PSYCHOLOGY OF LITERATURE

A Study of Alienation and Tragedy
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By

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### II. RESULTS OF ALIENATION: TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES

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This book does not analyze in detail the more traditionally aesthetic aspects of tragedy, either tragedy as literature or tragedy as life. Rather it seeks to identify the psychological and anthropological forces which converge to make the tragic mode possible. For this reason the book clearly calls for a sequel. Such a book will need to examine the transformation processes which the materials outlined in the present volume undergo as they emerge into art forms. It will need to limit itself to aesthetic principles.

I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to express my appreciation to Mrs. Helen Barnes of the English Department at Pasadena City College for her assistance in reading the manuscript and for her many helpful suggestions with language and style.

R. J. H.

Pasadena, California
PART I.

CAUSES OF ALIENATION:

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS
CHAPTER 1

RITUAL AND REASON

Perhaps it is no longer necessary to justify the use of psychological methods in literary analysis, or in the more general field of art criticism; however, some preliminary comments to this end will help to elucidate the particular theory of tragedy which I am proposing in this book. First, tragedy appears to be something other than an art form; unlike most of the other arts, it tries to overreach itself and to speak about the human situation as it occurs outside of literature. The result is that when the drama critic comes upon some insight, he is deeply moved, for he believes that he has made a discovery which bears crucially upon living. Thus, a mere intellectual understanding of tragedy often produces a feeling which is as genuinely exhilarating as a more strictly aesthetic experience of the object when considered solely as art.

A fervor akin both to poetic ecstasy and to a religious transformation pervades the writings of those who have thought most profoundly and who have spoken most forcefully about the nature of tragedy. Nietzsche is a case in point. On every page of his book, The Birth of Tragedy, he leaves something of the thrill and enchantment which he experienced when he discovered the famous principle which revealed to him the meaning of Greek tragedy, and consequently of Greek culture. He reveled in the enjoyment of
his new intellectual insight, and constantly pauses with the reader to recall to his mind his earlier vivid impressions: "Let us think of our own surprise at the chorus and the tragic hero of that tragedy, neither of which we could reconcile with our customs any more than with traditions—till we rediscovered this duality itself as the origin and essence of Greek tragedy, as the expression of two interwoven artistic impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian." ¹

The circumstance which caused the famous French poet, Edouard Schuré, to begin his studies of tragic art also contains elements of the mystical and the revelatory. On this particular occasion, he tells us, he had been doing research on some early Greek writers in Florence when, "... my inward vision suddenly extended beyond the horizon." ² An instantaneous insight into man's relationship to the universe as a whole and to the Beyond dazzled him and provoked him into his strange new endeavor, namely, the elucidation of the nature of tragedy. "For after this it seemed to me that an evolution of the theater must correspond with this religious and philosophical evolution of humanity wherein were manifested the spiritual powers that gave it direction. The theater! What strange phenomenon, what an amazing puzzle; in this camera oscura is reflected the entire outer and inner world of things!" ³

The most amazing thing about these statements is that they are descriptions of intellectual experiences rather than aesthetic ones. These men are describing their reactions to a theoretical principle, a principle of literary criticism, not to an art object. They explain that the process which begins as understanding of tragedy terminates in a psychological state of near-rapture. Certainly other arts may enthrall the beholder more rapturously than tragic drama; other arts may move us more quickly to tears or laughter or more directly evoke a state of aesthetic delight; but these require that the observer center his full attention upon immediately present art objects. These are not cognitive experiences
such as enthralled Nietzsche. Both he and Schuré describe their reactions to an intellectual understanding of general principles. They seem to be saying, in effect, that tragedy is such that merely an understanding of its principles can furnish a deeply emotional experience. Perhaps this claim can be made with assurance by no other art form. What validity does the claim have?

The simplest answer that can be given is that tragedy forces man to consider the boundaries of his own existence, for the subject matter of tragedy is always human existence—and existence is always concrete and individual existence which is inevitably enmeshed in the uncertainties and joys of specific situations. Principles which can illuminate tragedy will therefore shed light upon the individual's search for himself, for purpose and meaning, and upon his inescapable failures. Tragedy unfolds within the bounds of a philosophical system; it implies a metaphysics which can reach out and speak about human life as well as about particular art objects. Tragedy describes that borderline point where artistic fancy becomes metaphysical fact, where myth interposes itself between the creative faculty and the aesthetic response only to discover itself less myth than mirror. Tragedy invites us within the very sanctuary of the Poetic Muse, but leaves us unattended there to communicate with our own existences.

But this communication reveals to us something more than poetic fantasy; it embodies more than the refusal of the completely autonomous person to be trapped by the reality principle and made to serve the interests of a cultural tradition. The tragedy unfolds when fantasy, still speaking as fantasy, presents the imaginative under the image of the real; for not even fantasy, our last bulwark against the dominating forces of cultural form, can escape repression by these forms. The great refusal shows itself to be illusory only, and man's final hope for spontaneity and freedom dissolves under the pressures of the imagined, but within real, coercive
forces—Death, Chance, Uncertainty—which limit our individual human existences. Tragedy moves out to the edge of the fantasy world and from across this boundary line speaks the truth with all of the power and eloquence which the imaginative impulse can generate.

Nietzsche accurately describes this distinctive aspect of the tragic mode. "Dionysian art, too, wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence: only we are to seek this joy not in phenomena, but behind them. We are to recognize that all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end; we are forced to look into the terrors of the individual existence." This means therefore that any theory of tragedy will be more than a theory of a particular art form; it will encompass human existence itself. For our purpose, it means that a theory of tragedy must therefore rely heavily upon psychological methods of inquiry.

