in order to indulge in some very elementary appetites that he had in his daily life. His flight to Varennes is characteristic of this. He, Marie Antoinette and the immediate family unsuccessfully attempted to escape France in order to initiate a counter-revolution at the head of loyal troops under royalist officers near the border. They escaped only as far as the town of Varennes where they were arrested and returned to Paris.

When he returned to the Tuileries Palace he passed through two columns of revolutionary military officials who received him with their swords up and crossed over his head, forming a cupola of steel. It was a terrible threat. He passed through, entered his apartment, let himself drop into his armchair, and made this exclamation that astonished everyone: "Back home, finally." That is to say, that attempt to escape had taken from him some elementary pleasures that he had in captivity.

This vice can occur at any step in a person's moral, spiritual or intellectual ascension. This laziness and this attachment to it produce paralysis. But when it expands to the entire soul, the individual is reduced to almost nothing.

When we pass from this to the phenomenon of the new generation, we see that this is the principle, the defect that moves and dominates everything. And that this defect in the new generation can occur in two wavelengths. When the person of the new generation is not entirely new generation, he has a certain tendency that impedes some very agitated and violent sensations. When he is entirely of the new generation, even this impediment is not present.

6. Transforming Union

Here we designate "transforming union" only as the final phase of the Process of Love. But, in fact, the whole Process of Love could also be called the Process of Transforming Union.

A. Metaphysical sense & sensation of the absolute

Placed before the universe, man sees that it does not exist necessarily: it exists, but could not exist.

But he sees, at the same time, that since it exists, it has to be necessarily subject to certain principles that govern it. From this arises the idea that if the universe were to cease to exist completely, should a new one come into existence, the empire of these principles would be reborn. Now, these

principles are relationships that cannot be suspended in an absolute vacuum; to impose themselves again, there must be an order of reality in which they exist. It would have to be an entirely different order of reality, altogether superior to this one, which imposes itself every time it comes out of nothing. This order of reality is a being, and this being is necessarily a Divine Being.

Here we arrive at important conclusions for our consideration of wisdom. When a person takes these principles, which must necessarily exist so long as things exist, he has at the same time a feeling of the absolute, something that is imposed by a force that stems from an invisible reality. The sensation of that absolute – the sensation that here is an intellectual perception with a certain temperamental detonation in the face of the fact – is the absolute that the individual must seek in all things.

Here we finally reach the definition of the concept of the absolute that is used when speaking of the quest for the absolute. Here is the concrete doctrine of a very poorly used word – encounter – which we should only employ in this sense. It is when a man, in an encounter with another man or in an encounter with something of a non-spiritual but material nature, perceives, by evidence, the presence of principles existing necessarily in the divine order, and thus perceives something of absolute.

For example, let us take a very beautiful reasoning that a friend made about us when enemies called us hypocrites. He said: "If they are not sincere, then God does not exist, because if it is possible to take fidelity to a doctrine as far as they did and not be sincere in doing so; the universal order, which establishes *quand même* a minimal stable relationship between appearance and reality, would be truncated. If it is possible for the enemies to lie so much and in a way that steals the appearance of good, then God does not exist." Just as *Christianus alter Christus*, so also, in the final analysis, this is the response of Our Lord to the Pharisees when they accused Him of having a pact with the Devil. There is a kind of similarity by which the Christian is another Christ.

Here principles of universal order are present, they are the absolutes that should be sought.

A culture, a philosophy, an art, a literature are all the more excellent the more they make the absolutes be felt and facilitate this metaphysical work. This is the function of temporal society at the service of the Church, and of religious art at the service of the Church.

I remember when I was a boy, when I heard the organ playing at Mass, I deduced: "It is evident that the Catholic Church is true. Whoever discovered such an instrument can only be true." In fact, the organ and the sacred music played on it are so holy, so upright, that either they can only be generated by the true Church or the whole universe is a fraud. These are the metaphysical senses of reality that lead us with greater facility toward the act of faith. They are not the determinant reason for the act of faith, but they prepare our spirit for this act.

B. The sense of the divine prepares for the knowledge of God

Here I record something that seems to me important in understanding the criteriology of this matter: It regards the proofs of the existence of God and what we could call the sense of the divine in Creation, that is, an approach of the spirit in which the point of departure makes it easier for us

to understand the proofs of the existence of God. I would say that this sense of the divine is a clear perception of the absolutes.

When the individual does not have this clear perception of the absolutes, which still are not enmeshed in the idea of God, but instead the absolutes appear to him as absolutes *per se*, without inviting him to further contemplation, his spirit is not ready to entirely understand the proofs of the existence of God.

The raw material of the proofs of the existence of God or of understanding the role of God in the universe is a type of good sense, where the soul easily perceives the various absolutes that present themselves to him. This clarity of eye to catch the absolutes even without divine cogitation is a kind of first approach that the egalitarian spirit destroys because it is profoundly relativistic and banal; not turned toward making such considerations. This is true, above all, for the so-called North American spirit.

This seems to me the point of points. After perceiving well what is an absolute, departing from this notion, the person comes to the conclusion that somewhere there must exist a Being that is the Absolute itself, which must be a Person.

This sense of the absolute is very important; it is necessary for the spirit to be rich in these perceptions for it to go further.

a. Do the absolutes exist or are they creations of the imagination?

The certainty that the absolutes exist and the fact that they are only explained by another order comes first of all from that sense of the absolute, which seems to me to be the true beginning of Wisdom in this order of things. The beginning of Wisdom is this richness of the sense of the absolute.

b. Doors of the soul

The human mind can be considered as a kind of city with doors. There are doors through which the truths with reference to God enter the human mind. These various doors correspond in the human soul to the five great proofs of the existence of God.⁴³

We are always considering these proofs not so much as needed evidences of the existence of God, but as five categories of contemplations about the role of God in the created order of the universe that we have before us. It follows that the well-formed human mind needs this truth to enter through the five doors, with more or less assistance, according to the primordial light of each person.

⁴³ See Appendix, p. 143.

c. General symphony of the proofs of God's existence

We have made an exposition of the other proofs of the existence of God that are not the five classic proofs of St. Thomas. Observing such proofs, we see that they are nothing but the application to inferior fields of the same general considerations made in the superior fields. This is something very legitimate, but it does not open particularly new horizons for our study.

What is very legitimate is to deduce from this that, in each conjunct of knowledge, these five proofs – each in its own way – are reconfirmed every time we descend lower into the field by insights of a practical character, which constitute a general symphony of the proofs of the existence of God.

