

## THE WESTERN CONCEPTION OF MORAL ORDER

In an age when the interactions between East and West are multiplying and the once-dominant characteristics of Western life appear to be disintegrating, the search for some "principle of coherence" which characterizes a given civilization assumes special significance. None of the many explanations of the distinctive character of Western civilization which have been advanced by generations of scholars seem fully convincing when the latter is seen in both its structural and chronological aspects. Indeed, neither its devotion to technological innovation nor its Christian messianism can account for the kaleidoscopic elements in Western culture. It is also fruitless to attempt to find the underlying principle of unity in some unique world-view that would ostensibly be applicable at all times and in all social and geographical contexts—unless one would arbitrarily reduce the concept of civilization to the outlook or behavior of an educated elite, drawn from one or two relatively small social classes.

More rewarding than the various attempts to distinguish the nature of Western civilization by identifying some objectifiable social or cultural trait have been recent efforts to characterize

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certain existential concerns which express its forms of self-consciousness and judgment. In particular, this approach brings to light how the Western conception of the person is related to a distinctive way of perceiving the world and of shaping man's moral sensibility into concrete values. But here another problem is raised: how can one differentiate the Western conception of the self-in-the-world from parallel forms of subjectivism encountered in both India and China? The answer lies in a particular mode of rational ordering that manifests itself in the Western conception of natural law in the physical realm—or in other words in the groundwork of its scientific thought—as well as in a distinctive way of conceiving the moral responsibility of man—that is to say of formulating the notion of *justice*. The characteristic quality of Western civilization inheres not in the principle of justice itself, which is found in virtually all cultures, but in the special manner in which it is applied to the correlative unities in the order of nature and in the moral order.

### I. THE WESTERN FORM OF MORAL AWARENESS

The central quality of Western civilization, pervasive in all its ideas, institutions and values, is the *expectation that the circumstances of human existence—that is, nature, society and history—should not cause suffering, especially to those who have intended no wrong, and should not act in such a way as to make the events of our lives seem arbitrary, nor victimize the innocent, notably children*. The uniqueness of the Western form of consciousness, distinguishing it from the forms of consciousness of other civilizations, is the culturally in-built sense that the conditions of man's being ought not to give rise to seemingly irrational, accidental tragedies, whether of natural disasters, erratic historical occurrences or personal misfortunes that do not fit either the intelligible expectations or the moral life of the individual. Thus a large part of the collective shock felt at the assassination of a youthful president is the intuitive feeling, not only of sorrow or loss, but that such an incomprehensible and irrational event "ought not to happen," for it contravenes our assumption of moral order. What this assumption means is that when suffering and what we regard as injustice do occur, we

presume that there must be some means of redressing it, whether through prayer or through man's own actions.

Of course, the attempt to explain suffering, destruction and the malevolent forces of sickness and death is a universal fact of all cultures. Ritual appeasement of the gods or spirits, and the passion for vengeance, whether by magic or other means, against those to whom the responsibility for one's suffering is attributed constitute widespread human responses to pain, illness and mortality. It is the West's explanation, not of pain or misery but of the quality of evil that is unique. It rests on the unconscious assumption that both nature and history—and even God—have an inherent moral “obligation” or commitment to make justice attainable<sup>1</sup> with regard to man's conscious intentions in his present life and to his moral will. This view implies that the innocence and well-meaning actions of individuals should be rewarded with some positive state of bliss, if only in their contemplation of a future good, and that men should find compensation for the seemingly unjustified tragedies they have been made to endure.

We may compare this expectation with the moral consciousness of classical Chinese civilization. Confucianism fostered a powerful sense of moral order and a strong impulse to achieve ethical harmony in society. One of its primary concerns was the moral content of human obligations and actions. Perhaps its central motivation was to set aright the dislocated moral balance in the world. Confucian sages expressed deep indignation at social discord and the ethical failings of men, especially rulers, as well as against the ills of a disordered society. But Confucianism did not cultivate a sentiment of moral indignation against the human condition per se for “permitting” suffering. Thus men might be refractory in their behavior, bringing about great misery, but the fundamental state of things and the conditions of human existence in themselves were not at fault. Even Hsün-tzu, who

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Ellul writes: “This is why we must take seriously man's claims upon justice in the Bible even though they have certain demonic overtones. The poor and the weak, in particular, deserve a hearing, since they are those who have rights before God.” (*The Theological Foundation of Law* [trans. Marguerite Wieser; Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1960], p. 82). On the notion that man has a claim to certain rights because of his status as God's partner, responding to God and to His covenant with man, see *ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

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viewed human nature as basically corrupt and predisposed to ill (though improvable by ethical teaching), did not deny that justice was always inherent in the order of nature and in the essence of being.<sup>2</sup> In this perspective of a preeminently impersonal moral order, there was no expectation of compensation from Heaven or from man for the unlucky individual's misfortune. For the origins of such a feeling rest upon the initial belief in a morally-conscious and benevolent Creator of the Universe Whose primary concern is the salvation of the individual—a view which the predominant Confucian or Neo-Confucian outlook did not feature. Because tragedy and pain were seen here as consequences of the interaction of creative and destructive forces of the universe, the idea of linking them to good and evil as distinct moral principles did not arise.<sup>3</sup>

We find a notable contrast to this Chinese view in the Christian concept of Original Sin.<sup>4</sup> Seen as the basic vitiating factor in

<sup>2</sup> Hsun Tzu writes: "Water and fire have subtle spirits (*chbi*; somewhat analogous to the *pneuma* of the Greeks) but not life (*seng*). Plants and trees have life (*seng*) but not perception (*chib*); birds and animals have perception (*chib*) but not a sense of justice (*i*). Man has spirits, life, and perception, and in addition the sense of justice; therefore he is the noblest of earthly beings. In strength he does not equal the ox, nor in power of running the horse, and yet he uses them; how can this be? Man is able to form social organisations (*chbun*) and they are not. How is it that men can do this? Because they can cooperatively play their parts and receive their portions (*fen*). How is it that they can carry this out? Because of justice and righteousness (*i*), which unite the parts into a harmony, and therefore a unity, and lead to strength, and in the end to triumph." Cited in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. II: *History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> On the point that in "Eastern" consciousness there are no determinate categories of good and evil, though there is an absolute ground of indeterminate moral value, see Filmer S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West; An Inquiry Concerning World Understanding* (New York, Macmillan, 1947), pp. 386-88.

To Mencius, evils in the world are, in the words of I. A. Richards, "a gigantic reflection of a frustration in the mind of man." (*Mencius on the Mind; Experiments in Multiple Definitions*; London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1964; p. 76).

<sup>4</sup> I. A. Richards writes, "There is no officially recognized war in the Chinese mind between the Soul and the Body, between will and desire. Hence that absence of a sense of sin which used so to puzzle missionaries. The result may even be a difference in the basic lines of division in the Chinese mind between the Ego, the Ego-Ideal, and the rest of the personality." (*Mencius on the Mind*, pp. 74-75). On the absence of the sense of "sin" in Chinese moral consciousness, see also Marcel Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise*, in *L'Evolution de l'Humanité; Synthèse Collective*, dirigée par Henri Berr, Vol. XXV bis; Paris, La Renaissance du Livre, 1934; p. 401.

all human life, sin imposes a moral flaw on the whole temporal world—though a flaw against which God has provided the grace for man's ultimate redemption. In Christianity, God guarantees eventual fulfillment of divine justice. But until the Day of Judgment, the categorical presence of evil vitiates the prospect of absolute justice in human experience or in the state of the world. Thus where in the Chinese view there can be no just order "against" or "outside" the essential harmony of nature and our secular world, in Christianity there can be no ultimate justice within the temporal realm. The difference is that in Confucianism, justice is intrinsic to the nature of being of the world, in Christianity it is the eschatological goal of conscious life.<sup>5</sup>