There is a second reason why psychological methods must become available to the literary critic: the origins of tragedy are psychological ones. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the evidence uncovered by psychology merges with the fragmentary information which historical method affords, and together they yield a firmer account of the nature of tragedy. Interestingly enough, both methods lead inevitably to the same set of circumstances, namely to a typical mystery religion, the worship of the fertility god, Dionysius. They therefore isolate this one circumstance and point to it as containing the clues to the mysteries surrounding the tragic experience, its nature and its origin. Our inquiry will therefore need to focus primarily upon this primitive dynamic: upon the psychological basis of Dionysian religion, for this religious experience furnishes the content of tragic drama; upon primitive ritual, for ritual gave form to drama by determining how events will be conducted, as during the festivals of the Greater Dionysia at Athens; upon the modes of primitive thought, for in the end these intellectual processes determine both the form and the content of Dionysian
religion and therefore of tragedy, and they likewise create the kinds of metaphysical systems which would sanction and nourish both religious ceremony and tragic drama.

In short, to assert that the origins of tragedy are psychological ones means that Dionysius lives today in the psychic materials of modern man, and it means that the same ancient impulses which moved the Greek into a frenzied worship of his god and into a dramatic expression of his feelings survive still and furnish the basis for our enjoyment and understanding of tragic experiences. We propose to exhibit these psychological connections; that there exist historical connections has long been known.

Nietzsche describes these historical relationships. “The tradition is undisputed that Greek tragedy in its earliest form had for its sole theme the suffering of Dionysius, and that for a long time the only stage-hero was simply Dionysius himself.” It seems to be clearly certain that the three forms of drama—the satyr plays, the dithyramb, and tragedy itself—grew out of and transpired in connection with the worship of Dionysius, which is to say, during the festival of the Greater Dionysia in Athens at spring time when nature was renewing herself after a winter of inactivity and lifelessness. Dionysius was the central figure in all of these activities, which were dramatic as well as religious; his was the personality which lurked behind the masks of every tragic hero on the Athenian stage. Both Aeschylus and Sophocles were devoted followers. As a fertility god whose fecundating power restored to life both man and nature, Dionysius caused the fig to grow and the grape to ripen, and he left his intoxicating power in the wine so that his devotees, the Bacchantes who were later to emerge as the tragic chorus, could in their life-restoring revels more fervently imitate their god. As with Dionysius, every tragic hero must experience a suffering and death, and out of the suffering must emerge a new life. As members of the satyr band, and later as witnesses in the theater, they purify themselves by imitat-
ing the suffering and dying of their god, and they regenerate themselves through the frenzied mystery of the god’s rebirth.

This death rite constitutes the basic psychological connection between tragic art and mystery religion. The content of tragedy, which arises always out of the Dionysian ritual, dramatizes the continuing need of man to periodically renew himself. This is a psychological act and requires psychological methods to uncover its meaning. The purpose of this book therefore is to describe the ancient and universal impulses which impel the human mind to celebrate its ever-recurring need to die and to be reborn.

Psychological methods in literary criticism can be justified also in the sense that they offer the soundest criteria for classifying literary forms. To Aristotle, who stands as the originator of poetic theory, we owe this traditional insight. His definition of tragedy and of other poetic forms refers to the emotional effects which are aroused, that is to say, to the psychological states in the spectators. Aristotle’s psychology is a primitive and inadequate one and therefore leads him into some gross errors, but his original insight that literary theory is grounded on psychological data has continued to be the most stimulating principle in the history of criticism. His theory that art form relates directly to audience psychology reappears in modern criticism, for example, in the writings of Kenneth Burke.

If an art theory speaks at all about the creative act itself, about the impact of art objects upon the beholder, or, in the case of the literary arts, about the motivations of characters, then the theory must either consciously subscribe to a particular psychology or else assume that the defining properties of the art form are supplied by psychological data. In Counter-Statement, Burke goes so far as to say that his literary form itself is a function of audience psychology. Specifically he says, ‘... seen from another angle, form is the creation of appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the ade-
quate satisfying of that appetite." 6 This statement probably goes beyond what Aristotle had in mind, for it emphasizes not only the neatly categorized emotions as autonomously self-contained essences, but the basic drives as well. However, it does accept the Aristotelian view that audience reaction defines art rather than, for example, hero psychology.

The transition from hero to audience psychology parallels the historical development from religious drama and ritual to aesthetic drama, from religious purification to aesthetic purgation. It is hero psychology which dominates early Greek tragedy, and inescapably so, for drama itself is nothing more nor less than a celebration of the suffering and dying of the hero-god. The chorus serves, both historically and psychologically, as the bridge from hero to audience, for the chorus belongs to both realms. In bacchic revelry chorus members identify themselves with their hero-god; they sing their songs and dance their dithyrambs under the impulse of the immediate power and image of Dionysius whose intoxicating presence they literally experience. Gradually the chorus becomes the spectators, who in the beginning were some civic-religious group come to pay homage to Dionysius and who remained in the theater to be transformed into an audience, into a group seeking aesthetic delight only.

Thus, only those theorists who disregard human experience as integral in the production of art objects or in the appreciation of them can escape a psychological interpretation. They have two major alternatives, neither of which is satisfactory: they can reduce art to technique or to thematic content. These can offer little help in understanding art, for they terminate in scientific analysis in the former case and in metaphysics in the other. They err in regarding art as merely a branch of some other discipline, and they transpose art into that discipline in order to be able to apply its principles rather than those which might properly apply to art as such.

Thus, this essay accepts the legitimacy of a psychological
interpretation of art, and specifically of tragedy. It holds that impulses even more fundamental than the emotions are involved, and it seeks to identify these and to trace their ramifications in various examples of tragedy. But to this Dionysian impulse will be added a second major ingredient: a self-criticizing intelligence. Our theme will be that tragedy emerges when reflective thought challenges the authenticity of the Dionysian death ritual, when the archaic religious impulse discovers the threats to its fulfillment which have been erected by reason.

