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IMMORTALITY: EXPERIENCE AND SYMBOL *

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I

IMMORTALITY is one of the language symbols engendered by a class of experiences to which we refer as the varieties of religious experience. This term is perhaps no longer the technically best one but it has the advantage of a great precedent, especially here at Harvard. Hence, its use will be convenient to secure, I hope, a common and immediate understanding about the subject-matter of inquiry.

The symbols in question intend to convey a truth experienced. Regarding this intent, however, they suffer from a peculiar disability. For, in the first place, the symbols are not concepts referring to objects existing in time and space but carriers of a truth about nonexistent reality. Moreover, the mode of nonexistence pertains also to the experience itself, inasmuch as it is nothing but a consciousness of participation in nonexistent reality. As Hebrews 11:1 has it: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen." And finally, the same mode also pertains to the meaning of the symbols, as they convey no other truth than that of the engendering consciousness. We have spoken, therefore, of a truth experienced rather than of a truth attaching to the symbols. As a consequence, when the experience engendering the symbols ceases to be a presence located in the man who has it, the reality from which the symbols derive their meaning has disappeared. The symbols in the sense of a spoken or written word, it is true, are left as traces in the world of sense perception, but their meaning can be understood only if they evoke, and through evocation reconstitute, the engendering reality in the listener or reader. The symbols exist in the

* The Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality, delivered at Harvard Divinity School on January 14, 1965.

world, but their truth belongs to the nonexistent experience which by their means articulates itself.

The intangibility of the experience just adumbrated exposes the symbols and their truth to strange vicissitudes of history. Because of the vanishing substratum, even the most adequate exegesis and articulation of an experience can achieve no more than symbols which remain as the exterior residue of an original full truth comprising both the experience and its articulation. As soon, however, as the symbols have separated from this fulness and acquired the status of a literary account, the intimate tension between a reality engendering and symbols engendered, holding in balance the identity and difference of the two poles, is liable to dissociate into a piece of information and its subject-matter. There is no guaranty whatsoever that the reader of the account will be moved to a meditative reconstitution of the engendering reality; one may even say the chances are slim, as meditation requires more energy and discipline than most people are able to invest. The truth conveyed by the symbols, however, is the source of right order in human existence; we cannot dispense with it; and, as a consequence, the pressure is great to restate the exegetic account discursively for the purpose of communication. It may be translated, for instance, into simple propositions, rendering what the translator considers its essential meaning, for use on the secondary level of instruction and initiation. If submitted to such proceedings, for quite respectable purposes, the truth of the account will assume the form of doctrine or dogma, of a truth at second remove, as for instance the propositions "Man is immortal" or "The soul is immortal." Moreover, dogmatic propositions of this kind are liable to condition corresponding types of experience, such as fideistic acceptance or even more deficient modes of understanding. There is the seminarian, as a Catholic friend once bitterly remarked, who rather believes in Denzinger's *Enchiridion* than in God; or, to avoid any suspicion of confessional partisanship, there is the Protestant fundamentalist; or, to avoid any suspicion of professional partisanship, there is the professor of philosophy who informs you about Plato's "doctrine" of the soul, or of the idea, or of truth, though to conceive of Plato as a promoter of doctrine is preposterous.

Even the transformation into doctrine, however, is not the last loss that truth can suffer. When doctrinal truth becomes socially dominant, even the knowledge of the processess by which doctrine derives from the original account, and the original account from the engendering experience, may get lost. The symbols may altogether cease to be translucent for reality. They will, then, be misunderstood as propositions referring to things in the manner of propositions concerning objects of sense perception; and since the case does not fit the model, they will provoke the reaction of scepticism on the gamut from a Pyrrhonian suspense of judgment, to vulgarian agnosticism, and further on to the smart idiot questions of "How do you know?" and "How can you prove it?" that every college teacher knows from his class room. We have reached T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* with its broken images:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

II

I have tried to suggest the phenomena of original account, dogmatic exposition, and sceptical argument as a sequence that can attach itself to every experience of nonexistent reality when it becomes articulate and, through its symbols, enters society as an ordering force. In some instances, when the sequence attaches itself to the great ordering experiences of philosophy and Christian faith, it is discernible as a structure in historical processes of infinite complexity. A recall, even if it can be no more than the barest hint, of these wide-arched courses will be of help in determining not only our own position in them but the very sense we can make of an inquiry concerning Immortality today.

In our civilization, the sequence has run its course twice: once in antiquity, and once in medieval and modern times. In antiquity, there emerges from the culture of the myth the noetic experience of the Hellenic thinkers. They have left, as the ex-

egesis of their experience, the literary corpus of classic philosophy. The exegetic philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, then, is followed by the dogmatic philosophy of the schools. And the dogmatism of the schools, finally, is accompanied, ever since the first generation after Aristotle, by the sceptical reaction. At the turn from the second to the third century A.D., the vast, accumulated body of sceptical argument was collected and organized by Sextus Empiricus. The second cycle is more complicated than the first one, inasmuch as the sequence attaches itself to the truth of both philosophy and revelation. The crack in the precarious balance of a Christian order becomes unmistakable in the high Middle Ages, with the ominous bifurcation of faith and fideism in the parallel movements of Mysticism and Nominalism. In the sixteenth century, a Christianity that has become doctrinaire explodes in the wars of religion; and their devastations, both physical and moral, arouse wave after wave of disgust with dogmatism, be it theological or metaphysical. Still within the sixteenth century, the revulsion crystallizes in the so-called *crise pyrrhoniennne* with its reintroduction of Sextus Empiricus into the arsenal of antidogmatic argument. And with the seventeenth century begins the incredible spectaculum of modernity — both fascinating and nauseating, grandiose and vulgar, exhilarating and depressing, tragic and grotesque — with its apocalyptic enthusiasm for building new worlds that will be old tomorrow, at the expense of old worlds that were new yesterday; with its destructive wars and revolutions spaced by temporary stabilizations on ever lower levels of spiritual and intellectual order through natural law, enlightened self-interest, a balance of powers, a balance of profits, the survival of the fittest, and the fear of atomic annihilation in a fit of fitness; with its ideological dogmas piled on top of the ecclesiastic and sectarian ones and its resistant scepticism that throws them all equally on the garbage heap of opinion; with its great systems built on untenable premises and its shrewd suspicions that the premises are indeed untenable and therefore must never be rationally discussed; with the result, in our time, of having unified mankind into a global madhouse bursting with stupendous vitality.

Madness in the sense of the word here used — it is the Aeschy-

lean sense of *nosos* — is a pneumatopathological state, a loss of personal and social order through loss of contact with nonexistent reality. Where in this madhouse is there room for a rational discussion of Immortality which presupposes the very contact with reality that has been lost — if there is any room at all?

Well, there is such room — and even more of it than we are sometimes inclined to suppose. For a man does not cease to be man, even when he runs amuck in worlds of his own making, and a madness of the spirit is never quite undisturbed by a knowledge of its madness, however skilfully suppressed. The violent phase of the madness we call modernity is accompanied throughout by thinkers who, correctly diagnosing its cause, set about to remedy the evil by various attempts at recapturing reality. In the seventeenth century, a Descartes tries, in his *Meditations*, to find the safe ground of philosophizing beyond dogmatism and scepticism in an immediate experience. Early in the nineteenth century, Hegel states in so many words that we can escape from senseless dogmatism only through penetrating again to experience and he undertakes the dialectical speculation of his *Phaenomenologie* for this purpose. In our own century, the work of William James and Henri Bergson has set great landmarks of such endeavor. This task of reestablishing contact with nonexistent reality, however, is not easy; and the task of making the attempts socially effective is even less so. It would be difficult to detect any lasting imprints the work of individual thinkers has left on the vast expanse of intellectual mud that covers the public scene; the madness seems to go as strong as ever, and only an Hobbesian fear of death puts on the brakes. And yet, discouraging as the results may be, progress of a sort seems to me undeniable.

In order to establish the criteria by which progress in this matter is to be gauged, I shall advert to a classic document of openness toward experiences of nonexistent reality, to William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). If you examine the Index of the book, you will find no reference to the most important literary texts that articulate such experiences and elaborate with care on the question of Immortality. In vain you will look for the names of Plato and Aristotle; Christ is not men-

tioned; and the two references to St. Paul refer to passages in which he is quoted by other authors. These observations are not meant to criticize James; they rather want to characterize the situation of science at the beginning of the century, when the fundamental texts were so far below the threshold of general debate that even the catholicity of a James could not become aware of their relevance to his purpose. On Immortality in particular, he has no more than a brief page, urbane in form but grumpy in mood — an understandable mood, as Immortality presented itself to him in popular imaginings of the kind that were spoofed about the same time by E. M. Forster in his satirical short stories. The turn of the century, one must remember, was a difficult time for men of a philosophical bent, so bad a time indeed that a Wilhelm Dilthey refrained for a decade from publishing because he deemed the effort useless.

Since the beginning of the century, the situation has changed substantially. On the one hand, the spiritual disease has manifested itself massively in bouts of global war and revolution; on the other hand, the experiences of transcendence are being recaptured in a peculiarly backhanded manner. For the experiences which had been reduced to shadows by dogmatic incrustations, and seemed to be removed from the realm of the living by the successive attacks of antitheologism and antimetaphysicism, have returned from limbo by the back door of historical knowledge. To a field that apparently had been cleared of them so they would not disturb the futuristic dreams of *paradis artificiels*, they are being reintroduced as “facts of history” — through the exploration of myth, of the Old and New Testament, of apocalyptic and gnostic movements, through comparative religion, Assyriology, Egyptology, classical philology, and so forth. This renewed knowledge about experiences on which depends the order in personal and social existence makes itself felt even now in an increasingly accurate diagnosis of the contemporary disorder and its causes; and it would be surprising if it did not become a living force, sooner or later, in the actual restoration of order.

