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The Romantic Self: An Historical Sketch

GEORGE BOAS

IT WILL SEEM strange to anyone hearing this paper that a man who has been closely associated with Arthur Lovejoy should speak about romanticism without apology. But what I have to say is not by way of producing another definition of this ambiguous word nor am I trying to attribute to the men usually called romanticists a common belief. There just happen to be certain men and women towards the end of the eighteenth century and during the first quarter of the nineteenth who had peculiar ideas about the human self and it is these ideas that I should like to talk about. The ideas in question dealt with the uniqueness of each human being and with the desirability of emphasizing that uniqueness. That such ideas were widely held during the period in question is too well known to require any proof. And I shall not bore you with a cargo of quotations from Goethe, the Schlegels, Mme. de Staël and their common ancestor, Rousseau, to demonstrate what you already know. I should like rather to discuss the history of this set of ideas, for it runs parallel to antithetical theories about human nature, and in that curious interplay of contradictions we may find something of historical interest.

That all men are not alike was known of course very early in European history. Herodotus, for instance, had all the curiosity of the amateur anthropologist about the various traits of different peoples, Scythians, Persians, Egyptians. The *Dissoi Logoi* made such dif-

ferences more precise by focussing them on moral questions, standards of beauty or ugliness, truth and falsity. And in a famous fragment of Xenophanes we have a correlation made between the nature of the gods and the people who believed in them. Such passages were utilized in the argument over whether certain beliefs are established by Nature or by Custom, but little if anything is said in them about why Custom varied so widely in view of the pervasive humanity of the men who lived in accordance with them. Xenophanes, it is true, hints that as far as theology is concerned the gods are a projection of corporeal peculiarities; they are made in the image of men. And he is castigating us for not seeing this. Presumably if we would only use our powers of reason we would correct our beliefs and see that there is only one god, unlike mortals in any respect except in that which Xenophanes admired. But that is as far as the fragment goes. In short, we can say only that there was a tradition of early Greek culture that human nature varied in certain respects, with overtones of disapproval of the variations.

In Plato's *Republic*, however, the distinctions of human nature become somewhat sharper and are not correlated with climate or geography or custom. There are, we find, three kinds of men, kinds distinguished by the preponderance in a given individual of one of the three psychic faculties, the appetites, irascibility, usually translated "spiritedness," and reason. These preponderant traits are not hereditary, a rational man begetting at times an appetitive or irascible son, and contrariwise. It is safe to conjecture that this followed or reflected the theory of humors according to which a man's temperament was determined by the humor which was pre-eminent in him. But, regardless of that, the *Republic*, in so far as it is a program of social reform, is based on the principle that each type of man should be put in his appropriate place, so that his peculiar abilities might be most profitably used. The state must be governed not by the appetitive and the irascible but by the rational men, just as the individual should obey his reason, not his emotions or senses. Whether Plato was aware of degrees of rationality, irascibility, and appetitiveness, we shall not say. It was not part of his program to make anything of this if he was aware of it and, moreover, his main interest was in perfect rationality.

The divisions of human nature became finer in Aristotle. In the ethical treatises, if we may be allowed to attribute them all to him,

we find elaborate descriptions of different kinds of individuals; the Magnanimous Man, the Foolhardy Man, the Friendly Man, are celebrated types in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book II of the *Magna moralia* begins with short paragraphs describing the man of equity, the just man, the man who lacks self-control, and the like. Book III of the *Eudemian Ethics* similarly deals with courage, temperance, gentleness, liberality, magnanimity, and magnificence as virtues characteristic of different individuals. But there is, as far as I have been able to discover, no tendency on the part of Aristotle to argue that these types are fixed and invariable species of humanity and that their excesses cannot be corrected by education. It is not until we come to Theophrastus and his *Characters* that we find temperamental species defined as if their *differentiae* were ineradicable.