This general symphony should be considered not only in what it has on the most elevated terrain, but also on a lower sphere. We see, then, that in Catholic Civilization the individual sees God not only in the metaphysical realm, but he also sees the same theme reappear in all the lesser terrains. This symphony is very important so that there is the sense of the divine in all things.

C. Evidence of the absolute

I gave a definition of the absolute, saying that it is something before which man has a living experience – an experience with a clarity that contains within itself the evidence – that such an absolute really exists, and it exists in that way, even if everyone else opposes that notion.

This is actually the point that is the source of all the calm and inner well-being of the man. A man is calmer when he is clinging to things like this, and he sinks into nervous crises when he is not holding on to them. It is the *vivência*, the living experience of the evidence.

We could give examples of this, as when St. Peter considered the gaze of Our Lord. Humanly speaking, when Our Lord looked at Peter, he saw an unsuccessful man despised by many. But that gaze, so to speak, brought St. Peter to life, making him feel certain moral values that made it worthwhile for him to break with Judea – which for him was equivalent to breaking with the world – in order to remain faithful to that gaze. And, in final analysis, this is what led him to be crucified upside down. Throughout his entire life he saw nothing but that gaze. It was an absolute that he grasped with the dizzying force of the evidence.

I would say, then, that when the individual is before an evidence like this, he is not concerned about making philosophical considerations to explain whether that evidence is true or false, because it is true. And this is a point of departure for judging a philosophy to know whether it is or is not in accordance with the evidence that he touched at that moment.

D. Study of the sensation of the absolute

Since God is acting in the universe by these various ways that correspond to the proofs, when a man finds himself before the action of God through one of these ways, at one point in his thinking he has a sensation of the absolute.

This sensation is what we will analyze here from a criteriological point of view. Is it poesy to place a criteriological problem before the spiritual problem at those moments when man feels the absolute? Is this an impalpable internal illusion or is there something that corresponds to a perception of truth?

The word *sensation* is suspicious to the philosopher. It seems the opposite of intellectual thinking, appearing like sentimentality and poetry, and, therefore, a chimera. To speak of a sensation of the absolute seems to indicate a chimera. This is the first impression we have to destroy.

There is, indisputably, a sensation of the possession of certainty. I cannot say that it is a proof that I am certain, but there is a sensation of certainty; just as there is a sensation of error, of doubt, there is also a sense of the obvious error. There is also a sensation of the good and the bad linked to the moral sense. These sensations should not only be seen as sensations, but must be justified by reasoning. It is also legitimate to analyze criteriologically the sensation of the absolute and the contingent.

How does this sensation of the absolute and the contingent come? Either by way of abstraction or symbolism, a man comes to consider that something is contingent and that something is absolute, eternal and necessary. He practices an intellective act, which is not just an authentic act of the intellect like any other, but which is, in relation to other intellective acts, like the noble to the commoner or the king to the plebeian. Because it is an intellective act of such a superior category, so super-eminent, that it gives him a much greater sense of certainty. This is what prototypically is a thought and also a certainty. **This cognition of the absolute generates in the person a sensation of certainty greater than the sensation of certainty generated by evidence.**

Even the evidence of visible things causes a sensation of certainty lesser than the sensation of certainty given by the cognition of the absolute in this form. It is easier to believe that these pieces of furniture are not in this room or that I am not on Rua Martim Francisco than to believe that an absolute that I have seen is wrong. As St. Teresa said, if the whole heaven would open to prove that the Catholic Church is false, she would not believe it. This is because the certainties we have in the Catholic Church participate in certainties of this type.

This super-eminent sensation of certainty, this truth, as soon as it is known, presents itself to the will as a good, a super-eminent good, which also determines a plenitude of the condition of being. This is also, prototypically, what it is to desire or to will. Hence, the man's strength of his will comes from the fact he has absolutes. The man who does not have absolutes has no strength of will.

This produces in the sensibility a sensation also proper to the sensation that the abstraction produces in the sensibility, which is a sensation *par excellence*, which reverberates in his *obscure chamber*, given the unity of man and given the simultaneity of these operations, which reverberate as only one action, in a single position.

a. The sensation of the absolute is an essentially religious act

The sensation of the absolute is an act essentially religious, above all when man knows that there is necessarily One Being who embodies all these values in a way that is eternal, immutable, necessary, etc.

It is clear that it is a religious act that did not enter the soul through Revelation but through reason, and which participates in some way in natural religion. In the supernatural order, grace dispenses precious and continuous assistance so that this act is not only natural, but is an act in which the natural elements enter in a greater proportion than in, for example, an act of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which is a purely supernatural act.

If this act exists, the sensation of the absolute exists; it is necessary for the disclosure of the plans of Providence. So then, true piety should cultivate it, rather than taking a jealous attitude toward it; rather, it should establish this natural religious act in relation to the supernatural religious act like the staircase that goes around a monument, or like the grilled gates and gardens of the monument that serve as a frame for it. They lead man to know it, to love it and to admire it adequately.

b. The sensation of the absolute & the religious role of temporal society

There is a difference here between our position and the *white heresy* attitude, which is ignorant and jealous of this natural religious act. This act also helps one to understand the religious role of temporal society. While the role of the Church is to lead toward the making of the supernatural religious act – not forgetting that she also has a role in the other point – the role of temporal society is to lead toward generating this religious act in the natural terrain, although temporal society should also lead to the supernatural.

E. Positions of soul in the face of the absolute

We can distinguish different positions before the absolute.

a. Living experience or *vivência* of the absolute

Now we pass to study the question of the *vivência* of the absolute. We give the following meaning to the word *vivência*: We have two types of men, the man who does not identify himself with any absolute, and the man who makes the absolute his patrimony, the love of his life. The *vivência* of the absolute – according to this terminology – would be not just to feel the absolute, but, so to speak, to be married to the absolute, to be one with the absolute.

We should not, however, confuse the *vivência* of the absolute with sensation of the absolute. *Vivência* is not the sensation. *Vivência* would be profoundly linked *to*, or *with* it.

We have two ways the individual sees the absolute: *the first way*, through reason and abstraction; *the second*, through symbols and the senses. Seeing does not mean loving. One can see and not identify oneself with something, because love here means to identify oneself with something.

We must still look at one other meaning that we do not adopt.