It should be clearly noted that what is distinctive in Western experience is not the claim of moral order in itself. The concept that such an order exists is universal to all civilizations. The corollary that the order imposes moral obligations upon man which may take ritual forms but also predicate ethical relationships is, if not universal, at least widespread among human cultures. In the Confucian tradition, for example, the Mandate of Heaven is withdrawn from a dynasty because of the moral failings of the emperor. In Hinduism, a man is reincarnated in a high or low state depending upon his performance of morally binding duties. What is peculiar to Western consciousness, then, is not the sense of man's ethical role within the cosmic order but rather the converse, namely the postulation of a tacit "obligation" of the universe to man, to make justice and the good attainable to him. In this regard the development of Calvinism is instructive. The Calvinist view of God's Elect presents a revealing manifestation of the basic moral paradox intrinsic to Western thought. But equally significant of Western consciousness is the fact that Calvin's version of the doctrine of predestination aroused widespread resentment as an offense to our "natural" sense of justice and equity, grounded upon the conceptions of individual innocence and intent. Thus even Calvinists were eventually to find the rigor of predestination increasingly unpalatable, because in condemning man to arbitrary punishment it seemed incom-

<sup>5</sup> On the significance of the notion of eschatology as regards the Western conception of justice and law, see Ellul, *The Theological Foundation of Law*, pp. 41, 94, 99, also 101, 104-5.

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patible with their culturally-formed sense of ethical judgment. Many of them were to disguise, or to push aside, this basic tenet of their original teaching. Revealing of the Western concept of justice is the view of that staunch Puritan, John Milton, affirming that the standard Calvinist interpretation of predestination was erroneous and morally reprehensible. While according to orthodox Christian theology the moral order may be regarded as merely a consequence of God's will,<sup>6</sup> the fact remains that psychologically we hold our basic notion of justice or fairness to be part of the necessary conditions of things.<sup>7</sup>

The notion of a theodicy is peculiar to our cultural tradition. Nature and history, we feel intuitively, should not be so structured that individual justice is unattainable in life. According to Western consciousness, the elements of time and space—or that is to say, the phases of history and the laws of nature—ought not to be so constituted that justice always remains an enigma, or that the circumstances of life impose an unintelligible destiny of accidents, diseases and misfortunes upon hapless individuals. Existence should not defy man's aspirations for the Good as the end-goal of human experience.

Against non-Western views of nature and history as embodying the inevitable expression of right, there arose the unconscious Western attitude that true justice lay outside, or beyond, natural disasters and historical vicissitudes.<sup>8</sup> Against the acceptance of

<sup>6</sup> See for example the discussion of voluntarism in Catholic theology by a critic and defender of the Natural Law position, in Heinrich A. Rommen, *Natural Law; A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy* [trans. Thomas R. Hanley, O.S.B.; St. Louis, B. Herder, 1947], pp. 57-60.

<sup>7</sup> See for example the citation from Grotius' argument (in *De iure belli ac pacis*) that just "as God cannot cause two times two to be anything but four, so He cannot cause that which is intrinsically evil to be not evil," in A. P. d'Entreves, *Natural Law, An Introduction to Legal Philosophy* (London, Hutchinson University Library 1951), p. 53. Josef Fuchs, S. J., argues that in the theonomous conception of Natural Law, there is room for the notion of the good "in itself," and not merely as a consequence of arbitrary divine will. For the good arises from God's being, or from his very nature. Thus the moral order is not the expression of an arbitrary act of God, nor on the other hand does it exist independently of Him (*Natural Law, A Theological Investigation* [trans. Helmut Rickert, S. J., and John A. Dowling, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1965], pp. 65, 67-70).

<sup>8</sup> Expressing the classical Chinese view on this point, Wang An-Shih wrote: "Nature in the heavenly sphere is not without faults, as witness irregularities in the seasons, eclipses, etc. Nature in the earthly sphere also has its faults,

suffering as the inescapable manifestation of a just order which the individual must accept, there stood the Western belief in a justice that must be made or achieved. It is often remarked that a distinctive feature of Western culture is man's impulse to control and change his environment rather than adapt himself to it. We may add that this desire springs from the more basic notion that universal justice is to be achieved, rather than being immanent in nature. The Christian dogma of an eventual Day of Judgment has given expression to this view, as has, in a quite different sense, the modern idea of progress. Both views assume that the world will be redeemed from its present, fallen state.

The distinctive presumption of the Western form of consciousness is revealed at every level of awareness, from theological and philosophical systems to the constant theme of popular sermons, seeking to explain the mystery of seemingly arbitrary suffering and death. Indeed, the uniqueness of Western consciousness is manifest in the implication of the question often asked by those who suffer: "Why me?" What they seek is not just an explanation of the causes of tragedy; and what they feel is more than the quasi-universal desire to understand what went wrong, that is commonly expressed in the widespread recourse to magic spirits and to the anthropomorphized powers of nature. Such a concern is shared by all peoples. What is distinctive here is rather the search for a rational explanation of the seemingly inscrutable order of things which would permit these tragic circumstances to arise, violating our most profound sense of moral justice. Such an explanation has appeared primarily in two related forms of Western thought, namely in the Christian world-view, and in its secular derivatives, cast as social and historical ideals.

But the expectation of achieving a state of moral right should not be identified with the notion of progress or with the idea of worldly perfectibility. In many cases it has accompanied a social and political pessimism which counted solely on an after-life to

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earthquakes, floods, desiccation, and the like. But yet Heaven and Earth continue to cover and support all things, being in no wise hindered by their defects from so doing. That is because they possess the capacity of reverting to the normal." (cited in H. R. Williamson, *Wang An Shih, A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty*, 2 vols. [Probsthain's Oriental Series, Vol. XXII (London, A. Probsthain, 1937)], II, 327).

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achieve the individual's providential redemption. Even the skeptic who expects neither human progress nor divine salvation and feels a resigned frustration at the imperfect order of things and the futility of all ideal aspirations attests the Western understructure of consciousness. For it is this consciousness which first instilled the expectation of absolute justice in him, and thereby led to the disillusion he subsequently experiences over its unattainability. The key to the Western frame of awareness is the fact that it poses as man's fundamental dilemma the contradiction between his conception of happiness and his recognition of a human condition that frustrates the attainment of justice from society and from nature.

Thus the common theme in Western culture is not an affirmation that history, society or nature are just, and reward goodwill and intention. The history of the Western world, as much as that of any other civilization, is filled with man-inflicted sufferings and shows the ravages of war, oppression, brutality and inhumanity, refined by superior technological prowess and exercised, for the most part, in the name of justice and right. In modern times, it is the West that has been a major source of human miseries and of the use of technical skills for devastation—though significantly, it is also Western-derived ethical ideals that have provided the primary resistance to, and moral resentment of, man's suffering. The particularity of Western consciousness does not involve any belief that history or nature will assure moral balance in human life. In this respect, Western thought is no less "fatalistic" than that of non-Western cultures. Rather, the Western view implies the distinctive presumption that man has the right to expect justice in the sense that the circumstances of his existence should not preclude the working out of his moral expectations *but that since they do, some reckoning for this situation ought ultimately to occur*, whether in man's future or in God's timeless realm. This sense of moral outrage is especially to be noted in the Western response to the suffering and death of children, which combines personal grief with a profound feeling of indignation at the injustice of things—not least, one might add, by pious souls who see in such tragedies the incarnate principle of evil in the world resulting from man's rebellion against God.



The expectation of happiness (understood as moral satisfaction) in some transcendent state is not, of course, an idea limited to Western thought. It appears in many, if not all, cultures. Yet such expectations do not constitute the conception, found in the West, that man has a *personal* claim upon the moral order. In Hindu moral consciousness, for example, all suffering is seen as the working out of an absolute moral cosmic principle.<sup>9</sup> The difference between the notion of justice as a quality that is presumably given and ontologically intrinsic in the nature of things, so that it always remains manifest in life, even in its rationally inexplicable "accidents," and the view of justice as a goal to be attained or sought, so that it always remains an incompleting object of religious expectation or of human endeavor, is clearly manifest in the contrast of ethical ideals presented respectively in Job and in the Bhagavad Gita. Job's complaint is against the "unjust" order of his life, which he cannot account for by his own behavior, or reconcile with a just God. In the Hindu classic, the moral problem is the acceptance of one's duty to act in accordance with one's destiny. In Arjuna's case, justice is implicit in his condition and role; in Job's case, it is an expectation of fair treatment or of a just fate.