Whether the preamble to the *Characters* is by Theophrastus or not need not concern us here. It poses a question which sets the problem of character in a manner which is clear. Why should we Greeks, says the author, who all speak the same language and have about the same education be so different? The answer of course is individual characters. Theophrastus does not say that our characters are innate, but the drift of the argument and the subsequent history of his book make one think that at least a character is never lost once it is acquired. The Ironic Man, the Flatterer, the Garrulous Man, the Shameless Man are all fixed types and there is no need to point out to this audience how the tradition passed on into Latin literature both in the plays of Plautus and the Horatian *Ars poetica* and thence into such modern critics as Boileau and Pope. For literary pedagogics it was important that the writer observe what we came to call consistency of character. I hope that I am not leaping to conclusions by seeing this principle exemplified in the *commedia dell' arte* and the comedies of Molière. In fact the tradition seems to have had such force that well into the nineteenth century the repertory companies had to have actors specializing in playing heroes, heavy villains, juvenile reliefs, and the like, as if all drama dealt with the interplay of a few fixed types of character. It was, I suppose, Marcel Proust with his *intermittences du coeur* who put an end to this practice, in so far as any practice is ever ended.

Now what is of special interest is that the very men who made the first classifications of human types also maintained that there was one moral goal for all. Both Plato and Aristotle, along with the Stoics,

Epicureans, and Sceptics, argued for a single end to human education. All men capable of goodness were to find the same kind of goodness. They might differ on what this end was, but that individual differences were no impediment to its attainment seems never to have occurred to them. Both Stoics and Epicureans, for instance, agreed that the end was *autarky*, self-sufficiency, independence of all external demands; they differed merely in how it was to be found. None of the Greek philosophers, so far as I have been able to discover, thought that each man or each type of man ought to have a good of his own. The Shameless Man was not to live a shameless life and even Aristotle's Courageous Man was to avoid pushing his courage to an extreme lest he become foolhardy. Similarly in the *Republic* the appetitive man must not be allowed to live out a life of the appetites, but on the contrary must be under the control of the Philosopher-Kings precisely in order to prevent this. Though Socrates, according to legend, believed that the end of life was self-knowledge, the self that he would discover would be a human self, not a Socratic self, and, a bit more concretely, a self which was rational and capable of doing away with everything that might weaken his rational powers. The educational schemes of the Ancients, as far as we have them, all laid it down as axiomatic that there was one program suitable to all which would eliminate individual differences so as to produce conformity. It was of course conformity to an ideal, not to any customary regimen, which was sought, and the ideal in question was discovered by the reason operating with universal and, it was surely hoped, self-evident premises. I do not say that every Greek and every Roman lived in accordance with this program. The contrary is true. For the ethical philosophers were trying to correct current *mores*, not to elevate them to the position of norms.

There was thus an obvious conflict between the theory of ethical purpose and descriptions of individual men. Men might differ fundamentally from one another, but they must learn to amend their characters so that they would all live in the same way. In Plato it was clear that some kinds of men if left to their own guidance would never attain goodness. In Aristotle only potentially rational beings were in question anyway and they at least could be expected to understand his ethical system and apply its teachings to their own behavior. In fact, the *Nicomachean Ethics* tells one how to do so. Outstanding among the rules is the precept to pull against one's natural

instincts, for by giving in to them one will inevitably move towards extremes. One's sense of humor will lead towards buffoonery, one's sensuality towards lasciviousness, one's sense of shame towards cold-bloodedness.

At the end of the Pagan period we find a new note entering philosophy and that is the note struck by the biographers. Though Aristotle and his teacher too were of course aware of the personalities of their predecessors, they made little use of them except in the case of Socrates. The Socratic legend, as we are all aware, began right after his death and, as far as anyone knows, so did the legends of other teachers, such as Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope, and Pyrrho. These men became ethical models, paradigms so to speak of the good life. None of them, at least in the surviving accounts of them, was a theorist beyond the extent to which every man who corrects his life may be said to do so in accordance with a set of principles. Today we speak of Kantianism, Hegelianism, Bergsonism, and the like, but we do not usually try to draw out of the lives of Kant, Hegel and Bergson evidence for their philosophies. But in the Hellenistic period one finds a curious interest in biography, as if the personality or the character of philosophers and statesmen were of paramount importance in interpreting their beliefs and acts. This is the time when all sorts of fictional lives were written, anecdotes of various sorts which it is hard to relate to any moral or metaphysical principles, imaginary letters which in at least one case were supposed to be written by an imaginary person. I refer to the letters of Anacharsis the Scythian. We now begin to find documents such as the *Lives of the Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius, a mixture of anecdotes and epitomes of teachings, or the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch preceded by the shorter biographical sketches of Cornelius Nepos and Suetonius. Such works were written over a period of 500 years. The interest of these writers has shifted from the ideas which their subjects propagated to their personal histories and one seems to have fallen into an abyss of gossip and myth which has unfortunately been accepted as history even by serious scholars who have yielded to the temptation of recording everything possible about the men of the past. In some cases, such as the life of Plato, these writings have furnished modern historians with the only evidence which they have for the fantastic stories which they help to perpetuate. They have given continued credence to Plato's adventures in Sicily, the dark mysteries of the so-called