Since the opening years of the century, thus, the intellectual scene has changed indeed. Today, a philosopher can responsibly engage in an inquiry concerning Immortality, supported as he

is by the comparative materials the historical sciences put at his disposition as well as by fairly advanced sciences of experiences and their symbolization. I shall now turn to the analysis of a representative case.

III

As the purpose of this inquiry is not a description of symbols but an analysis of the experiences engendering them, our choice of a case is narrowly determined by requirements of method. For, on the one hand, the case selected should be an historically early one, in order to avoid questions which otherwise might arise with regard to the traditional character of the symbols and a correspondingly suspect authenticity of the experience. But, on the other hand, it has to be culturally late enough for an exegesis of the experience to be so articulate that the connection between the truth experienced and the symbols expressing it will be intelligible beyond a doubt. The case that will satisfy both requirements is an anonymous text from the Egypt of the First Intermediate Period, c. 2000 B.C., an early reflection on the experiences of life, death, and immortality, distinguished by excellence of analysis. The text is known as the "Dispute of a Man, Who Contemplates Suicide, With His Soul."

The first part of the *Dispute*, only imperfectly preserved, presents an argument between the Man and his Soul. The Man is driven to despair by the troubles of a disordered age and wants to cast off a life that has become senseless; the Soul is introduced as the speaker who militates against the decision. As far as the imperfect state of preservation permits us to understand the rationale of speech and counterspeech, the argument moves through three phases. The first bout of the struggle between Man and his Soul is concerned with the idea of life as a gift of the gods. Since life is not a man's property to be thrown away when it becomes burdensome but an endowment to be treated as a trust under all conditions, the Soul can point to the command of the gods and the wisdom of the sages which both prohibit the shortening of the allotted span. But Man knows how to plead: the disintegration of order, both personal and public, in the sur-

rounding society deprives life of any conceivable meaning, so that exceptional circumstances will justify a violation of the rule before the gods. In the second bout, there arises the question of immortality in the conventional sense. Man tries to make the decision palatable to his Soul by promising proper provision for burial and sacrifice, so that its sojourn in the beyond will be pleasant. Unfortunately, however, the Soul belongs to the sophisticated variety and proves impervious to conventional promises. It seems to be familiar with sceptical thought about the probabilities of after-life; it knows that nobody has ever come back from over there to tell the living about the state of the soul in the beyond. But Man proves no less resistant than his Soul. A third and last bout becomes necessary because he is not to be swayed by scepticism. That makes for a difficult situation. For what can you do with a man who will not find his peace of mind either with conventional belief or with conventional scepticism! Hence, the Soul now has to proceed to a radical attack on the core of Man's misery: Man is in deadly anguish, because he takes life seriously and cannot bear existence without meaning. But why be so serious? Why not simply not despair? Man should enjoy the pleasures of the moment as they come: "Pursue the happy day and forget care." This ultimate argument was in common use at the time, as we know from other sources, such as the "Song of the Harper." In the present context, however, it gains a new meaning, because it is not accepted as a counsel of worldly wisdom but sensed as the ultimate indignity inflicted on Man in the agony of his existence. The counsel sets off the spiritual crisis that had been in the making. Man is incensed by the baseness of the advice and expresses his distaste:

Behold, my name will reek through thee
 More than the stench of bird droppings
 On summer days, when the sky is hot.

Before this outburst the Soul falls silent; its resources are exhausted. Man is now alone with himself to face the decision.

A brief reflection on this first part will clarify its function in the *Dispute* as well as its import with regard to some questions raised earlier in this inquiry.

The arguments of the Soul try to open ways out of an impasse that characteristically may induce a solution through suicide. These arguments, however, suffer from a curious tinge of unreality; we can bring it out by wording them colloquially: this life is god-given and not yours to throw away at will; besides, you can't be sure of a life beyond, so better hold on to what you've got; and finally, don't be so pompous about the meaning of life, don't assume that holier-than-thou attitude, be one of the boys and have a good time like everybody else. If in this manner we transpose the essence of the argument into American colloquialism, its seriousness will become suspect. The first part would, then, appear as an ironic exhibition of popular arguments used at the time in debates about the meaning of life; and the irony would imply an understanding of the arguments as expressions of existence in a deficient mode. It looks as if the surrounding society were to be characterized as suffering from a severe loss of ordering reality, manifesting itself in the vulgarian character of the argument; as if the troubles of the age were to be understood, not simply as a breakdown of government on the pragmatic level, perhaps caused by the disfavor of the gods, but as events somehow connected with a disintegration of existential order. A characterization of this type is possible, of course, only if the alternative to the deficient mode is a living force in the author, so that he can use the presence of reality experienced as a standard by which to judge society. The situation of the Man in the *Dispute*, then, would not differ very much from that of a Man in our own time: to live in a society that lives by vulgar *clichés* of piousness, scepticism, and hedonism is trying enough to make a Man look for an oasis of reality — even if, in order to reach it, he will not necessarily resort to the radical means of suicide.

This interpretation, though it sounds anachronistic, is not a piece of venturesome surmise. It is confirmed by the construction of the *Dispute* as a drama of existence. The argument is carefully phased so as to lead up to the spiritual outburst — which could not occur unless there was a spirit to burst out. Hence, the argument must be read in retrospect from the outburst it has provoked. In the light radiating from the climax the difference

between a traditional lamentation about the iniquities of the age and the existential revolt against the indignity of participating in corruption, even if the participation should assume the respectable form of ineffectual lament, becomes clear. The author of the *Dispute* rises above lamentation to dramatic judgment and action. His Man is pitted against the disorder of society and can emerge as victor from the struggle because he carries in himself the full reality of order. Such reality can grow to its full presence, however, only through a growth of consciousness; and the consciousness of reality is made to grow precisely by Man's dramatic resistance to the Soul's counsel. Only through his ultimate rejection of society, its persuasion and pressure, does he find the freedom and clarity to articulate both the reality living in him and the negative state of society from which he disengages himself. Having disposed of the temptation to become a conformist and make his name a stench, he can be at one with himself and find the language adequate to his experience.

The second part of the *Dispute* articulates the experience of reality; the account is organized in four sequences of tristichs. The first sequence expresses Man's revulsion at becoming a stench to himself by continuing life on the level of corrupt existence. After this outburst of a reality that has become sure of itself as distinct from unreality, the second sequence characterizes life in the mode of unreality; the third one deals with death as the liberator from the sickness of life; the fourth one, with faith in the fulness of life to be achieved through death. This pattern of articulation — revulsion at the dead life, description of the living death, liberation through death from death in life, and fulness of life through death — renders the structure of the experience with an exactitude hardly to be surpassed. It is true, the accounts rendered by Plato or St. Paul move on the more differentiated level of noetic and revelatory experiences, they have at their disposition a more diversified arsenal of symbols, their expression has become more supple as it is no longer hampered by the blocklike compactness of myth, but fundamentally they are — as all accounts invariably must be if they are true — variations of the motifs that were articulated by the unknown Egyptian thinker.

From the first sequence, expressing Man's revulsion, I have quoted an example. The other tristichs of this series do no more than amplify the theme by listing further unappetizing odors. I shall now present one or two samples from each of the following sequences to give an idea of the degree to which the experience has become articulate in detail.

Each of the tristichs of the second sequence opens with the line "To whom can I speak today?" The destruction of community among men through destruction of the spirit is their great theme. Specifically, the author complains:

To whom can I speak today?
 One's fellows are evil;
 The friends of today do not love.

Transposing the thought into the language of classic philosophy, one might say: The *philia politike* in the Aristotelian sense, deriving from love of the divine Nous that is experienced as constituting the very self of man, has become impossible, because the divine presence has withdrawn from the self. As a consequence, the complaint goes on:

To whom can I speak today?
 Faces have disappeared:
 Every man has a downcast face toward his fellows.

When reality has receded from the self, the face becomes faceless — with various consequences. The present tristich seems to point to the consciousness of the loss and its torment; the lines sound like a description of the phenomena of which today we speak as the "lonely crowd" and the "quiet despair." To the Man of the *Dispute* the phenomenon becomes conscious as his own loneliness:

To whom can I speak today?
 There is no one contented of heart;
 The man with whom one went, no longer exists.

But the loss of self can also assume the form of wickedness and consent to it. Further tristichs dwell on the wicked man who stirs no more than laughter, on the social dominance of criminality, and on the dreary prospect of evil without end.

In such utter loneliness, Man turns toward death as the salvation from senseless existence:

Death faces me today
 Like the recovery of a sick man,
 Like going out into the open after a confinement.

Or:

Death faces me today
 Like the longing of a man to see his home again,
 After many years that he was held in captivity.

The tristichs of this third sequence vary the themes of life as a sickness, as a land of darkness under clouds, as an exile and a prison; and the themes of death as the recovery, as the light that leads from darkness to the hitherto unknown, as the longing for return to one's home, and as a release from prison. The symbols of this group arouse our attention because we are familiar with them from Platonic and Gnostic texts. Hence, it seems, they are not specific to any of the varieties, but rather characteristic of a genus of experience. We shall return to this problem presently.

