A Christian Anthropology

Emil Brunner

Man in Revolt

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Man in Revolt

From this we see how necessarily our Self is rooted
and grounded in Him who created it, so that the
knowledge of our Self does not lie within our own
power, but that in order to measure the extent of the
same we must press forward into the very heart of
God himself, who alone can determine and resolve the
whole mystery of our nature.

Hammann

Man in Revolt

A Christian Anthropology

Emil Brunner

Translated by Olive Wyon

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Preface to the German Edition

What is Man? This question is the point at which the passionate interest of men and the divine message of the Bible meet and come into conflict. Primarily, man regards himself as the natural centre of his life and of his world. Even where in theory he thinks that he has overcome this 'naive anthropo-centricism,' in practice, in life itself, he does not cease to assert himself as this centre. A world with as many centres as there are human beings—that is the cause of all the chaos and disintegration in the world of men. The message of the Bible, therefore, is this: God, not man, is the centre; this truth must be expressed not only in theory but in practice. Hence this message is not concerned with 'God in Himself,' but with 'God for us,' the God who manifests His nature and His will in the Son of Man, in order that in man this centre may once more become the true centre. The great obstacle to this, however, is that view of himself held by man; to overcome this 'misunderstanding' of man about himself, to which he clings as a supreme good, is the revealed will of God, and the act in which this resistance is overcome is faith. The understanding of man's being is decided in faith or unbelief; in the fact, that is, whether God or man is the centre.

Thus in itself the truth of faith involves discussion, the Gospel is essentially—not accidentally—controversial. It is an attack on man who is his own centre. Divine truth wrestles with human falsehood, and man conceals himself behind his 'self- knowledge' in order to defend himself against the Divine claim. Hence a Christian doctrine of man must be beaten out on the anvil of continual argument with man's own view of himself. If faith simply means that human thought and will finally capitulate to the truth and the will of God, then theology can never be anything other than an attempt, in some way or another, to 'transcribe' this controversy between the Word of God and the thought of man. Hence all genuine theology is dialectical and not orthodox. It is aware that its 'transcript' reflects the imperfection of our human effort of thought as

much as the glory of divine truth. Above all, it is aware that its task is never finished.

Thus this book also is an unfinished piece of work, and would still be so even if I were to work on it for many more years. Its first beginnings lie in the past, more than fifteen years ago, when- it became clear to me, under the deep impression made by the anthropological work of Kierkegaard, that the distinction between modern Humanism and the Christian faith must be made at this point: in the understanding of man. Acquaintance with the thought of Ebner, Gogarten, and Buber helped me further along the path which I had begun to follow. Here too, however, I learned still more from the new light thrown on the teaching of the Reformers; I learned most from Luther, for I came to see that in this question, of all the Reformers his teaching is the most Scriptural and the most profound. Yet as I probed more deeply into the subject I saw that it would be impossible simply to re-affirm the Reformation position and to go no further. I saw too why this was inevitable. In the central anthropological question of freedom versus unfreedom, in particular, the inadequacy of the teaching of the Reformers was evident. There is a great deal to learn from Augustine the thinker which escaped the notice of Luther the fighter. Above all, it became plain to me that the whole ecclesiastical tradition was burdened with certain fundamental axioms, wrongly regarded as Biblical truth; it is these ideas, regarded as axioms, which frequently provide a handle for attacks on the ecclesiastical doctrine on the part of its opponents. In the attempt to reformulate the Christian doctrine of man I took it for granted that I should utilize the results of Biblical criticism, and also, even though less directly, of modern discoveries in the field of natural science. Since we are now at the beginning of a theological era of increasing rigidity in orthodoxy, it is particularly important to preserve the faculty of criticism, although this too has its own peculiar dangers.

The book which I here present has passed through a number of preliminary stages. The germ of the whole was an article on *Law and Revelation* which I published in March 1925 in *Theologische Blätter*; the second stage was a lecture on *Christian Psychology* which I gave in the winter of 1927, which, completely

recast in 1934, forms the foundation of the present work. A chapter on Biblical psychology in my small book *God and Man* provided a preliminary outline for the structure of the whole; but most of the other papers which were published, both before and afterwards, turned on the question of anthropology, especially those entitled *Die andere Aufgabe der Theologie* (the Other Task of Theology) and *The Point of Contact (Anknüpfungspunkt).*

With the publication of this book I hope that I have redeemed the promise made in the foreword to the second edition of *Natur and Gnade,* namely, that only a completely theological anthropology, which begins with the great central truths of the Christian faith—the Trinity, Election, and Incarnation—and is directed towards the final Redemption, will be in a position, without causing new misunderstandings, to show clearly my concern, as against Karl Barth, namely, man's responsibility. It is that alone, and not any weakening of the doctrine of the *sola gratia,* which causes me to hold fast to the Biblical doctrine of a general or "natural" revelation of God, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary. The fundamental idea of my book is this: that even the unbeliever is still related to God, and therefore that he is responsible, and that this responsibility is not put out of action even by the fullest emphasis upon the generous grace of God, but, on the contrary, that God requires it. This fundamental idea is illustrated in a number of ways throughout the book as a whole. It is concerned with a Biblical doctrine of man, whom the Word of God—as a word of judgement and of promise—addresses and apprehends. One 'theme with variations' will always be exposed to the reproach of repetition—especially if there are a good many of them. In my justification I would point to the illustration of the winding tunnels in our Swiss mountain railways, which continually present us with the same view seen from another aspect and from a greater height. The same, if said in a different context, is not simply the same.

Owing to my conception of the task of theology, all technical discussions are relegated to the notes and the appendices. Real theology is not only for experts, but it is for all to whom religious questions are also problems for thought. Hence I have

tried to deal with difficult theological questions in such a way that they can be followed by those who have no special theological equipment. There are many ways of faith to Him who alone is the Way; theological reflection also may be such a way, although it certainly is not the way most people would choose. Among all the problems of theology that of anthropology is one of the most important. It is only through the study of this question that many a person comes to understand the Christian message itself, simply because he has learned to think more deeply about himself. Even thought may lead us into 'the cell of self-knowledge,' but this real self-knowledge is the point at which faith comes into being. Rightly understood, therefore, to begin at this point is genuine missionary effort.

In conclusion, there are two things I wish to say, I would like to express my cordial thanks to all those who have helped me, especially those who have helped me in the arduous labour of proof correction. And I would like to ask the reader to forgive me for not saying what I had to say in briefer compass. In spite of all my resolutions to the contrary this has developed into a big book after all, and yet I have left a great deal of material untouched. May the readers of this book regard its length as a parable showing that, in the last resort, we human beings cannot fully express even that vision of the truth which we have seen.

Emil Brunner
Zurich, March 1937

Translator's Note

The present work is an unabridged translation of the book which was first published in German in 1937, by the *Furche-Verlag, Berlin,* under the title: *Der Mensch im Widerspruch,* with the sub-title: *Die christliche Lehre vom wahren und vom wirklichen Menschen (Eng.* Man in Contradiction. The Christian Doctrine of the true (or ideal) man, and of man as he actually is).

The English title: *Man in Revolt,* has been chosen by Dr. Brunner himself.

For the English version the author has slightly altered the text on page 360 (page 372 in the German original).