Pythagorean brotherhood, Aristotle's esoteric doctrines, Socrates's troubles with his wife—that is, with one of his wives—the meeting of Diogenes and Alexander the Great and other absurdities. But with the exception of Plutarch's none of these writings tell us much of anything which would really explain the motivations of their heroes, to say nothing of their thoughts, if they had any. It is indeed doubtful whether the problem was clear to the authors in question.

With the coming of Christianity a new principle was introduced into ethics as distinguished from morals. The Stoic and Epicurean philosophies had given some reason for withdrawing from social claims and the Cynic's retreat from the world was emulated by the Eastern monks. Though the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines had made each man responsible for his future as far as each man was rational, the Christian was not only responsible for his own future but also bore the burden of inherited guilt. The primordial sin of Adam and Eve came from their free choice. As St. Augustine pointed out, they were created with the power of not sinning (*posse non peccare*) and lost it after their act of disobedience. Not all Christians believed that we had lost this power and of course the disputes about man's freedom were numerous and have lasted in Christian circles down to the present day. But so far as I know, no one doubted that we were free to believe or not to believe, that is, to have faith or not. But the act of giving faith was not conditioned by rational controls. One was not to be convinced by argument of the truth of that in whose redeeming power one was to believe. One believed first and understood later. Thus, in spite of the growing power of the Church, each man, like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, carried his own load of sin and it was his task in life to shake it off in order to enter Paradise. Once again let me emphasize the fact that I am not saying that all Christians, even the Fathers, agreed on how this was done. I am simply skimming off from their disagreements that common element which survived and influenced men of later generations. It may well be true that Mme. de Staël was wrong when she said, "The Ancients, so to speak, had a corporeal soul, all the acts of which were strong, direct, and causally connected (*conséquents*); this was by no means true of the human heart as developed by Christianity; we moderns have drawn from Christian repentance the habit of continually turning in upon ourselves" (*De l'Allemagne*, Pt. II, ch. xi). But the fact remains that many Christians did practice an examination of con-

science and their principal moral problem was the discovery if possible of the true motives of their acts. Mme. de Staël's point was that introspection became a fundamental moral act; it alone could show whether one's purposes were pure and it was purity of intention which was the clue to goodness in the Christian sense of that term.

There is here, to be sure, a certain similarity with such Pagan philosophies as Neoplatonism. If one chooses Plotinus as one's specimen of that doctrine, one finds that he too demanded of his disciples the retreat into the soul in order to find knowledge. He could perhaps have taken over St. Augustine's phrase, *In interiore hominis veritas*, had he known of it. Indeed St. Augustine may have found the idea in his Platonistic predecessor. At any rate, as we all know, Plotinus too had little regard for discursive reasoning. For him knowledge was an illumination, the beatific vision. The Christian mystic also hoped for such a vision, but it was not so much for moral as for religious reasons. Plotinus carried on the Pagan idea that knowledge and goodness were identical; he wanted no other kind of goodness except for practical purposes. But the Christian had to atone for the sin committed by his primordial ancestors; he had to know himself not simply as a man but as an individual. Whereas Plotinus believed that redemption might come about in our successive lives if we were victorious in the psychomachia, the Christian knew that he had only one life to live and that the battle would be won or lost in it. Both agreed that no one could save you if you were in search of salvation but yourself. But the Neoplatonist maintained that the problem could be solved through an intellectual exercise; the Christian only through an act of faith followed by meditation. To use the slogans of the schools St. Augustine could say, *Credo ut intelligam*; the Neoplatonist could reply, *Intelligo ut credam*, or at least *Volo intelligere ut credam*. Both again agreed that the moral problem was self-education, self-reform, but it was to be solved in different ways.