This essay therefore develops and elucidates the following propositions: that tragedy emerges directly out of primitive religious experience; that the content of this religious dynamic involves a dying and reborn; that this impulse to renew oneself periodically constitutes a basic psychological need; that primitive religious ritual integrates the various facets of human life into a meaningful whole, albeit a very tenuous and poor one; that as a corrective to previous inadequacies a critical intelligence interposes itself as an historical circumstance, as at the time of the Greeks, and demonstrates that dying as such does not insure a restoration of life, and that it does so without at the same time removing the original impulse to seek death for that very purpose; that therefore intellectual systems alienate man and present him with a kind of death which is necessary but meaningless.

Tragedy presents this alienated condition of man; it dramatizes man in alienation. Religion makes death attractive by demonstrating its necessity for a spiritual rebirth; but to the extent that death can be made attractive to the rational faculty it must be cloaked in aesthetic garb. In the former instance, it is not a final fact, but rather a terrifying and fearful event leading to finality; in the latter case, it remains a final fact in human life, but we tolerate it and even enjoy it because, though it remains a psychological expression of inescapable psychological drives, it has become transformed into an aesthetic event by the techniques of the artist.
The tragedian replaces the real meaning of life and death with an artistic meaning. He cannot deny the death wish as a necessary impulse, nor can he eradicate its strong affective accompaniments. He is not equipped to guide it to its culmination in a renewal of life; but he can guide it to an aesthetic finality, to a purgation of emotions attached to an artistic form.

Having indicated the importance of Dionysian worship in tragedy as the justification for psychological analysis, let us anticipate the role of intelligence in the tragic mode. In the most general sense, this analysis will require that we indicate a general theory of culture, for intelligence manifests itself first in the Culture Hero. He originates culture, establishes civilization, and he accomplishes his work because of his newly discovered rational faculty. He is consequently a completely different person from the intoxicated Dionysian Hero whose work belongs to mystery, to darkness, to the unconscious. From the conflict of these two natures in all of us the tragic experience emerges. It is a conflict therefore between the freedom of Dionysius and the domination of reason, between Eros and Thanatos, autonomy and constraint, gratification and repression, between genuine progress and the eternal return.

This is our theme: Tragedy expresses the need to die as the only means of regaining the spontaneity which life loses under the alienating, repressive systems created by intelligence.

These formal systems, products of reflective thought, constitute what we mean by culture; they offer a real advance over more primitive, precarious living arrangements; they arise in the first place because of previous inadequate conditions; they confer upon both individuals and groups a greater amount of security and protection. In the largest sense they are the products of the Culture Hero. His power and influence solidify them into the permanent socio-economic structures of a cultural tradition. The ideals of
loyalty and obedience, which are developed through such mechanisms as ritual and education, perpetuate these newly won cultural discoveries and provide living characterized by order and continuity.

But the intelligence which creates cultural progress also creates the conditions for regress and even for death. It contains a paradoxical flaw: the same institutional arrangements which protect man also alienate him from his world and from himself. The more fully man realizes his rational nature or lives in conformity with that of previous generations, the more completely he estranges himself until he loses all autonomy. Though reason provides protective economic and moral systems, it also dominates and represses. Reason elucidates, orders—but stills life; it preserves, protects—but constrains life. It civilizes man: it provides law, technology, and abiding societal relations. But it also alienates man: it depersonalizes, represses, fragmentizes life. Along with purpose and meaning, it supplies guilts and anxieties. The more fully we are protected by tradition, the more certainly will we be assimilated and destroyed by it. In short, reason and its products destroy the autonomy of self and make it necessary to be continually renewing oneself in order to remain alive and to grow. And in order to renew ourselves we must die.

This was the curse of Adam. He paid the price of death for an increase in intelligence. His curse dramatizes the connection between death and culture: the same rational process which strengthens man’s chances to live also installs those conditions which make death both inevitable and attractive. The curse condemns every Culture Hero to a tragic hero’s role: Prometheus to eternal suffering, Adam to painful toil, Job to unbearable isolation. He who on his own authority utters a new law, discovers a new cultural order, must reject his Father’s world and as a consequence suffer and die. He who realizes himself outside the limits of tradition threatens all the protective agencies of an established
order. But he also endangers his own existence, for he cannot live in complete freedom, cannot exist as a completely autonomous person. This is man's tragedy.

Tragedy thus emerges out of the self-alienating conditions of civilized living. These conditions attempt to preserve individuality, but succeed only in dehumanizing it. The growing individual has but two choices: one presents itself as a parental cloak which will engulf him and sap him of personal freedom; the other offers unrestrained freedom for self-formation and full gratification of impulses, but requires of him a strange and terrifying ordeal. He must first die and then be reborn as a means of winning the power for this enterprise. And even then it carries no warranty of success. This second choice requires that he die from his Father's world, retreat to a more primitive Dionysian condition, to an original fountain of life energy and there renew himself before he undertakes the dangerous journey of self-realization unguided by traditional systems. This renewal of life's vigor is the most ancient and necessary of human acts. It means that life itself involves a continuous process of dying and reborning.

Life is spontaneous, fluid, ever-changing; it is continuous adaptation to and integration of alien materials. It seeks unrestrained freedom, full gratification of impulses. But it cannot sustain itself under these conditions of freedom even though it demands them. It therefore builds safeguards in the form of conscious systems. These are of necessity lifeless and theoretical and therefore soon harden and challenge individuals to break them up in gestures of liberation and release. Having broken up these external systems, man then seeks security among the fragments, and finding none, he suffers. Suffering introduces him to the authority of his own person, and he begins to listen to his own voice as it charts out his proper vocation and guides him to the place of the secret power.

