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PREFACE

This book was begun several years ago. It arose out of a public crisis and a private need --- a need to take stock while there was still time, a need to find out just how much and how little I really knew about myself and the universe in which I had somehow occurred. It seemed a pity to die before I had had time to be surprised at being alive, or actively curious as to what man amounted to --- if, indeed, he amounted to anything. Though the present book has grown far beyond my first attempts to meet such a situation, still it remains an effort to answer the question: what am I? "Whatever the human mystery may be I am it."*

What is man? This is the riddle which everyone, while accepting all the outside help he can get and use, must solve after his own fashion. My solution (if it can be called that) will not in its entirety do for anybody else, and it is offered here more as an incentive than as a guide. In any case I have no complete, self-consistent, well-rounded system, but only the sketch-plan of a philosophy. The nature of man is a baffling and inexhaustible topic, about which I do not wish to dogmatize. While I can say with Thoreau, "I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else ^{whom} I knew as well",* I have to admit that I am increasingly a stranger to myself. Of the two kinds of men -- those who refuse to take the advice know thyself, and those who imagine they have done so -- the second is perhaps the less wise. Knowledge that is not counterbalanced with knowledge of ignorance is mere dead weight.

This is a philosophical book, but to prevent misunderstanding I must explain at once that the term philosophy as I use it bears a meaning which is not always accepted nowadays. Firstly, I avoid as far as possible the metaphysics which, remote from the concrete details of nature, loses itself in a fog of words. Philosophy has been defined as the sum of scientific knowledge, or an attempt to unify the sciences.[†] My intention is not so ambitious, but I do wish to suggest lines along which the chief results of the separate sciences may one day coalesce into a Science. Secondly, this book is a practical enterprise. Many philosophers, and amongst them the greatest, have held that philosophy is much more than thinking about the important things: it demands and includes appropriate ways of behaving. I shall have a good deal to say on this subject. Thirdly, this book is speculative --- I hope boldly so. Though in the main I agree with Samuel Alexander that "true or concrete thought is tied down to nature",* I dare not claim that all my balloons are captive ones. Some of them sail off into the blue. But is not the view from above, the widest possible perspective, just what we require if we are to find ourselves in the universe? At present we do not know where we are, though it is clear that we are not at home.[†] Philosophy has failed us. There is a trenchant passage in Kierkegaard's Journals where he says that "In relation to their systems most systematizers are like a man who builds an enormous castle and lives in a shack close by." Our real need is neither

*Christopher Fry, Venus Observed, III. And earlier in the same play: "what in the world is a man? Speaking for myself, I am precisely that question: I exist to know that I exist Interrogatively."

*Walden, 'Economy'.

"The old description of the philosopher as one who tries 'to see life steadily and see it whole' may not be in accord with the fashion of the day. But it has the perhaps higher merit of being in accord with etymology, with common verbal usage, and with a tradition of 2,500 years." Professor C. A. Campbell, Philosophy, April, 1950.

[†]E.g. by Paulsen, Introduction to Philosophy, pp. 33 ff.

Philosophy is apt to go on, William James remarked, as if the actual peculiarities of the world were irrelevant. "But they cannot be irrelevant; and the philosophy of the future must imitate the sciences in taking them more and more elaborately into account." A Pluralistic Universe, p. 331.

*Space, Time and Deity, i. p. 204.

Cf. A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, p. 152: "If science may be said to be blind without philosophy, it is true also that philosophy is virtually empty without science."

[†]"The inhabitants do not bother about the universe, having more important affairs to look after. They know of course their place on the map...but in the universe they are completely lost." L.P. Jacks, The Legends of Smokeover, p. 14.

castle nor shack, but a home in the universe --- something between a hovel and an equally uninhabitable front parlour, something that is neither the sceptic's cosmic slum nor the tidy (but insubstantial and draughty) constructions of the arm-chair metaphysician. I believe we are desperate for lack of a world-picture in which our own lives fill a perceptible corner --- a picture with enough richness of colour and generous detail to fire the imagination, with that conformity to science which any robust intellect demands, and with that clear portrayal of cosmic unity and purpose which alone will satisfy the heart. This book is the rough cartoon of such a picture.