That the conflict existed in many systems of thought appears very clearly in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. Here was a man who like the Christians believed that the whole cosmos was governed by immutable law. Destiny, fate, the statutes of the Cosmopolis could not be changed and they had sovereignty over every individual. But this did not prevent the Emperor from urging himself to reform, as if his way of living was within his power. He had free will apparently in his own life and at the same time as a member of the Cosmopolis

he had no free will. Epictetus of course disagreed with this. He knew precisely what lay within his power and what did not, what was his, as he put it, and what was beyond his control. The latter included property, his reputation, business, and the body. The things within his control were alone of moral relevance. In the early Christians the same dualism appears. God's will is obviously universal in its scope and Nature, in the sense of the nonhuman cosmos, always follows the same laws which were decreed by the Creator. These laws were expressed in a verse of *Wisdom* (XI, 21) to be quoted over and over again during the Middle Ages, *Omnia in mensura, et numero et pondere disposuisti*, "All things hast thou ordered according to measure, number, and weight." But the notion that the life of each man was also determined in advance by some sort of universal law was repugnant to the Christian, for it would clearly have reduced the individual's will to impotency. The attempts to reconcile free will and God's universal sovereignty are numerous among Christian writers and at least one can say that they saw the importance of the problem, whether one accepts any of their solutions to it or not. The lives of individuals were in their own hands, as far as their ethical progress was concerned. And the disharmony in the dualism which I have hinted at persisted throughout the philosophies of the Scholastic Period. Whether many Christians continued to seek truth in their inner lives, I do not know and doubt whether anyone else does either. In the monastic communities there was doubtless a general practice of self-scrutiny but for many lay Christians it probably sufficed to fear God and obey His commandments.

But when one comes to Montaigne one finds a different situation and one which seemed scandalous to many seventeenth-century writers. Though he took over the ancient slogan, Know thyself, as his motto, he found that he was different from anyone else and his *Essays* are predominantly attempts to expound his differences. There is barely a trace in Montaigne of the idea that all humanity formed a whole and that each man should try to exemplify in his life the universal traits of mankind. Each man was a center of ideas, hopes, longings, interests, fears, which were as a collection unique. What Montaigne liked was none the better because others liked it too, though he was always very happy to find that some of the Ancients shared his propensities. But his humanism is purely individualistic. He can be called a humanist only in the sense that like Socrates he was

not interested in cosmological problems. He was interested, one might say, in humanity, but only in so far as he was himself a human being. Probably no healthy man before him ever spent so much time telling others about his tastes and distastes. Some of his notes seem trivial to us as they did to his contemporaries and juniors. But the personal essay since his time has become a standard form of literature and we are accustomed to self-revelation in the form of autobiography, journals, and private letters. It is one thing obviously to stand before God and confess one's sins; it is quite another to exhibit them in public, not as an act of repentance and in the hope of pardon, but as a simple exhibition. I do not mean that exhibitions of private life are not interesting, but simply that they do not always serve religious purposes. Why Montaigne felt the need to tell others of his taste in books and wine, his indolence, his château, and that one item which annoyed the seventeenth century more than any other, his page, I do not pretend to know. But that he felt a compulsion to do so is obvious. Moreover the compulsion led him to depict himself in a discreditable manner. He was not boasting of his goodness, his moral strength, his successes as Mayor of Bordeaux, but on the contrary of just those things which more serious minds would object to. It is this feature of his self-scrutiny which became traditional in confessional literature. The *Essays* are not a prayer for forgiveness; they can easily be interpreted as a prayer for imitation. And as the philosophy which they were held to express was carried over into the seventeenth century by Charron, LaMothe-le-Vayer, and the Libertines, it was transformed into a form of scepticism which was a denial of those truths which the Père Garasse, Descartes, Pascal, and Port-Royal were anxious to strengthen.