Such is the ritual of death and resurrection; such is the
worship of Dionysius. It is the nuclear religious drama, it insures the reawakening of spiritual energy in the individual and in the community. It shatters the enslaving forces and liberates the psyche, for it belongs to mystery, to the irrational. Out of this ancient dynamism tragedy emerges. Tragedy dramatizes man's efforts to renew himself. These efforts terrify because they demand death as a condition of renewal. But whereas the religious rite emphasizes the rebirth and makes death only secondary and conditional, the art form of the drama finds greater meaning in the dying itself and in the conditions in our living which make dying attractive. Art transforms our psychological need to die into an aesthetic need merely, and thus succeeds in disengaging the life-renewing act from the life process itself. As art, the ritual culminates in an aesthetic purgation of feelings rather than in a spiritual purification. That is to say, tragic art demonstrates the necessity for death but can offer no redemption. A critical intelligence has interposed itself and reveals to our rational faculty the fatal logic. The new Phoenix bird cannot rise from its own ashes, Osiris from his dismembered pieces, nor Dionysius from his severed members. Reason reveals the meaninglessness of death without making it any the less necessary; reason invalidates the connection between dying and reborning and illuminates the functions of self-sacrifice as being psychological only. And death stands: isolated, meaningless, necessary.
CHAPTER II

ALIENATION: PSYCHICAL ORIGINS

Tragedy signifies man’s failure to achieve identity; it traces out his efforts to discover who he is and what he ought to do and how he fits into the general scheme of things. In the broadest sense tragedy reports the failure of personality formation and consequently installs those conditions which destroy the values which are normally associated with individual personality. Loss of identity, or its nonmaterialization, equates with the alienated condition—a concept which will be used throughout this essay as an explanatory principle of tragedy. The alienated person does not know where he belongs. Those identifications which could sustain him and which could reveal himself meaningfully to himself never solidify to the extent that they produce a self-sustaining, self-aware personality.

Exactly how it is that the individual person comes to some sense of who he is and where he belongs remains perhaps an open-ended question despite the many answers which have been proposed by psychologists and anthropologists. Most solutions indicate the great complexity of the problem as well as the rather incomplete information about it which is available. But for the most part, three theories appear to dominate the literature: personality may emerge by identifying itself with some prescribed social role, with its own personal visions, or with the physical order.
The first of these theories has widespread acceptance. It holds that man develops an adequate sense of selfhood through the process of identifying himself with a socio-cultural role. Helen Lynd has indicated what a number of these possibilities are. The individual comes upon a social role which tradition has sanctioned and within which he can live satisfactorily, and he acts out in the course of his lifetime the requirements imposed by this particular cultural pattern. This may be related primarily to family, to community, to a national entity, or in even more recent times to a one-world ideal; and it may find itself primarily the expression or solidification of political, religious, or familial ideals. Whatever the specific nature of the cultural form, he discovers it, attaches himself to it, internalizes it, and defines himself in the process of living it out.

For example, until recently at least, the most common Hindu view of life centered upon the necessity for each individual to realize in his own personal living those timeless ideals which had long ago coalesced into a caste-defining structure. These ideals in the form of ethical norms, political duties, and social relationships have themselves been ordained by the gods; therefore they cannot be resisted nor violated; they are final and absolute. Nor should they be resisted, for they afford the individual his single opportunity for realizing himself fully. At least this is the theory.

Some obvious difficulties arise when the theory is put into practice. What happens when the strong individual who, having discovered the ageless caste role established for him, finds it inadequate if not shallow and sterile? How is he to achieve an identity then? How prevent alienation? For these are the culture heroes, and they become the alienated personalities which are prime materials for tragedy. Otherwise, where does value indeed lie, and in what sense can personalities who wear only a cultural mask and are faceless behind it become personalities if we define personality as a locus of value?
There is a further difficulty: the cultural role itself may be a grand deception. Such writers as Marx, Marcuse, and Fromm—from quite different philosophical points of view to be sure—point out that society itself regardless of how completely an individual fulfills some social role within it can be sick or mischievous or even self-destroying and cannot therefore vouchsafe to him a life which is meaningful. In such cases the prescribed social role, however hallowed and effective in preserving a given set of ideals, can only coercively distort the individual’s own efforts at creative living into pointless and empty gestures.

The individual who hopes to gain some sense of where he belongs by identifying himself with a timeless social pattern runs two other risks of failing and hence of alienating himself from his times. He may so completely submerge his own identity within a cultural milieu that he remains nothing but faceless cipher, a frozen cluster of social habits. Or he may identify with some social fragment, a community or perhaps even a national boundary, which will be destructive of values which attach to the whole of a given historical circumstance. Thus, he may emerge as a strong individual, but one who is motivated by strong and possibly aggressively provincial predispositions.

The second and third theories of how man may win some sense of himself and hence avoid a tragic estrangement are perhaps interrelated. The individual may be guided by his own demon voice rather than by a set of social codes. He will identify himself with his own personal ideals, with images of what he himself is capable of becoming, with the inner visions which compel his respect. He will also seek identification with the external world in so far as the physical order can be distinguished as an agency separate from himself.

We need not specify in detail the role of the physical world in the self-formation process. It has long been known that not merely self-consciousness and intelligence but the total
organism can maintain itself only to the extent that it remains in contact with the physical order. Attempts to block off its sensory contacts cause the mind to begin to disintegrate, to hallucinate, and to fail to function as a healthy organism. Hence, the kind of people we turn out to be depends upon the orderliness of the sensory boundary between the organism and the environment, which serves as a shape-producing force.

Living and growing in a physical environment requires the organism to pattern its life processes into a polarized dynamic: it must confront an alien matter, assimilate it, and then surrender its previous state. Its life pulsations move from a "dying" to a "rebornning" in a continuous cycle. Indeed life and growth may be defined in these terms. And exactly the same process occurs within the psychological materials of the individual's consciousness. But we need to examine these pulsations in greater detail, for they lie at the heart of our theory of alienation, and of tragedy.