To live the absolute would be, in function of a symbol, to perceive with love what this symbol reflects. To have only a taste of what the symbol reflects would not be to have a *vivência* or living experience of it.

b. *Conversio ad phantasmata* in the *vivência* of the absolute

Studying the *vivência* of the absolute, we said that the only true *vivência* of the absolute is when the absolute is united to the *conversio ad phantasmata* (conversion to images). In that moment the absolute acquires all the life and sense of reality that it should have.

There are two degrees of the *conversio ad phantasmata* of the plenitude of the concept of absolute. *In the first degree*, we can have the *vivência* of the absolute and, therefore, the concept that we have of this absolute can be very upright and full, with this concept being in accordance with everything that the reality presents. That is to say, it is a concept that relies neither on Romanticism nor on pure Cartesian theory.

For example, this *vivência* can be experienced by a soldier who goes to war for the first time. He has a whole notion of the absolute of courage that is very upright and correct, very realistic, but he has never fought.

The *second degree* of the *conversio ad phantasmata* is that of the person who, in addition to having a very upright idea of the absolute of courage, has fought in a battle and knows by *vivência* what the absolute of courage is. In the concrete fight on the battlefield, he enriched his first concept of courage with many images taken from the reality of war that made his notion of the absolute of courage fully realized. Through the *vivência* he completed the *conversio ad phantasmata* of that absolute. This person is the one who has a complete knowledge of that concept.

But then, can someone who does not have the experience still have a very upright concept of the absolute? He can, and he can have it even more perfectly than the one who fought. This is the case, for example, of St. Therese of Lisieux, who never did the apostolate in the missions, but identified herself so strongly with the missionary apostolate that today she is the patron saint of missionaries. But here we enter the terrain of exceptions.

The normal is that the concepts come to be realized, at least in part. The contemplative vocation itself is extraordinary because it escapes the rule that prevails for common men.

c. Types of adhesion given to the images of the absolute: the *transforming union*

This question of adhesion to the images (the images of the *conversio ad phantasmata*) is a very complex operation composed of various parts. The first would be a type of taste for the thing, followed immediately by a type of assimilation, absorption or nourishing of the spirit with it. It is properly what we would call the *transforming union* with the thing.

This *transforming union* can take place in many ways. By being in contact with the courtesy of an Eastern man, I can assimilate something of it; thus I live it because I transformed myself into something of it. But I can also not assimilate it, but rather just note the affinities and the harmonic differences between what is the courtesy of the West. Thus, by a process of differentiation I live more fully as myself, and live more fully the common background that exists between it and myself, Differentiation helped me to better realize myself. One can even have a type of special *vivência* of the good in the face of the evil by means of contrast, which is something very precious.

d. Children of darkness

A very important observation: In the face of the absolute there is another action besides this loving *vivência*. There can also be a refusal of the *vivência* or a *vivência* full of hatred. For someone to hate the absolute supposes that he saw it through his intelligence or his senses, but he execrated it in a militant action against it. Instead of being inside the wall of the absolute defending it, he is outside attacking it. But in fact it is in function of the wall of the absolute that the positions are defined.

e. The lukewarm

In addition to those who are inside and outside the wall defending or attacking the absolute, there is a whole world of people who eat, drink, sleep, walk, exercise, etc. who do not actually deny the absolute in the sense of combating it, but they deny it in the sense of making an abstraction of it.

This making an abstraction of the absolute has its ranges. Because there is one kind of making an abstraction that does not take the absolute into consideration or think about it: It simply organizes life as if the absolute did not exist. The spirit of the Rotary Club is a good example of this.

But there is also the role of the Catholic lukewarm man who, in fact, takes into consideration the absolute, but does so in a loose and relative way. There is not a rejection in it, a sin of heresy. It can even not be a mortal sin, but it is the typical phenomenon of lukewarmness. It is an action so frequent in mankind and responsible for so many wrong things that it must be classified as an explicit action.

The lukewarm takes the absolute into consideration, but at such a distance that it is equivalent to a poorly enunciated doubt. We see the importance of this in the Gospels in which Our Lord so often denounces this position. For example, those who did not go to the King's banquet did not do so out of enmity, but because they did not take the King's invitation seriously.

f. Various degrees of doubt

I cannot close without showing that the word doubt here can be understood with a great variety of *nuances*. There is a doubt that undisputedly calls into question a particular certainty. But there is another that almost cannot be called doubt, but participates in some way with doubt.

It is a fact that, facing a certain truth, one can have less certainty than the truth requests. In the end the spirit takes a hesitant position before that truth, without having doubt, properly speaking.⁴⁴

What causes this is that the human mind is constituted in such a way that a man is only capable of fully accepting the most onerous consequences of a truth when he has a high degree of certainty about that truth. When he has a lower degree of certainty, he does not find enough gasoline in himself to accept all the onerous consequences. This is not doubt, but a smaller degree of certainty than necessary from which he easily does not draw great consequences. However, an uncertain position about that absolute is born that, at its root, is not a doubt.

The person does not doubt the truth of that absolute, but doubts the degree of conviction that he has. Here there is a certain ferment of doubt.

This enters strongly into the attitude of the nonchalant Catholic and his non-acceptance of the absolute.

F. Relationships between the external & internal orders in the soul; search for the meeting point between the moral order & the ontological order to clarify the *transforming union*

In this office we see some columns, a jar, a lamp, a niche. These objects are placed in a symmetrical and ordered way and my soul is pleased to consider this order and symmetry. But it is not just "the pleasure" of seeing this, for this would be easy to explain. I also say that, in considering this symmetry, this symmetry is, as it were, being transfused into my soul, and it gains an enrichment of symmetry from this.

My soul, so to speak, eats and breathes this symmetry, and by a process of metabolism, incorporates this symmetry that I see. The problem is how can this ingestion of symmetry be explained? How does this phenomenon take place?

We would say that my soul is capable of being ordered. The order that exists in exterior things is the realization within them of the same principles that are realized in my soul when it becomes ordered. Thus, when I consider things that have an order similar to that which my soul is capable, my soul becomes more ordered.