Next as to the presentation. I know of no reason why serious books on philosophical subjects should not be as easy to read as the theme allows.* Accordingly I have tried to write in terms that the educated non-specialist will follow, and I have helped out the text with many diagrams, using these in what I believe amounts to a new way. Actually, no doubt, the book's intelligibility will depend more upon the reader's sympathies and antipathies than upon any other factor. Whether he is or is not a visualizer will also make a difference. To some, the graphic method is more hindrance than help --- for the sake of such readers the text has been written so that (with a few insignificant exceptions) it can be read without reference to the diagrams; to others the diagrams may perhaps prove as helpful in the reading of the book as they were to me in the writing of it; to a few they will possibly suggest a new field of research. There is an appendix on the subject.

The reason for the dialogues -- between my unreflecting or common-sense self ('C') and my philosophical self ('P') -- which are scattered throughout these pages, is that thinking naturally falls into such a shape. Thought, as Plato observed, is a dialogue of the soul with herself.* And in the course of this inward talk, C, though often worsted by P, is never worsted for good, but recovers again and again to play an indispensable part. Let me say here, once and for all, that no man, and least of all a philosopher, can afford to disown this hopelessly unphilosophical side of himself.

A hint about reading the book: I must warn readers against dipping in here and there. Sampling can only mislead, because the plan of the work is roughly dialectical. The findings of earlier chapters are modified later on, and later chapters need the backing of earlier ones if they are to be understood. The whole must be read.† There will be many things to bring my readers to a standstill, but, like Spinoza, "I pray them to proceed gently with me and form no judgement concerning these things until they have read all."*

Even so, there is a highly cultivated type of mind to whom much of what I have to say will remain meaningless. I know the value of the mentality that has no use for speculation, for it is to the intellectual ascetic, with his patient attention to detail, and his refusal to go more than an inch at a time beyond the evidence, that I owe many of the data on which are based the constructions which

It is not so much what we say explicitly about the universe, as what we take for granted, that is significant. For instance, Sir Arthur Keith, drawing the (very necessary) distinction between the behaviour of nations and the behaviour of the individuals that compose them, says that whereas the latter is governed by the "ethical" code the former is governed by the "cosmical" code --- that is, by the code of ruthless force and subhuman egoism. Essays on Human Evolution, XXIV, XXV. Note the assumption as to the nature of the cosmos. (I should add that the antithesis between the 'cosmical' and the 'ethical' is taken from T. H. Huxley.)

*A new standard in simple, but far from shallow, philosophical writing was set by John Macmurray's Freedom in the Modern World. Professor Macmurray found, to his astonishment, that his effort to avoid the specialized terminology of philosophers was philosophically rewarding, since it obliged him to think out much that he had taken for granted. He was "forced, not into superficiality, but into a deeper realization of his own meaning". In some measure this has been my own experience, though I cannot claim to approach Macmurray's lucidity.

†What Yeats (Essays, p. 492) says of poetry -- that we make it out of the quarrel with ourselves -- is assuredly true of philosophy. "For man", says Pascal, "holds an inward talk with his self alone, which it behoves him to regulate well." (Pensées, 535.) R. G. Collingwood insisted that the true 'unit of thought' is not a proposition, but a question with its answer. The Socrates within us is all-important. See Collingwood's Autobiography, V. Louis MacNeice tells us "...that a monologue is the death of language and that a single lion is less himself, or alive, than a dog and another dog."

†The general or lay reader, however, is advised to omit the appendices to chapters on his first reading. These appendices are not specially technical or difficult, but they are concerned with matters of detail.

*Ethics, II. xi.

he condemns as, at best, premature. All I can suggest to him is that our attitudes are complementary, and that there is as deep and as practical a need for large-scale structures of thought as for their building materials. Let him allow me my function as I allow his. It is little use pointing out that I have failed in it. I know that already. Constructive proposals are wanted. As the Chinese sage remarks, "The man who criticizes others must have something as an alternative. To criticize without an alternative is like using fire to put out a fire."⁺