The same instinctual urges which compelled the primitive mind to project its activities outwardly in the Dionysian ritual of death and resurrection remain to make the same demands upon the more civilized mind. These projective impulses reveal themselves in the form of deeply ingrained unconscious needs of the organism. They belong to the depth mind, to the archaic dynamisms which border upon the organic, and for this reason fall outside the limits of conscious control by the rational faculty. They are not replaced but only momentarily repressed by any later-evolved psychic phenomena. Thus, the primitive and the more civilized minds exhibit a common psychological kinship: if either of them continues to live and grow, it must periodically renew its vitality in an act of abandonment and sacrifice, an act of dying and rebornning.

To be sure, the external conditions which make rebirth psychologically necessary for the primitive mind differ for the more cultural ones, but the psychic needs themselves
remain unchanged. The failure of food supply occasioned by famine, flood, or plague serves as a dangerous threat to the spontaneity of life as experienced by primitive man. In order to avoid or to remove these strictures he must identify himself with the natural cycle of the dying of vegetation in winter and the rebirth of it in the spring. So closely identified with the natural forces does he experience himself to be that his behavior, now a rite, acts as a causal agency and compels other parts of nature to perform in the same manner, to produce the rains and to fertilize the earth when he himself engages in these kinds of activities. His own dying and reborning insure the annual waning and return of life energy into the community. Thus, his death drama not only re-enacts and symbolizes the death of life-giving vegetation, but it literally integrates with these cosmic powers and assumes the role of an immediate causal force.

The constrictions which compel civilized man into a periodic renewal of himself derive less perhaps from food scarcity—but the asking for daily bread still belongs in the model prayer—than from the peculiarly cultural conditions of alienation. This estrangement produces a shrinkage in living which must be curbed; it produces a solidification which must be softened. It distinguishes civilized living, and not primitive living, because it is a creation of a self-criticizing intellect. Mind alienates itself by the very same process which makes it a reasoning instrument in the first place. Thus, for cultured man the dying part of the Dionysian cycle signifies a withdrawal from or a destruction of the repressive systems erected by intelligence.

The kinship between religious ritual and tragic art is then more psychological than historical. The psychic processes which impelled the primitive mind into its mysterious Dionysian rites, or civilized man into very similar ones or into tragic art, are identical. Civilized man boasts only a thin veneer of intellect which falls away from him during moments of stress; yet it is the work of this critical faculty
which transforms the earlier ceremonial materials into an aesthetic expression. Intelligence cannot encompass and redirect the whole force of these psychic elements into art forms, or other compensating forms, but leaves them autonomous and uninhibited in their compulsive expression as religious ritual. They remain independent of conscious control; whereas, art certainly requires at least a minimum amount of contrivance. Reason cannot still the unconscious impulse to die and to be reborn, but its invalidation of the necessary connection between them makes death rationally meaningless and therefore provides for the typical tragic experience.

Why the strange persistence of these residual elements of a primitive ritual compelled by a primitive psychology? Why the paradox that if we are to be born into a new life we must die from the old, that if we regain the autonomy and receptiveness which alone define the life process we must die from the world, paralyze our conscious connections with it, retreat into a secret place which we then idealize into a Nirvana, a state of eternal blessedness?

As suggested above, the impulsion to the death drama is in one sense organic. The biological process of growth requires a constant confronting and an integration of differences. Unless the living organism is capable of facing materials foreign to it and assimilating these into its own nature it will disintegrate, atrophy, and return to the inorganic. This means that it will die. Failure to integrate a hostile and differing environment becomes itself a form of death. The extent that we wish to avoid the world’s harshness and to replace it with a peaceful state describes the intensity of our desire to die. The state of being alive involves a state of constant tension. Life is struggle; death is quiescence. Organic energy itself emerges out of tensional situations in which an organism confronts an alien material and transforms it into its own being.

In the second place, the death ritual is requisite to any per-
sonality development. It has psychic origins as well as organic ones, and like the organic, these origins reach far below the level of consciousness. They too belong to the irrational, the compulsive. So basic and so powerful is this need to die, so fatal the attraction, that it has been given the status of an independent force. Freud calls it Thanatos, the Death Wish, one of the two instinctual urges in the human psyche.

The death wish takes many forms. It is the inertia that drags heavy on all of us, the attraction for inactivity. It becomes the flight from pain and suffering, from insecurity and tension; it is withdrawal from the growth process; it is sacrifice. It is the inability to integrate. It is the rejection of coercive systems, of formal ideals. It is the inner search for selfhood, and therefore essential for the emergence of the Hero. It is desire for peace of mind, for cessation of turmoil. It is loss of autonomy, of vigor. It acts as the conservative tendency in life: the Platonic attraction for the changeless, the permanent, the absolute. It is also the opposite: it is the infantile desire for self-absorption; it is incest; it is the Faustian desire for full gratification. It deifies the earlier condition, the "good old days"; it longs for the more primitive condition which has reluctantly been sacrificed to the harsher and more immediate reality principle. It is domination by tradition; it is the Voice of the Father. It is control, unconscious submission to the mystic lore. It is dissipation of life energy through toil; it is domination by guilts and anxieties, by political and moral systems.

The theme of this essay is that the great tragedies re-enact this death drama—its necessity and its meaninglessness; they depict the alienation of man, and because man’s rational faculty establishes the alienating conditions, tragedy depicts the bankruptcy of intelligence as a measure which one must take in vain effort to escape the final estrangement. Before we analyze this theme in detail let us illustrate it and thereby further clarify our definition by referring to some specific tragic heroes, namely Adam, Hamlet, Job, and Oedipus, all
of whom yield to the Death Wish, but under different symbols.