In the face of such exterior things, the soul is not only like a mirror that fleetingly reflects the images which then leave it, but rather it is like silver nitrate that fixes the images and conserves their photographs. It is much more than a silver nitrate that fixes the image to make a photograph;

⁴⁴ In other studies, Prof. Plinio analyzes what he called the "Theory of the Fringes" The 'fringes' of the light of the day, which momentarily linger on the horizon when the darkness of night falls, give us a metaphor of our process of convictions. The fringes of a rug, which represent a transition between the body of the rug and the floor and reveal parts of the floor, can thus express an analogous process. Indeed, at times we adhere to absolutes with a little less love and certainty than they deserve. The consequent lack of conviction, like the fringes of a rug, contains elements of uncertainty that, as the time goes by, may contaminate the body of certainties a man has regarding that absolute. When a historical moment comes in the life of that man when he is under great pressure, that fringe of uncertainty may play a decisive role by influencing him to take a dishonorable position.

it is a living body that assimilates what is outside, transforming it, so to speak, into its own substance.

This notion gains in richness when we consider that, in reality, the principles of the aesthetics and the ethics of the universe are realized *par excellence* in the soul and, only secondarily, in objects extrinsic to the soul. So, the ordering of which my soul is capable is a reflection of those laws of aesthetics and ethics of the universe. In parallel, the ordering that I admire outside myself is also a reflection of those laws. So, when I admire them, that admiration wakes up the potentiality that is sleeping in my soul and makes my soul more akin with those principles of order.

Therefore, what happens is not that my soul actually inhales these principles inside itself, but something different. My soul has the potentiality, the capacity to set those principles of the ethics and aesthetics of the universe to work within itself; and these external things, by the mechanism of admiration I have just described, operate as if to activate these potentialities that are dormant within myself.

This leads my soul to the great operation of transforming from potency to act the rich potentialities that it has, and of doing this according to the principles of the ethics and aesthetics of the universe.

- **What does this resolve? And what does it not resolve?**

What this resolves is easy to see: The absolute that we are called to admire in persons, society and creation grows inside of our souls insofar as we admire it in the external world.

What is important to see is what it does not resolve. What are the problems that lie outside the margins of this topic of the *transforming union*?

The first series of problems is this:

- Given the spiritual nature of the human soul, what are the rules of the aesthetics of the universe that apply to the *transforming union*?
- The concept of order can seem to apply only to composite beings, whose parts are strongly related to one another. How can this idea of order apply to a soul, which is a very simple spiritual being, not a composite being?
- This objection is true above all regarding the angel. How can an angel have this order, when he is not a composition of heterogeneous parts, but is a simple spiritual being?

This series of problems enters into the realization of the the ethical and aesthetical orders of the universe, and thus is a very important question.

Underlying it is another problem, which I regard as still more important.

- In what sense can it be said that ethics is the matrix of aesthetics? The distinction between the logical order and the moral order is a very legitimate distinction, but it is a distinction that cannot be taken beyond the limits proper to it. It happens that the moral order in the

soul has something intrinsically ontological, corresponding to a certain ontological reality within the soul itself.

- So then, what is the juncture point of these two orders?
- Why is it important for the MNF to study it?

It is because only by understanding this point of juncture will we understand the *transforming union* in its essence; the *transforming union* which is where all the transformations of the universe converge. We can only understand the movement – the human process – by understanding the goal to which it tends.

I emphasize that it becomes increasingly clear that the most meticulous, rigorous and exact possible understanding of the *transforming union* in its natural and supernatural senses illuminates all the aspects of our work in an extraordinary way.

There would still be a series of problems relating to contingency, to disinterested love, etc. that should be studied in light of what I have just said.

- What is disinterested love in all this?
- Is disinterested love situated inside the process of the *transforming union*?
- Or is there another terrain for it different from this?

This is very important, so much so that a certain intuition makes us see that the pinnacle of *transforming union* lies in disinterested love, and that it is actually to the measure that a man has disinterested love that he transforms himself. Disinterested love is that which transforms, because it is an act by which man abandons himself to live completely for another.

Here there would be a whole constellation of problems to deal with at the opportune moment.

The First Commandment teaches us to love God with all our heart and all our soul, etc., that is, to love with all the modalities of our love. Therefore, interested love also has to necessarily enter into this plenitude of love, which is the realization of the *transforming union*.

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CHAPTER II

THE PROCESS OF HATRED & OF VICE

1. Observations on the Capital Vice

Parallel to the *primordial light* that shows man how to fulfill his contingency and reach the absolute he is called to love, each man has a *capital vice* that leads him in the opposite direction. Let us address it now.

A. Deliberations

For us to understand the mechanism of deliberations, we would need to see the different types of deliberations of man.

Let us take the example of the child who is going to bathe in the sea. The child, radiant with joy, goes to Santos (a beach city in the State of São Paulo, Brazil) to take a sea bath. He puts on his bathing clothes at home thinking of the sea. He goes to the beach and, when he sees the sea, he is ecstatic.

When the time comes for him to make contact with the sea and to feel the wetness and the coldness of the water on his body, his whole prior deliberation, which was cloudless, is reconsidered in the mind of the child. In such a way that if some older person were not there to demand that the child enter the water and carry out his previous deliberation, he and many other children could return home without entering the water.

What does this prove? It proves that a deliberation has such a depth that is only entirely tested when it is put into practice. This last step completes the deliberation.

Thus, the child only fully completes the deliberation to enter the sea when he resolves to resist the disagreeable coldness of the first contact with the water; afterwards the integral habitual deliberation is formed. The child habituates himself to the shock and regularly jumps into the water. The deliberation is pre-made.

I would say that the execution of certain deliberations, whether for the 1st, 2nd, 5th or the nth time, require a new act of will each time that goes to the end, while, in other cases, the act of will is made only once.

I would end by saying that there are certain matters where the man, at every moment, needs to make his deliberation anew.

B. Notes about the capital vice & the primordial light

- The capital vice is diametrically opposed to the highest point of the primordial light.

- The point of greatest struggle at a given moment is not always against the capital vice. It can be the temporary defect that is being combated, which, however, is deeply influenced by the capital vice. For example, in the sin of impurity, Solomon was powerfully influenced by his vice of denying wisdom.
- In every spirit there is something toward which it tends: This something is the filling of a lacuna in his being. Accepting the lacuna in peace and seeking to fill it in peace is the primordial light. Revolting against it is the capital vice. And, in that sense, one is the opposite of the other.
- At a given moment, the capital vice may not be what most solicits the person. But it always represents the greatest weight that attracts the person to evil. Likewise, the primordial light is always the greatest force that attracts the person to good, although it is not always the point most sharply in focus.
- Every man has a tendency to get irritated with his primordial light. The primordial light is heavy. There is a special incompatibility when it meticulously goes up against our capital vice.
- Man tends toward his capital vice in a very intense way. And only by exercising a very strong pressure in the opposite sense can he conquer it.