In Hinduism, the individual's actual knowledge of justice, and his understanding of his place within cosmic movement and activity (*karma*), depend on an intuitive enlightenment, the attainment of which may involve a life-time of exertion and rigid discipline. Experiencing the sense of just and true being directly requires, first, the removal of man's basic misconception of absolute reality and the overcoming of his inborn ignorance and clouded vision. For in his present empirical state of illusory being, man cannot truly know the ontological justice of existence, or its relation to his own condition in life and to the fundamentally deceptive appearance (*maya*) of the nonreal world. But this

<sup>9</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan writes: "The law of karma is the counterpart in the moral world of the physical law of uniformity. It is the law of the conservation of moral energy." (*Indian Philosophy*, 2 vols. ["Library of Philosophy," ed. by J. M. Muirhead (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952-1953)], I, 244). He adds: "The vision of law and order is revealed in the Rta of the Rg-Veda. According to the principle of karma there is nothing uncertain or capricious in the moral world. We reap what we sow. The good seed brings a harvest of good, the evil of evil." (*ibid.*, I, 244-45).

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process of elimination entails fundamentally a revelation, or unveiling, of his own pure being which is always there, and remains unchanged through his successive illusions and reincarnations.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, the quality of absolute justice itself is already achieved in his existence and is ever present as an immanent attribute of being. In Western consciousness, on the other hand, justice remains a goal to be achieved, either as a state to be "created" or as a divine promise to be fulfilled.<sup>11</sup> This difference explains why the West's prophetic perspective of an eschatology and its subsequent formulation of secularized eschatological objectives remain alien to Brahmanic psychology.<sup>12</sup> But whether it is conceived as an expression of divine Will and Providence, or a consequence of humanity's Faustian striving, the principle of justice remains, as far as Western man's experience of life is concerned, a *temporal objective*. Such a view is characteristic neither of Hinduism nor of the Confucian sense of the inherent order in nature. It is this distinctive Western attitude towards the nature of justice that constitutes the ground-work of its characteristic cultural traits and impulses, namely the striving for social justice and the impetus to scientific discovery. Both

<sup>10</sup> As Surendranath Dasgupta puts it: "All sufferings and limitations are true only so long as we do not know our self. Emancipation is the natural and only goal of man simply because it represents the true nature and essence of man. It is the realization of our own nature that is called emancipation. Since we are all already and always in our own true nature and as such emancipated, the only thing necessary for us is to know that we are so. Self-knowledge is therefore the only desideratum which can wipe off all false knowledge, all illusions of death and rebirth." (*A History of Indian Philosophy*, 5 vols.; Cambridge, University Press, 1957; I, 58-59).

<sup>11</sup> In the Western tradition, goodness, is not so much a quality of being as an impulse to action and an object of will (Heinrich A. Rommen, *Natural Law*, pp. 47 ff.). Rommen remarks that "good is to be *done*" (ital. added; *ibid.*, pp. 48-51).

<sup>12</sup> Contrasting the *Chakti* tradition in India with Judaism and Christianity, Rudolf Otto writes: "The central point of their [the Hebrew prophets'] preaching is this, that Jahveh's kingdom ought to be, and, alas! is not, but that at the appointed time it will be, in spite of resistance and disobedience on the part of his people, carried on through judgment and flaming wrath to the consummation. And so thought the young Christian community also. God's kingdom *will come*: this they knew, and in glowing expectation of the advent they stood, and hoped, and waited. The expectation of the advent, in humble reserve and in supplicating expectation in view of the final breaking forth

of these endeavors are consequences of the Western view that the just ordering of man's life is the *creative* function of conscious, rational intellect, whether of God or of man.

The frequently-held view that the uniqueness of Western civilization is its predisposition to reform turns out to be merely a derivative trait of the more fundamental attribute of Western consciousness, namely its view of man's right to justice and to a benevolent order of things. The idea of justice as the object of a human quest, rather than as an inexorable presence inherent in the vicissitudes of life, eventuates psychologically in the idealization of change and of a man-made reality, as in the Faust-myth. The much-noted Western addiction to cultural innovation and to revolutionary movements, which stands in contrast to the more customary quest of peoples for cultural stability, arises from the desire to have man achieve an intelligible order, both in human relations and in dealing with the forces of nature. It is this desire that, we found, gives rise to technological progress and to the continuing impulse to scientific inquiry, as well as to movements for social reform and political innovation.

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of the 'wholly other,' is the soul of this religion from the days of the original Church on—an attitude of the soul altogether unknown in India. . . . [Christianity] gives precedence over the idea of simply individual beatification and rescue, to this whole great *objective* eschatological value—viz., that Jahveh's reign is certainly 'coming,' and will become real, and that the 'end of things' in time and eternity will be the realized 'kingdom of God.'" (*India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted* [trans. Frank Hugh Foster; New York, Macmillan, 1930], pp. 71-72).

Dasgupta uses the term "eschatology" in the different sense of any doctrine based on the notion of a transcendent, ultimate "soul" (*atman*) [*A History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 25 f.]. Mysore Hiriyanna regards the notion of *moksa* (deliverance) as an ideal that has eschatological implications (*Outlines of Indian Philosophy*; London, Allen & Unwin, 1932; pp. 19-20, 77). The same notion of an eschatology, he argues, has been mistakenly applied to the Buddhist teaching of *karma* (*ibid.*, p. 136), which is in fact rationalistic and positivistic. But Hiriyanna here is using the term eschatology to distinguish liberation achieved in an afterlife from a state of release attained within this one. Such a use of the word is different from the conventional, and more precise, definition of eschatology as the absolute Self-manifestation of God to the world, the final completion of the universe at the end of a linear, temporal evolution, and the ultimate goal to which all Creation is inexorably moving. This second conception of eschatological, as for example in the idea of Judgment Day, remains wholly alien to Buddhist time-consciousness and to the Brahmanic frame of awareness.

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### II. INTENTIONALITY IN THE WESTERN STRUCTURE OF ETHICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The attitude that man should have an individual "right" to moral justice in life is expressed in one of the most distinctive characteristics of Western civilization, namely its conception of *intention* and of *free will*. It is the implicit Western view that man's intentions constitute the critical determinant of the moral value of his acts. This notion presumes the individual's moral freedom of choice, though not necessarily his freedom of realization or action. The dilemma of free will and rational order has remained at the heart of Western moral consciousness. In fact, it is the problem of effectuating our conscious intention and our ideal of freedom of choice, by making the possibility of alternative decisions existentially real for the individual, that characterizes to the Western mind the human condition.

In certain non-Western civilizations, the notion of intention has played no less a role in moral consciousness,<sup>13</sup> but it has been a role of a different type. In Hinduism, moral blame is preeminently attached to the failure to do one's duty, that is to say, not to act in accord with one's *dharmā*,<sup>14</sup> including therein all the obligations and rituals of caste. Behind these social duties lies the enormous psychological weight of the whole system of *karma* and the notion of *samsara*,<sup>15</sup> or of rebirths into various human and non-human states in accordance with one's previous moral record.<sup>16</sup> Yet the supreme goal of eventual release from the

<sup>13</sup> On the distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary actions in Hinduism, and the point that moral responsibility applies only to the former, see Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, II, 222.

<sup>14</sup> Of the nature and role of *dharmā* in Hindu consciousness, Heinrich Zimmer remarks that it is better for a man to carry out his own *dharmā* poorly than someone else's well (*Philosophies of India*, ed. by Joseph Campbell [Bollingen Series, XXVI; New York, Pantheon Books, 1951], p. 160).