The translator desires to offer her cordial gratitude to the many friends who have helped her, in various ways, during the course of this work. For assistance with the revision of the manuscript she would thank particularly: Dr. H. Bookyer, Dr. L. Frankl, Miss L. Goodfellow, and Miss Edith Sandbach-Marshall, M.A., B.D. For the elucidation of some difficult passages she is grateful to Edwyn Bevan, Esq., D.Litt., and to the Rev. John Oman, D.D.

Olive Wyon
London, May 1939

Introduction:
The Question of Man

Chapter 1
The Riddle of Man

It is not self-evident that man should inquire into his own nature, or even that he should ask questions at ah. To ask questions and to take things for granted are incompatible attitudes; when man begins to inquire, he can no longer take things for granted. A mysterious movement has begun, and none can tell whither it may lead. Moreover, once the question of his own nature has been raised, man seeks an answer to a second, still more disquieting question. The earlier questioning had made only his surroundings, the shell of his existence, seem insecure; now, however, he himself feels insecure. Not only is the world full of riddles; he himself, who asks the riddles, has become a riddle. Small wonder, then, that man tries to evade this upheaval. He feels the danger of inquiry, and tries to avoid it by persuading himself that it does not really matter. A sane human being, he says, has something more sensible to do than to look at himself in a mirror. In any case, man should not consider himself so very important. What is there in him so outstanding—this speck of dust, this none too successful late product of Nature? In the world of antiquity it was perhaps allowable that man, with his restricted view of the world and his geocentric outlook, should consider himself to be specially important; but we modern men, for whom astro-physics has shattered the familiar and homely picture of the world, and has opened up to our gaze the infinity of the universe, can no longer ascribe any special importance to man and his problems. Man must accustom himself to the idea that he is only one problem among many others, and by no means the most important.

But the riddle of man cannot be shelved like this. This riddle is not the fruit of our opinions; it springs from its own inward necessity, as the question above all others. Other problems may seem to us to be greater or more important, but they are still *our* problems. It is *we* who probe into the remote recesses of the world's existence; it is for *us* that the

phenomena of the universe become questions. All our problems are focused in this one question: Who is this being who questions—the one behind all questions? Who is this who perceives the infinity of the world? Who is this who is tortured by all life's problems—whether in human existence or outside it? Who is this being who sees himself as a mere speck in the universe, and yet, even while so doing, measures the infinite horizon with his mind? We are here confronted by the problem of the *subject,* separated by a great gulf from all problems of the objective world. What is this to which things are objects, which they are 'set over against'? What is this unextended point, like the inapprehensible originator of waves behind a field of electro-magnetic force, its emissive and receptive centre—the soul?

'Go hence; the limits of the soul thou canst not discover, though thou shouldest traverse every way; so profoundly is it rooted in the Logos,'[1] says the great sage of Ephesus, he who was the first to utter the proud word: 'I have inquired of myself.'[2] Hence the soul is separated, as by a deep gulf, from all that man can know or discover by search and inquiry, because the soul itself, which makes itself known, is that which knows; because in the very act of laying something upon the dissecting table for examination, the soul looks away beyond it. It is the inquiring eye, the intelligence, that makes what is examined into a unity; this it is that knows the problems and seeks to solve them. But the soul does not only think and examine; it also wills and feels, makes estimates, loves and hates. It gives its rightful place within the intellectual life as a whole to research, science, thought—to all, indeed, that has value and meaning. Only he who forgets this can overlook the fact that the question of man as subject is not one among many others; it is a new dimension of questioning, and the soul is an 'object' whose particular problems consist in the very fact that it is not an 'object' at all. We cannot assign any place to the soul—that is, to man—because the soul itself is that which puts everything else in its right place. Hence man is unfathomable in a way different from everything else, because he himself fathoms things; he is the discoverer of that

1. In Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Fr. 45. 2. Ibid., Fr. 101.

which is unfathomable. If to fathom anything means to get to the other side of it, then the soul is unfathomable because it is that which penetrates to the other side. The fact, however, that man, who can include in his gaze the whole horizon of the world, is at the same time a minute point in the world, an object of infinite smallness in space, does not reduce, but rather increases, the riddle of his being. The difference—indeed, the unfathomable gulf—between the subject and the object, the soul and the world of things, between soul and body, is one problem; a second problem, and one with which thinkers have wrestled in vain for thousands of years, is that of the relation between both, and the way in which both exist alongside of one another—the problem of body and soul.

Even the 'man in the street' is aware of this dualism, although he does not give it much thought. He knows that he ought to treat human beings differently from things, not only because they 'react differently,' but because he has no right to treat them as things. A purely objective attitude where human beings are concerned is not only impossible; it is not right, and is therefore forbidden. It is precisely this sense that he has no right to dispose of himself and of his fellow-creatures in such a way that gives man the consciousness of his peculiar nature—of his being as man. This 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' is not something added externally to human existence; it constitutes the heart of man's being. Man's being is inseparable from his sense of obligation.

Once again a new depth in human existence is disclosed. Man is not merely what he is; his peculiar being is characterized by that inward and higher 'something' which confronts him either with a challenge or at least with pressure from without. But this element which confronts him does so as that which is 'over against' him, and not as an 'object.' It is genuinely 'over against' him, whereas objects are not really 'over against' but 'beneath' us. This challenge, then, is not foreign to man's life, but it comes as a call to one's own nature, as the call to accept responsibility for one's own life,[3] to be truly oneself,

3. The original word is *Eigentlichkeit*—an allusion to one of the leading ideas in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. If 'one' accepts responsibility for one's life, if a person desires to be what he *is*, and to decide on his own

and yet it exercises a kind of compulsion. Man is not only one who can ask questions because he is subject; but he is one who *must* ask them—one who is constrained to do so because he does not yet know, and is not yet what he would be. Whether he will or not, in some way or other he must reach out beyond himself; he must transcend himself; he must measure his thinking, willing, and acting by something higher than himself. As the butterfly is attracted by the light, so irresistibly is he drawn by this 'higher' element, whether it be the 'truth' which he does not yet know, and by which he tests his thought, or by 'righteousness,' 'the good' or 'the beautiful,' 'the perfect' or 'the holy,' or even that which is 'truly human.' However he may explain this 'higher' element to himself, he cannot escape from it, and the disturbance which it causes is so intimately connected with his existence that without it the nerve of his existence as man would be cut, and he himself would sink to the sub-human level. Just as the tension of the bow-string makes the bow—apart from this it is merely a piece of wood—so it is this tension between him and this 'higher' element which constitutes the essential human quality in human existence, without which man would be only a particular kind of animal. Man is not merely what he is; he is the being which first seeks himself. All that man creates by his own works, which express his nature, is at the same time a manifestation of the fact that he seeks to understand himself.