The tristichs of the fourth sequence express the speaker's faith in entering the fulness of life through death:

Why surely, he who is yonder
 Will be a living god,
 Punishing the sin of him who commits it.

Why surely, he who is yonder
 Will stand in the barque of the sun,
 Causing the choicest therein to be given to the temples.

Why surely, he who is yonder
 Will be a man of wisdom,
 Not hindered from appealing to Re when he speaks.

From this sequence one should especially note the symbolism of Man's transformation into a living god, riding in the barque of the sun. For, transformed into a divine companion of the sun-god, Man will function as his adviser and as a judge concerning affairs of man and society on earth. The theme of Judgment, it appears, is no more specific to Hellenic or Christian experiences

than the symbols of alienation, sickness, imprisonment, and so forth; it rather is, like the others, a constant in the whole class of experiences from which the symbolism of Immortality emerges.

The precise degree of differentiation which the author of the *Dispute* has achieved will become clear only if we confront the assurances of the last sequence with the Egyptian experience of cosmos and empire.

In the primary experience of the cosmos all the things it comprehends — the gods, heaven and earth, man and society — are consubstantial. Since the realm of Egypt is a partner in the cosmos, its order is supposed to manifest the *ma'at*, the divine-cosmic order, while the Pharaoh is supposed to be the mediator of this order to society. At the time of the author's writing, however, Egypt was in disorder because of the Pharaoh's malfunctioning; and according to the traditional conception of empire, this unfortunate situation could be repaired only by the epiphany of a new Pharaoh who again would effectively channel the flow of *ma'at* from the gods to society. Set against this traditional conception, the *Dispute* must be considered an extraordinary, if not a revolutionary, event in the history of empire, inasmuch as it offers a substitute for the mediating function of the Pharaoh. For the author of the *Dispute* is neither interested in life at all cost nor in immortality in the sense of conventional imaginings — such topics belong to the mode of unreality from which he is disengaging himself —, but in a quite different kind of immortality that is meant to become instrumental in restoring order to Egypt. The living-god Man will shoulder the burden of the living-god Pharaoh who has failed. There can be no doubt, we are witnessing a spiritual outbreak, bursting the primary experience of the cosmos and moving in the direction of a personal experience of transcendence. The author is on the verge of the insight that Man's order, both personal and social, will have to depend on Man's existence in immediacy under God. In view of the very articulate symbolization, it would even be tempting to press the interpretation one step further and to consider the insight into Man's nature as *imago Dei*, without benefit of Pharaonic mediation, as achieved. But that would be going too far. For the unknown author does not radically break with the primary ex-

perience but, the phenomena of social disorder notwithstanding, preserves his faith in the cosmos. His Man is not Everyman, and, therefore, he cannot translate his personal breakthrough into a revolution against sacred kingship. The acceptance of status as counsellor to the sun-god remains the only method conceivable to make the newly discovered reality of Man effective in the economy of cosmos and society — and in order to achieve that status, Man must commit suicide. The time had not yet come for the transfer of authority from the cosmological ruler to the prophet, sage, or philosopher as the nucleus of a new communal order.

IV

The Western philosopher in the twentieth century A.D. finds himself in substantially the same position as the Egyptian thinker in the twentieth century B.C.: both the philosopher and the author of the *Dispute* are disturbed by the disorder of the age, they both are in search of a reality no longer alive in the surrounding images, and they both want to recover the meaning of symbols from their misuse in everyday debate. The contemporary quarrel between doctrinaire beliefs and equally doctrinaire objections is the counterpart of the first, argumentative part of the *Dispute*; and today's philosopher has to wind his way in search of truth through the very type of imagery and argument that has been recognized as expressing a deficient mode of existence by his predecessor of four-thousand years ago.

On the strength of this parallel, we can lay down two rules for the philosopher. On the one hand, he is not permitted to side with the believers and, in particular, he must not let himself be betrayed into arguing the doctrinal question whether man, or his soul, is immortal or not. For in doctrinal argument symbols are erected into entities; and when he participates in it, he involves himself in the error that Whitehead has named the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. On the other hand, he is not permitted to side with the objectors, as they deny validity to propositions concerning God, the Soul, and Immortality, on the ground that they cannot be verified or falsified like propositions concerning

objects of sense-perception. This argument, however, is pointless, as nobody maintains that doctrinal propositions refer to the external world; the appearance of an objection accrues to it from the false premise that doctrinal truth is not derivative but original. Nevertheless, while treading the narrow path between the contestants, the philosopher must remain aware of their respective merits both intellectual and existential. He must grant the intellectual advantage to the objector, because he escapes the believer's fallacy of operating with hypostatized symbols. He must grant the existential advantage to the believer, because the objector pays for his intellectual cleanliness the price of denying truth altogether, while the believer preserves truth experienced at least in its doctrinal derivation. But then again, the sympathetic weighing must not degenerate into the sentimentalisms of either condemnation or indecision. The philosopher must not condemn — for the tension between faith and reason, their conspiracy and conflict in time, is a mystery. Whether the traditionalist believer who professes truth in doctrinal form is not perhaps farther removed from truth than the intellectual objector who denies it because of its doctrinal form, he does not know. God alone knows who is nearer to the end that is the beginning. Nor must the philosopher remain undecided because he cannot penetrate the mystery — for as far as he can see within the limitations of his human understanding, the objector who cannot sense an unbroken reality behind the broken images moves on the same level of deficient existence as the traditionalist who, perhaps desperately, believes his broken image to be whole. Indecision would cast the philosopher in the rôle of the Soul in the *Dispute*, while it is his burden to act the part of Man.

The philosopher moves in the field of tensions just adumbrated. We have to note its properties with regard to extension and structure. With regard to its extension Plato has formulated the principle that Society is Man written large — a principle that must be amplified today so as to include history. Both Society and History are Man written large. The field, that is to say, is not confined to Man as a single person, but embraces the manifold of human beings in society and history; for the tensions Man experiences in his personal existence are the same he recog-

nizes as structuring the other sectors of the field. With regard to the structure of the field, then, we can distinguish two principal dimensions. There is, first, the tension between existence in truth and the deficient modes of existence. This is the very tension in which the philosopher lives and moves himself. His concern is, therefore, not with truth as a bit of information that has escaped his contemporaries, but as a pole in the tension of order and disorder, of reality and loss of reality, he experiences as his own. His existence comprehends the disorder by which he feels repelled as much as the order toward which his desire moves him. There are, second, the tensions on the level of deficient existence. When the reality of truth has declined to traditionalist belief in symbols, the scene is set for the appearance of unbelief and reasoned objection to belief. For belief, when losing contact with truth experienced, not only provokes objection but even gives aid to the enemy by creating the doctrinaire environment in which objection can become socially effective. This class of tensions, i.e., the dynamics of belief and unbelief, I shall call the sub-field of doctrinaire existence. The philosopher's concern, now, is not with this or that part of the field, but with the whole of it — to its full extension and in all of its structural dimensions —, for his search would lose direction, if he were to disregard the points of orientation. In particular, he must resist the professional temptation of taking his stance at the pole of the tension toward which his desire moves him; if he were to start sermonising on existence in truth as if it were an absolute object in his possession, he would derail into doctrinaire existence.

Though the author of the *Dispute* and the modern philosopher move in the same type of field, their respective fields differ concretely, inasmuch as the issue of history is present in the Egyptian field only compactly, while in the modern Western field it has become an explicit theme for the philosopher as well as for the believer and the objector. I shall deal, first, with the issue of history as it appears in the sub-field of doctrinaire existence.

In the modern variant of the sub-field we find a class of symbols that has no counterpart on the Egyptian scene, i.e., the so-called ideological objections to doctrinal belief. Their prodi-

gious success in our society can be explained only if we have recourse to the rule that doctrinaire belief prefigures the pattern of ideological argument and, thus, makes society receptive to it. As a representative case, I shall select for analysis the modern objector's *pièce de résistance*: "The experience is an illusion."

First, the intellectual structure of the objection: the proposition is a piece of loose thinking, quite common in everyday speech. Speaking carefully, one would have to say that an experience is never an illusion but always a reality; the predicate "illusion" should be used with reference, not to the experience, but to its content, in case it has illusionary character. Taken by itself, the incorrect wording is worth not more attention than is necessary to avoid a misunderstanding. In the context of ideological polemic, however, the transfer of the predicate is subtly used for the very purpose of creating a misunderstanding, viz., that the incorrectly worded proposition in the foreground carries, in its own right, the possible sense of the background proposition. The transfer diverts attention from the inarticulate premise. The result is a nonsense proposition designed to forestall the question whether the possible sense in the background makes really sense in the concrete case. Let us, therefore, break the taboo and ask the question we are supposed not to ask: What does it mean when the content of an experience is to be characterized as an illusion? It can mean one of two things: either, radically, that the object experienced by a subject does not exist at all; or, gradationally, that the object exists but on closer inspection reveals characteristics different from those apparent in the object as experienced. In either case, the judgment of illusion rests on control experiences of the potentially or actually existent object outside the experience. With this observation, however, the reason — or at least one of the reasons — why the possible sense in the background must be kept in the dark becomes visible. For a judgment of illusion can pertain only to experiences of existent objects, not to experiences of participation in nonexistent reality. Thus, the veiled sense in the background, if made articulate, proves to be just as much nonsense as the proposition in the foreground.