There is another type of reader to whom much of what I have to say will be all too acceptable. I refer to the lazy-minded and intellectually undisciplined enthusiast, to the cult-monger who, unprepared for the long grind of working his way through stubborn facts towards the goal of his desire, tries to leap there at a single bound. But in fact quick advance leads nowhere, and nothing worth while is achieved without industry, patience, and humility. Let there be speculation about man and the universe (without it man is not himself) but let it be informed speculation, ^{not idle.} The warning of Heraclitus that "men that love wisdom must be acquainted with very many things indeed" is more to the point now than ever it was. Dr. F. Sherwood Taylor underestimates neither the size nor the urgency of the task when he writes: "the only hope for the world is the incorporation of the religious, philosophical, and scientific outlooks in a single comprehensive view, and I would say emphatically that this incorporation has not been accomplished and that its accomplishment is the most immediate and urgent of tasks for those who wish men well."^o We are due for a synthesis. The scientific jungle needs the taming hand of the thinker and the saint; on the other hand, philosophy can find in the luxuriant growth of modern science just the food she should have for further growth, while religion can find in it a much-needed purgative and tonic. Dr. Inge has told us that the task of the century is to spiritualize science.* it is also, I would add, to intellectualize religion. In both tasks philosophy has a great opportunity and a great responsibility. The following pages are an attempt to discharge my own share of this responsibility.⁺

Finally, let me emphasize the fact that I carry no stock of patent medicines or labour-saving devices. I can offer no easy way out or in, no short cut to bliss, no philosophy without tears, no brand-new gospel. All I can promise are some ancient teachings in modern dress -- teachings that are difficult only because they are simple, and must be lived to be understood -- together with some old recipes for hope and confidence. The merely new-fangled is as useless as the merely traditional. We must go forward to new ideas and back to old ones; we must get down to the facts of science and wake up to those of religion. Genuine progress is not one-way advance from the present into the future, but the symmetrical expansion of the present pastwards and futurewards, so that time is in some sense transcended. D. H. Lawrence is surely right when he says: "Every profound new movement makes a great swing also backwards to some older, half-forgotten way of consciousness."[†]

^oI do not say, with Schweitzer, that "The object of all philosophy is to make us, as thinking beings, understand how we are to place ourselves in an intelligent and inward relation to the universe" (Goethe, p. 3); but that this is at least half the object of philosophy, and that it involves an investigation into the nature of the universe and man's place in it.

⁺Mo Tzu Book, XVI.

^xBurnet, Early Greek Philosophy, p. 137.

^o'The Scientific World-Outlook', in Philosophy, Nov. 1947, p. 207.

^{*}Christian Mysticism (1899), p. 322.

⁺"For philosophy has now to give us back, by an act of transcendental imagination, the shape and design of the external world --- the world of which, through an era of analysis, she has progressively robbed and impoverished our souls; and this task demands a combination of realism and religious feeling...." Arland Ussher, The Listener, Sept. 11th., 1947. Cf. Mgr Ronald Knox: "Our age is in need of a great philosopher; one who can thread his way, step by step, through the intricate labyrinth of reasoning in which scientists have been led....; one who can keep his mind, at the same time, open to the metaphysical implications of all he learns, and at last put the whole corpus of our knowledge together in one grand synthesis. He must be able to gaze through the telescope, to peer through the microscope, with a mind unaverted from that great Source of all being who is our Beginning and our last End." God and the Atom, p. 98.

[†]Apocalypse, p. 56.

What is the task of the modern philosopher? Logical positivists^o, dismissing one of his traditional functions as the excogitation of metaphysical nonsense, and another as unwarranted encroachment upon the realm of science, leave him with only a tiny fraction of his work. Professor Ayer writes: "The propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character --- that is, they do not describe the behaviour of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions. Accordingly we may say that philosophy is a department of logic."⁺ And the view that philosophy is a kind of speculative knowledge existing alongside the special sciences is quite mistaken. "Those who make this supposition cherish the belief that there are some things in the world which are possible objects of speculative knowledge, and yet lie beyond the scope of empirical science. But this belief is a delusion. There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give."^x