Man is not at home with himself; as he is, he cannot come to terms with himself. He desires to be and to express himself as that which he is; yet at the same time he does not want to be what he is. Hence he conceals himself behind his ideals. He is ashamed of his naked existence as it is. He cannot tolerate it; he feels that in some way or other he must live for a future existence in order to endure his own view of himself. In some way or other he counts that 'higher' element

responsibility, then he is *eigentlich* (literally 'proper,' 'true,' 'real'). If, on the other hand, man allows himself to be concealed by conventional fictions about himself (idealistic, traditional, etc.), he does not accept responsibility for his own life, and is therefore *un-eigentlich*. On Heidegger's philosophy, see Werner Brock's *Contemporary German Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1935).—*Translator.*

as his own, in order to be able to say 'yes' to himself, and yet he knows that this 'higher' element is not real. Thus—in a far deeper sense than in the dualism of body and soul—he is a divided being, and is always conscious of this division. The 'harmonious human nature' completely at rest within itself is an extreme instance which does not really exist, whereas the other extreme instance certainly does exist—that of the man who is so divided that his inner nature no longer finds any unity at all, the schizophrenic, the insane. The sense of division, however, owing to the contrast between that which he is and that which he ought to be or would like to be, forms part of the very essence of all human life known to us. We are all aware of this defect in the bell, and of the discords which it causes. Man is a contradictory creature in a threefold sense: he contains contradictions within his own nature, he knows that this is so and suffers accordingly, and, on account of this very contradiction, opposes himself to and vainly tries to free himself from this contradiction.

Or can it be that 'man with his conflict' is fortunately an exceptional instance? Is it true to say that 'man" as such exists at all? Is not that an unreal abstraction, and can it be that the illusion of the contradiction is created by the fact that in a quite unallowable way, which completely sifies reality, the various qualities of the individual man, as we observe him, have been ascribed to a common denominator, in order that we may then exclaim: 'See, what a monster is man?' If this were so, then we should be dealing not with a contradiction but with *individual differentiation.* The one *genus humanum* is presented to us in a variety of species, sub-species, varieties and individuals, each uniform in itself, but impossible to reduce to a common denominator. How can we possibly speak of 'man[3] in view of the immense differences between the races and historical epochs—from the cave-dweller of the Stone Age to the Athenian of the days of Pericles, from St. Francis to the man of the age of ferro-concrete and of the wireless; in view of the differences which separate the civilized world of the East from that of the West; or again, in view of the fundamental differences which are brought out by the psychological study of types and of character? Does what we

say about the old apply also to the young man, and what is true of man to woman as well? This at least is true, that to speak of man as a whole without taking these differences into account would mean that one was talking not of man as he actually is, but of an empty abstraction.

But the converse is also true. All these human beings are bound to one another not only by a very far-reaching common element in their physical and mental endowments, but also by that 'something' which makes man *man,* the 'mind' or the 'reason'; so that, in spite of all differences, they can speak with one another, work together, create and tend common goods and hand them down to succeeding generations. The term 'man' not only denotes a zoological species, but, in contradistinction from all names of zoological species, it also seems to denote an independent whole, something which is distinctive, in contrast to all that can be conceived from the biological point of view; that is to say, the *humanum*. Indeed, is it not a fact that it belongs to this common element—common, that is, to all human beings, but to them alone—continually to deny the reality of that *humanum* which distinguishes it from all other creatures? Is it not part of the picture of man that he is the being who can deny his nature, his human existence, and continually turn into his opposite, the inhuman? Is it not in this *humanum* itself that the cause of the conflict from which man suffers resides? Is it not a fact that the mind, the very element which teaches human beings to understand one another, is also the main cause of their being brought into conflict with one another? Indeed, is it not true that the more we learn to understand man the more we see that it is impossible to understand him?

Then perhaps, though for a different reason, we are not justified in speaking of 'man' in general. When we do so, we think involuntarily of the individual human being, even if at the same time we also think of the common element present in all. May it be, after all, for this reason, that 'man' is an abstraction, since he cannot in any way be understood as an individual? Possibly what leads us astray in the line of thought which starts with the contrast between the subject and the object is this: that it isolates the individual human being as

though it were something which could be understood as an independent entity, whereas man in his concrete actuality not only does not occur as an individual, or cannot exist physically, but precisely in his peculiar existence as human can only be conceived and understood in his relation to the other. The decisive, distinctive element is not the 'I' which confronts the object, the 'It,' but the 'I' which confronts the 'Thou'—or rather does not confront the 'Thou,' but in its very existence as an 'I' is also determined by the 'Thou.' However unfamiliar this view of human nature may be, may it not be the correct view? Has it not always been familiar in some way or other to non-reflective thought—to thought which has not been corrupted by the abstractions of philosophy?[4]

The fact that man is a *zoon politikon,* a social being, was already taught by Aristotle in a decisive passage.[5] The fact that the individual can only be understood in the context of a larger whole was indeed, although in an entirely opposite way, brought afresh to our consciousness by Darwin and Hegel; the former, by treating seriously the idea of the *zoon,* and the latter, by dealing seriously with the idea of the *politikon:* the individual human being a dependent member in the series of his species, and further in the series of living creatures in general; the individual man a more or less unimportant point of transition in the universal history of Spirit, which attains its highest point in the State. In both views the individual is understood as a collective being, as a dependent part of a larger whole.

But the idea that the 'I' can only be understood in the light of the 'Thou' means something quite different. It is not the member of a species, not the *zoon,* and not man as the more or less indifferent transitional point in the history of civilization and of Spirit, the spirit-being, which knows the 'Thou,' but solely the human being who, in the 'Thou' of the 'Other,' comes to realize that his being a Self means his being a person, which

4. The 'thou' as the theme of anthropology and philosophy dates from Kierkegaard's philosophy of existence, though in the narrower sense only since Buber and Ebner (in spite of appearances to the contrary, Feuerbach cannot be mentioned in this connexion). On this cf. Cullberg, *Das Du und die Wirklichkeit* (Uppsala, 1933).

5. Aristotle's *Politics,* 1253a.

is not subordinated to any higher 'something,' but is itself the ultimate meaning—that which alone gives to every mental object, to all culture and civilization, and to all life in political communities, its meaning and its right. By this we do not mean merely Goethe's conception that 'the highest happiness of earth's children is in personality alone'; for this saying again suggests that the individual is the ultimate and final point of reference. What is meant is the person, which only arises and exists in inseparable union with the 'Thou' of the 'Other' as 'I-Myself? Just as man, as the subject of all science, stands over against all objects of knowledge, and cannot be included among them as a member of a series, so man as person stands over against all his intellectual objects, his science, his art, his civilization, his political life, as their source, the one who gives them meaning, and their measure, and is neither incorporated with nor subordinated to them. Man does not exist for the sake of culture or civilization, he is not a means to an end, but he is an end for himself, precisely because, and in so far as, he, as person, is a self which is related to and bound up with a 'Thou.' A new depth of human existence and of the riddle of man has disclosed itself to our gaze. Can it be that this is ultimate and final?

Man is part of this world; he is a physical body, a conglomeration of chemical compounds, a *zoon* with a vegetative and sensory-motor system; he is a species of the great order of mammals. He is also the *homo faber,* the maker of tools—and what a monstrous tool he has created for himself in modern technique! He is, however, also the *humanus,* that is, the being who not only makes signs, but can and does speak; the being who not only maintains his own physical existence, but creates and shapes culture and civilization. As this individual human being, he is an individuality which cannot be compared with any other. Hence, in spite of all human resemblances, and in spite of his power to communicate with others through the medium of speech, in the depths of his being he is incomprehensible to every other human being. He is the person who only becomes an 'I-Self ' in union with the 'Thou.' And he is also the little creature who is for ever seeking himself, and therefore also fleeing from himself; one who is for ever

being drawn and attracted by something higher, and yet is ever seeking to release himself from this higher element; the creature who is both aware of his contradiction and yet at the same time denies it; a creature so great and again so pitifully small that he can measure the universe and yet can be attacked by a bacillus and die. Man is a spirit which dreams of 'eternity' and creates 'eternal' works—and then the loss of a little thyroid gland makes him an idiot. Man is all this. Is this all?