C. Does vice destroy the personality?

To this question, in theory we can respond saying that vice, taken to its final consequences, leads man to a complete de-personalization, because vice is a negative element.

But in practice, considering how vice influences and advances in persons, we see that even when taken as far as plausible, vice does not reach a complete de-personalization. Thus, for example, is the case of the Devil. Sin went as far as it could go in him, but he still conserved his own personality.

Thus, we cannot say purely and simply that vice destroys the personality. *Per se*, yes. But in concrete, the thing is different.

2. Criteriological problems

A. The total loss of the whole notion of good

The loss of the pure notion of good, personified in God, that the child has takes place by stages. It is not from one moment to another that this notion falls apart, disintegrating in the head of the child. Rather, this picture becomes smudged in one point or another.

In regard to this decay, we observe that it can happen that the child loses this notion of good in a more or less complete way. When this happens, the child becomes evil and knows that evil is evil and desires it. And, he does so with such a dose of deliberation, it becomes a sin of the spirit.

B. The partial loss of the notion of good

There is another eventuality whose consideration is more important for us. It is the partial loss of the notion of good that takes place. This happens in such a way that the child loses the notion of a layer of the whole concept of good, a layer of that personification in God, maintaining the other layers almost entirely intact.

This is what happens in the great heresies.

In the first case, where the notion of good is lost entirely, the person is bad. He knows that he is evil and has a shamelessness that even prevents him from falling into heresies, in the proper sense of the word. It is the case of the atheist who, being boldly bad, mocks Religion and does not care about heretical disputes over Religion.

In the second hypothesis, however, the person continues to practice Religion – or a religion – still wanting to be good and be recognized as a good man. He begins to find doctrinal justifications for all his erroneous principles.

While the former falls into a crass atheism, the latter falls into heresy. This heresy can be considered in two distinct ways:

- The heresy that reaches an explicit formulation;
- The heresy that does not become formulated as such. In this case the person continues admitting in principle all of the Catholic doctrine. He accepts all the dogmas, agrees with what is said, etc., but in his way of acting and being, therefore, in what in him is not the thinking head – the *first head* – he lives in accordance with those unformulated principles; in this living and active side of his personality – the *second head* – he accepted the heretical principles.

C. Fidelity to the *first vision* & criteriological problems

When a person preserves from his *first vision* a fidelity that refers only to some points and does not want to accept other points, he falls into a contradiction. Then, one of the ways to try to overcome this contradiction is to invent a criteriological problem.

Let us consider a man who accepts everything of God but revolts against His justice. He will try to find a justification for this rejection by emphasizing the goodness of the Catholic Church and putting in oblivion her justice. He will end by saying that, historically speaking, the Church erred in the past when she applied justice. That initial revolt against justice made him invent a new criterion of being “orthodox,” which he did not hesitate to apply to the entire past of the Church.

That is often how criteriological questions are born.

A person does not dare to assert a certain erroneous proposition about the external world because he sees, on one hand, that it does not correspond to the logic of the external world; on the other hand, he does not want to accept that point of the external world. Then, his exit is, for example, to pretend that the external world does not exist.

I believe that German Idealism in great part is a flight from the points of the external world that the Protestant German does not understand or does not accept. By the fact of denying the Papacy – the head of the spiritual sphere – the Protestant lost the comprehension of the unity of creation. So, when this unity presents itself to him, he feels hurt by it and revolts against it. He also does not accept the suffering that comes from Original Sin. The result is that he invents a criteriology – German Idealism – according to which he denies the existence of the external world. I think that the person who wants to understand German Idealism loses his time and pollutes his mind when he dives into the nonsensical theories of those various philosophers. They themselves did not believe in what they wrote. They are all trying to find different criteria to flee the objective reality of the external world that they denied.

The different criteriologies often results from the states of spirit of persons.

3. From complacency to Satanism

The partial denial of reality descends in a slippery slope until it reaches Satanism. Let us see how this happens.

A. The transcendentals of man & his corresponding instincts

The transcendentals of man are the principles of a first evidence. Certain instincts correspond to them.

The being (*ens*), which is the object of metaphysics, is the prime concept, the most simple and fundamental of philosophy. Regarding it we find descriptive definitions such as "that which whose competence is to exist" or "that which whose action is the act of existing." So, the act of the *ens* – the being – is the *esse* – the existence. Its proper instinct is that of conservation. The so-called transcendental concepts come from this fundamental notion. They express the being from a particular point of view, but do not really distinguish themselves from it:

a. *Res* (thing) – is that by which the being tends toward its own internal perfection – the instinct of perfection.

b. *Unum* (one) – is that by which the being is a complete whole – the instinct of integrity.

c. *Aliquid* (alterity) – is that by which the being is different from the others – the instinct to keep its own characteristics.

d. *Bonum* (goodness) – is that by which the being tends toward its end – the instinct to occupy the place to which it is due in the order of the universe.

e. *Verum* (truth) – is that by which the being identifies itself with the truth – the instinct to understand and be understood.

f. *Pulchrum* (beauty) – Some Scholastic philosophers do not consider *pulchrum*, or beauty, a transcendent concept properly speaking, but a consequence of truth and goodness; *pulchrum* would be the splendor of the two other transcendentals, *bonum* and *verum*. However, it seems legitimate

to us to present *pulchrum* as an autonomous transcendent, even though it is founded on truth and goodness. Its correspondent instinct is the instinct for the contemplation of the beauty of the universe.

B. One seeming initial contradiction: the process of vice & of satanic initiation ⁴⁵

At the same time that the being is one, that is, it is a whole in itself and has alterity (otherness) in relation to other beings, it has within itself the *vivência* (living experience) of its own contingency and the tendency toward perfection. From this fact comes what seems an internal contradiction: For it simultaneously tends not to be confused with others and tends to find the fullness of itself in an exterior absolute.

Catholic doctrine sees in this apparent contradiction the source of the whole ordering of the universe, whereby the inferior, at the same time that he does not lose his personality, sees in the superior his model, his master and the reflection of the absolute he lacks and that completes him.

Gnosis gives to this contradiction unbalanced solutions that are the sources of all the heresies previous and posterior to the Revolution. At times, it says that the solution to resolve this apparent contradiction is for the man to be completely closed in on himself, at other times it affirms the solution is for the man to annihilate himself, seeing in the alterity the evil that prevents man from being integrated into a collective *Pan*.

Oscillating from one side to the other, Gnosis thus delivers men to perdition.