The intellectual error, though it takes a paragraph to trace it out, is too obvious for the proposition to survive, in a critical

environment, for any length of time; in order to explain its social effectiveness in polemics, we must introduce the factor of existential assent. To one part this assent is determined by the general readiness, in our society, to think (if "think" is the right word) in doctrinal form. Since the objector's argument accepts the believer's doctrine at its face value, the intellectual error which should discredit the argument becomes the source of its credibility in a predominantly doctrinaire society. This general readiness, however, is characteristic also of other civilizations and periods in the history of mankind. For the specific cause of assent, we must look to the specifically Western and modern ambiance of language and opinion as it has grown through two centuries of ideologies.

The modern-Western ambiance to which I refer is an intellectual and emotional jungle of such denseness that it would be unreasonable to single out a particular ideology as the great culprit. Nevertheless, the most important strands in the matted growth can be discerned and enumerated. First rank among them must be accorded to the psychology developed by Feuerbach in his *Essence of Christianity*. Feuerbach was disturbed — as Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* had been before him — by the fact that dogmatic propositions, be they theological or metaphysical, survive socially, even when their fallacious character has been thoroughly analyzed and exhibited to public view. There must be some reality engendering them and sustaining their life, after all; and since to a doctrinaire believer, if he is well shaken by rationalism, this reality can neither be a transcendent entity nor a truth experienced, the symbols must have some world-immanent cause. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had already used the term "illusion," but had not been overly clear about the reality responsible for the illusions and their pertinacity. In the nineteenth century, when the attempt to solve the riddle of the missing reality through gnostic speculation had run its course and failed, the question had become desperate: after the great "idealistic" systems, the time had come for unequivocal, if somewhat exacerbated, answers through recourse to human nature as the cause of the illusions. Thus Feuerbach interpreted the symbols as projections of the world-immanent consciousness of man. His psychology of

projection has remained one of the pillars of the ideologist's creed ever since, and one may even say it is a stronger force today than it was in Feuerbach's time, as in our century it has been fortified by the psychoanalysis of Freud and Jung. Another important component of the ideological ambiance is Marx' critique of religion. Marx relied on Feuerbach's psychology, but elaborated it further by the introduction of "Being," in the sense of *Produktionsverhältnisse*, as the cause of the various states of consciousness which induce or prevent the illusionary projections. There must be mentioned, furthermore, Comte's *philosophie positive* which interpreted the symbols of truth experienced as peculiar to a doctrinaire "theological phase" in history, followed by an equally doctrinaire "metaphysical phase," both of them now to be superseded by the dogmatism of "positive science." And, finally, we must not forget Freud's *Future of an Illusion*, as the title of the work has become a popular phrase endowing the ideologist's language of illusion with the authority of so undoubted a science as Psychology. The list could be continued, but it is sufficiently long to establish the issue: the conventionally so-called ideologies are constructions of history which interpret the doctrinal mode of truth as a phase of human consciousness, now to be superseded by a new phase that will be the highest as well as the last one in history.

The proposition "The experience is an illusion," thus, operates with two intellectual tricks. First, it obscures the fallacy of misplaced concreteness which its background premise has taken over from doctrinal truth; and second, it hides the implied ideology which carves history into a series of block-like segments, each governed by a state of consciousness. That the second trick is, just like the first one, prefigured by the doctrine it criticises, is too obvious a point to be labored; I shall recall only the most blatant figuration of the prefigured, i.e., the replacement of the era of Christ by the era of Comte, the *Fondateur de la Religion de l'Humanité*. As the doctrinaire believer gives his existential assent to the tricky device, he is caught both ways: by the first trick, he becomes the victim of his own fallacy; by the second one, he is shoved aside as the relic of a past that has become

obsolete. The proposition is an excellent polemical device, indeed.

The question how the issue of history presents itself to the philosopher has been answered, to a large part, by the preceding analysis. It is true, we have described the issue as it appears on the level of doctrinaire existence, but we have not described it as it appears to the doctrinaire. To the people who live in it, the sub-field is a closed world; there is nothing beyond it, or at least nothing they care to know about, should they uneasily sense that something is there after all. Our analysis, on the contrary, while describing this world of theirs, did not move inside it but described it as the sub-field in the philosopher's larger horizon of reality. As a consequence, the point has come into view on which hinges a philosophical understanding of history: that truth experienced is excluded from the sub-field, while the larger field is characterized by its inclusion. The implications of this difference in structure for a comprehensive view of history must now be unfolded.

Doctrinaire existence affects the operations of the mind. Since the deficient mode of existence belongs to the comprehensive field of history, the pathological deformations which characterize the sub-field are historical forces. We must take note of the two principal deformations that have become visible in our analysis:

(1) Truth experienced can be excluded from the horizon of reality but not from reality itself. When it is excluded from the universe of intellectual discourse, its presence in reality makes itself felt in the disturbance of mental operations. In order to save the appearances of reason, the doctrinaire must resort, as we have seen, to such irrational means as leaving premises inarticulate, as the refusal to discuss them, or the invention of devices to obscure them, and the use of fallacies. He does no longer move in the realm of reason but has descended to the underworld of opinion, in Plato's technical sense of *doxa*. Mental operations in the sub-field, thus, are characterized by the doxic as distinguished from the rational mode of thought.

(2) A critical study of history, based on empirical knowledge of phenomena, is impossible, when a whole class of phenomena

is denied cognizance. Since the appearances of empirical knowledge, as well as of critical science, must be saved just as much as the appearances of reason, a considerable apparatus of devices has been developed for the purpose of covering the defect. Such devices I shall call doxic methodology; the resulting type of doctrinaire science, doxic empiricism. The problem is set by the constructions of history to which our analysis had to advert: they draw their strength from their opposition, not to faith and philosophy, but to late doctrinal forms of theology and metaphysics; and they remain themselves on the very level of doctrine whose specific phenomena they oppose. The persuasive trick of carving history into ascending phases or states of consciousness, for the purpose of placing the carver's consciousness at the top of the ladder, can be performed only under the assumption that man's consciousness is world-immanent and nothing but that; the fact that man is capable of apprehending

The point of intersection of the timeless
With time

as well as the symbolisms expressing such apprehension must be ignored. The field of historical reality, furthermore, has to be identified and defined as a field of doctrine; and since the great events of participation do not disappear from reality, they must be flattened and crushed until nothing but a rubble of doctrine is left. Especially Plato had to go through the oddest deformations to make him fit the doctrinaire fashions of the moment. During the last one-hundred years, selections from his *disjecta membra* were used to let him appear as a Socialist, a Utopian, a Fascist, and an Authoritarian Thinker. For its legitimation, the butchery performed by ideologists on history requires the covering devices which go under the name of methods — be they of the psychological or materialistic, the scientific or historicist, the positivist or behaviorist, the value-free or rigorous method varieties. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, when doxic constructions of history had become so numerous that their mutual incompatibility attracted attention, the fact of doctrinaire construction was even transformed into a methodological principle: "History" was to be a constructive selection of materials, in agreement with

somebody's private view or standpoint; such standpoints were called "values," while the assembly of materials under them was named "value-free science"; the standpoints or values themselves were to be exempt from critical examination; and the postulate of exemption was buttressed by the strict refusal to admit the existence of criteria. Not the least grotesque feature of a grotesque age is the speed at which standpoints roll off the production-line of consciousness. In fact, the public scene has become so crowded with them that, in the twentieth century, the Open Society — Popper's, not Bergson's — had to be invented, in order to prevent public collisions between private opinions. Regrettably, however, the device for securing peace among opinions, if not of mind, is not foolproof. For every now and then, there happens a standpointer who takes himself seriously and faces everybody else with the alternative of either joining him in his intellectual prison or being put in a concentration camp.

Iron laws of segmented history are constructed, in order to frighten the contemporaries into a state of consciousness that seems desirable to the respective doxic thinker. The conception of the iron law is a terrorist's dream. History has no phases governed by states of consciousness, because there is no such thing as a world-immanent consciousness that would politely exude this or that type of projection in obedience to a doctrinaire's prescription. For History is Man — not: the Doctrinaire — written large; and as man's consciousness is the reality of tension toward the divine ground of his existence, history is the struggle between existence in truth and the deficient modes of existence. A representative sector of this struggle has been illuminated by the analysis of the *Dispute*. There is the wasteland of argument; this wasteland presupposes a truth experienced that has engendered the symbols now broken; and a spiritual outburst occurs in revolt against the untruth of existence. The sector is representative in the sense that we have no empirical knowledge of a different pattern in history: neither is there a wasteland of literalist doctrine and scepticism not recognizably deriving from a truth experienced; nor are there spiritual outbursts in a field empty of previous truth and its decline. There is no beyond in time to the struggle in time; or, if we want to express the same thought in an

older language, the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena* are intermingled in history throughout its course from the beginning of mankind to its end. The history of mankind, thus, is an open society — Bergson's, not Popper's — comprehending both truth and untruth in tension. It is true, the balance of the tension can shift — personally, socially, and historically — toward one or the other of the poles; and certainly, the shifts in balance can be used to characterize periods of history. Our present age, for instance, must be characterized as an age in which deficient existence, as well as its symbolic expression, is socially predominant. But social predominance of one pole does not abolish the other one and together with it the tension. To speak of periods characterized by one of the poles to the exclusion of the other would be equivalent to saying that there are periods in the history of mankind characterized by the nonexistence of Man — though sometimes one is tempted to indulge in this fancy.