There is one final depth in man which we have hitherto ignored. Man has gods, and he renders them homage. He has *religion*. Whatever may be said of the dividing-line between him and the other living creatures known to us, this at any rate is his special preserve; it has been characteristic of him from his earliest beginnings, and seems to be an inseparable part of his existence. Whether he adored his totem animal or the gods of the sun, the moon and the stars; whether by the practice of magic he tries to gain control of supernatural forces; whether by the practices of asceticism and of Yoga he achieves union with the 'Wholly-Other'; or whether in union with his fellow-countrymen he brings a solemn sacrifice to the high gods, or somewhere in solitude he approaches the Ground of all being in mystical contemplation; one thing remains the same, namely, that just as man is *homo faber,* so also he is *homo religiosus*. He is this even when he renounces all mythology, all ideas of a supernatural being, and becomes an agnostic or an atheist. The dimension of the infinite, of the absolute, of the unconditioned, is not empty for any human being, even when he has cut himself adrift from all traditional religious ideas. If he no longer has any personal gods, all the more surely he has one or more impersonal gods[6]—something which he regards as taboo, something which may not be touched at any cost, whether it be his Communism or his Nationalism, his civilization or 'life.' 'Man always has God or an idol.'[7] He can no more rid himself of this dimension of his existence than he can rid himself of the dimensions of time: past, present, and future. Just as little as he can get rid of his past by ceasing

6. Cf. Th. Spoerri, *Die Götter des Abendlandes*.
7. "Der Mensch hat immer Gott oder Abgott," Luther.

to take it into account, can he get rid of his relation to God by denying it. And just as little as he can get rid of anxiety about the future by shutting his eyes to it, can he escape from the unrest of the unconditioned and the longing for perfection by renouncing 'religious mythology.' This too belongs to the nature of man, and he has as little power over it as he has over the fact of his existence. He can 'do away with himself'—but can he? Is this so certain? Anyone who has tried to do this has always begun to wonder whether it was so simple, after all, to evade the riddle of man and the torment of his existence. The dimension of eternity remains, never unoccupied, even if only by the sense of insecurity and the anxiety which accompanies it. Even the extreme instance confirms the truth that this ultimate depth which calls everything else in question, and possibly constitutes the ground of everything, forms an integral part of human existence.

And now, what is man? In view of the wealth, the variety, and the obscurity of the problems upon which we have touched in our rapid survey, is there any possibility of solving the riddle of man? Is anyone able to demonstrate the point from which multiplicity can be reduced to a unity, and presented as an intelligible whole? Attempts to do this have never been lacking. Aristotle must have been the first to undertake to bring together all the particular knowledge of man into a systematic order, and to present from one central point of view an interpretation of man. His attempt has had an incalculable influence upon the whole of Western thought. The Aristotelian anthropology has been part of the supporting structure of European history. This immense influence should not be regarded as due to an unusual depth of thought, but to the fact that in him—in a way which has never been repeated—philosophical, scientific and psychological thought was combined with the non-reflective knowledge and understanding of the ordinary, non-philosophical and non-scientific human being. It is, of course, also true that he owes a great deal of his enormous influence to the fact that behind him stood the greatest thinker the world had known up to that time—Plato, his master and teacher. But neither Plato nor Aristotle mastered the problem of man. Although even to-day no one who wishes to deal

seriously with this question can afford to ignore them, yet no one can take his stand on the views of either of them. Two thousand years of history are no small matter, even—and particularly so—for thought about man. The man of the twentieth century not only knows other things about man; he himself, too, is different, not finally because he knows, or thinks he knows, fresh things about himself. It is characteristic, if not of our own day, at least of the period which immediately preceded it, that 'anthropology' had become a branch of natural science, and that a book with the title 'Man' was as a rule either a scientific or a medical book. In the nineteenth century, humanity tried once more, and with more material than at any previous time, to solve the riddle of man from the point of view of objective research. The effort has not been without result; an immense amount of material about man—I might almost have said, of incriminating material against man—has been collected, and to some extent sifted. But the main result must still be regarded as this, that the decisive questions of human existence are not even perceived by objective scientific research; still less does it contribute anything to their solution. By anthropology, then, to-day, men begin to understand something which, at any rate in general outline and in its main features, far more resembles the attempt of an Aristotle or a Plato than of a Darwin.

But between the extremes of a purely materialistic and a purely spiritual, a purely individualistic and a purely collectivistic, a purely positivistic and a purely religious or theological way of looking at the subject, there lie also to-day all the hundred and one different possibilities of method and combination which have emerged in the history of the past two thousand years, after it has been proved that the problem cannot be solved from the point of view of objective scientific research, in spite of all the resources of scientific method. Naturalistic anthropology is to-day one among several others, and, if I am not mistaken, it is no longer the predominating one. At the present time, therefore, we seem to be as far as ever from being able to give a clear answer to the question: What is Man?

And yet we *ought* to have an answer. We are not concerned

with science and its achievements. We are concerned with ourselves. We are concerned with our life. How can man live if he does not know what his life means? And how can he understand what his life means if he does not know what he, man, is? The question of man is not one which can be pushed aside at will, like that concerning the character of a species of animal or of a spiral mist. Knowledge of oneself forms part of human existence; but human existence is not something optional, which one can take or leave at will, it is the one thing which is not optional but obligatory. It will be worth while to devote some thought to this problem.

Chapter 2

Man's Own View of his Significance

There exists, at least apparently, a certain kind of human life which asks no questions; a human existence which, at least apparently, knows nothing about itself, and has no desire to know—that non-reflective existence which Goethe, for instance, admired and envied so much in the poetry of Homer, and which is such a favourite subject to-day with poets who are weary of civilization. Yet even the 'Homeric' man, and he particularly, does not lack a quite definite, clearly defined anthropology; he believes that he knows what genuine human existence is. The question lies behind him; he has found an answer, and he is expressing it in his life.[1] The naive human being is not distinguished from the reflective human being by the fact that he neither knows nor cares about, human existence, but by the fact that he regards his knowledge of human existence as settled. In this sense alone is there an existence which does not raise questions. Above all, however, there is a longing for such existence; it is there as a postulate, as the romantic idealization of some kind of primitive existence. The man who is weary of his intellectuality and his culture, the man who is weary of activity, longs for the repose of 'simple existence'; the man who is tormented by the unrest of questioning dreams of immediacy. But to know oneself is always reflection, 'turning in upon one's self'; therefore we must do away with self- knowledge. Reflection is unhealthy; the healthy human being does not reflect, he lives. He does not let his left hand know what his right hand is doing; he is man, without knowing or asking any questions about himself.