<sup>15</sup> For some, *dharmā* constituted an end in itself, but generally its purpose was to permit the attainment of *moksa* (M. Hiriyanna, "Philosophy of Values," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *et al.*, Vol. III [*The Philosophies*, ed. by Haridas Bhattacharyya, Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission, 1953], pp. 648-50). But it should be noted that *dharmā* is essentially a positive obligation, doing what is right for its own sake; see Charles A. Moore, "Metaphysics and Ethics in East and West," in *Essays in East-West Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1951), pp. 411 f.

<sup>16</sup> It is this basic and universal principle of Hinduism that served to justify the inequality of the caste system and the severity of treatment, including the

chain of causality and of the total detachment of the true Self from the acting, differentiated ego precludes the ultimate responsibility of the empirically self-conscious "I" for the Self's real spirit (*atman, purusa*). Because the mere wordly subject of conscious being is but part of the illusory appearance of *maya*, it has no "jurisdiction," as it were, over the depersonalized psyche in its pure state, whether the latter is understood as the undifferentiated One-without-a-second of the predominant Advaita tradition or as the distinct souls and monads of some of the heterodox schools. In either case, intention—which after all presupposes the notion of causality—is identified with the deceptive realm of memory and aspirations, of the empirical ego, and of the binding effects of desire, or in short, of non-enlightenment and of the world of bondage.

The popular interpretation in the West that the Brahmanic ideal of disengagement from *karma* and from the limiting *dharma* of the worldly ego means a psychology of pessimism or fatalism and an ideal of moral indifference is utterly false; but the pre-

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forms of legal punishment, of the low-born. Referring to the conception of crime during the Vedic age, V.M. Apte writes: "It is curious that even a minor bodily defect such as the possession of bad nails, or the violation of a purely conventional practice was looked upon as a crime. But we should remember that the implicit belief in rebirth, and the fixed notion that for every defect or mishap in this life a person himself is responsible through actions committed either in this life or in a past one, can explain a number of anomalies in the judicial or social code of the Hindus. This is often forgotten when the charge of an inhuman and brutal outlook is preferred against their legal and social structure." ("Political and Legal Institutions," in *The Bharatiya Itikasa Samiti's History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. by R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalker [London, Allen & Unwin, 1951], Vol. I [*The Vedic Age*], p. 434). Because the rewards and sufferings of *karma* and *samsara* were the true consequences of the individual's inner moral life, determining his future condition, it followed that the ideal of social (distributive) justice and the ruler's function of corrective (retributive) justice could, by contrast, be entirely "exteriorized." Thus public justice, in contrast to the inner justice of *karma*, was a response to the ritual and formal aspects of behavior, or to outward acts, showing little concern for the individual's intention and state of mind. That is the main psychological reason why it was possible for a highly ethical system to combine a rigid, traditionalist social structure, often characterized by harsh punishments (see for example A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* [London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1954], pp. 118-19; also L.D. Barnett, *Antiquities of India* [Calcutta, P. Pustak, 1964 ed.], pp. 150, 151) with an intense concern for the spiritual freedom of the enlightened man. It also helps to explain the unconcerned juxtaposition of elevated moral ideals with the most cynically Machiavellian view of political life.

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vailing sense that it presents an essential difference from the Christian notion of moral responsibility is true. In Hinduism, the proper performance of one's ethical obligations remains one of the key prerequisites to enlightenment,<sup>17</sup> refuting the charge of inherent moral unconcern.<sup>18</sup> As for the term fatalism, it does not properly apply to a world-outlook which proclaims the hope of ultimate redemption,<sup>19</sup> or to a phenomenology of the ego which holds out the possibility of release from suffering,<sup>20</sup> whether through intuitive knowledge (*vidya*, *jnana*) or through devotion (*bhakti*).<sup>21</sup> All the various paths to salvation presume as a first step to *moksa* the individual's will to release, and motivation to virtue as the first condition of his emancipation. But the point is that even the moral intentions of the attribute-laden worldly ego do not constitute the ultimate determinants of the pure soul in its self-transcendent state, either for the theistic schools or the Advaitins. In both the Brahmanic and the non-Aryan traditions, the real Self or life-monad lies untouched by the present, active "I".<sup>22</sup> That is why, incidentally, the yearning for good

<sup>17</sup> See Bhattacharyya, "Indian Ethics," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III (*The Philosophies*), pp. 620-22 ff. On the humane qualities of Hindu ethics, see *ibid.*, pp. 642-43. See also M. Hiriyanna's discussion of the moral values in the notion of *dharma* ("Philosophy of Values," *loc. cit.*, III 647-48. The enlightened person seeks to spread enlightenment to others, and in many schools the road to self-realization is through universal good (*ibid.*, III 653).

<sup>18</sup> Moore, "Metaphysics and Ethics in East and West," in *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, pp. 411-12.

<sup>19</sup> On the fundamental optimism in the Hindu outlook, implicit in the idea of liberation from bondage, see M. Hiriyanna, "Philosophy of Values," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III (*The Philosophies*), p. 654.

<sup>20</sup> There is in Hinduism a pessimism with regard to life and the world and to the inevitability of suffering but there is no despair with regard to the possibility of ultimate release therefrom (see Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* [trans. Willard R. Trask; Bollingen Series, LVII; New York, Pantheon Books, 1958], pp. 11-14).

<sup>21</sup> The two aids to the attainment of *moksa* are morality and knowledge (Hiriyanna, "Philosophy of Values," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III [*The Philosophies*], p. 651).

<sup>22</sup> As Dasgupta writes commenting on the Upanisadic teaching, "The true self manifests itself in all the processes of our phenomenal existences, but ultimately when it retires back to itself, it can no longer be found in them." (*A History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 61).

deeds must ultimately be overcome<sup>23</sup> along with all the other expressions of desire that bind the true Self to the deceptive ego.<sup>24</sup> Such an attitude presents a clear contrast with Christianity in which the over-all moral condition of the self-conscious ego is presumed to determine the ultimate fate and condition of the soul in its eternal state.

If we turn to a comparison with the moral impulse in Confucianism, we find that ethical consciousness played a more conspicuous role here than it did in any other culture. The factors of purpose, intention and will were major considerations in determining a person's responsibility, notably with regard to crimes.<sup>25</sup> The involuntary causing of death did not constitute a criminal act.<sup>26</sup> But intention was judged largely as a quality inherent in a person's behavior rather than in his inner state of mind, and as a source of guilt that could be extended to his entire

<sup>23</sup> The liberated soul stands above the moral code (Bhattacharyya, "Indian Ethics," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III [*The Philosophies*], p. 635).

<sup>24</sup> As Karl H. Potter points out, good habits bind a man to karma just as surely as do bad habits (*Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*; Englewood, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 13. In Radhakrishnan's view, the ethic of the Upanisads requires that the enlightened man give up Kama, or personal pleasure and selfish desire, but not that he renounce desire as such—that is, desire for the good (*Indian Philosophy*, I, 215). Indeed, Radhakrishnan points out that in the early Upanisadic teachings, the desire for salvation and knowledge was highly commended, while neither piety nor affection and devotion were regarded as faults (*ibid.*, I, 215). Only long afterwards did this ideal degenerate into the "insane asceticism of a later day." (*ibid.*, I, 216).

<sup>25</sup> On the concern in Chinese jurisprudence with a person's intention, and the role of attenuating circumstances, etc., see Jean Escarra, *Chinese Law* (Peking and Paris, 1936), trans. Gertrude R. Browne (Seattle, University of Washington MSS—Works Progress Administration, W. P. 2798 [Harvard Law School, and East Asian Research Center, Photocopy]), p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> In Han jurisprudence, premeditation or intention constituted an essential ingredient of the judgment of the criminality of acts and of responsibility (A.F.P. Hulswede, *Remnants of Han Law*, Vol. I: *Introductory Studies and an Annotated Translation of Chapters 22 and 23 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty* [Sinica Leidensia, edidit Institutum Sinologicum Lugduno-Batavum, Vol. IX; Leiden, Brill, 1955], pp. 251-54 ff., 262-65 ff.). The infliction of an accidental injury was generally not regarded as a crime, though occasionally an unintentional offense was punished (*ibid.*, pp. 262-64); even the slave's punishment might be mitigated by the unpremeditated nature of his action (*ibid.*, p. 59).