The doctrinaire segmentation of history has found its climactic expression in the formula: "We are living in a post-Christian age." Every style, even the doctrinaire, has its beauties of perfection — and the philosopher cannot suppress his admiration for the neat trick of turning the "post-Christ" of the Christians into the "post-Christian" of the ideologues. Thanks to existential assent, the formula has become widely accepted in our society. Thinkers who otherwise rank above the level of ordinary intellectuals propound it with a serious, if sorrowful, face; and even theologians, who ought to know better, are softening under constant pressure and display a willingness to demythologize their dogma, to abandon the most charming miracles, to renounce the Virgin Birth, and glumly to admit that God is dead. The attitude is regrettable; for a truth whose symbols have become opaque and suspect cannot be saved by doctrinal concessions to the *Zeitgeist*, but only by a return to the reality of experience which originally has engendered the symbols. The return will engender its own exegesis — as it does in the present Lecture —, and the exegetic language will make the older symbols translucent again.

The social effectiveness of the formula indicates a widespread confusion and helplessness; I shall clarify, therefore, the several levels of its meaning. The symbolism belongs to the self-interpre-

tation of a revolutionary movement in the deficient mode of existence. To one part its meaning reaches, like the top of an iceberg, into the reality of the historical process; this realistic stratum of meaning I shall isolate first. To the larger part, the meaning is submerged in the dream-world of doctrinaire existence that has cut loose from the reality of existential tension; with this large block of submerged meaning I shall deal second. As the "post-Christian" derives from the "post-Christ," I shall deal, third, with the implications of the symbolism for the Christian "post-."

As far as the formula of the "post-Christian age" expresses a revolutionary consciousness of epoch, we can make sense of it. The eighteenth-century revolt, enacted in the name of science and reason against the incubus of doctrinaire theology and metaphysics, was certainly an "epoch," and the unfolding of its momentum up to the present definitely marks an "age" in history. Moreover, the consummation of the revolt through social predominance of its doctrine may well infuse latter-day conformists with a warm glow that theirs is the epoch which in fact was that of the eighteenth century. Inasmuch as the revolt against doctrinaire Christianity has been remarkably successful in our society, there are solid reasons to speak of the age as "post-Christian." As soon, however, as the realistic meaning of the formula is brought out, the limits to its sense as well as to the age it denotes become visible. Regarding the sense, we must not forget that the revolt occurred in the sub-field of deficient existence; its wrath was directed against a Christian doctrine that had become opaque, not against Christian faith. Hence, to distinguish the age of ideological revolt as a "post-Christian age" would attribute to the revolt a depth which it does not have — it would be too much of an honor. Regarding the limits to the age, they are set by this very lack of depth. For the revolt against theology and metaphysics did not recover the tension of existence that had seeped from the older symbols but abandoned truth experienced altogether, with the inevitable result of flattening out into a new doctrine of world-immanent consciousness. The loss of reality was not repaired but only further aggravated by the development of ideological doctrines which now in their turn have become opaque and lost their credibility. Still the revolt had to be lived

through, it seems, in order to bring the issue of truth v. doctrine to acute consciousness: in the twentieth century, at least the beginnings of a truly radical revolt against all varieties of doctrine, including the ideological ones, can be discerned — as I have pointed out in an earlier part of this Lecture. What the ideologues style the “post-Christian age” appears to be receding into the past, and those among us who prefer to live in the present will characterize their age rather as postdoctrinal.

In the realistic sense the “post-Christian age” is an antidoctrinal revolt which, having failed to recapture the reality of existential tension, has derailed into a new dogmatism. The adherent of an ideological sect, however, would not accept our interpretation as the meaning which he attaches to his symbol. He would be aroused to indignation by the idea that his particular “post-” should ever become a past, with a new “post-” moving into the present; for he, on his part, intends the symbol “post-” to denote the establishment of a final state of society on earth. Moreover, he would ridicule our charge that he failed to recapture truth experienced; he would rightly plead he had never tried such nonsense, as “the experience is an illusion.” And, finally, he would insist that he objects to theology and metaphysics, not because doctrine is a secondary mode of truth, but because they are wrong conceptions of the world and have long enough obscured the reality in which alone he is interested. This energetic protest cannot be brushed aside. The ideologue’s position seems to have a basis in reality; we must ascertain what this reality is, and how it is transformed into the dream-constructions of history.

The ideologue appeals to the reality, not of truth experienced, but of the world, and for good reason. For the ideological revolt against the older type of doctrine derives indeed the better part of its strength from the contemporaneous experience of power to be gained over nature through the use of science and reason. Ideology is a commensal of modern science, drawing for both its pathos and aggressiveness on the conflicts of scientists with Church and State. In the sixteenth century, and in some regions of Western civilization well into the twentieth, the Christian *contemptus mundi* still cast its shadow over nature; and the exploration of nature was specifically handicapped by the literalists’ belief in

Christian doctrine as the infallible source of information about the structure of the world. Inevitably, the explorers of the reality hitherto neglected had to suffer from the persecutions of literalist doctrinaires. There is nothing dreamlike about these facts: science, technology, industry, and the memories of the struggle are the solid ground on which the ideologue can take his stand. Nevertheless, the terrorism of ideological groups and regimes is also real; and the claim of the ideologies to be "sciences," as well as the development of the doxic methodologies, leave no doubt that somehow the nightmare is connected with science in the rational sense. There must be a factor whose addition will change the reality of power over nature, with its rational uses in the economy of human existence, into a terrorist's dream of power over man, society, and history; and there can hardly be a doubt what this factor is: it is the *libido dominandi* that has been set free by the draining of reality from the symbols of truth experienced. At the time when the reality of science and power was gained, the reality of existential tension was lost, so that from the combination of gain and loss, with the *libido dominandi* as the catalyst, the new dream could arise. The technique by which the symbols of the dream are produced is well known. The shell of doctrine, empty of its engendering reality, is transformed by the *libido dominandi* into its ideological equivalent. The *contemptus mundi* is metamorphosed into the *exaltatio mundi*; the City of God into the City of Man; the apocalyptic into the ideological millennium; the eschatological metastasis through divine action into the world-immanent metastasis through human action; and so forth. The center from which the particular symbols receive their meaning is the transformation of human power over nature into a human power of salvation. Nietzsche has developed the symbol of self-salvation in order to express the alchemic *opus* of man creating himself in his own image. In this dream of self-salvation, man assumes the rôle of God and redeems himself by his own grace.

Self-salvation, however, is self-immortalization. Since the dream of participation in a "post-Christian age" secures to the ideological believer the immortality which in terms of the broken images has become incredible, he can accept neither the realistic

meaning of his own phrase, nor rational argument in general. His problem will become clear, as soon as we state the alternatives to persistence in his dream. In order to accept reason, he would have to accept truth experienced — but the reality of existential tension is difficult to revive, once it has atrophied. If the prison of his dream, however, were broken in any other manner than by a return to reality, the only vista opening to him would be the bleakness of existence in a world-immanent time where everything is post-everything-that-has-gone-before *ad infinitum*. The second alternative would release a flood of anxiety, and the dread of this flood keeps the doors of the prison closed. We should be aware of this horror, when sometimes we wonder about an ideologue's resistance to rational argument. The alternative to life in the paradise of his dream is death in the hell of his banality. His self-made immortality is at stake; and in order to protect it, he must cling to his conception of time. For the time in which the ideologue places his construction is not the time of existence in tension toward eternity, but a symbol by which he tries to pull the timeless into identity with the time of his existence. Though the reality of tension between the timeless and time is lost, thus, the form of the tension is preserved by the dream-act of forcing the two poles into oneness. We can characterize the ideologue's "post-Christian age," therefore, as a symbol engendered by his libidinous dream of self-salvation.

The philosopher, too, has his troubles with the "post-." For participation in the nonexistent reality of the ground is participation in the timeless; the consciousness of the ground is the area of reality where the timeless reaches into time. Where, then, does the existential tension belong? To time with its "post-," or to the timeless where presumably there is no "post-?" The experience of a reality intermediate between the two poles is excellently symbolized by two passages from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*: "History is a pattern of timeless moments"; and "the point of intersection of the timeless with time." To express the same experience of reality, Plato has developed the symbol of the *metaxy*, of the in-between, in the sense of a reality that partakes of both time and eternity and, therefore, does not wholly belong to the one or the other. There appears to be a flow of existence that is

not existence in time. Since modern philosophy has not developed a vocabulary for describing the *metaxy*, I shall use the term "presence" to denote the point of intersection in man's existence; and the term "flow of presence" to denote the dimension of existence that is, and is not, time. The question then will arise, what sense the symbol "post-" does make, if history is a flow of presence; and inversely, what sense the symbol "presence" does make, if the presence of intersection is a timelike flow.

The question has agitated the Christian thinkers. For the truth of salvation and immortality through faith in Christ, if converted into doctrine, is apt to condemn to hell all mankind that happened to live before Christ. Setting aside the brutality of the procedure, a philosopher will not be too happy about such doctrine, because he knows the tension of faith toward God to be not a Christian privilege but a trait of human nature. A St. Augustine, for instance, was well aware that the structure of history is the same as the structure of personal existence; and he did not hesitate to use, inversely, historical symbols to express the reality of personal tension. In the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 64,2 he lets the historical symbols of the Exodus and of Babylon express the movement of the soul when it is drawn by love toward God:

Incipit exire qui incipit amare.
Exeunt enim multi latenter,
et exeuntium pedes sunt cordis affectus:
exeunt autem de Babylonia.