The reasons for this longing, as we shall see in a moment, are not superficial, nor are they merely a sign of weariness; but this does not alter the fact that this longing produces a deceptive picture. The human being who knows nothing about his human existence, and does not inquire into it, is not a human being; this existence freed from all questioning is not

1. Cf. Nagelsbach, *Homerische Theologie;* Rohde, *Psyche*; W. Jager, *Paideia*.

human but animal existence, and those who consider this to be the correct view would do well not to write clever books about 'the mind as the enemy of the soul.'[2] For who will believe that it is possible to find the way back to this unquestioning kind of existence simply by reading books?

Knowledge of human existence and the desire to have this knowledge is indissolubly connected with the nature of will. The fact that 'I will this or that' cannot possibly be separated from the fact that 'I am this or that' and 'I' will be this or that.' My understanding of myself is reflected in my will. Self-understanding and self-determination are two aspects of one original fact; willing and doing are always at the same time a demonstration and an exposition of one's understanding of oneself, whether this understanding be genuine or sham. The purposes and ends which determine my practical attitude are not only related to one another, either secretly or openly, but they are also connected with the picture which I make to myself of the right or happy or true or good 'life'; and this always means, of human life. Even a human being who one day decides that he will take no more trouble about questions of human existence does this upon the basis of a picture—although this may be unconscious—of the right life; and what he henceforth does or 'lives' is, so far as he does not sink to the unquestioning level of the animals, still, and continually, determined by that secret connexion.

This connexion of thought is, however, only one of the component parts which determine our actual existence. Man is not absolutely what he wills and what he loves—as Fichte thinks he is—he is also that which he does not will to be and that which he does not love; he is also something 'accidental,' through birth and destiny, through the play of obscure forces, often borne with reluctance, of the surrounding reality which influences him. But that element of deliberate volition which determines the ends and purposes for which man lives is never absent from human life, and it is this which gives to our life its distinctiveness and its specifically human character. There is a system of our ends and purposes which cannot be evaded.

2. An allusion to the chief work of Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (in three vols.).—*Translator*.

I will this or that, because I will that particular thing, and I will it because I will something still more fundamentally different. I may give to this final basis any name—happiness, meaning, value, divine destiny, whatever I choose—yet in so doing I have not yet expressed that controlling content of my purposes which determines my will and my action. This content, however, comes from that which I regard as the truly human, or happy, or divinely destined, or significant life, that is, human life, even though this 'thought' may be quite in the background and largely unconscious—something which is rather 'felt' or pictured than a clearly formulated idea.[3]

Still another point should be noted. If, having become aware of this inward system of practical active life, of this hierarchical order of ends and purposes, we name the highest point in this hierarchy which determines all the rest, the dominant, we must not be led into thinking that the conscious, so to speak official, dominant must be the actual one. There are human beings with an elaborate system of conscious aims which they acknowledge and even proclaim as 'official,' with a very ideal ultimate end or dominant, who in their actual life do not live in the very least in accordance with these proclaimed ends and purposes—perhaps without being altogether conscious of the inconsistency. This does not prevent their having a certain secret but nevertheless close inner connexion, but it is of a quite different kind, because it is dominated by another 'unofficial' dominant. Karl Marx's view of history, his theory of ideologies, and his systems of values which are not in the least in harmony with them, are based upon the proof of this dualism. With exactly opposite methods, the psychological background of Nietzsche does the same; this is the method he employs in order to try to get to the bottom of the 'official' lies of human history. But Marx as well as Nietzsche cannot help regarding the actual behaviour of human beings, not, it is true, from the point of view of the 'official' values, but from that of one which is equally ordered in a hierarchical manner, and ultimately ends in a definite view of man. Here, therefore, we may leave this distinction between the 'official' and the

3. Cf. my book *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen* (English translation: 'The Divine Imperative'), Chap. 1.

unofficial' system of values, and the self-understanding of man, since all we are aiming at here is to prove the presence of some such system as a presupposition and an impelling force in human life and action. Human life is always—not exclusively but also, and essentially—determined by this system of values, which again is rooted in man's view of himself.

Indeed, how could it be otherwise? For our loving and our hating, our desires and our fears, our longings and our detestations, do not constitute a fortuitous bundle of instincts, but—so far as they are human at all—they all flow from one source. Man wills 'something as a whole,' and he determines the details of his life in accordance with this purpose. Even in the extreme instance of the man or woman who drifts through life, at least a trace of this can be found; that is, in the constancy of this determination to drift, which is rightly, if paradoxically, described with an active verb, 'to let oneself drift.' An animal does not let himself drift; he cannot do so, for in him the presuppositions are lacking, namely, the possibility of not letting himself go, of acting according to any other logic than that of his instincts.

History shows us to how great an extent man's understanding of himself—even when conscious and explicit—actually influences and shapes society. Thus, the Stoic view of man influenced Roman law, and through that the whole development of law in Europe, right down to Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and the ideas of the French Revolution, and beyond that to modern Socialism and Communism.[4] Thus, too, the civilization of China is—or was—dominated by the classic ideals of filial piety and fraternal subordination created by the great teachers of antiquity, and, through the system of education which they brought into being, handed down from generation to generation. What a rigid form has been stamped upon Indian society, and indeed upon the life of India as a whole, by the religious doctrine of man standardized in the Code of Manu![5] Finally, how firmly the Christian view

4. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, I, 64-9; 150 ff.; IV, p. 726. Dilthey, *Ges. Schriften*, II, pp. 246-82.
5. Cf., e.g., A. Geiger, *Die indoarische Gesellschoftsordnung*, 1935, and Max Weber's *Religionssoziologie*, vol. ii.

of man, in spite of all the forces ranged against it both inside and outside the Church, has been imprinted upon the peoples of Europe!

These are only a few examples which show how a definite view of human existence—whether it be empirical or ideal—is able to determine historical reality for thousands of years, and indeed has actually done so. The fact that alongside these 'official' views considerable influence is exercised by the 'unofficial' views of man proclaimed by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, of man as determined by hunger, power and sex, does not contradict this statement, but is only another proof, along a different line, of the same truth, namely, that man's view of himself determines his life. I would, however, repeat that this truth must be modified by the following qualification: it determines his life along with the 'accidental' elements of his existence and his environment.

Every culture has its own special aspect, and behind this aspect its soul. It is possible that Spengler's assertion that religion is the soul of every civilization may be too strong; but it is impossible to refute his argument that every civilization possesses a relative, systematic unity, and that this unity is determined by its 'soul.' It would, however, be more correct to say that we find this 'soul' rather in man's view of himself than in religion. The culture of the Renaissance, for instance, certainly has its own clear characteristics, and the power by which this was shaped is its 'soul.' But who would claim that this was due to the religion of the Renaissance, and not rather to its 'feeling for life'—which means precisely man's view of himself—which gave it its dominant laws and its dominant aspect through all the varying forms of expression, in actual contrast to the religious forces which preceded and followed it?[6] Similarly, scarcely anyone will say that our machine age possesses its distinctive—though relative—essential unity in its religion, and not rather in man's particular understanding of himself as the *homo faber,* as the man of technique and of natural science. The fact, however, that man's view of himself may also be a religious and even an ecclesiastical or

6. Cf. Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance*, especially *Die Entdeckung des Menschen*.

theological one, is shown easily enough by the history of other epochs, such as the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries. At a second point, too, Spengler is right, namely, when he says that the vitality of that which is specifically human, the humanity-content of a civilization, is determined by its connexion with a living religious tradition. For every civilization, for every period in history, it is true to say: 'Show me what kind of a god you have, and I will tell you what kind of a humanity you possess.' A purely secular civilization will always lack this deeper kind of humanity; and the converse of this statement would be that the purest humanity is to be found where God, not man, is at the centre of all. The truth of this statement will be examined later on.