Now I do not dispute the usefulness of much of the logical positivists' criticism of metaphysical thought-structures, or of their efforts at demolition and the removal of rubbish.[†] Nor, indeed, can Mr Ayer be denied the right to define philosophy as a department of logic. Nevertheless this definition seems to me to depart from usage unnecessarily. Moreover it leaves anonymous that small but not superfluous class of persons who are neither scientists, nor metaphysicians, nor logicians, but who desire to take as their subject matter the chief findings of the special sciences, and, cutting across all departmental barriers, to find the larger pattern. Logical positivists would reply (I suppose) that, in so far as this task of integration is neither a matter of metaphysics (i.e. of a peculiar kind of nonsense) nor a matter of logical analysis (i.e. of philosophy proper), it is the task of science, in which the philosopher has no business to meddle. Ideally, perhaps, this is so: T. H. Huxley defined science as "all knowledge that rests upon evidence and reasoning", and Dr Alex. Hill goes so far as to say that "all intelligent knowledge is science". But I think it is clear, first, that science shows few signs of undertaking this work of self-integration; second, that the individual scientist, by reason of his inevitable and necessary specialization, is scarcely the man for the job; third, that the method of the work cannot yet (if ever) be exact or 'scientific', but must be rambling, speculative, and provisional; fourth, that the project is worth while all the same, and even important. Therefore I say that, until such time as science can take over (supposing that time should come), there exists a need for a more or less non-metaphysical philosophy whose propositions are factual rather than linguistic. Lacking such a philosophy, we are overwhelmed with huge masses of unco-ordinated information about ourselves and the universe. To many people this state of affairs is intellectually and aesthetically intolerable.

It may be said in reply, of course, that actually there is no work for the kind of philosophy I propose, or that the work, though desirable, is too difficult

*I suggest that the general reader should omit this Note, on the first reading.

^oSee, e.g., Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* ("The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts"); Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, II; A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*. The more recent periodical literature is enormous.

⁺*Op. cit.*, p. 57.

^xA. J. Ayer, *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

[†]While I keep as close as I can to empirical data in this book, I cannot altogether eschew "metaphysical" questions. For I believe (1) that all serious discussion makes assumptions about ultimate matters, which assumptions are best admitted; (2) that though the most comprehensive and least comprehensive aspects of the universe are mysterious, the familiar intermediate aspects do provide curves which may be extrapolated at both ends to yield reasonable hypotheses; (3) that such hypotheses are capable of empirical verification when the poet and the worshipper come to the aid of the thinker, and particularly when all three are united in the mystic. It is mere dogmatism to say that the analytical intellect is the only truth-getting instrument, and that nobody can learn to use other instruments.

C. D. Broad (Philosophy, Oct. 1949, pp. 292-3) points out that, "if we can judge of what philosophy is by what great philosophers have done" then it involves Synopses -- "the deliberate viewing together of aspects of human experience which, for one reason or another, are generally kept apart by the plain man and even by the professional scientist or scholar."

to succeed. To these objections the present book is my answer. While I cannot expect any reader to agree with all that I say, in detail, I do claim to show (1) that important new propositions about the universe (propositions which are neither nonsense on the one hand, nor tautological on the other; which are not confined to any particular science but nevertheless have an empirical basis) are forthcoming; (2) that some of these propositions are capable of suggesting new and fruitful lines of research in the special sciences; (3) that such cross-fertilization of the existing sciences is capable of leading to the birth of a new science or sciences. Let me give one example. In the following pages I show that there exist, besides the physical and chemical and biological units which are our scientific stock-in-trade, several kinds of objects which are concrete, material things^x, offering an abundance of empirical evidence as to their nature. The scientist ignores them, for their temporal dimensions place them beyond the borders of his field of view: the 'specious present' he takes to them is too brief to contain them.^o In other words, they are non-existent for him because he does not give them time to exist: he destroys their essential character by dividing their time. Here, then, is work for the philosopher --- to discern and to study the numerous orders of physical (or rather psycho-physical) units whose only disqualification is that their 'minimum time' (the time they need to be themselves) is somewhat greater than science is as yet prepared to recognize. In this case at least, the present limitations of science and common sense demand that philosophy shall do precisely what Professor Ayer declares it cannot do, namely, afford "knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense."^{*} It is to be hoped, indeed, that science will eventually take over the study that philosophy thus initiates. Meantime, the philosopher must do the best he can. And, after all, this function -- of bringing to birth and rearing the infant sciences -- is none other than that which positivists generally accord to philosophy. The only mistake of Comte and his followers in this respect is to suppose that philosophy is now old and past bearing, and that the family of grown-up sciences can have little further use for their mother. I try to show that, on the contrary, she is still the head of the family (without whom the children are either strangers or at loggerheads) and still capable of adding to their number.