He begins to leave who begins to love.
Many the leaving who know it not,
for the feet of those leaving are affections of the heart:
and yet, they are leaving Babylon.

His conception of history as a tale of two Cities, intermingling from the beginning of mankind to its end, conceives it as a tale of man's personal Exodus written large. But how does the "historical Christ," with a fixed date in history, fit into this philosophical conception? St. Thomas has asked the question and sharpened it to its critical point: he asks "whether Christ be the head of all men" (*ST* III.8.2), and answers unequivocally that He is the head of all men, indeed, and that consequently the Mystical

Body of the Church consists of all men who have, and will have, existed from the beginning of the world to its end. Philosophically, the proposition implies that Christ is both the "historical Christ," with a "pre-" and "post-" in time, and the divine timelessness, omnipresent in the flow of history, with neither a "pre-" nor a "post-." In the light of these implications, then, the symbolism of Incarnation would express the experience, with a date in history, of God reaching into Man and revealing Him as the Presence that is the flow of presence from the beginning of the world to its end. History is Christ written large. This last formulation is not in conflict with the Platonic "Man written large." To be sure, the two symbolisms differ, because the first one is engendered by a pneumatic experience in the context of Judaic-Christian revelation, while the second one is engendered by a noetic experience in the context of Hellenic philosophy; but they do not differ with regard to the structure of the reality symbolized. In order to confirm the sameness of structure expressed in different symbolisms, I shall quote the essential passage from the Definition of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), concerning the union of the two natures in the one person of Christ: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . truly God and truly man . . . recognized in two natures . . . the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence." This valiant attempt of the Patres to express the two-in-one reality of God's participation in man, without either compromising the separateness of the two or splitting the one, concerns the same structure of intermediate reality, of the *metaxy*, the philosopher encounters when he analyses man's consciousness of participation in the divine ground of his existence. The reality of the Mediator and the intermediate reality of consciousness have the same structure.

In the intellectual climate of the age, our analysis of equivalent symbols may lead to misunderstanding. Let me caution therefore: the philosopher can help to make Revelation intelligible, but no more than that; a philosophy of consciousness is not a substitute for Revelation. For the philosopher is a man in search of truth; he is not God revealing truth. The warning is necessary, because

Hegel has tried to combine philosophy and Revelation in the act of producing a system of dialectical speculation. He imagined an inchoative Revelation of God through Christ to have come to its fulfillment through consciousness becoming self-conscious in his system; and correspondingly he imagined the God who had died in Christ now to be dead. I do not have to go into details — we are familiar with the Hegelian aftermath of existentialist theology and the God-is-dead movement. This Hegelian dream of making God a consciousness, so that consciousness can be Revelation, belongs to the “post-Christian age.” Our inquiry is neither a “post-Christian” construction of history, nor a revelation of truth; it rather is an anamnestic venture to recover presence from “the general mess of imprecision of feeling.” T. S. Eliot has caught the essence of such a venture in the following lines:

And what there is to conquer
 By strength and submission, has already been discovered
 Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
 To emulate — but there is no competition —
 There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
 And found and lost again and again; and now, under conditions
 That seem unpropitious

Perhaps the conditions are less unpropitious than they seemed to the poet when he wrote these lines, almost a generation ago. Anyway, we must immerse ourselves now in the flow of presence, in order to recover the meaning of Immortality that has flared up in the Egyptian *Dispute*.

V

Man, while existing in time, experiences himself as participating in the timeless. The experience engenders the type of symbolism of which the Egyptian *Dispute* is a variant. This rather large complex of symbols must be considered a unit, because its various parts — of which “immortality” is one — are the expressive ramifications of the one originating experience. We must describe the nature of the complex and its variants before we can use the *Dispute* in the analysis of certain issues surrounding the problem of Immortality.

The complex is not an accidental assemblage of symbols but reveals a structure in which the member symbols have a definite place. The *Dispute* suggests at least the following groups as typical: (1) there is a nuclear group consisting of the symbols life, death, mortality, and immortality; (2) another group is formed by the symbols which refer to the entities involved in the fate of life and death, such as man, his soul, or part of his soul, and the gods, or God; (3) a further group concerns the order of the cosmos and society, justice and judgment; (4) we have drawn attention, then, to a group that also appears in Hellenic philosophy, in Christianity, and Gnosis, i.e., the group of life as a prison, as a sickness, a darkness, and an exile, and of death as a release from a prison, a recovery from sickness, a light shining in the darkness, and a return to one's home; (5) and, finally, there is a group of imagery concerning the topography of the upper and nether worlds and the destinies of their inhabitants.

The historical variants of the complex do not actualize the several groups all in the same manner or with the same relative weight. The accents may fall on the consequences of immortality for the ordering of existence in earthly life, as in classical ethics. The tension of existence may snap, so that the injustice of social order will appear irreparable in the present Aion and just order is to be expected only from a metastasis of the world through divine intervention, as in Apocalyptic; or it may be deformed by the libidinous attempt at pulling the timeless into identity with time, as in ideological speculations on politics and history. The cosmos may be considered a demonic prison, so that the purpose of human action will be reduced to finding the means of escape from it, as in Gnosis. The expectation of immortality may rise to Egyptian comforts, or shrink to the Hellenic shadow existence in Hades, or expand ecstatically to Christian glorification. The drama of fall and redemption may assume the form of a cosmological myth, as in gnostic systems; or of an historical myth, as in Marxian speculation. The imagery of afterlife may be richly elaborated, as in apocalyptic and gnostic symbolisms; and then again, the mythical imagery may disappear under pressure of enlightenment and demythization, to be replaced by the hedonistic imagery of perfect realms to be achieved through progress and

revolutionary action, as in our own time. Nevertheless, wherever the accents fall and however the groups of symbols are balanced or imbalanced, the pattern of the complex remains recognizable.

The relations between the complex and its variants, as well as the relations between the variants, are problems in the logics of experience and symbolization, too intricate to be suitable for treatment on this occasion. It must be sufficient to state that the variants of the complex are not individuals of a species but historical variants in a technical sense: they have a recognizable pattern in common because they all express the tension of existence between time and the timeless; and they are variants of the pattern because they express modalities of the tension. The flow of presence with its changing modalities of experience is the common source of both the single variants and their sequence. The variants are, therefore, sub-units of meaning in the unit of the sequence which derives its meaning from the one engendering flow of presence. The fact that the sequence of variants is a unit of meaning makes it possible for our inquiry to move backward and forward in the sequence, in order to let the variants elucidate one another. For the variants, however remote in time, will never sink into a dead past without meaning, once they have arisen from the flow of truth that has "presence"; they will remain phases in the historical process of living truth of which neither the beginning nor the end is known; and by virtue of this character the truth of each variant is supplementary to the truth of the others. A later variant may have differentiated an aspect of truth experienced that has been insufficiently articulated in an earlier one; while the compact earlier variant may have expressed aspects of truth which, under pressure of a newly differentiated and therefore more heavily accented problem, do not receive their proper weight in, or have disappeared completely from, the later one. Moreover, the movement of inquiry from one variant to the other is apt to let the meaning of the sequence as a whole emerge — though "meaning of the whole," I should warn, is not the proper term for a perspective of truth that must be gained from a position inside the process of emergent truth.

In my concluding remarks I shall use the *Dispute* to clarify

a few problems of Immortality that must remain obscure as long as we concentrate too firmly on later variants. I shall deal, first, with the issue of alienation as it provides the setting for the problem of Immortality; and, second, with the experiential motivations of the symbol "immortality."

I shall use the term "alienation" to denote a certain mood of existence. Whenever the mood is aroused to intense consciousness, it engenders a characteristic group of symbols. We have encountered this group, in the *Dispute*, in the symbols referring to life as a prison, and so forth; the same group appears in pre-Socratic and Platonic philosophy; and in the gnostic ambiance it flowers so richly that the authorities in the field are inclined to accept it as the specific difference of gnosticism. The term "alienation" (*alotriosis*, *Entfremdung*) itself, however, does not appear in philosophical discourse, as far as I know, before Plotinus. In its neo-Platonic context it refers to a remoteness of God so great that God is "alien" to the world and man; and this meaning is quite close to the language of the "alien" or "hidden God," or of the "alien Life," that we find in the Mandaeen and other gnostic writings. In modern usage, especially since Hegel and Marx, the term has come to refer to the state of existence which is apt to engender this group of symbols — a change of meaning which indicates the new critical attitude of existential analysis. I shall continue the modern usage, but give it more philosophical precision by letting the term refer to a mood of existence that is rooted in the very structure of existence itself. By this procedure it will be possible to connect the plurality of meanings which the alienation group of symbols has acquired in the course of history with similar pluralities of meaning developed by other groups. Of primary interest to our purpose is the connection between the developments of plural meanings in the alienation group and in the life-death group of symbols.

We know life ending in death to be only part of the life we experience. Under the pressure of circumstances, this suspense between a temporal life that is not all of life, and a nontemporal life that makes no sense on the conditions of time and death, can be sharpened to a conflict in which the meaning of life changes

to death and of death to life. In the *Gorgias* (492–3) Socrates addresses Callicles:

Well, but on your own view, life is strange. For I tell you I should not wonder if Euripides' words were true, when he says:

Who knows if to live is to be dead,
and to be dead to live?

and we really, it may be, are dead; in fact, I once heard one of our sages say that now we are dead, and the body is our tomb.