From some outstanding modern instances, we can see how largely a definite view of the nature of man is able to determine the practical reality of human life, both of the individual and of groups. They show us that the 'solution' of definite practical problems of a period—as, for instance, those of race, economics and sex—is always based upon definite views of the nature and the destiny of man. The fact that binds together the most influential thinkers of recent generations, those whose thought was capable of determining the thought not only of other thinkers, but also of the masses, and through them of determining the whole course of political development—Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Marx—was this: that each of them gained power, directly or indirectly, over a considerable section of mankind by his view of man, by his 'anthropology.' Whether they were aware of it or not, it was not their scientific systems or their systems of philosophy which made history, but their view of man.

Darwin, if not the first, is still the most impressive of the thinkers who placed the life of man under biological categories. I am not speaking here of the importance of Darwin's work for natural science—no one questions that, whatever else they may think about the views of Darwin—but for us that is a matter of only indirect importance. It was not the origin of the species as a scientific theory of the genesis of the forms of life, but the inclusion of man in the biological process of evolution, and the explanation of human forms of life in terms

of biological laws of growth, which made Darwin's theory a force in the life of our day. Man understands himself as a 'living being' in continuity with all other living beings, and the laws of his life are biological in character. This is an argument which even the ordinary man can understand, which appeals to something familiar to him, and justifies it. The theme itself is not new, but the general acceptance which it gained in an era of natural science, owing to its 'scientific' character, is certainly new. Those who popularized this theory found people willing and even eager to listen, both among the educated classes and among the people at large. The period of humanism was succeeded by the period of biology; the *humanum*—that which distinguishes man from all that is subhuman—disappears in the view that man is essentially an animal 'like all other living creatures.' One of the most practical conclusions drawn from this general thesis is the understanding of man from the standpoint of 'race.' The unity of the human race becomes doubtful, the varied types and values of particular races come to the fore and become a guiding principle in politics, especially in a political theory of civilization. The anthropology of Darwin, in the conclusions which he himself did not draw, became a main factor in political legislation and action.[7]

Nietzsche's picture of man, and its historical influence, is far more complicated. But whatever may be the elements of humanistic idealism and humanistic romanticism contained in his idea of man, here too the main element is naturalistic. That which became influential in the thought of Nietzsche was essentially his vitalistic dynamism, his theory of man as a creature governed by impulse and instinct. The justification for this theory is not scientific but philosophical, we might almost say prophetic. Nietzsche is aware of himself as one who proclaims a new man—namely, that man who gives first place not to the mind (or spirit) but to life itself, and indeed to a 'life' which is understood essentially as strength of impulse, sureness of instinct, and 'self-expression.'

7. The following well-known book is typical: Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*. Cf. the book of Hertwig, *Zur Abwehr des ethischen, des sozialen, des politischen Darwinismus*, which is still instructive.

Here, too, simplifications and transformations had to take place before useful slogans for the political conflict could be gained from the ideas of the over-cultivated and ultrasensitive humanistic philosopher. But they were acquired, and they have made history. Both Italian Fascism and German National Socialism are unthinkable apart from Nietzsche. The direct influence of Nietzsche upon the thought of the Duce is well known; his influence upon the German Fuhrer is less direct. National Socialism springs from a view of man which may be described as Vitalism, and among its chief creators Friedrich Nietzsche may be considered supreme, whether or not many of his views agree with those held in the Third Reich.[8]

The third and still more outstanding example is that of Karl Marx, as regards both the significance of his view of man as such, and its direct influence in the political sphere. Marxism is not primarily an economic or sociological theory; it is above all an anthropology, a definite attempt to define the nature of man. In spite of all the differences between Marxism and the views of Darwin and Nietzsche, the former has this at least in common with them: the refusal to admit any transcendental, metaphysical or religious basis for his view of man. It is not his political economy and his theories of value and capital, and the scientific arguments on which they are based, or even the proofs of the economic conception of history—the so-called 'historical materialism'—but the ideal of man and of society taught by Karl Marx which has created modern Socialism, and has made Marxism an historical force of the first rank.

This ideal of man and of society, which at the same time provides the standard for the criticism of bourgeois society, is itself a structure which cannot easily be understood or analysed. Various threads have here been interwoven: Jewish, Christian, Stoic rationalism as well as modern naturalism.

8. The work of Nietzsche shows an increasing preponderance of the naturalistic over the classical-humanistic elements, while certainly the formal element, the prophetic consciousness and the imperative character of the doctrine of values, cannot be understood either from naturalism or from humanism, but only from the Biblical background. Nietzsche draws his strength and his nourishment from his opponent, Jesus Christ.

The ideas of human dignity and of justice, that of the identity of the idea of man and the ideal of society, and lastly the understanding of the historical nature of human existence, may be regarded as its main elements. But whatever may be its content or its origin, it is this idea of man which has roused the masses of the proletariat, and has welded them into a unity of desire and action which, at least in one of the great states of the world to-day, has achieved great political success. The actual impelling power of the proletarian revolution is faith in oneself, in the common man,' in his ideas, his powers, and his rights. Karl Marx has made history, not as an academic economist, but as an anthropologist.[9]

A fourth illustration may be added which shows the effect of anthropology not so much in the sphere of political and public life as in that of private life and of custom—Sigmund Freud's theory of sex and of the unconscious. Here again what concerns us is not its medical and therapeutic aspect, nor its psychological and scientific aspect, but its significance as a general theory of man. Man is essentially sex-instinct—in the view of Adler, desire for power, in the view of Jung, *libido,* in a broader and more indefinite sense of the word—and is above all to be understood from the point of view of the unconscious.[10] The new scientific theory shows not only that this is so, but that it is meaningless and dangerous to play off any sense of obligation against this existence. This theory justifies man as a sex being, it gives him the right to understand himself primarily from the point of view of his sexuality. Here again, as in other instances, the simple thesis is embedded in a complicated system of scientific and in part also of philosophical arguments. It is not, however, these arguments which exert an influence, but the thesis itself, the view of man which is able to become a leading idea, and indeed has already to a very large extent become so. The sexualistic—in the broader sense the erotic—view of man is a force in the literature of to-day, both literature proper and merely popular

9. Cf. Orient und Okzident, June 1936; Die biblische Botschaft und Karl Marx, by Lieb and Berdyaev. Also Allwohn, *Die marxistische Anthropologie und die christliche Erkündigung in Imago Dei*, published by Bornkamm, 1932.
10. G. Adler, *Entdeckung der Seele*. From Freud and Adler to Jung, 1934.

writings, which to a large extent determines the practical life of man.[11]