I suggest that there is not one remedy for the well-advertized infertility of philosophy, but two; and that though they seem utterly opposed they are really complementary. The first is the positivist's, who demands that the philosopher should narrow his field to certain very limited (but answerable) problems lying on the borderland of science. The second is the one advocated in this book, namely that the philosopher should broaden his field till it includes the whole territory of science and art and religion.⁺ Both remedies reduce the pretensions of philosophy --- the first by the method of abstraction and exclusion, and the second by the method of concreteness and inclusion. The first is the philosopher's Self-denying Ordinance, the second his act of generous acceptance and outgoing: and each needs the other. It is the present business of philosophy to find out what she can hope to do in her own very restricted department, and what she can hope to do as the general liaison officer between all the great departments of human endeavour.

^xI accept the positivist dictum "that material things are reducible to sense-contents" (in so far as they are material things). See Ayer, Op. cit., p. 69.

^oMy point here is not that science and common sense take no account of long periods of time -- obviously they do recognize them -- but that, beyond a certain rather arbitrary limit, they ignore the internal unity and continuity of such periods, their Bergsonian 'duration'. We allow light waves, atoms, molecules, and even men, that minimum of undivided time each needs to weave its characteristic pattern: but inconsistently we stop there. And so large aspects of the universe escape us.

^{*}Op. cit., p. 33.

In Logische Aufbau der Welt, Carnap argued that talk on any subject is reducible to talk about our sense experiences; but he realized later that there is no sense in regarding talk in terms of sense experience as somehow primary, and that it is not always necessary to translate statements about physical objects into statements about sense contents only. Wittgenstein also departs, in his later teaching, from the uncompromising position he took up in the Tractatus. Nevertheless it remains a fundamental positivist criterion that, in the last resort, a factually significant statement must mean some difference in the content of actual experience.

⁺The distinction I make here roughly corresponds to William James' celebrated distinction between the 'thin' philosophies which are mainly verbal and critical and devoid of empirical content, and the 'thick' philosophies which are the opposite of all this. (A Pluralistic Universe, pp. 136 ff.) The former lack body, while the latter are apt to lack rigour. Ideally, the two types are united. Alexander's Space, Time and Deity is a modern instance which comes within measurable distance of such an ideal.

The second of these tasks is beset by a pair of formidable difficulties --- of language, and of human capacity. (1) My aim is always to cut across, to imitate the processes of a universe which is no respecter of departmental boundaries, to bring together regions of human experience that have become increasingly isolated.^o But each region, just because of its isolation and its own internal needs, has developed a language and thought-habits of its own: its intellectual fauna, so to say, are Australasian. The consequence is that, in our age, a symposium consisting of, say, a physicist, an artist, a philosopher, a psychologist, and a theologian (to include no others), could only begin to make sense if all agreed to speak in the lay lingua franca of everyday life, and thus to abandon innumerable professional subtleties. Indeed we are so departmentalized that even two of the same profession -- two psychologists or two philosophers -- if they should happen to belong to different schools, are likely to find each other almost unintelligible. (2) And it is not only this appalling confusion of tongues which makes the labour of integration so difficult --- as well as so desirable. A further impediment is the vast discrepancy between the work and the workman: obviously the volume of modern knowledge is so great that its unification has to be a long-term co-operative enterprise, to which no individual can make more than a modest contribution.

Is the attempt, then, hopeless? We cannot know the answer in advance, a priori, without ourselves trying to find it. To say the very least, the experiment in cosmology must go on. But its limiting conditions -- particularly the linguistic -- must never be forgotten. The inter-departmental lingua franca, which I have adopted for this inquiry, has all the defects of imprecision that are inevitable in such a medium. But plainly the unifying purpose of this book demands a certain verbal neutrality: it cannot be written in the language of any one particular department or level, and certainly not in the highly specialized language used by logical positivists. For the topic determines the medium of its discussion, and only very abstract or very circumscribed themes can be treated with logical strictness.* Not surprisingly, the concrete and many-levelled universe -- sublimely mad, as it often seems -- declines to be coaxed into any of our standard linguistic strait jackets; but that is scarcely sufficient reason for pretending that it does not exist, or that if it exists it is not a seemly topic for discussion, or that its study -- cosmology, that word of current philosophic abuse -- is a solecism, analogous to astrology, perhaps, or to the shadier and grubbier varieties of occultism. What this book is about, the hierarchy, is no figment, and it lends itself to empirical study --- on its own terms. Refusal to accept these terms is not a comment upon the thing or its study, but upon human ineptitude; and it is no more scientific than a denial that man exists qua man, on the grounds that he is not retained on the mesh through which physical science passes him.