The Platonic double meaning of life and death, current in Hellenic culture probably as early as Pythagoras, is substantially the same as in the *Dispute*; and in both the *Dispute* and the *Gorgias* it prepares the vision of just order restored through judgment in afterlife. We can speak of a state of alienation, therefore, when the existential mood that engenders the double meanings of life and death has reached a stage of acute suffering — as it has for the Man in the *Dispute*. The symbol “alienation” is meant to express a feeling of estrangement from existence in time because it estranges us from the timeless: we are alienated from the world in which we live when we sense it to be the cause of our alienation from the world to which we truly belong; we become strangers in the world when it compels conformity to a deficient mode of existence that would estrange us from existence in truth. In further elaboration of the symbolism, existence in time can become an “alien world,” or a “foreign country,” or a “desert” in which the wanderer from another world has lost his way; or the man thrown into this alien environment may find his direction and engage in a “pilgrim’s progress,” or an “ascent from the cave,” or a prolonged “wandering in the desert” that will ultimately lead him to the “promised land”; or he may adapt himself to the ways of the strangers and find his home among them, so that the alien world becomes the true world and the true world an alien world — a problem that has occupied the Hellenic poets and philosophers from Hesiod to Plato.

I have followed the symbolism of alienation from its experiential core into some of its ramifications, in order to make it clear beyond a doubt that there is no other way to make sense of the variety of symbols but the way back to their point of origin in

the structure of existence. Alienation, it appears from the symbols, is a mood of existence just as fundamental as anxiety. For the symbols of alienation are recognizable as hypostases of the poles of existential tension. The "world" we discern in the perspective of our existence to partake of both time and the timeless is dissociated, under the pressure of the mood, into "this world" of existence in time and the "other world" of the timeless; and as we "exist" in neither the one nor the other of these worlds but in the tension between time and the timeless, the dissociation of the "world" transforms us into "strangers" to either one of the hypostatized worlds. The symbolism of the two worlds can then be further elaborated in the manner that we know from the *Dispute*, or the Platonic and gnostic myths, or modern ideological speculations. With regard to the historical situations that will arouse a feeling of alienation strong enough to engender the great symbolic expressions, a survey of the variants suggests the breakdown of traditional order and the subsequent periods of disorder, both personal and social, as their typical setting. In the case of the *Dispute*, the situational pressure is supplied by the breakdown of imperial order, the prolonged disorder of the First Intermediate Period, and scepticism with regard to traditional symbols of order; in the case of the pre-Socratics and Plato, by the waning power of the *poleis*, the continuous warfare among them, the threat to their very existence posed by the rise of power-organizations on the imperial scale, and the disintegration of the *patrios doxa* through scepticism and Sophistic; that Apocalypse, Gnosis, and Christianity were conditioned by the expansion of empire and the destruction of traditional community order is generally acknowledged; and in the case of modern alienation, the pressure is supplied by the decline of Christianity into dogmatic belief, the wave of enlightenment, the dissolution of traditional economic and social forms through the rise of industrial society, and the global wars.

Symbolisms of alienation are conventionally associated with Gnosis. It will be appropriate, therefore, to formulate the bearing which our analysis has on this question.

In the present state of science we are still torn between the older historicist methods and the critical methods of existential

analysis. Historicism is a doxic method, connected with the general decline of truth experienced to belief in doctrine; symbols, when conceived as doctrine, are cut off from their engendering experience and become historical phenomena in their own right. Once a symbolism has attracted his attention for one reason or another, the historicist scholar will describe it conscientiously on the basis of the sources and then proceed to explore its historical filiation as far back as the knowledge of materials will allow. The method has been applied to Gnosis. Gnostic systems certainly are spectacular phenomena in the "history of ideas" and deserve attention; symbolisms of alienation and the famous "dualism" are so strongly developed that one is justified in considering them the specific difference of gnostic thought; and both Hellenic and Iranian symbolisms are similar enough to permit the construction of a long prehistory of gnostic thought. The Egyptian *Dispute* has hitherto escaped attention — but I would not be surprised if sooner or later it were used to extrapolate the history of Gnosis beyond Iran to its true beginning in Egypt. Nevertheless, even at the time of historicist exuberance Eugène de Faye had insisted, in his *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme* (1913), that gnostic symbolisms could not be understood without recourse to the experience engendering them. Today, with our wealth of comparative materials, we must be even more insistent on the point. If alienation is indeed a fundamental mood of existence, its symbolization is to be expected whenever a situation of disorder has built up sufficient pressure; since, however, the alienation symbols are no more than one group in the comprehensive complex, nothing follows from their appearance for the meaning of the variant as a whole. The mood of alienation can affect the tension of existence in more than one way, and the resulting modes of experience and variants of symbolization are not necessarily gnostic. Neither the argument of the *Dispute* nor the philosophizing of Plato has anything to do with Gnosis; and we hardly shall consider St. Paul a gnostic thinker because he counsels us to live in this world as if we were not of it. If we want to overcome the confusion caused by historicism, we had better remember the treatment accorded to the issue by Clement of Alexandria. For the purpose of his polemic against Marcion and other gnostics he

presents (*Stromateis* III, iii. 12-21) a formidable collection of alienation symbols gleaned from Hellenic poets and philosophers; and then he goes on to explain that the collection is as acceptable to him as it is to Marcion as a true interpretation of the human condition, but that he will not for that reason agree with Marcion on the conclusions to be drawn from them. Clement presents us with the model case of a single body of alienation symbols that can serve in three experiential contexts differing as widely as Pagan philosophy, Gnosis, and Christianity. I conclude, therefore, that the appearance of alienation symbols does not mark any of the historical variants as gnostic, even though in the gnostic context they are remarkably elaborate. The problems of Gnosis lie elsewhere.

The problems posed by the symbol immortality, or rather by the pair mortality-immortality, will be brought into focus by the following statements:

(1) The symbolism of immortality is not peculiar to Christianity and Revelation. It is well articulated as early as the *Dispute*, i.e., in a strictly cosmological variant of the complex.

(2) Immortality is a predicate presupposing a subject. In Homeric language man is mortal, the gods are immortal; in classic philosophy the soul, or at least its noetic part, is immortal; in early Christianity immortality means the bodily resurrection of man assured by the resurrection of Christ; in the *Dispute* the subject of immortality is the soul, or rather one of the souls, of Man.

(3) Whatever the subject of which immortality be predicated, the symbol pertains to the lasting or duration of an entity.

(4) The symbol immortality presupposes the experience of life and death. The symbols life-death are not synonyms for man's spatiotemporal existence, its coming-into-being and its passing away, seen from the outside, but express man's consciousness of existing in tension toward the divine ground of his existence. We have noted the double meanings of life and death engendered by the consciousness of participating, while existing in time, in the timeless. The pair mortality-immortality is related to the pair life-death and its double meanings.

The problems arise from the changing modes of experience and

the corresponding plurality of variant symbols. The four statements suggest at least two historical modes of experience: on the first level, that of the primary experience of the cosmos, there appear the entities of whom mortality or immortality is predicated; on the second level, that of differentiated consciousness, the symbols express the poles of existential tension. The movement from the earlier to the later mode of experience, however, is not accompanied by the development of a new set of symbols; the older symbols are retained and change their meanings. Moreover, it seems the earlier meanings cannot be dispensed with when the later modality is reached, so that in the later context the symbols appear with two meanings; the symbolizations of truth experienced do not exclude but supplement one another. The result is a not inconsiderable confusion of meanings. I shall try to unravel this problem at least on principle.

A famous passage from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (X, vii, 8) will show the symbolism of immortality at the point of transition from the earlier to the later mode of experience:

The life of the intellect (*nous*) is higher than the human level; not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of other sorts of virtue. If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought to immortalize (*athanatizein*) as much as possible and do everything toward a life in accordance with the highest thing in man.

The two modes of experience and symbolization are clearly recognizable and the confusion of meanings is impressive. On the older level we find the entities, i.e., the immortal gods and mortal men; on the new level, represented by Plato and Aristotle, we find the tension of existence with its poles of mortality and immortality. The passage alludes to a sharp conflict between the guardians of tradition and the philosophers. For the traditionalists believe in gods and men as distinct entities and insist that men should have only thought proper to their status of mortals; while the

philosophers have discovered that man is not quite mortal but partakes of divine immortality and insist, therefore, that his thought should be principally concerned with the divine. It is a clash between two theologies: the philosophers abolish the gods of the polytheistic tradition and identify their own God as the Nous who reveals himself, through noetic search, as the ground of existence. In the passage, however, the conflict is not expressed with full clarity because tradition is strong enough to overlay the newly discovered tension of existence with the older symbolization of gods and men. Even to Aristotle man is still the mortal who can think only mortal thought; if he can think about the divine nevertheless, he is enabled to do so by some part in him, the intellect, that is a divine entity. Is the Aristotelian man, then, a temporary union of a human-mortal with a divine-immortal entity to be dissolved through death? The answer must be No; for at this point the tension of existence, in its turn, makes its influence felt and engenders the magnificent symbol of *athanatizein*. I have translated the *athanatizein* by an intransitive "to immortalize"; for the symbol is meant to characterize noetic life as an habit of action by which man can, and ought to, increase his potential immortality to its full stature. The practice of "immortalizing" is to Aristotle a virtue superior to all other. Since in *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle has distinguished only between ethical and dianoetic virtues, not giving a name to the highest class — to which also belong *phronesis* and *philia* —, I propose the term "existential virtues."