Although these four thinkers are very different from one another, and although at many points their views and their methods of teaching may be opposed, yet they have three elements in common. Firstly, they show that it is through the interpretation of man that ideas make history. Secondly, they show that deliberately positivist or even atheistic views of man have done most to influence the thought of our day. Thirdly—and this should be added to what has gone before—they show that even these theories could only become factors in the formation of history when they themselves, in some way or another, became either a religion or a substitute for religion. To-day, as in pre-Christian days, there is once again a religion of blood, of power, and of sex. So long as the idea of man—of whatever kind—is not elevated to the plane of the absolute, of the unconditioned, it is not really able to shape history, and it remains more or less a private concern; it remains academic, and has little power to influence actual life. As we suggested in the previous chapter, this is how the matter stands: the dimension of the Absolute does not remain unoccupied, even when it has been deliberately cleansed from all religious mythology. The various views of man are distinguished from one another not by the fact that man posits an absolute when he tries to understand himself, but by what kind of an absolute he posits, and of what kind his relation to it is. Man has always either a god or an idol *(Gott oder Abgott).*

At the close of this brief survey, however, we must also remind ourselves of the fact that all these modern views of man, which we must describe primarily as positivist and atheistic, although they have brought pressure to bear upon the two main older traditions which have formed our civilization—those of Biblical Christianity and of Platonic Idealism—have by no means got rid of them. The individual and the social ethos is still nourished by their deep roots. No one has yet attempted to discover in any detail how much there is in our legal institutions and our social services, in our views of good

11. Illustrative of this whole tendency: D. H. Lawrence for English literature, and (the later) Gerhard Hauptmann for German literature.

and evil, of what is and is not permitted, is noble and base, sacred and despicable, that gains its vitality from these sources. The question whether this element is diminishing or not is as a rule one rather of personal conviction than of proof. The new usually attracts more attention than the old. Here it is not our concern to try to weigh one against the other; all that we have tried to do is to remind ourselves that the Christian and the ancient humanistic views of man have as much right to exist, to-day as in other ages, as the new views of man.

Chapter 3
The Variety of the Views of Man

We must know what man is; for in all that we do we answer, we are obliged to answer, the question of how we understand ourselves, our life. But where shall we find the right answer? An almost unlimited variety of views and theories opens up before us as we look. Which of them is the right one? Can it be possible that there is no right view, that there are only fragments, here a little and there a little, but nothing which binds all these individual perceptions into a unity? There is a good deal to be said for this opinion and it would be in harmony with a view of man which regards him not as a unity, but as composed of various elements which are co-ordinated but not united. Man is, indeed, an entity which belongs to the most varied spheres of existence: to the inorganic, vegetable, animal, psychical, spiritual, and perhaps to some transcendent sphere of reality. Can it be that from each of these standpoints there is a particular view which in itself is always correct, and yet can never be the only view, but must always be complemented by others? Why not? Why should we not let the experts in each of these spheres speak for themselves?

Man, a part of the physico-chemical world, subject to the law of gravity like everything else, is a portion of matter composed of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, and other elements. It will not do to regard this physico-chemical substratum as a mere trifle, as merely the outer shell within which the real human being lives. Not only does a little thyroid-gland secretion more or less determine the whole of a man's bodily existence; it also affects his psycho-spiritual existence as well. A blow upon the head—that is, a purely physical movement, the shifting of a molecule—may turn a genius into an idiot, and bring to an end the existence of the strongest man. It is not surprising that, from the days of Democritus until now, attempts have been made again and again to explain man as a whole from this point of view of his physical nature. This attempt is particularly active to-day as a result of our research into

chromosomes and hormones. It is easy to understand that the physician, who every day observes the physico-chemical limitations of human life, and who finds that he must exert his influence almost exclusively at this point, constantly falls a prey to the temptation to ignore other aspects of man. It is indeed a temptation; if he seeks to understand the whole nature of man by studying the physico-chemical aspect only, he is chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, although it is quite true that this aspect should be studied.

Side by side with and above the materialistic theory there is the organic-zoological theory—that of man as an animal having a peculiarly complicated structure, in particular a highly differentiated central nervous system which gives him his biological superiority over the other species. The modern idea of evolution which has changed the rigid distinction of the species into a fluid *continuum* is supported by such a mass of observations and established facts that no one with insight can fail to be convinced by its arguments. Man, the final—perhaps from some points of view the highest—off shoot of the mammals? Why not? The fact that man has a soul, and that it is impossible to identify this 'soul,' without further consideration, with an organism, need not on that account be denied. Then has the animal, for instance, no soul? Are the instincts of man—even though the one-sided development of the brain and intellect may have weakened them—essentially different from those of the higher mammals? The ancient traditional view that the intellect forms the boundary between the animal and man can be held no longer. Even though the intellectual faculties of man may surpass a hundredfold the intellectual faculties of the animal, it is still impossible to fix a boundary-line; everywhere we see points at which continuity exists. Is it not particularly true that man to-day has no cause to elevate himself too high above his fellow-creatures, his own animal nature and bondage to his instincts being only too evident? The fact that man has even conceived himself recently as a degenerate animal may at least be noted as a sign of the times, nor must we overlook the grain of truth which exists even in this strange theory.

But in spite of all these attacks of modern naturalism, the view still exists, well established and not confuted, that

man differs from the animal, not only in degree but in principle, by a 'something' which the animal lacks at all stages of his development—and in an unconditional sense, not merely to a certain degree; and that down to the present time no traces of this 'something' have ever been discovered in an animal—the reason or the mind, in the sense of the power to grasp ideas and to express them. 'Man alone, in so far as he is person, is able to rise above himself as an animal, and, from a centre beyond the world of time and space, to make everything—including himself—the object of his knowledge.' 'Thus man is the being which is superior to himself and to the world. … As such a being, he is also capable of irony and of humour, which always include an elevation above one's own existence.' 'The capacity for the separation between existence and nature constitutes the main sign of the human mind.' 'Man is able to separate "three-ness" as a number of three things from these things, and to operate with the number three as an independent object according to the inner law of production of the series of such objects. The animal can do nothing of this kind.'[1]

By means of his mind, his reason, man is able to create culture and civilization;[2] this is his *humanitas*—that which distinguishes him from all other living creatures, from all other *zoa*—his distinctive characteristic. The animal may have the rudiments of technique and civilization—that is, the artificial means of preserving life—but it never has the slightest beginning of culture. Man alone has science, that is, research for the sake of truth alone; he alone has art, that is, creation of beauty in form and colour, for the sake of beauty alone; he alone has religion, that is, worship and adoration for the sake of the Holy. Man alone has speech; the system of signs used by animals, wrongly called the language of animals, is—as William von Humboldt has shown us once for all[3]—something fundamentally

1. Scheier, *Der Mensch im Kosmos,* pp. 57 ff.
2. Ger. *Kultur*—practically untranslatable; but W. von Humboldt's definition may be quoted: 'Civilization *(Zivilisation)* is the humanizing of the nations in their external organization, and in the spirit and temper to which this is related; to this culture *(Kultur)* adds science and art.'— *Translator.*
3. W. von Humboldt, *Sprachphilosophische Werke,* published by Steintal, P. 51.

different from human speech. For speech is formed precisely by that which the animal lacks—the general conception, the idea. This contrast is sharp; it is the direct line of division between the human and the sub-human. The animal remains connected with that which constitutes sense-existence, and his interest does not extend beyond his biological sphere of existence. Man, however, even when he makes no use of this capacity, is capable of going beyond this sphere through his mind, his reason. This capacity constitutes his humanity. This humanity, however, is the distinctively human element. Thus, whoever desires to speak of man must speak of his humanity, his capacity for culture, and his spiritual destiny.