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family,<sup>27</sup> often with dire consequences.<sup>28</sup> Despite the sophisticated refinement of Chinese ethical thought, this attitude presented a very different view from the concern with the internal state of mind and individual responsibility that are the ideal of modern Western jurisprudence.

Thus neither in Hinduism nor in Confucianism do we find an exact parallel to the Western formulation of individual intention and will. In orthodox Brahmanism, the transgression of one's *dharma* brings grave consequences to one's spirit even if the polluting act, such as a breach of caste barriers with an untouchable or the slaying of a cow, is unintended. In Confucianism, the failings of an emperor might spell disastrous droughts or floods for his subjects, even though he was unaware of his faults or misdeeds. The crimes of an individual might bring torture and death to his relatives.<sup>29</sup> The significant point here is not that one person paid the price of unhappiness for another's failings—for such is the condition of life—but that he conceived of no ultimate reward, as in the Christian Heaven or in the West's secularized ideals, for what he had “unjustly” suffered. In this sense, the Western conception of justice remains unique, for it hinges upon the conception of good and evil, not as relative modes but as self-contained moral principles. We must now show that the Western outlook results from a distinctive feature of its world-view, namely its theomorphic conception of man.

<sup>27</sup> Owen Lattimore writes: “To begin with the Chinese method appears, in practice, to fix responsibility not in terms of ‘who has done something,’ but of ‘what has happened.’ When something has once happened, responsibility must be assigned; and hence there is always an underlying tendency to try to prevent decisive things from happening, and to diffuse responsibility. In legal practice, for instance, this leads to the convention that when a murder has been committed, a murderer must be produced to match the corpse. If the individual cannot be apprehended by the police, the family or the village or some larger community must be made responsible and made to produce ‘satisfaction.’” (*Manchuria, Cradle of Conflict* [New York, Macmillan, 1932], pp. 80-81).

<sup>28</sup> On collective responsibility and punishment, see Hulswewe, *Remnants of Han Law*, I, 103. In severe cases, this included the “extermination of the three clans” (*ibid.*, pp. 112-16 ff.). Opposition to the idea of collective guilt can be found, but despite such occasional protest, it always found its way back into practice (*ibid.*, pp. 114-15, 271-73 ff.), being extended to groups of neighboring peasants (*pi wu*; *ibid.*, p. 273).

<sup>29</sup> Not only was the death penalty inflicted but atrocious mutilations were practiced (Hulswewe, *Remnants of Han Law*, I, 109-12, including for example boiling the prisoner; *ibid.*, pp. 122 ff.). But it should be noted that legal



### III. THEOMORPHISM, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEOMORPHIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The Western perspective of universal justice depended initially on the belief in a single deity who consciously created the world and imposed upon man moral as well as ritual obligations. Ethical monotheism has constituted the framework of our culture, even in its modern secularized form; it has provided the sub-structure of our consciousness long after its religious nucleus had been fractioned. The link which holds together the religious and secular phases of Western history is the quality of theomorphism through which Western man has striven to overcome the arbitrariness of human destiny and to extend control over his environment. The theomorphic view is the source of his conception of Natural Law and justice.<sup>30</sup>

Theomorphism is the assumption that man is conceived in the image of God, or of an ideal mind upon which the finite capacities of human consciousness are modelled,<sup>31</sup> notably in man's ability to think in ideal terms, as in his sense of moral order and of a rational universal law.<sup>32</sup> Such a view is not to be confused with

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torture was practiced in the West with equivalent cruelty until quite recent times, and that the unparalleled savagery of the Nazis was a Western, not a Chinese, phenomenon.

<sup>30</sup> In a comparable vein, see what Fuchs refers to as "theonomy" and "theonomous ethics" (*Natural Law. A Theological Investigation*, pp. 67-73).

<sup>31</sup> Carl G. Jung, "Christ, A Symbol of the Self," in *Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self (Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. IX, Pt. II)*, (trans. R. F. C. Hull [Bollingen Series, XX], New York, Pantheon Books, 1959), p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> "Alone among created beings, man is called to participate intellectually and actively in the rational order of the universe. He is called to do so because of his rational nature. Reason is the essence of man, the divine spark which makes for his greatness. It is the 'light of natural reason' which enables us to 'discern good from evil.'" (see A. P. d'Entreves' discussion of St. Thomas' conception of Natural Law, *Natural Law, An Introduction to Legal Philosophy*, p. 40). Rommen writes: "St. Thomas . . . starts from the likeness of human nature to the divine nature. Understanding and free will are the most essential marks that distinguish man from every other earthly creature. It is precisely through them that man is in a special degree the image and likeness of God. Man's intellect and free will constitute the closest image of God in the material universe. His creation." (*The Natural Law; A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy*, p. 45).

In Catholicism, the eternal law comprises the laws of the natural sciences, including both the physical sciences and the biological sciences with their entelechal elements, and the rational laws of moral virtue. (*ibid.*, p. 46).

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the popular notion of anthropomorphism nor of a pantheism in which man is part of an all-pervasive godhead.<sup>33</sup> In anthropomorphism, man imagines his deities and spirits in his own likeness, characterized by his own temperament, hates and lusts.<sup>34</sup> In pantheism, where the individual is an integral element of god-in-nature, the sense of a unique ideal relationship between man and God does not arise. In theomorphism, on the contrary, man perceives himself in the likeness of God, in the sense that within the limits of his finite mind he participates in the divine quality of a moral and rational intelligence.<sup>35</sup> Of course from a critical standpoint, theomorphism may appear as merely one particular instance of anthropomorphic thinking,<sup>36</sup> in which man's conception of the deity is simply the projection of his own idealized

<sup>33</sup> In the Judaic and Christian view, Man is made in the image of God; in Jaina cosmology, the cosmos itself is of human form—a sort of First Man (Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, p. 241).

<sup>34</sup> Lien-shen Yang writes: "Worldly rationalism ascribes the same reasoning to Heaven and to man and, in so doing, brings Heaven down to earth rather than lifts man up to the heights above." ("The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions*; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 302). Needham cites the view of Wang Chung criticizing the traditional Chinese habit of "making inferences from the ways of men [to those of Heaven]" (*Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. III [*Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth*], p. 480).

<sup>35</sup> Writing of the limited but real autonomy of man under God, Fuchs remarks: "One of the reasons for man's likeness to God is precisely the fact that he participates in the autonomy of God. Similarly the definition of what is good is not given us by God's arbitrary will but is taken from his being and nature. So, man can know what is good by analysing his own being and nature. Man's autonomy is a gift because God revealed himself by creating his image." (*Natural Law, A Theological Investigation*, p. 70). In a similar vein, Jacques Ellul writes: "For the Scholastics, natural law belongs to the nature of man. It is written in his heart and derives entirely from the principle that man must do good and shun evil. It is a kind of yardstick for discriminating between the just and the unjust in law as it exists. The just is what is in agreement with the law inscribed by God in the human heart . . . thus justice itself is closely bound up with human nature. Man is capable of discovering by himself what is truly just and of applying it in the world, because he is not totally depraved and retains a spark of divine truth. This natural law in the heart of man is the reflection of the divine law, inducing man spontaneously to accept the common good as the goal of law, normally determined by those who govern." (*The Theological Foundation of Law*, p. 23).