One of the basic principles of Montaigne was expressed in his essay *On Repentance* (III, 2), which begins with the frank statement that whereas others would construct a man, he is describing one (*Les autres forment l'homme: ie le recite*). Asserting the Heraclitean thesis that all is in a state of flux in which constancy "is merely a very slow rate of change," he foresees that he too may change from hour to hour and is always *en apprentissage et en espreuve*. His *Essays* have no pretension of being anything other than a self-portrait. *Je n'enseigne point, ie raconte*. But what was more serious, he announced that the judgment of others upon his conduct left him cold; he appealed only to his own conscience. To appeal to one's conscience was hardly

novel. But whereas others had felt that conscience was either in direct communication with God or formed by religious education under the guidance of the Church, Montaigne was frank in admitting that his was a free agent controlled only by what we would call the laws of psychology. It was neither the conscience of an angel nor of a horse, as he said; it is simply the conscience of a man (III, 2). Were he to be born again, he would live again as he has lived in the past—*paroles horribles*, said the *Logique de Port Royal* (III, 20). The reason for this was clear: he had taken as his motto “the ancient precept, ‘We cannot but follow Nature’ ” (III, 12). But Nature in this context was the antithesis of God. Hence it looked as if each man for good or ill had within himself a guide which he could not correct or reform. And there was little evidence in Montaigne that he wanted to correct or reform his.

Meanwhile in philosophical circles of a more professional type the self was being reduced to a point, little more than a grammatical subject. Beginning with Hobbes in England and continuing through Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, as on the Continent in Descartes and Spinoza, it was being deprived of any sovereignty whatsoever except in the case of judgment. It could have experiences which came to it from the external world, but no attention was paid to its hopes, its desires, its dreams by those thinkers who were interested in its epistemological role. Even the imagination lost whatever creative powers it may once have had and was simply a complex of decaying sensory data organized according to laws which later became the laws of the association of ideas. The climax was reached in Hume who, as all freshmen learn, confessed that whatever others might think, he for himself found no Self in his inner life but simply “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement.” And lest others might argue that he was unique in his lack of a self, he filled out his argument by showing that whatever anyone might believe, the idea of a self was impossible since there could be no impression adequate to producing it. This tradition was the contradictory of another contemporary with it, that of the English Platonists. According to them the Self was a permanent and indestructible being which was not only creative of knowledge but the sole judge of truth and falsity as well of the other values. But this tradition, vigorous though it was at the time, was submerged as the progress of philoso-

phy moved on. Just as Descartes' Ego served no purpose other than grammatical, Spinoza's seems to have played an even smaller role. Though he was writing about ethics, the bondage and freedom of man, yet he paid no attention in his *Ethics* to those problems which might arise because of the unique personality of John Doe in distinction to Richard Roe. In his famous axiom (Π , ii), *Homo cogitat*, cogitation becomes simply one of the functions of humanity and such problems as derive from individual differences and historical circumstances are not even envisioned. We are by now at a point at which Montaigne's self would be considered an empty fantasy and, as the subsequent history of psychology shows, it was soon to be discarded. In our own time consciousness without a self was discarded as well.

It is not until we come to Rousseau that we find the two strains reunited, the strain of a moral self, unique in its personality as in its capabilities, and the cognitive self which, derived from English Platonism, takes on the new power of asserting truths which contradict the truths of science and does so on its own authority. The latter self is most clearly described in the *Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar*, which, as the late Professor Gertrude Bussey showed, is probably the source of Kant's Transcendental Ego, which could lay down moral axioms without recourse to empirical evidence. The former of course appears full fledged in the *Confessions*. Rousseau himself, oblivious of the previous claims of Montaigne, announced in the opening lines of this book that he was engaged on an unprecedented enterprise and one which, he again mistakenly thought, would have no imitators. This enterprise was a self-portrait. He felt that he was both unlike anyone else whom he had ever met and like no one else in the whole world. He was not better than other men but at least he was different from them. He then proceeded in great detail to expose his sins, his disappointments, his aspirations, the cruel tricks of fate which had been played on him, the physiological abnormalities which made him miserable, and the few kindnesses which one or two women had shown him. I do not know whether he was actually so disgusting a man as he says, but one has the suspicion that just as Casanova added the salt of braggadocio to his adventures to show the world how seductive he was, so Rousseau emphasized his morbidity to make himself even more repulsive than he could possibly be. Whereas in the *Profession of Faith* the self can assert in full confidence the existence of God, freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul, in the

Confessions it becomes its sole purpose to show how revolting it was and how unsuccessful in maintaining either the loyalty of friends or the love of mistresses. The result is incredulity on the part of any reader, one would think, and no one is so naive as to suspect that this was the underlying motive of the book.