Here, then, we reach the position which the philosophical doctrine of man, since its first splendid outline by Plato and Aristotle, has triumphantly maintained, in opposition to all attempts to understand man from the point of view of natural science or of psychology, from the levels of sense-existence and of that which can be experienced physically: the *humanistic idealistic understanding* of man. In the spirit a new dimension of existence is opened up : the truth that our life *here* is determined by a life *beyond,* that which is conditioned by that which is unconditioned, that which is accidental by a norm of necessity, the imperfect by the perfect, the changing by that which is eternally valid. In all that is specifically human there is this relation to a realm beyond, a transcendental realm—whether in the formal logical laws of thought, in the content of the idea of Truth, in the idea of Justice or of the Good, in the idea of Beauty, of that which is full of absolute meaning. Man is the bearer of ideas, the shaper of ideas; the actual *nature* of man, in contrast to his 'accidental' appearance, is the Idea itself.

From the first creative suggestion of Plato down to Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and their modern successors, the ways in which this one fundamental idea has been expressed have been most varied, and their influence within history has been immeasurable. But the creed of Idealism is always the same: essentially man is spirit, and therefore immortal, eternal, divine, in the deepest part of his nature. All that is mortal, perverted, meaningless, limited, is 'non-essential'; it is a kind of foreign addition, perhaps even a mere illusion. Although apparently,

in accordance with his empirical aspect, man may be un-free, as *homo noumenon* he belongs to a wholly different world, the world of freedom, eternity, and perfection. Indeed, from the Far East, where one comes to terms more easily with this tiresome irrational actuality than in the realistic West, this gospel is proclaimed still more boldly and completely; *Atman is Brahman*,[4] the spirit in us—the being-subject—is the same as the All-spirit; *tat tvam asi,* 'that'—namely, the All, the Deity, the One—'art thou,' the man who knows.[5]

This perception arises not only out of the intellectual labour of the philosophers, but also out of the contemplation of the mystics. He who in this contemplation severs himself from illusion, he who 'detaches' himself from the world, who sinks down into the inmost ground of the soul, or into 'ecstasy,' who in mystical rapture forsakes the prison of his bodily nature, he also experiences it thus. He beholds his unity with the principle of all existence and of all life, with changeless, eternal being; he knows no contradiction and no separation any longer between the One and the Self; he has reached the point where the Wholly Other and the 'I' are the same. This mysticism is tied neither to time nor place; whether India be its country of origin or not, it has found a home everywhere, in pre-Christian and Christian Europe as well as in Asia; it has its parallels in Africa and among the 'primitive' people of America. To-day it is the religion of the educated and the learned, just as it was three thousand years ago; it is combined to-day with the most recent modern psychology as in the days of the first yogis. And its varieties, as countless as those of Idealism, yet display one fundamental form of the view of man or of the soul.[6]

One variety we must not overlook, owing to its special influence in modern times and at the present day—the romantic view, which lies midway between the organological and the mystical views. Its starting-point and its fundamental principle is the 'soul,' as distinguished from the 'spirit.' This 'soul,' through the medium of the unconscious and psychical, is the formative power of the organism; it is that which makes it a

4. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophic* I, pp. 79 ff.
5. Ibid., p. 37.
6. Otto, *West-Östliche Mystik;* Levy-Bruhl, *L'arne primitive.*

living whole. On the other hand, it is the mother-source from which springs the life of the spirit. But it is more original, deeper, more profound than the spirit. In the spirit arise contradictions, harsh opposition; in the soul, however, is the original totality and unity. Nature and Spirit, subject and object, reality and ideality, are one in the deepest experience of the soul, in that obscure darkness of the unconscious into which division has not yet entered, which only arises in the garish light of the spirit. Here in the realm of the unconscious and the psychical, the realm of the mothers, is the origin of all genius as well as of all creative dreams. Here in the fiery centre all is still fluid, which on the surface forms into solid shapes. Here the truth has not yet been solidified into sharp masculine conceptions, but everything is still maternally soft, in symbols, intuitions and emotional awareness. Here in the deep centre, in this seeing, this awareness, this feeling, we are close to the primal reality, to that existence and life which has no contradictions, which has not yet been differentiated, the 'immediate.'[7] Hence the soul and not the spirit is the true centre of man, in such a way, however, that the contrast between man and nature, the arrogant elevation of the son above the mother, is regarded as the primal sin. It will not be necessary for me to produce documentary historical evidence for this view from the mother cults of the ancient world down to the romantics of last century[8]—down to the 'Psyche' of Carus, and the *Kosmogonische Eros* of Klages, and the metaphysical psychology of Jung. All I wish to do at this point is to describe briefly a typical and important interpretation of the riddle of man.

Nor must we forget the 'wisdom of the man in the street.' Even the simple man, who is neither a scientist nor a philosopher nor a mystic, has his own view of man. There is an anthropology of the *sensus communis,* difficult as it is to discover it among all the historical *debris* of the various religions. It lives in the wisdom literature of the various nations, and reveals in it its *sensus,* its meaning, as well as its *communis,* its universal expansion. But we can only speak of it with extreme caution, for at every step we perceive definite and distinctive historical opinions which are

7. H. Kutter, *Das Unmittelbare.*
8. Cf. Baeumler's *Introduction to Bachofen's Works.*

now regarded simply as 'common sense.' To-day we no longer believe in those *notiones communes* in the sense in which Cicero used the words—which were the basis of the whole of the medieval and modern anthropology until modern historical research swept it away. And still this characteristic wisdom of the man in the street, which Oetinger loved so dearly and described so beautifully, does exist. What does *it* say about man?[9]

First, it says everything in an un-academic way; it makes no appeal to 'principles.' Quite deliberately it does not attempt to go too deeply into these problems. It knows that man is body, soul, and spirit, and that he is both an independent individual, with his own responsibility, and a being who is bound to the community and intended for community. It is aware of man's freedom and also of man's bondage; of the higher element in man and of his pitiful need; of the unity of his personality and of the contradiction which it contains. Further, it is aware of man's eternal destiny, and yet also that man dies, and that all his life is in some way determined by the fact of death, and tends towards death. It is aware of the necessity of becoming conscious, but also of the dangers which this involves, and of the power of the unconscious. It is aware of the peculiar character of each individual, and also of the common element which binds all individuals together. This 'wisdom' knows all these things, but it cannot be grasped at any particular point. The more eagerly we try to seize it, the more elusive it becomes, this extraordinarily -intelligent and reflective, and yet at the same time superficial and incomplete kind of knowledge. If we inquire into it too boldly and eagerly, it waves its hand and turns its back on the questioner—just like mother-wit, that keen, merry, profound, lighthearted thing.

Before and behind all scientific, philosophical and theological anthropology there lies this ordinary, universally human, naive, pre-reflective understanding of man, very variously interwoven, concealed, enriched and distorted by those other views, and

9. Oetinger, *Die Wahrheit des Sensus communis oder des allgemeinen Sinnes in den nach dem Grundtext erklarten Spriichen und Prediger Salomo.* Also A. Auberlen, *Die Theosophie F. C. Oetingers.*