Accordingly my aim is to bring together, whenever possible, the most diverse testimonies --- of poets and mystics and even of primitive man, no less than of philosophers and scientists. But it is essential to remember that these juxta-

^oThe perilous and absurd situation, to which over-specialization has led us, is surveyed with admirable clarity in Dr Joad's Decadence (see particularly pp. 375-6). More than ever before, we need a philosophy which performs its traditional task, and presents "a plan of the cosmos as a whole to the construction of which the moral intuitions of the plain man, the insight of the artist, the verdict of the historian and the testimony of the saint, no less than the results achieved by the special sciences, have contributed. Our outstanding need at the moment is for a clearing house of knowledge"

Whitehead's observation that exactness, in the discussion of concrete objects, is a fake, was not less true for being a measure of self-defence. As another brilliant Gifford Lecturer says: "No doubt you will detect errors, even contradictions, in my reasoning. I comfort myself by remembering that no thinker of my acquaintance, however eminent, is free of them. Not the mathematically-minded Plato or Spinoza, not Descartes, nor Kant nor Leibniz. Their works, one and all, sparkle with contradictions of the most flagrant, delightful and encouraging variety." (W. Macneile Dixon, The Human Situation, p. 16.) And that, of course, is just the point which logical positivists and their friends are always making, in their criticism of the large-scale systems of the past. Logical confusion in all its shocking variety is doubtless the occupational disease of the system-maker; though I doubt whether the system-breaker does not catch it. But (to leave that question aside) does the positivist seriously suppose that all the philosophical labours of the past which do not conform to his logical standards have no more than ~~precautionary~~ value, and that now and henceforth no large-scale systems will be attempted, or (if they are attempted) are worth consideration; that the grand tradition, of which Ward and Alexander and Whitehead are recent exemplars, is dead and buried and never likely to rise from the grave; and that future humanity will be all the richer, and not miserably poorer, on that account? Is not the only sane, the only reasonable, the only generous course to allow the two types of philosophical endeavour -- the analytical and the synthetic -- to flourish side by side, and to see what comes of it?

*"Exactness must not be looked for in all discussions alike, any more than in all works of handicraft. The educated man will seek exactness so far in each subject as the nature of the thing admits." Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1094. And, as Goethe remarked, we know accurately only when we know little.

positions do not imply that a work of imagination, and a work of piety, and a work of science, enjoy the same status, or that the methods and results of any one of these three has any unmediated relevance to the others.⁺ Each is, in one sense, self-contained. And it is precisely on this account --- precisely because the honest scientist does not allow his aesthetic and religious preferences to sway his professional judgement, because the true artist is not primarily out to instruct or improve us, because the genuine mystic and the saint are not, as such, concerned to further our science and art --- that the delivery of each is, in the end, ~~in the end~~, so relevant to the others. As in the departments of science, so here: temporary separation makes the eventual reunion ten times more fruitful.* To the degree that science and art and religion suffer no mutual dilution, to that degree is their evidence, when at last it converges (and this, as I shall show, is very often) trebly powerful. There has been a minimum of collusion.

~~An inset,~~

In any case, whether explicitly or unexplicitly, the synthesis has to be made.^o In so far as a man is a mere scientist, or artist, or saint, he is a monster; in so far as the scientist, and artist, and saint, hold aloof from one another in him, he is not one person but three, an unholy and unhealthy trinity; in so far as they are hopelessly mixed up, he creates nothing; in so far as they are distinct but united, poles which can neither merge nor part, he approaches creative completeness. I take the question not to be whether the synthesis, which I seek in this book, is possible, but rather how far our daily and hourly versions of it shall remain imperfectly conscious, and haphazard.