- **How does Satanism come from simple complacency?**

Let us see how, from a simple complacency in the field of pride or a fraudulent evasion of a requested sacrifice, the person goes through a psychological process that will lead to the most extreme Satanism.

1st stage: A complacency with oneself; an avoidance of the Cross represented by making a sacrifice, following a rule, adopting a protocol, in final analysis, making some effort.

2nd stage: The complacency leads to the exaltation of one's real – or imaginary – qualities and leads to the desire for preeminence.

Fleeing from effort begins to make the yoke of the laws and morals unbearable.

3rd stage: Both tendencies prepare the man for what we call the "dream of man." It is a stage when he delivers himself to utopian daydreams, imagining an order of things where there would be no authority above himself, where every kind of restraint were abolished and all effort extinguished.

⁴⁵ Item B to the end of this work is a resume of initiation made by the compiler in his own words, based on the vast material of the MNF.

4th stage: The man given to this dream is prepared to accept the pantheist doctrine, which is nothing but the affirmation of these tendencies. There are infinite types of Pantheisms, one for every taste. But they can be summarized as follows: In the beginning of time there was an egalitarian and liberal order of things, in which all the beings enjoyed a complete happiness because there were no inequalities among them and they were not subject to any law.

Alterity, therefore, is presented as an evil, hierarchy as a state of degradation and Creation in general as a disaster.

Thus, the man engaged in this process begins to try to annihilate his own individuality, longing for reintegration into the collective *Pan*.

5th stage: But, analyzing his own being and the universe in general, the pantheist man will raise against this philosophy a more or less explicit objection, more or less based on the experience of life: "I still feel that in me not everything is evil and that I am not an absolutely and utterly despicable creature that must be annihilated." He also perceives that in the universe there exist, along with the bad things he already sees, things that *per se* are good.

6th stage: For this objection, Gnosis has prepared an explanation – also varying according to the need – that serves to launch its initiated one degree deeper into the gnostic doctrine. In sum, it tells him the following:

"In the universe and in the being, there is in reality a struggle between two principles, one good and one evil. There was a fight between the two at the beginning of time, and the one who conquered was the bad-god, which is considered by the Catholic Church as the true God. He is the God of hierarchy, the God of sacrifice, the God of sacrality. Then the Church decided to call the good-god the Devil. But he is actually the legitimate proprietor of the divine throne, which was usurped by the bad-god. The Devil is the god of equality, the god of liberty, the god of vulgarity, whom we should serve in order to dethrone the usurper."

Needless to say that man, when he attains the degree of malice to the point of receiving this explanation, is absolutely obdurate and, in the ordinary ways of the action of grace, without possibility of conversion. Therefore, the objections that he raises do not mean that he wants to return to a better position, but rather that he is looking for a more profound justification for his hatred of hierarchy, inequality and sacrality.

7th stage: Deeply scrutinizing his interior, the man will see that the longing he had for good – and which he has entirely rejected – coincides with that which the Catholic Church teaches as good. He sees that the promise made, first by Pantheism and then by the Devil, of satisfying the desire in his being for plenitude born from contingency, was not kept. In face of this, he asks what the real truth of things is.

8th stage: In response to this last inquiry, the truth is told to him. The Devil is the Devil, God is God. And the objective of the Devil is to lose souls and do away with the order of Creation. But it must be said that this plan, consisting of successive lies presented to the initiates, is the best means to attain this goal of the perdition of souls.

C. The dream of the Devil

Even though the Devil is very lucid, he also delivers himself to certain deliriums, which he later tries to accomplish through his followers.

On one hand, the Devil is committed to the delirium that he can do away with Creation. He knows that, by losing souls, he harms the Plan of God. But he also knows that Creation of itself glorifies its Maker. That is why he hates it and desires to destroy it, desiring even his own destruction.

On the other hand, another illusion to which he surrenders himself is this: Not being able to destroy Creation, he imagines being able to submit it to himself in such a way that good would be considered evil and evil would be seen as good; thus he could dominate God himself, so that God would be considered the Bad one, the devil, and he would be considered the Good one, god

Struggling paradoxically, both lucidly and despairingly, between these two dreams, he acts in History. The pantheistic doctrines correspond to these two types of dream as presented in the 6th and 7th stages of the initiation reported above.

D. The dream of man: Its incentives

We saw that many phenomena take place like the hatching of an egg at the birth of the chick. That occurrence was prepared for about 20 days until the moment the chick broke the shell. A superficial observer would have the impression that everything took place instantaneously. But, for anyone who knows how to analyze things on a deeper level, he knows that the phenomenon had a careful preparation.

The emergence of these supposed changes of nature, dreamed of by evolutionists, which are also the object of man's own dream, also occur in the same way. A long and painful gestation was prepared, until, at a certain moment, man has the illusion that everything will break open; then a new age will come, a new man endowed with a new nature, as the anarchists suppose. Thus all will be accomplished!

It is very interesting to see that this impression that everything will be done instantaneously, for both peoples and individuals, is of enormous importance, because it creates a sense of inebriation at the moment when persons – or peoples – believe themselves to be close to this change in the very nature of things.

E. Tedium

Another observation about the dream of man concerns a contrary element, which would be the other side of the coin of the dream of man. This other side of the coin can be defined as tedium in relation to the whole established, normal, traditional order.

An example would be a child who is tempted to a sin to disobey his parents and to run freely through the streets like a ragamuffin. From the moment that he has the temptation, that child will

not only have the illusion that leaving the house and roaming the streets would be a delight – the dream of man – but also he will start to feel such a tedium with the life he has always led inside the home that this life really would seem unbearable to him. The routine will be transformed into something monstrous. The small sacrifices he has to make in the home will give him the impression of being very heavy crosses, impossible to bear.

This also happens with peoples. On the vespers of the French Revolution and in the first periods of the Revolution, one notes that the French people experienced an enormous tedium, a sensation that the *Ancien Régime* was insupportable. The same thing happens on the vespers of all the revolutions. From it comes that almost mystical *élan* found in almost every revolution. We would call this *tedium* and it would be an element concurrent with the dream of man.

At the same time it is easy to understand that this also takes place with the dream of the Devil. Because it is easy to conceive that Lucifer, before the moment of his sin, had reflected upon the eternity he would pass in an orderly subjection to God and that eternity seemed insupportable to him. At this moment, that eternal subjection gave him the impression of strangling his soul.