The state of confusion in which Aristotle has left the problem has become an historical force causing confusion even in modern thought. For if Nous is both the god beyond man and the divine entity within man, then the two are liable to collapse into one as soon as they are not firmly held apart by the tension of existence. This is what has happened in Hegel's *Begriffsspekulation*: the two Nous entities of Aristotle blend into the one *Geist* of Hegel; the separate entities become moments in the dialectical process; and the tension between them reappears as the dialectical movement internal to the *Geist*. When the consciousness of existential tension has atrophied — as it has in doctrinal theology and metaphysics of the eighteenth century —,

we are not thrown back to a pre-Aristotelian belief in mortals and immortals. From the state of confusion, there rather emerges the new type of system which transforms experienced participation in the divine into a speculative possession of the divine. The system has had prodigious success, and still has, because it furnishes the intellectual apparatus for the various ideological and theological attempts at bringing God and the world, society and history under the control of man.

In order to dissolve the fateful confusion, I shall first give more precision to its crucial points.

(1) The confusion arises at the point of transition from the primary experience of the cosmos to the consciousness of man's participation in the divine ground. The language of the cosmological myth will not adequately express the newly discovered reality of interaction and mutual participation between God and man.

(2) The pre-Socratic and classic philosophers have developed a host of new symbols that will express the experience of an area of reality intermediate between God and man. There are, first of all, the Platonic symbols of the in-between (*metaxy*) and of the spiritual man (*daimonios aner*) who exists in the tension of the in-between. Curiously enough, there was developed a wealth of symbols expressing the nuances of existential tension, such as love (*philia, eros*), faith (*pistis*), hope (*elpis*), while the symbol tension (*tasis*) itself appears only in Stoic philosophy as expressing the structure of reality in general. The nature of the in-between as a mutual participation of human and divine is symbolized by the Platonic *methexis* and the Aristotelian *metalepsis*, the active life in the tension by the existential virtues previously mentioned. Symbols for consciousness are inchoatively developed by pressing *aisthesis* and *nous* into service; as a symbol for the site of the experience, the *psyche* must do. The experience itself, however, is carefully described as a search (*zetesis*) from the side of man and attraction (*kinesis*) from the side of God.

(3) In spite of the highly developed symbolism expressing the in-between of participation, certain difficulties arise from the side of the participants. For the divine and human partners to the tension are not the immortals and mortals of tradition, but a new

type of God and man. We have seen Plato developing the *daimonios aner*, in order to distinguish the new man from the mortal (*thnetos*) of old; when the distinction is not made, we encounter the difficulties of the Aristotelian passage. In a modern language of consciousness the problem of the new man can be formulated in the following manner: when man discovers his existence in tension, he becomes conscious of his consciousness as both the site and the sensorium of participation in the divine ground. As far as consciousness is the site of participation, its reality partakes of both the divine and the human without being wholly the one or the other; as far as it is the sensorium of participation, it is definitely man's own, located in his body in spatio-temporal existence. Consciousness, thus, is both the time pole of the tension (sensorium) and the whole tension including its pole of the timeless (site). Our participation in the divine remains bound to the perspective of man. If the distinction between the two meanings of consciousness be neglected, there arises the danger of derailing into the divinization of man or the humanization of God.

(4) In the primary experience of the cosmos, mortality is man's way of lasting; immortality the gods' way. On the level of differentiated consciousness, the meaning of the symbolism subtly changes in a manner that will become apparent when we link the pair mortality-immortality with the double meanings of life-death in the *Gorgias* passage. We would then have to say: Mortality means that man's life having lasted for a while will succumb to death; immortality means that man's life will outlast death. The meaning carried by the two sentences will be more clearly conveyed when they are combined into one statement: Man's life is structured by death. The symbol "life" in this last formulation will express with exactitude the experience of the in-between that has also engendered the Platonic *daimonios aner*. For the life structured by death is neither the life of the mortals, nor the lasting of the gods, but the life experienced in the tension of existence. It is the life lived in the flow of presence.

(5) Even though the symbolization may be exact, we have the uneasy feeling that something has escaped us. Is that really

all we know about immortality? Some of the more robust will say they don't care about this sort of anemic immortality. What has become of the mythopoetic imagery of afterlife, as for instance of the position of a counsellor in the barque of the sun-god, as in the *Dispute*; or that of a follower in the suite of the God, as in the *Phaedrus*; to say nothing of Dante's Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise? Well, as far as the tension of existence is concerned, I am afraid that is all — though it is a good deal, for we have traced the symbolism of immortality to its origin in the experience that life is more than the life of mortals. Nevertheless, the rebellious questioning motivated by a desire for fulfillment beyond tension, for a purpose to the exodus from Sheol, for a destination to the wandering in the desert, and so forth, is quite healthy, for the experience of existential tension is indeed not all of man's experience. We have to account for the fact that the symbol immortality unequivocally means lasting in the manner of the gods, though man's existence in tension toward the divine ground will give him no information about the mode of divine existence. How, then, do we know that gods are "everlasting (*aiomios*)," and what does the lasting of the gods mean, if they so distinctly do not last in time that the most appropriate symbolism for man's existence is the tension between time and the timeless?

The answer to the questions to which our series of precisions has led will come through recourse to the *Dispute*.

The Egyptian variant of the symbolism reveals an acute suffering from alienation and the desire to preserve existence in truth against the pressure to conform to a deficient mode of existence. Since, however, the consciousness of existential tension has not yet differentiated, its problems must be expressed in the compact language of the cosmological myth. It is the language, not of tension, but of the entities involved in the fate of life and death; and the understanding of the entities is hardly affected by the theological conflict characteristic of the transition from the experience of the cosmos to that of existential participation. The entities are man, his soul, the realm of Egypt, and the sun-god; the order (*ma'at*) pervading the entities has its source in the sun-god and flows from him, through the pharaoh, into the

administration of the realm, and ultimately to the people living in the realm. When something goes wrong with the order of the pharaoh, the realm, and man, the solution envisaged is the restoration of order through Man's cooperation at its source in the barque of the sun-god. The entities, thus, form a community of consubstantial partners in divine order. This divinely ordered community — to which we apply the later Greek term *kosmos* — is experienced by Man as the lasting reality of which he is part. The lasting of the cosmos is the lasting of the gods who create and maintain its order; and the Man of the *Dispute* can participate in its lasting by attuning his existence to the order of the gods. The primary experience of cosmic reality, thus, provides the spaces and times for the life of the gods and the afterlife of man. The imagery of immortality is engendered by the primary experience of man's conduration with the cosmos.

The confusion will dissolve, if we acknowledge the historical stratification in man's experience of reality. There is, first, the compact experience of the cosmos and, second, the differentiated experience of existential tension. For their adequate expression, the two types of experience engender two different sets of symbols. To the first set there belong among others:

- (a) the time of the cosmos; and conduration with the cosmos;
- (b) the intracosmic gods;
- (c) the language of the mythical tale and its personnel.

To the second set there belong among others:

- (1) the polarization of cosmic time into the time and the timeless of the tension; and the flow of presence;
- (2) the world-transcendent God;
- (3) the language of noetic and spiritual life.

With regard to the symbol Immortality we can say therefore: the imagery of afterlife originates in the compact experience of cosmic reality; the symbolism of life structured by death originates in man's experience of his existence in tension toward the divine ground.

We can dissolve confusion and misconstruction once they have arisen — but we cannot prevent the disturbances of existential

order that will historically arise from changes in the modes of experience and cause ever new confusion and misconstruction. Let me advert, in conclusion, briefly to this problem, as we are living in an age of major disturbances from this source.

The two experiences do not pertain to different realities but to the same reality in different modes. The experience of cosmic reality includes in its compactness the existential tension; and the differentiated consciousness of existence has no reality without the cosmos in which it occurs. On the level of cosmic experience we find, as a consequence, a rich variety of hymns and prayers expressing the personal tension of existence, and even such documents as the *Dispute*; while on the level of existential experience man has to cope with the problems of cosmic reality which require resymbolization as far as the older symbolism has become incompatible with the new insights of existential tension. Plato, for instance, was acutely aware of the philosopher's quandary: he developed a new type of symbolism, the philosophic myth, in order to express on the noetic level the cosmic reality that formerly had been the domain of traditional myth. Moreover, in the *Epinomis* he earnestly warned against discrediting traditional myth, because people whose faith in the myth is destroyed will not necessarily become philosophers, but rather will become spiritually disoriented and derail into some deficient mode of existence. Christianity, then, has inherited, through both the Old and New Testaments, a solid body of cosmic myth and lived with it by letting it stand and digesting theologically only so much of it as the philosophical instrumentarium of the moment seemed to allow. Compact symbolisms, in sum, may become obsolete in the light of new insights, but the reality they express does not cease to be real for that reason. If we let any part of reality drop out of sight by refusing it public status in the world of symbols, it will lead a sort of underground life and make its reality felt in intense moods of alienation, or even in outright mental disturbances. C. G. Jung had to say a few things on this problem. Even though we should have to reject all traditional symbolizations of cosmic reality as incompatible with our present mode of experience, we still are living in the reality of the cosmos and not in the universe of physics, the brainwashing

propaganda of our scientific ideologues notwithstanding. The ideological constructions of history which ignore the historical stratification of experience and relegate compact strata, under the title of obsolete "states of consciousness," to a dead past should be understood, with regard to one of their motivations, as acts of despair caused by an acute state of alienation; for they try to annihilate by magic murder a disturbing reality that has not yet found satisfactory resymbolization. These remarks, though they can be no more than the barest hints, will perhaps suggest a new understanding of some problems that move the age.