At least it is worth while considering whether the mutual separation of the intellectual and aesthetic and religious sides of our life has not now reached a stage where each is thereby seriously distorted, and whether, in particular, our thinking does not become increasingly unrealistic and trivial as it engages less and less of the total personality of the thinker. I beg leave to doubt whether he thinks well who only thinks, whether the philosopher can transcend the man, whether it would not be useful to ask once more that our teachers should be all-round or balanced men, whether there are not, perhaps, important aspects of the universe which are misapprehended to the degree that they are apprehended by the mere specialist. In any case, if we wish to call a halt in our intellectual journey, on the grounds that the path of reason by which we have come does not lead onwards by itself, but is joined by others of a different class, we would do well to tolerate the few who want to go on --- just in case there is anything worth finding. It is not impossible that, after all, there should be something in the ~~are combinatoria~~ of the 13th century Augustinians' and their practical conviction that "there is no field that belongs to reason alone", and that the unity which reason seeks transcends reason.^x Besides, there is the practical question. ~~Almost the last words which~~ D. H. Lawrence[†] wrote were: "If we do not rapidly open all the doors of consciousness and freshen the putrid little space in which we are cribbed the sky-blue walls of our unventilated heaven will be bright red with blood." Whether this is true or not, it would be unwise to defer

⁺Dr Joseph Needham, in Materialism and Religion, has much to say that is relevant here, on the creative autonomy of the religious and artistic and scientific modes of experience. "The spiritual tension developed by their antagonism within the individual soul is the most fructifying thing in the modern world.... In the business of living they must be taken together; not fused, for that is impossible; but incorporated into a harmonious human character. This strain, this tension, is the matrix out of which the character is born." (p. 20)

*The possible objection that I ought, in that case, to write at least four books -- one on science, a second on religion, a third on poetry, and a fourth to combine their conclusions -- scarcely needs an answer, unless it is to say that the first three have been written again and again, and this book is a contribution to the fourth.

^oGoethe is, of course, an outstanding example of successful synthesis. As L. A. Willoughby well says of him, Goethe had "a sure conviction that all phenomena, animate and inanimate, spiritual and material, are intimately related and governed by the same general laws. Thus what he discovered about the universe by observation and reasoning confirmed what he had intuitively felt to be true, and he consequently experienced none of that confusion and conflict which must inevitably arise when our scientific view of the world is at odds with our subjective ideas about it. That is why his scientific writings and his poetry consistently endorse and complete each other instead of being at loggerheads. The poet and the scientist in him were never kept in watertight compartments; they ran fluid one into the other." (The Listener, Sept. 1, 1949.)

Can the powerful diversity-in-unity of Goethe himself be separated from this world-view of his, or our often pathologically divided personalities from our refusal to attempt anything of the kind?

We cannot know in advance, but only by the method of trial and error, how much there is in the words of Lactantius: "When philosophy and the worship of the gods are so widely separated, that the professors of wisdom cannot bring us near to the gods, and the priests of religion cannot give us wisdom; it is manifest that the one is not true wisdom, and the other is not true religion. Therefore neither is philosophy able to conceive the truth, nor is religion able to justify itself." Institt. IV. 3.

^xEtienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, pp. 114-6.

[†]'Nemesis', Pansies, p. 106.

the consideration of such matters till every logical nicety has been cleared up --- that is to say, till doomsday. If philosophers refuse to contemplate the universe, it is liable to force itself upon their attention in ways that are unpleasant. If the captain of the fire brigade goes on demanding an accurate survey of the nature and extent of the conflagration before he will budge, then he is liable before long to find the fire station itself in flames.

Among those who use the technique of logical positivism, writes Dr Joad, "philosophy has become a closed preserve, closed, that is to say, to all but initiates. As practised within this preserve, philosophical thinking is no longer an instrument by means of which men can liberate themselves from bondage to nature, from servitude to abstractions, from the tyranny of circumstance or the injustice of man; it is not even a torch to light up the dark places of the universe and so to reveal man's place and function within it. It shrinks into a technique for ensuring that, whenever philosophers try to use it for its traditional purposes, they will be trapped in the meshes of a net of verbal contradictions and so reduced to philosophical helplessness." Decadence, p. 20.