4. Doctrine of execration ⁴⁶

Having seen how easy is to fall into bad positions in the face of the absolute that we should admire, love and imitate, a question arises: How can I prevent myself from entering this slippery slope? The answer is: By taking a correct initial decision. To show how to do this, let us study the doctrine of execration.

A. The act of will that accompanies the first vision

When man is placed before the universe, he takes a position. This represents a movement of his sensibility and his natural capabilities, and something related to his human will also enters. It is, however, an act of will in such an initial step that we cannot call it completely an act of will.

Thus, for example, a person who is thirsty sees a glass of water in front of him. In his first movement there is not only the movement of thirst, but there is already an incomplete act of will present that says "I want water." That is to say, there is also an act of the spirit, of the intelligence, and not a mere movement of animal thirst like that of a man immersed in a profound slumber. The same is true when a man is placed before the external world.

B. Vigilance begins with that nascent act of will

It falls to man, by means of ascesis, to comprehend that in these first movements something of the volitional already enters and that he should curb this by means of a great vigilance. Thus, in the same moment in which that appetency announces itself, he should discern if it is good or bad, and

⁴⁶ See also "Pastoral Letter on the Problems of the Modern Apostolate," Part III, No. 37 - Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer.

take a position before that appetency. In this way he can reject any participation of his will in that bad movement that is rising up in him.

Characteristic of this is the fight of St. Francis Xavier who, while he was sleeping, fought against the sensual appetites that tried to accost him. During one of these struggles, the force of his will was so great that he even broke a vein of his heart and had a hemorrhage.

In this we see that, if he were a less virtuous man, he would have a type of half consent of the will in such a matter – even if it were a consent without guilt because he was sleeping. Despite this, there could be a half consent of will that he could have given, but which clearly St. Francis Xavier did not give.

Then, we reach the conclusion that what characterizes the act of will in this first movement is not an act of full will. It is a first act of incomplete and conditional will, in which the person says "I want it," but it is not an "I want it" such that the person is resolved to no matter what to carry out that act. But it is an "I want it" as if to say, "I am wanting this now, later I will make the moral debate on the matter to see if it is convenient for me." But in this is a conditional act of will.

C. The doctrine of execration

From this first idea of a conditional act of will, we can draw something else, which is the doctrine of execration.

For the person to be able to resist these first bad movements of will, he needs to be in a normal state of vigilance and execration against the evil that can appear. In this way, at the very moment that the bad volition appears, the person already makes an act repudiating it. And, at its very birth, he already expunged from it any participation of will.

This vigilant execration is something indispensable for the life of virtue. It is exactly this vigilant repudiation that marks the difference between the mentality of the counter-revolutionary Catholic and the typical Christian–Democratic Catholic. The counter-revolutionary Catholic knows that he has original sin and that an action of vigilant and suspicious execration is necessary. The Christian Democrat of a middle-of-the-road mentality thinks that such an execration is unnecessary and too exaggerated. Before evil, he harbors all types of neutralities, distinctions, sub-distinctions and, in the final account, he is complacent toward evil. Here we find one of the clearest features demarcating the difference between the liberal mentality and the counter-revolutionary mentality.

D. An application: St. Remigius & Clovis

An application of the doctrine of execration is found in the life of St. Remigius, Bishop of Reims and Apostle of the Franks (437–533). When St. Remigius was evangelizing the Franks and was describing the Passion of Christ, the Franks stood and raised high their lances shouting: "Why were we not there?!" And Clovis said: "Oh, if I and my Franks had been there this would not have happened!"

We see that they had a profound execration of all the evil that the Jews did.

Another fact along the same lines happened when St. Remigius baptized Clovis on Christmas Day in 496. The Bishop of Reims said: "Bow thy head, proud Sicambrian, burn what thou hast hitherto adored and adore what thou hast hitherto burned!"

Here are two principles of the doctrine of execration that St. Remigius gave in an extremely concise form. That is, he ordered that we should detest all that we had formerly liked to such a point that we should burn them; and that we should like all that we had persecuted to such a point that we adore them. This is correct. Burning is the most complete form of destruction. I do not know a better formulation of the principle of execration than this.

When this execration of evil is very strong in a person, he can have – in certain heterogeneous zones of the soul that obey more or less slowly the orders of the will – many miseries, many imperfections. But everything can be hoped from this soul in the order of individual ascension since he execrates, in fact, he execrates even that which through weakness at times can make him fall and costs him so much to remove himself from.

This principle leads us to understand certain statements of Our Lord about mercy toward the sinner and severity toward the Pharisee. The repentant sinners whom Our Lord received so well were the sinners who had made an execration of all the evil that they had done. Toward those evils and miseries, Our Lord showed a great mercy because of that execration. On the contrary, the Pharisee is one who makes no execration. He has a love for the bad thing and, in appearances, tries to foist it off as something good.

We have a fundamental difference with the liberals because they want to apply the principles of mercy to Pharisees who make no execration whatsoever. On the other hand, we have a great understanding for persons who may have weaknesses but who in fact make this execration. We make a discernment, as Our Lord did. Our Lord did not apply this principle without discernment. To some people He delivered words of fire on various occasions and, to others, words of honey.

E. Execration, the dominant feature of the counter-revolutionary spirit

Execration is what constitutes the true counter-revolutionary. That is, one who has a total detestation of evil and, for this reason he has true love for good. The true test of love for the good is execration of the evil, because when a person does not make this execration of evil in its totality, he in some ways accepts the principle by which one can love things that are wrong in some of their aspects and sides. By doing so, he commits a graver sin than to directly love the bad things. This is because he admits the principle that the evil, in some of its aspects, should not be execrated, should have the right of citizenship. He allows the right of existence for the evil and, with this he implicitly admits all the rest.

F. A state of execration that should be total

This principle of execration leads us to recognize that there can be a "state of execration" which should dominate all parts of our soul. That is to say, we should have a grand elevation of intentions, purposes and ideals of the fight for good, which only slowly and with unequal velocity embed themselves in various parts of the soul. This fight for good necessarily implies that one has to live in a constant state to vigilance and, consequently, in a constant state of execration.

There is no field of the soul free from or foreign to the empire of the will. This empire can be achieved in different ways and at different speeds, thanks to special graces of Our Lord, who can greatly accelerate the acquisition of this state of total and constant execration.