Man's original sin, the tragedy of Adam, evolved out of those circumstances which yielded his first knowledge. Adam lost his innocence when he tasted the fruit of wisdom, when he ate of the Tree of Knowledge. His original innocence bespoke no childlike morality, but rather it was the innocence of the completely spontaneous person; it was the perfect wedding of thought and act, of subject and object, man and nature. The absence of any sex consciousness before the fatal meal symbolizes the inability to make rational distinctions, as between male and female, good and evil. These classifications require an intelligence, and prior to the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge there was no division in the Garden of Eden, for there was yet no mind. It was Eve as the symbol of Reason, of Divine Sophia rather than the Great Mother, who took the initiative for introducing into human life a criticizing intelligence. In the image of alienation, of man-in-separation, she divides off from the original Adam who was in the beginning unitary and androgynous and who lived in a state of innocent freedom. Into consciousness then springs the notion of opposites, of separateness, of distinctions; and the male-female dichotomy becomes the symbol of the fragmentizing functions of the mind. Knowledge beguiles divided man alone, for wisdom arises out of a dividing, generalizing process. It is an alienating process. It destroys man’s original innocence, his spontaneity, and it brings on the curse of death.

Hamlet inherits the curse of Adam; his rational faculty produces feelings of guilt which alienate him from his society.

Hamlet’s predisposition to intellectualize prevents the fulfillment of the princely mission which was imposed upon him by his cultural tradition. To escape the commandments of his Father’s Voice, which symbolizes all of the coercive, societal institutions responsible for having molded his per-
sonality in the first place, Hamlet recoils into a fatal melancholia which sets thought thinking upon itself, a strangely beguiling lure. The moral system to which he belongs demands revenge, but Hamlet's introspection reveals to him that the system is awry, that applying the system solves no problems, no longer permits him to live in freedom. In fact, the princely commandments prevent him from acting the role of a Prince. His tragedy emerges from an inability to identify himself with his Father's system; nor can he successfully die from it. The results are that his own life loses its vigor and autonomy.

Since Hamlet cannot undergo a ritualistic death—his reflective propensity precluding any therapeutics from dying—his only recourse is to intellectualize all the more rigorously. This he does until reason itself reveals its own narrow limits. Hence, it is his own critical intelligence which condemns him, sickens him, enervates him even more than his mother's guilt. For the "pale cast of thought" which he finds so difficult to shake off illuminates his own unredeemable guilt as the selfsame guilt of all mankind and shows that his guilt feelings reach far beyond the more restricted feelings of anxiety which follow from the disobedience of his Father's Voice. Reason instructs him that fulfilling his princely role of vengeance can neither remove his own guilt nor eradicate the disgusting weakness from his mother's character; reason shows that vengeance solves no problems however strenuously he might address himself to the task or however insistently the Voice of his Father urges the duty upon him.

_The Book of Job_ in the Old Testament presents another tragic hero in a variation of the alienation theme.

Job not only alienates himself from his cultural tradition, but also from his God, and it is his intellectual curiosity which leads directly to his estrangement. Job shows no anxiety for lost family, property, home; he cares not a whit about his sickness nor any other physical circumstance. His concern is for knowledge, a particular kind of knowledge,
and he discovers that in order to gain the enlightenment which his condition requires he must die.

As with Hamlet, the old order crumbles about Job and carries with it the life which it had once sustained. He finds himself isolated from family, friends, and servants. They belong to the old tradition, the stable social order, but an order which is now so destructively repressive to Job that it can no longer support the conditions of his further existence. Specifically, the traditional, but commercial, relationship to God now explodes under the circumstances which Job can not longer afford to disregard. The old socio-economic order arose from a covenant between God and Man. It was a simple barter arrangement: if man worships God, God will prosper man. Men who do not worship God—evil men—will not flourish economically. The events of Job’s personal life violate this orderly arrangement. But unlike his wife who, overcome by her grievous losses, counsels her husband to curse God and die, Job instead becomes intrigued with the intellectual aspects of the problem. His own personal experience, he discovers, maintains its autonomy and fluidity even though the culture which had previously sustained it has disintegrated. This new exciting discovery that personality must justify itself apart from regulatory systems arouses the basic questions which lead directly to Job’s alienation and to the insight that the only means for achieving individual freedom involve a form of dying.

Job demands to know why the wicked live and prosper (21:7), what God is like, whether a man can really live after death (14:14). To these and other questions Job’s friends only reaffirm the justice and rightness of the established culture as it was practiced by their Fathers. “Consider what the fathers have found,” they charged him, “for we are but of yesterday and know nothing” (8:8-10).

These arguments push Job, as they do Hamlet, into the fatal trap of examining the knowing process itself. Despite the fact that the ancient wisdom has produced an alienating
system, he would through the same agency search out still another system and establish it for the purpose of correcting the former one. Unconsciously he seems to know that the new law will infuse life with the new vigor which he requires and that sooner or later this new rational construction will force living into even more coercive forms and into even sharper fragments. Then a New Job must need appear with yet a newer vision to place a newer construction on the living process.

Job undertakes this analysis of human reason and its role in the human situation in the famous twenty-eighth chapter. He concludes that the kind of wisdom which can save man from a tragic estrangement is indeed not to be found in any human endeavor. What is required is not a human wisdom at all. Its home is not on earth, nor in the heavens, nor in the sea. It has no price; it cannot be consciously earned. It is unutterable, unavailable to human discourse. It belongs to Dionysian darkness, to the deepest reaches of experience. It is identification with God; it is death; or it is living which does not alienate. Wisdom is a godly thing. To achieve wisdom and understanding is to depart from the duality and fragmentariness imposed by human rationality.

The Oedipus trilogy presents another version of the same theme.