<sup>36</sup> See Jung, "Christ, A Symbol of the Self," in *Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Pt. II, p. 67.

self-image.<sup>37</sup> But nonetheless, the distinguishing theomorphic trait remains the fact that here man's notion of his own unique capacities is modelled upon an ideal image of conscious Being,<sup>38</sup> conceived as the creator of rational order, the author of moral good and the incarnation of love.

This theomorphic view is different from the forms of consciousness that have prevailed in non-Western civilizations. In classical Chinese culture, for example, the concept of natural order centered upon a non-personal principle or a-conscious force.<sup>39</sup> There was presumed to be a universal order<sup>40</sup> upon which individuals

<sup>37</sup> According to Jung, "*Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self*. He represents a totality of a divine or heavenly kind, a glorified man, a son of God *sine macula peccati*, unspotted by sin. As *Adam secundus* he corresponds to the first Adam before the Fall, when the latter was still a pure image of God, of which Tertullian (d. 222) says: 'And this therefore is to be considered as the image of God in man, that the human spirit has the same motions and senses as God has, though not in the same way as God has them.' . . .

"St. Augustine (354-430) distinguishes between the God-image which is Christ and the image which is implanted in man as a means or possibility of becoming like God." ("*Christ, A Symbol of the Self*," in *Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Pt. II, pp. 37-38).

<sup>38</sup> For Eckhart, according to Rudolf Otto, "the soul is a counterpart and image of the Godhead." (*Mysticism East and West; A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism* [trans. Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne; New York, Macmillan, 1932], p. 206).

<sup>39</sup> We should note that C. K. Yang argues against the prevalent thesis that Chinese civilization has been pre-eminently a-religious (*Religion in Chinese Society*; Berkeley, Cal., University of California Press, 1961; pp. 3-6). Arguing partly from the wide diffusion of temples, Yang states that Chinese life has in fact been permeated by religious currents (*ibid.*, pp. 6-16). But the question here is whether one defines the term "religion" to include all popular beliefs in ancestral spirits, demons or ghosts, were-tigers and *feng shui*, or whether one limits its use to forms of personal theism. As regards Chinese culture, and particularly Confucianism, the perennial question remains whether theistic notions were relevant to, or even implicit in, its rational ordering of the universe and the ethical philosophy of the scholar-gentry, and the very nature of the *Tao*. (Cf. discussion, *ibid.*, Ch. X). In any case, Yang emphasizes what he regards as the religious aspects of Confucianism with respect to its supernatural and theistic elements (at least in its popularized rituals) and to its view of fate and Heaven, which he sees as non-rational features within a generally rationalistic system (*ibid.*, pp. 244-77, esp. 246-50, 255-56, 257, 269).

On this point, see notably Henry Maspero, *Les Religions Chinoises (Mélanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la Chine)*, Vol. I [Publications du Musée Guimet; Bibliothèque de Diffusion; Vol. LVII], (Paris, Civilisations du Sud—S.A.E.P., 1950), pp. 137-38.

<sup>40</sup> See Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise*, p. 591.

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were to ground their social behavior and the emperor was to fashion his conduct, making it a model example to others. But there was no presumption of a personal cosmic Legislator to command a code of laws<sup>41</sup> expressing his conscious concern for *individual* men. In fact, the justice of Heaven was not only expected to be inscrutable and sometimes irrational,<sup>42</sup> but also impersonal<sup>43</sup> and arbitrary.<sup>44</sup> Man might worship Heaven as a supreme father, but Heaven did not provide a transcendent

<sup>41</sup> See especially Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. II (*History of Scientific Thought*), pp. 214-15, 286-87, esp. 563-64, 581. Joseph R. Levenson contrasts the Western (or rather the Byzantine) tradition of absolute monarchy, in which the magnificence and despotic authority of the ruler appeared as a copy of God's majesty and rule in Heaven, with the imperial tradition in China, which lacked such a transcendent referent since Confucianism did not presume a divine Creator. The consequent absence of an "in-the-beginning" perspective of time meant that the role of the emperor was conceived ideally as that of passive adjustment of the social order to nature and to the hidden yet immanent reason of heaven. See "The Suggestiveness of Vestiges: Confucianism and Monarchy at the Last," in *Confucianism in Action*, ed. by David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, Cal., Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 257-58.

<sup>42</sup> On the idea of divine retribution and justice in China, see Lien-shen Yang, "The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 298 ff. But the author points out that divine retribution did not always work out (*ibid.*, pp. 298-99). As evidence of the irrationality of the Mandate of Heaven, Homer H. Dubs notes that in Confucianism the emperor ideally acquires his mandate to rule through benevolence, justice and virtue (*Hsuntze, The Moulder of Ancient Confucianism* [Probsthain's Oriental Series, Vol. XV; London, Probsthain, 1927], pp. 276-80 ff.) but the fact remains of reconciling fact with theory in the successes of various bad emperors. (*ibid.*, pp. 285-88).

<sup>43</sup> However, Yang argues that while Confucianism constituted a generally rationalistic system—though not simply a mechanistic one—it was closely connected with Chinese religious beliefs in a personalized Heaven ("The Functional Relationship Between Confucian Thought and Chinese Religion," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, pp. 272-74). He sees Confucianism as readily adaptable to religion (*ibid.*, pp. 271-72 ff., 278, 285, 289-90) citing the implicit personification of the predetermining power in Mencian thought (*ibid.*, p. 274). But Yang here uses the term "religion" in a broader meaning than is usually intended, covering a wide range of magic and rituals (*ibid.*, pp. 288-89), Yin-Yang and Five Elements divination (*ibid.*, pp. 275-76), ancestor worship (*ibid.*, pp. 276-78), and indeed any beliefs in spirits, spirit-forces or the supernatural.

<sup>44</sup> "Heaven . . . does not invariably reward the good man nor does it always punish the wicked. We must look to mankind for our own reward, the reward of a good or bad name." Burton Watson, *Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 157-158.

conscious model of self-awareness such as characterizes the theomorphic view.<sup>45</sup>

In Advaita Vedanta, the pattern of cosmic becoming does not involve a conscious, rational act on the part of what is conceived as Brahman, the essence-of-all-being. Rather it presupposes a de-personalized passive energy from which emanates the unending stream of appearances that constitute our illusory world-reality.<sup>46</sup> Where man's soul is seen as an indistinguishable part of the one-ness of all existence,<sup>47</sup> theomorphism becomes a meaningless notion. Where all things are part of Brahman, where the great chain of Being links all forms of consciousness in *karma*,<sup>48</sup> the theomorphic view of man does not arise. As for popular Hinduism, the endless multiplicity of gods brings it closer to a ritualistic animism. Thus it is really in Western consciousness that man defines his capacity for rational thought and moral judgment

<sup>45</sup> Heaven is the origin of all things, and it governs the world; see Alfred Forke, *The World-Conception of the Chinese; Their Astronomical, Cosmological and Physio-Philosophical Speculations* (Probsthain's Oriental Series, Vol. XIV; London, A. Probsthain, 1925), pp. 147-49. Thus heaven is the source of justice and of rewards; but Forke notes, "heaven is not only the donor of happiness, he also may send misfortune and is often unkind." (*ibid.*, p. 150). We may note that Forke here refers to heaven as "he." Indeed, Forke remarks, "Heaven is not a man, but he acts like one." (*ibid.*, p. 151). But this anthropomorphic usage does not disclaim the prevailing Chinese conception of heaven, especially in the Neo-Confucianism of Chu Hsi, as an abstract, impersonal principle (*ibid.*, pp. 157-58, 160).

<sup>46</sup> In Samkara's Advaita Vedanta, according to Zimmer, it is God himself who constitutes the supreme illusion; for God seems to delude himself (though actually he is only engaged in sport, or a pantomime play) that he has the attributes of godliness, though these are but the sheer illusion of passive, impersonal Brahman (*Philosophies of India*, pp. 425-27). Thus in the end, "God's Ego, the ultimate personal entity, is fundamentally as unreal as the human ego, as much an illusion as the universe..." (*ibid.*, p. 426). Dasgupta remarks: "In the Vedanta system Isvara [God] has but little importance, for he is a phenomenal being; he may be better, purer and much more powerful than we, but yet he is as much phenomenal as any of us. The highest truth is the self, the reality, the Brahman, and both *jiva* [the empirical ego] and *Isvara* are but illusory impositions on it." (*A History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 447).