Whether Rousseau really believed that he would have no imitators or not, he had them in great supply. As Sainte-Beuve was to say (*Causeries*, III, 88), "We are all the grandsons of the bourgeois Rousseau." In this progeniture one thinks at once of Werther, René, Alfred de Musset, Adolphe, and Obermann, all of whom were melancholy, disappointed, and curiously unworldly. Their stories are known to all and I shall not repeat the commonplace any more than is necessary. But one reflection is perhaps worth making. While the self in the poets and novelists was sick at heart because of its differences from other men, the self in the philosophical disciples of the Savoyard Vicar was being elevated to a position which it had never had before. In Kant, for instance, the Moral Will laid down the bases for a transcendental ethics; in Fichte it actually created the external world and created it for its own noble ends, to have an adversary worthy of being conquered by it; in Schelling, at least in his early period, it asserted the Law of Identity upon which all metaphysics and almost everything else depended. It could never be an object of introspection because it did the introspecting. The poets and novelists mentioned believed that their selves were immutable, born into the world with their possessors, having a temper which could not be modified by experience and which accounted for the pathos of their lives. Education, an act of will, the influence of others, could induce no fundamental changes in the self. It could be wounded, occasionally pleased, once in a while helped by others, but still it remained a hard and unyielding nucleus of psychic experiences. Why was it always being hurt? Presumably because other people were not as yet persuaded of the immutability of selves, clung to the ancient theory that human nature was always the same and all the same in everyone. One could uncover the common humanity of an individual, such people thought, and thus behave decently. But the type of romanticist of whom we have been talking refused to accept this. Byron illustrates this clearly. For in spite of his boasting, there was clearly a vein of self-pity running through his nature which appears in such a document as *Don Juan*, self-pity because of his clubfoot and self-concealment because of his strange erotic life.

If these men had been philosophers rather than poets and novelists, they might have erected a theory of the Self which would have granted to all men the same degree of individuality as they claimed for themselves. But just as Nietzsche later was to make a distinction between the Will of the Master and that of the Slave and to maintain that most men were slaves, so these writers singled out themselves as the sole possessors of individuality. The overwhelming majority of men were all of a piece. And what was worse, they had no understanding of those individuals who were really individual. In the middle nineteenth century the distinction became that between the artist and the bourgeois, the rebel against society and society itself, the genius and the humdrum member of the herd. But to ask men not accustomed to abstractions and generalizations to be philosophical is perhaps unfair.

In any event it was the philosophers' self which survived. The generation after the 1830s began to see emerging such notions as that of the Great Man, Carlyle's Hero, or Emerson's Self-reliant Man, Whitman's *Myself* celebrated in almost every poem he ever wrote, in other words, the Genius who had been foreshadowed in eighteenth-century treatises on art but who now became above all law and, in an extreme form, turned into Zarathustra. Zarathustra is, as all the books tell us, a reincarnation of Cesare Borgia, the self which creates right and wrong, truth and falsity. He is above the law as the sovereign prince is in Machiavelli. The law is that which is pleasing to the sovereign, said the Justinian Code, and when the sovereign abandons society for a mountain top and the company of an eagle and a snake, his life becomes a dance of which he is the sole choreographer. He is beyond good and evil for the simple reason that he makes good and evil. He believes only that which he wants to believe: there is no God, says the Superman, for if there were, I could not bear not to be He. The main difference between this sort of Ego and Kant's is that Kant had enough humility to believe that all selves were human selves and would naturally all want the same or at least harmonious things.

In what I have called the Romantic Self there was always a yearning for reconciliation. The very fact that these men lamented in public and boasted of their sins and disappointments, was a recognition that other people's opinions did count for something, even if they were bad opinions. There has been a good bit of sentimentality in the interpretation of Don Juan yearning for the ideal to be found only in

mistresses, but nevertheless the search, whether for a woman or a blue flower, is a search for something beyond oneself, something in the attainment of which there will be peace. One sees this even in Whitman, as in Hart Crane, with their playing on the theme of a bridge. Whitman's spider, seeking the spheres to connect them, or Hart Crane's bridge which would unite the two shores, which in his own words would synthesize America, were clear enough symbols of this longing for an indefinite something which would remove the two poets from their solitude and unite them to their fellowmen. But this is not significantly different from what one finds in Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*, when he says that love is not merely a transition from the mortal to the immortal, but is a complete union of the two (*eine völlige Einheit beider*). It is not inexplicable, in view of the difficulty of such a union, that whereas the generation of Musset was sick at heart because of their discovery of difference, the next generation, that of Nietzsche, Ibsen, and Strindberg, gloried in their difference. They did not speak of being rejected by society; it was they who did the rejecting. This comes out clearly in the contempt which men like Gautier, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud had for their contemporaries. You went in for startling them because you despised them. But real and sincere contempt would not stoop to such antics. For if you despise someone, why bother about him at all? Of what importance is it that he be startled or shocked?