Perhaps the greatest threat to an order established by the Father is the birth of a child. The New Born enters the world as full potentiality, as possibility of growth and change. He stands in the image of progress as against retardation, freedom rather than law. He endangers because of a latent capacity to create his own order, to discover his own truths. The New Born always addresses the future, endangers the past. His is an alienating potential: divisive, destructive. He must be eliminated. Thus, the world's literature parades in front of us an endless succession of abandoned, threatened children: Oedipus was exposed by Laius to die, Heracles
confronted the serpents sent by Hera, Moses was hidden among the bulrushes, Isaac just escaped becoming his own Father's sacrificial victim. These are culture heroes, for they paved the way for intellectual advancement, but like Adam and Eve, brought on themselves the tragic curse, in their case for the very reason that they were potential dangers.

This is the meaning of the incest theme in the Oedipus drama, and indeed in all tragedy. If the child succeeds in escaping the father's threat, if the child succeeds in becoming himself, in reaching his own higher level of consciousness at the expense of his Father's constructions, then he must return to the source of power which stands isolated and unattached to any tradition, but which rather is identified with the Womb, the Great Mother, as the original source of all life energy. Only by undergoing this ritual death can he receive the boon of creative power and be born again into the world and into a higher consciousness.

This surrender to Dionysius, this retreat to the Womb threatens not merely the Father's world, but intelligence itself, for it signifies the very abandonment of conscious systems. The act belongs not to the surface level of our knowing minds but to darkness, to the irrationality of the unconscious. Not even the adult Oedipus with his large discourse and god-like reason can grasp its full significance. The more earnestly he tries, the further he misses the mark. It belongs to mystery. Hence, only the old seer, Tieresias, whose blindness to externalities endows him with a mystic vision, can fathom its full meaning.

Both of these—the retreat to the Womb, the vision of the blind seer—symbolize death. They represent different ways of getting to the source of creative power. They dramatize the need to die as a condition of the restoration of life energy which carries life forward, and which if it is successful, destroys the Father's world. In religious terms, they teach that if we are to be saved, we must become as little
children, that if we are to find our lives we must first lose them.

Having returned to the Mother and having charged himself anew with creative power, the child stands inviolable. The unhemmed spontaneity of his newly won power confers invincibility, for these powers become identical with the unfolding life process. As long as he remains a child, standing near the Mother, he will conquer; he will destroy the serpents sent to neutralize him, for in this relationship he remains wholly himself, freely himself, untouched by the protective but life-sapping institutions erected by his Father.

Jung and Kerenyi have shown that the Oedipus menace exists in the form of the Eternal Child within every one of us. Imbedded in the psychic structure of each individual, it expresses itself as the most fundamental urge to become ourselves through the process of losing ourselves in a retreat to infancy. It is thus potentiality for self-realization; it is the act of returning to the primordial condition where lies the secret power capable of unbinding the fetters of a coercive world and of releasing the self into full freedom.

Why a tragic circumstance? No man can achieve such freedom. No man can fulfill himself apart from an ordered system, yet his very nature demands that he try.
CHAPTER III

INTEGRATION: THE PRIMITIVE LEVEL

The psychological origins of the death and resurrection impulses may be clarified by an analysis of the modes of primitive thought.

Our thesis is that a self-criticizing intelligence intrudes upon earlier religious materials and releases among them an alienating force which in turn sets up the conditions which transform these materials into art expressions. These primitive materials are ritualistic in nature, and the common rite which they re-enact depicts some form of the death-and-rebirth ceremony. There appears to be abundant evidence that ritual expresses fundamental psychic conditions, that it is compulsive in nature, that it serves as a vehicle for releasing unconscious energies. For example, Theodor Reik has closely identified ritualistic activity with neurotic, compulsive behavior.\(^1\) The meticulousness with which ritual must be followed—that no detail be omitted, that the sequence of ritual acts be kept in precise order—points to the origin of rite in the depth mind. What we strongly wish for, even unconsciously, we act out; thus, ritual becomes the dramatized version of wish-fulfillment. By gratifying our own impulses, we compel nature into a similar behavior.

Primitive mind expresses itself characteristically through religious ceremony. It perhaps cannot experience a purely aesthetic response to any object. Art objects would not exist
to such a mind and would be entirely superfluous. They would be identical with religious objects, as they might be to the small child living today. Therefore, since primitive thought processes provide the kind of behavior we associate with religious ritual, and since this ritualistic dynamism culminates in tragedy, we need to examine more carefully the modes of thought which prevailed prior to the intercession of rationality if we are to fully understand the tragic experience.

It lies beyond the scope of this essay to develop a definitive theory of mythic thought, or even to evaluate the various theories which have been proposed to explain its nature. These theories appear to agree upon its fundamental characteristics and upon the fact that these characteristics are present in the thought processes of civilized man, too, in his more unguarded and superstitious moments. But they do make a clear distinction between the products of mythic and of reflective thought. Logical, directed inquiry appears as a genuinely new process which superimposes itself upon the older materials, but it does so without eradicating these more ancient impulses. For our purposes, we need only to establish the point that primitive thought differs sufficiently from reflective thinking as to preclude its having produced the aesthetic conditions for tragedy, but that it did create the religious contents which were carried over into tragic art.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that mythic thinking tends to integrate man’s living into a unity—even though it appears to be a poor and undifferentiated unity; whereas, discursive thought alienates man—to demonstrate that out of this alienation process, tragedy emerges.

As mentioned above, specialists in the fields of anthropology and primitive psychology express some disagreements over the exact nature of primitive thought processes. Lévy-Bruhl, for example, believes that archaic thought belongs to a pre-logical order, that its laws are different in kind from those of consciously directed thought. The ancient mind
cannot distinguish causal connection, lacks the capacity to learn from experience, cannot make systematic observations, nor abstract general laws from particular instances. It is at the mercy of the subconscious levels, the irrational. The category of causality becomes the personal will of an arbitrary but mysterious power.