<sup>47</sup> See Northrop on the "indeterminate or undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" of being in the consciousness of Eastern civilizations (*The Meeting of East and West*, pp. 335-37, *passim*, esp. 395 ff.).

<sup>48</sup> In traditional Hinduism, the personality of the individual is the result of the manifestation of Absolute Consciousness, due basically to *Maya*, and to the workings of *Prkrti* and *Karma* (see Bhattacharyya, "Types of Human Nature," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III [*The Philosophies*], pp. 610-11).

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in terms of a theomorphic model from which he expects justice in nature, society, and history.

To be sure, there arises in the theistic schools of Brahmanism a conception of *Isvara* and of man's relation to God that sometimes seems remarkably close to Western monotheism, and to the latter's theomorphic implications. In Ramanuja's modified non-dualism, the relation of the eternal, individual soul to a personal God<sup>49</sup> (contrasting with the Samkarite perspective and its absolute non-dualism) suggests a man-God relationship that parallels the traditional Western attitude. In the avowed dualism of soul and God of Madhva's teaching,<sup>50</sup> the similarity with Western religious consciousness goes further.<sup>51</sup> Yet at bottom a qualitative difference remains between them, a difference which gives a radically different existential meaning to their respective forms of religious life.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> See Ruth Reyna's comment on the attributes and personality of Brahman in Ramanuja's view (*The Concept of Maya, from the Vedas to the Twentieth Century* [Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1962], pp. 20 f.).

<sup>50</sup> On the sharp differentiation between the self and the holy Being in Madhva's dualist teaching, see Ninian Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 27. Madhva's dualism distinguishes the self from non-intelligent substances (*ibid.*, pp. 115-21). The reaction against Samkara developed by Ramanuja is carried further by Madhva's teaching (*ibid.*, p. 115) and Saivism, which Madhva's teachings influenced (*ibid.*, p. 123). To Samkara, Madhva opposes the argument that unqualified non-dualism "cuts at the root of worship and devotion" (*ibid.*, p. 120), and he consequently seeks to adapt "soul pluralism to the needs of theism." (*ibid.*, p. 122). In a sense, Madhva's thought provides a psychological link between atheistic mysticism such as that of the Jains and the theist devotionalism of the Ramanuja school (*ibid.*, p. 121).

<sup>51</sup> Madhva's dualism stands closer in one sense to the theism of the West than does Ramanuja's thought, yet there is a paradoxical situation here, "For although the separation of God from the world and from the selves is radical in Dualism [i.e., Madhva's teaching], and although Qualified Non-Dualism [i.e., Ramanuja's teaching] has something of a monistic air and thus superficially resembles pantheism, the concept of grace is much more strongly stressed in the latter." (Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, p. 120). Thus while Madhva's dualism seems closer to Western orthodox thinking, in fact it is the devotionalism basic to *what appears to be* the pantheism of Ramanuja that, in another sense, stands nearer to the Western outlook (*ibid.*, p. 120). Nonetheless it is true that the parallelism between Madhva's position and Western thinking is sufficiently noteworthy to explain the probably unfounded belief that the former has been the subject of Christian influence (*ibid.*, pp. 118-19).

<sup>52</sup> Otto points out that the *bhakti*-tradition bears notable psychological and theological similarities to the teaching on salvation and redemption in Christianity, but that in the end there remains a fundamental difference in

In Ramanuja's view, the universe is part of God, specifically constituting his "body," and every distinct soul is an integral atom of God's infinite being.<sup>53</sup> In Madhva's philosophy of the salvation and damnation of souls,<sup>54</sup> man exists in the image of God and reflects the qualities of His consciousness. But the point remains that in all these Hindu perspectives, man is not *unique* in reflecting or participating in God's existence. Thus man is not distinguished from other organic forms by his moral and conscious likeness to Isvara—though he is distinct from all other beings (even the gods!) by his capacity for enlightenment and release.<sup>55</sup> In the cycle of rebirths, man remains an integral element

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soteriological conceptions between Christianity and all forms of Hinduism. This difference is rooted in the Christian notions of sin and grace, exemplified in the meaning of the Passion and the Cross, and characteristically manifest in the expectation of God's Kingdom (see *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted*, pp. 101-8 and 71-72). William S. Haas argues that the distinctive Western notions of love, from the Greek *eros* to the Christian *caritas*, are alien to the Eastern tradition, even where surface similarities appear as in the Hindu concept of *bhakti* (*The Destiny of the Mind, East and West* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1956], pp. 190-91).

<sup>53</sup> For Ramanuja as for Western theists, there remained the key problem of reconciling the transcendence and immanence of God (Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* [Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1950], p. 396), but his approach to the problem was different from theirs. Smart comments that in the qualified non-dualism of Ramanuja, everything is part of the one holy Power which as the Absolute has two sides, namely "the Lord as supreme Self and the cosmos as his body." (*Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, p. 109). According to Ramanuja's philosophy, "there are many finite selves distinguished in some manner from God," yet these life-monads too were part of the one holy Power." (*ibid.*, p. 110). Thus Ramanuja's system "introduces a distinction between the self and the Lord, while retaining a sort of non-dualism or monism." (*ibid.*, p. 111). Smart remarks that in Ramanuja's thought there is "not the radical distinction that one might expect by analogy with the similarly oriented theism of the West." (*ibid.*, p. 114). For Smart notes that "the doctrine of the world as God's body looks rather like pantheism" but that a critical difference in fact remains (*ibid.*, p. 114).

<sup>54</sup> Concerning Madhva's doctrine of grace, and his teaching of God's determination of the Elect and the Damned, see Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, pp. 249-50. See also Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, IV, 57-58. On God as the source of human bondage, and on the prospects of liberation and damnation in Madhva's system, see *ibid.*, IV, 317-18.

<sup>55</sup> See Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 40. For the Gods, Eliade explains, remain only magicians and cannot attain true liberation like man (*ibid.*, pp. 89-90). Zimmer remarks upon the Hindu deification of man in the sense that it is he who is capable of gaining release (*Philosophies of India*, pp. 232-33). Thereby man is superior to the gods (*ibid.*, p. 291). But

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of the organic chain of being. As he may be reborn in non-human forms, so animals may be reborn as men. There is, then, no absolute categorical differentiation, as there is in Western theomorphic consciousness, applicable solely to the soul of man and to the human condition.<sup>56</sup>

Theomorphism is largely derived from Judaism and from the Hellenic idea of *logos*. While Greek mythology and religious rites, such as the Eleusynian mysteries, were clearly anthropomorphic, the concept of *logos* and the moral ideal of the *polis* constituted a variety of theomorphic idealism<sup>57</sup> best exemplified in Platonism. Christianity combined these two currents. It brought theomorphism to a culmination in the concept of Christ as both God and Man,<sup>58</sup> rather than as a deity simply appearing in human form. Christianity also rooted theomorphism in the substructure of popular Western consciousness. It popularized the belief that man lived in a world which despite its appearance to the con-

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Zimmer points out that the Hindu conception of man is not that of Western humanism (*ibid.*, pp. 231-32).

<sup>56</sup> Referring to, and then quoting, St. Augustine, Jung writes: "The God-image is not in the corporeal man, but in the *anima rationalis*, the possession of which distinguishes man from the animals. 'The God-image is within, not in the body... Where the understanding is, where the mind is, where the power of investigating truth is, there God has his image.' Therefore we should remind ourselves, says Augustine, that we are fashioned after the image of God nowhere save in the understanding: '...but where man knows himself to be made after the image of God, there he knows there is something more in him than is given to the beasts.' From this it is clear that the God-image is, so to speak, identical with the *anima rationalis*." ("Christ, A Symbol of the Self," in *Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Pt. II, pp. 38-39).