Yet some such gesture was, I suppose, inevitable. For there is a paradox in the expression of a self which is unique. No unique being can be described in its own terms, for our vocabulary is limited to describing only what members of classes have in common. Hence one is reduced to exhibiting oneself against the background of others, against society as in Rousseau's resentment against *les Grands*, the Nobility, against one's parents, as in Samuel Butler, against schools as in Macready, Southey, and even Lowes Dickinson, against the mysterious being known as The Age, as in Musset. The conflict is, one imagines, between what I felt and suffered and believed as a private being inaccessible to others, and what I observed going on about me. Thus the *genre* Confession was launched and soon was to be found in novels as well as in lyric poetry, until at the present time almost any serious novel is suspected of being a bit of autobiography. The height of this comes out in such a man as André Gide, who not only published his journals, which give the most intimate details of

his life, but a novel such as the *Faux-Monnayeurs* accompanied by an account of its composition from day to day. But even this is not so dramatic an outcome of the tradition as what is seen in some contemporary paintings which are made not under the direction of the conscious desires of the artist but under the impulses of the deeply buried self with all its logical absurdities revealed for added interest. In this manner the conscious self, which was the one sought by Montaigne, Rousseau, and their followers, was rejected and the unconscious alone permitted to function. The irony of the situation is that the unconscious self is more like other human beings than that which floats above it and is supported by it. In searching for the unique, one lands in the pool of the Collective Unconscious.

The story which I have been adumbrating is not complete without some reference to the shift in values which occurred in the twentieth century as a result, I imagine, of the popularity of historical and biological studies. That shift in the first place was from conformity to something called creativity or vitality. History, whether of nations, of the earth, of biological species is as much the record of novelty and diversification as of conformity. There seems to be a striving to depart from the established regardless of the very general pattern of events. Thus the one value which the unique self could achieve was its own expression. One must follow Polonius and be true to oneself, not to any over-individual standard. But how was one to know what the self was like? Only by what it did, what it produced, what it longed for, all of which were sanctified by their belonging to it. And since we were to cling to ourselves, we had to abandon the claims of reason, that great leveller, and seek another source of wisdom. That source, as Lovejoy has shown so beautifully, had been found by people like Jacobi and Hamann in the eighteenth century and exploited by some of the Post-Kantians in the form of intellectual intuition. Intellectual intuition was a higher form of knowledge, a suprarational insight into whatever truths science had not felt able to substantiate. In brief it was Rousseau's heart, or perhaps even a descendant of the Inner Light. Along with this went the cult of variety. That individuals, whether human or not, were incapable of being completely absorbed into classes is obvious, but that in itself does not imply that it is better to be individual than typical. Yet what Lovejoy again called the metaphysical pathos of certain terms attaches itself in strange ways to abstractions, in the long run perhaps merely because

of temperamental liking and disliking. Whatever the reason, the irreducible variety of things appealed to men who valued for temperamental reasons their personal individuality and we find even sober thinkers like William James eloquent in their dislike of unity. In the third place men began to take seriously the claims of the temporal order as contrasted with the timeless or eternal. The earlier attempts to flee from time into a world of eternity began to be abandoned, and though not every temporalist thought the historical better than the logical or mathematical, to like change, and consequently time, was nevertheless a help in justifying men's admiration for novelty. These three new motivations in philosophy are at least psychologically related to the cult of personal differences, for they bolstered the feeling that it was not only legitimate to preserve one's peculiarities but even impossible to do otherwise.

I have attempted in this paper to do nothing more than sketch the history of an idea which deserves much more detailed and careful study. To complete the story would require several volumes. That pastime I leave to my juniors.

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