G. True & false execration

Execration has two modes of being. One – which is not the true one – is the way of execrating of a laundry woman of the 16th century who, passing before some Renaissance building, would look and say: "This is not right, it wasn't like that in the old days," etc. She would not be making an act of true execration. For it to be true, she would need to take a condemnatory position: "If this is not right I reject it. I reject the bad influence it has on me; I reject everything that is like this." This is something that, in a confused and implicit way, any laundry woman can think.

True execration has much flexibility regarding the weaknesses of the one who execrates. It is flexible so long as there is no compromise by a diminution of the execration. In this way intransigence reaches its final end. It is also clear that the abuse of charity can jeopardize the principle of execration. Great care must be taken not to fall into this kind of false charity.

The liberal Catholic is exactly the opposite. He is one who does not admit the principle of execration. He admits the principle when he is slightly liberal. If he is from the right wing of the liberals, he makes many execrations on particular points. But he does not make a total execration of evil and, for this reason, he is a liberal, even though, for various reasons, he can speak fiercely against some bad things. He is like a bucket that is all in one piece, but has a hole at one point and, therefore, is of no use.

* * *

CONCLUSION

Closing this study, which sought to be at the same time a summary and a compilation, it occurs to us to consider the deep consonance that the doctrine exposed here has with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

This is a consonance that, as a "most faithful echo" of all that the Church has already taught, draws from this teaching consequences and unfoldings of unprecedented originality and depth. An example of this is the explanation of the innermost part of the soul described with details astonishing in their precision and subtlety; the distinction between the *first head* and the *second head*; or even the logical concatenation of the Law of Love, which shows that dependence on one's superior or one's alienation from him is the fulcrum of the Human Process and, consequently, of History.

May Our Lady allow at least some few to ascend to the top of this sacral mountain, to this prophetic overlook; it is what we wholeheartedly ask her.

Ad majorem Mariae Gloriam

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APPENDIX

THE FIVE WAYS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

or

THE PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The *quinque viæ* ("five ways," sometimes called "five proofs") are five logical arguments regarding the existence of God summarized by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*. They are:

1st Way: Argument from Motion (Unmoved Mover)

1. There are things that are moving;
2. Now, everything that is moving is moved by another being;
3. If this other being also is moving, it, in its turn, is moved by a third being;
4. But this chain cannot be infinitely long, so there must be something that causes movement without itself moving.
5. Therefore, it is necessary to admit the existence of a first unmoved Mover;
 - a. To move is to make something pass from potency to act.
 - b. Now, that which moves should be in act, because nothing can give what it does not have.
 - c. Then, if a being could move itself, it should be, simultaneously and from the same point of view, in potency and in act, which is absurd.
 - d. Therefore, everything that is moved is moved by another being.

2nd Way: Argument of the Efficient Cause

1. We verify that there is a series of efficient causes in things in the world;
2. Now, a thing cannot be an efficient cause of itself;
3. On the other hand, a series of efficient causes cannot be infinite because without a first cause the others would not exist;
4. Therefore, it is necessary to admit the existence of a first Efficient Cause.

3rd Way: Argument of Contingence

1. We find that contingent things exist, that is, things that can be or not be;

2. Now, it is impossible for all contingent beings to always exist, because for that which can be or not be, at some time is not.
3. Then, if all beings are contingent, at some time nothing existed.
4. But, in that case, there was a time when nothing existed, which is false.
5. Then, it is necessary to admit the existence of something necessary.
6. The necessary beings, in their turn, either receive the cause of their necessity from another, or they do not receive.
7. Now, this series of necessary beings cannot reach infinity, as was proved in the efficient causes;
8. Therefore, it is necessary to admit the existence of something that exists of its own necessity.

4th Way: Argument of Degrees of Perfection

1. We perceive in the world things that are more and less – in various degrees – good, true, noble, etc.;
2. Now, the more and the less are applied to different beings in the measure that they approach the different degrees of something that is supreme, e.g. something is warmer the more it approaches what is warm in the highest degree;
3. Then, something exists that is the most true, most excellent, most noble, and, consequently, it is a being in the maximum degree because that which is true in the maximum degree is a being in the maximum degree, as Aristotle says.
4. Now, that which is supreme in a certain genus is the cause of all that belongs to that genus, such as fire, which is the supreme heat and the cause of all heat.
5. Therefore, something exists that is for all beings the cause of their being, goodness and every other perfection.

5th way: Argument of the government of things

1. We find that there are irrational beings that operate in order to reach an end, because they always or almost always act the same way and reach that which is excellent.
2. Now, these beings cannot reach their end by chance, but they have to be oriented by some cognizant and intelligent being, like an arrow that reaches its target directed by an archer.
3. Therefore, an intelligent being exists through whom all the irrational beings are ordered to their end.

* * *

VOCABULARY

Absolute - It is the Being that exists by itself. Or, by analogy, a virtue or a truth that, dwelling in a being, represents to its inferior the Absolute Being.

Aesthetics of the Universe - It is the created universe seen in its architecture, the functioning of its laws and especially its beauty.

Axiological Principle - It is the principle according to which the created universe is one, good and harmonic and, for this reason, maintains its own order and naturally tends toward its end.

Contingence - It is the limitation, or the lack of plenitude, proper to all created beings.

Convertio ad Phantasma (plural, *phantasmata*) - It is the mental operation through which a man looks for an example in his imagination – a phantom – that adequately translates an abstract concept caught by his intelligence.

First Head - It is the part of the human intelligence common to the angel, that is, the part that catches abstract truths and is capable of abstractions.

Second Head - It is the part of the human intelligence common to the animal. It catches the living reality with all its nuances through the senses. It has the necessary tools to acquire symbolic knowledge.

Law of Love - It is the law according to which the inferior must blissfully depend on his superior. It is the law of alienation.

Moral Order - It is the order that studies the disposition of beings moving toward their final goal.

Obscure Chamber - It is the most profound zone of the human soul from where the acts of intelligence and will are born. It is the pinnacle of the soul in which the conscious does not strive to make everything that exists there explicit. Hence, "obscure."

Ontological Order - It is the order that studies the internal hierarchy of the beings in themselves, without considering their exterior goal.

Prophyrian Tree - It is the figurative representation by which the general ideas encompass the particular ideas. This subordination is directly related to the subject matter encompassed by the ideas. Porphyry imagined this hierarchy in the form of a tree.

Society of Souls - It is the Catholic society that mainly considers the relationships among the souls, their reciprocal influences, the laws that direct them, etc. This does not mean that there are two societies, one of the souls and one of the bodies. It is simply a name to emphasize the more important part of the social life.

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