<sup>57</sup> Referring to the *polis*, Haas comments that it was not a natural product but "the product of the mind at its highest level, an intentional creation that sprang full-armed from theoretical thought." (*The Destiny of the Mind*, p. 24). See also *ibid.*, pp. 79-82 ff. Haas adds: "The *polis* introduced the *logos* into the political and social sphere. A product of pure reason, it sanctioned the free citizen as the only adequate agent and representative of civilized life." (*ibid.*, p. 82).

<sup>58</sup> Jung writes: "Like Adam before the Fall, Christ is an embodiment of the God-image, whose totality is specifically emphasized by St. Augustine. 'The Word,' he says, 'took on complete manhood, as it were in its fulness: the soul and body of a man. And if you would have me put it more exactly—since even a beast of the fields has a "soul" and a body—when I say a human soul and human flesh, I mean he took upon him a complete human soul.'" ("Christ, A Symbol of the Self," in *Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Pt. II, p. 39).



trary was not ultimately arbitrary, a-rational or unjust, and thus would offer compensation for the suffering of the innocent in this life. The anthropomorphic concept of men sacrificing themselves to their deities is a standard feature of religious experience, but the theomorphic idea of God sacrificing Himself for man is a concept distinctive of the West. It is an idea that is incompatible, psychologically, with a fatalistic acceptance of an ultimately non-just or a-rational reality. Consequently theomorphism establishes the basic predisposition of mind to a quest for a universal ideal of the good and for the achievement of justice.

Historically, theomorphism came to express itself in the Western conception of Natural Law, seen as an emanation of the mind-quality behind the organized structure of the universe.<sup>59</sup> In its classical Roman form, Natural Law manifested an impersonal, universal ideal that prescribed man's moral duty.<sup>60</sup> Such was the great moral teaching of Stoicism, embodied in Roman jurisprudence. In its Christian development, Natural Law came to represent the rational organization of the universe created by God. In Thomism specifically, Natural Law theory presented man as subject to the organic unity by which God ordered the hierarchic structure of the cosmos. In seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalism, the Law of Nature came to reflect the idea of a transcendent or immanent reason which established the order of nature that could be translated into an ideal moral code and political philosophy for man.<sup>61</sup> The variations of the classical Natural Law theories from Hobbes to Locke, Hume and Rousseau are familiar to everyone as the ethical and political precepts of the modern

<sup>59</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, Macmillan, 1925), pp. 5-6, 15-17, 20.

<sup>60</sup> On the common root of the Natural Law of the jurists and the Laws of Nature in the framework of Western consciousness, see notably Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. II (*History of Scientific Thought*), pp. 519-20, 582.

<sup>61</sup> Ellul writes: "For the century of Enlightenment natural law is essentially in agreement with reason. Reason is no longer understood as a means of discovering natural law, as had been the case with Scholasticism, but as the very expression of this law. As a result, what is in accord with reason in the domain of law, indeed everything that accords with reason, constitutes natural law. Natural law is no abstract and ideal law; rather, it is a product of autonomous reason. Although the underlying principles may vary, they are unfailingly based on a natural attribute, reason, which is common to all men." (*The Theological Foundation of Law*, p. 25).

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state. Here theomorphism came to mean the deification of the nation-state as the new secular god.

The historical account of how an unconsciously theomorphic frame of reference was transformed and preserved in our secular modern age need not concern us here. Suffice it to say that an increasingly secular theomorphism took many forms, characterized by changing conceptions of Natural Law, or of man's natural state, that were developed from the time of the scientific revolution through the enlightenment to the romantic age. In their own ways, the arts also expressed the theomorphism found in science and philosophy. During the nineteenth century, the theomorphic view culminated in the Faustian vision of man becoming the "divine" creator of his own world and of his own ideal of a perfect state. It manifested itself in the romantic historical faith in some kind of Manifest Destiny—whether of parochial or universal scope—through which history reveals its supposedly providential quality.

No less significant than the intellectual and aesthetic manifestations of theomorphism among the elites were its various popular expressions in the mass-currents of life and thought. The nineteenth century tendencies to glorify technological innovation, social reform and political revolution were but the outward signs of a mass-faith in the power of humanity, or of some chosen elect, to create an ideal order, and thus to emulate the creative power of God. The deification of man was expressed in modern secularized nationalism, the idealization of social progress and eventually in the distorted historicist idealism of totalitarian movements. These mass-currents of modern Western experience attested the pervasive influence of a distorted theomorphic outlook, increasingly changed into a god-like worldly creative impulse and faith. In its modern secular form, largely denatured of its initial spiritual quality, theomorphism retained one key psychological attribute from its initial theocentric character, namely the expectation of a compensating justice for the individual. Thus the old Western faith in personal redemption and eschatological deliverance remained, albeit in disguised and new historical objectives. The Western intimation, that justice will be achieved and suffering rewarded, persisted in the new secular ideologies and worldly aspirations.

In brief, we have found that the traditional distinctions of

Western civilization in terms of its predisposition to innovation, its technology, its social and political movements, its instability, or even its Christian beliefs are all inadequate. For if these currents do, in fact, characterize major aspects of Western life and of its cultural impact on the world, they are not universal to all its peoples and ages. Thus we were led to seek a more pervasive and less obvious quality lying behind these various attributes. In this perspective, we formulated the particular Western conception that justice is an ideal to be achieved in the ending of suffering of the innocent and the eventual compensation for human misery. This yearning for a just state of man's being, unique only in its mode of expression and not in its quality as a moral impulse, distinguished itself through the Western conception of individual intention and will, and the sense of personal innocence and individual responsibility.

We found next that the Western form of consciousness had its roots in a distinctive theomorphism that was typified in the Christian conception of man. Theomorphism remained the basic Western frame of the individual's self-awareness, even after the latter had lost much of its religious orientation under the increasing secularization of Western life. It was the concept of Natural Law that came to constitute the bridge connecting the other-worldly and the worldly forms of theomorphic thought. Under the impetus of the technological, social and intellectual currents of the last three centuries, Western man's self-image changed greatly. But it retained its theomorphic sense in the striving for justice, manifest in the desire to find a rational, scientific order of nature and a moral ideal identified with social, political and historical values. Finally, we found the same basic psychological impulse culminating in the Faustian historicity of the nineteenth century and in the popularized mass-currents of the industrial age.

In sum, we are now in a position to explain the source of the moral doubt and sense of disorientation which have become such popular refrains in contemporary society. Whatever the particular causes of dislocation found in the currents of our age—for example the disillusionment of war, the anxiety over irrationality and dehumanizing totalitarianisms, and the alienation and depersonalization of our industrial mass-society—the fact remains that

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these modern conditions of life have served to undermine the Western predisposition of moral consciousness, namely that the attainment of justice constitutes the object of rational being. The dilemma of our age is not the disintegration of specific values, hopes and aspirations; it is not what is referred to as the new crisis of religious beliefs, the doubts about our social ideals or the abandonment of historical expectations. Problems of a similar nature have recurred several times in our history. The issue concerns rather the corroding of a far deeper core within our consciousness—a core upon which all particular values and ideal-systems must rest, namely the underlying expectation of right, or more accurately, the assumption of the inherent potentiality of things for right-ness. Other civilizations have overcome historical catastrophes and even the shattering of their historical illusions, for example the Ancient Hebrews. What has come to confront Western thought is the more profound challenge to its faith in the very capacity for order. All the traditional aspirations in Western culture, whether religious or secular, conservative or revolutionary, had agreed in this: that they presupposed a basic form of moral consciousness according to which nature, history, or God would ultimately provide the opportunity for justice to the redeemed individual. It is the eating away at this psychological base, upon which the sense of any redemptive and transcendent purpose to our actions ultimately depends, that characterizes the corrosive effect of a self-abandonment to irrationality and to the arbitrariness of existence.