Carl Jung emphasizes similarities rather than differences between the two modes of thought. Ancient man is no less at the mercy of his irrational mental impulses than is civilized man. In fact, modern man can well afford to accept direction from those lower psychic levels, for in the end they are more merciful, and they bring with them the possibility of healing powers for the fragmentizing which sickens modern man. The primitive mind is all that Lévy-Bruhl says it is—illogical and unable to make distinctions of a high order, but these qualities may not be unmixed blessings, Jung believes. Archaic man may be illogical and unreasonable, but no less so than the so-called civilized man. Both account for things in strangely capricious ways.

But there is, Jung admits, a major difference between these two ways of thought: each proceeds on the basis of wholly different presuppositions. Archaic man begins with the assumption of an arbitrary, invisible power which resides in all things; he assumes the efficacy of magical powers, of sorcerers and medicine men. Civilized man operates on the basis of natural causation, of uniformity of nature, of the conservation of energy. Both sets of assumptions can account for all phenomena of experience, and they claim to do it in an orderly manner. Neither stops to question his basic assumptions. "Nothing goes to show that primitive man thinks, feels, or perceives in a way that differs fundamentally from ours. His psychic functioning is essentially the same—only his primary assumptions are different." 8

Because Jung would privately like to erase any distinction between archaic and modern man, he has minimized the disparity between mythic and rational thinking, but differ-
ences in primary assumptions as he has outlined them are indeed differences of the first magnitude.

Certainly the kind of intellectual process which creates and sponsors a dithyrambic ritual as being causally efficacious differs from the mental processes of logical analysis. We proceed in the former instance on the basis of what Lévy-Bruhl calls a mystical participation with invisible forces, and on the other on the basis of natural causality. The latter is consciously directed and controlled; the former is an unconscious expression.

Malinowski, like Jung, tries to avoid drawing a sharp line between mythic and rational modes of thought. Whatever new processes reflective thinking makes possible, modern man never gets too far away from the archaic dynamisms of his remote ancestors. The difference is one of degree rather than of kind. For primitive people at all levels do develop a common storehouse of technical knowledge which derives from observation. They practice a rudimentary science. However, the largest areas of our living, he believes, do succumb to the control of magical rites.

We can perhaps identify four basic modes of mythic thought which appear to be absent in rational inquiry. These four modes have one feature in common; they have one dominant effect on primitive life: they tend to integrate man. They cause him to coalesce into a oneness with the community and with nature. No individual finds himself solitary and cut off from his world. His integration may be frightening and tenuous, but it is nonetheless complete and all-absorbing. It prevents alienation, and therefore tragedy.

First, the primitive mind is dominated by what Freud calls an omnipotence of thought. This mechanism belongs to the animistic level of culture; it is a mechanism for bringing nature under man’s control through the performance of certain thought processes. If man’s psychic contents extend out and pervade the whole of nature in the form of some invisible power, then thinking things is tantamount to produc-
ing those things. Actually, Freud points out, this mode of thought also characterizes the compulsive neurotic. The mere act of thinking of a person conjures up that person.

Various examples of this mechanism appear in mythology, as well as in the psychological clinic. Marduk was accepted by the Council of Gods of the Babylonian pantheon as their champion against the destructive forces of the monster-mother Tiamat only after he succeeded in demonstrating his power to create by thought alone. Placing a special garment before him, the assembled gods saw it annihilated by Marduk's thought process, and saw it recreated in the same way.

In the course of our living we witness so many uncanny coincidences and associations that we begin to ascribe a power of agency to our own thought processes. At a later stage we project this power outward and onto God. One of the most majestic descriptions of this phenomenon occurs in the first chapter of The Lotus of the Wonderful Law, a Buddhist scripture of the Mahayana school. In this magnificent apocalyptic vision the Lord Buddha falls into meditation and by this trance-like power alone he illuminates the earth and the heavens and indeed all of the universes in the whole of existence together with all of the devout followers, the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and even demons, and reveals to them his mighty and ancient truth.

Many people today believe that "thought waves" or vibrations of some mysterious kind reach out and affect those around us and connect us with natural forces. A popular belief has it that concentration alone can attract another person's attention.

The omnipotence which the mind experiences in connection with these thought processes reduces to a projective mechanism. Psychologists generally agree that one of mind's most persistent urges is to project its entire contents upon the world and thence to regard them as separate phenomena. Instead of ascribing powers of agency to his mind, he discovers its imaginings and fears in the disguise of external
events. Mental events occur as natural happenings. Every mental act, every suggestion, every impulse comes to us from some mysterious power whom it behooves us to placate or to control by means of some approved ritual. We create the world by becoming aware of our own understandings. Every dawning act of consciousness is a stage in the creation of the universe. Knowing the world creates it. Hence, we know ourselves only through our knowing nature. When we say that in the beginning the earth was without form and void, we mean that our earliest psychic existence was without form and void, that intelligence had not yet differentiated objects in the world, that indeed the world did not yet exist. We mean that the projection of our own psychic materials appears in the image of a cosmic creation. The darkness on the face of the deep describes the darkness in our own unconscious state.

This projective tendency of mind erases any distinction between mind as knowing subject and the world as an object of knowledge. It causes man to coalesce into a unity with other men and with nature; man knows himself as world, and he cannot divide himself from the world. He cannot estrange himself at this consciousness level. As there is no sharp division between man and cosmos, neither is there between thought and act. The identity of man’s inner life and of nature gives man a magical control over nature to the extent that when he performs certain prescribed ceremonies, nature must respond in corresponding fashion. If man performs a rain dance or a resurrection ritual, then heaven must indeed yield up its moisture, and vegetation must come to life again at springtime.

For animistic mentality there is not merely an integration of man and cosmos, but in a larger sense a union of all opposites. Primitive religion, for example, lacks moral content. There are no “good” things and “bad” things in the moral sense of the term; this distinction waits upon a more deliberative and reflective type of mentality. All primitive gods
exhibit questionable moral attributes, even the so-called highest of the gods, as Zeus. They fight, intrigue, seduce, torture. The primitive accepts the normality of these attributes because they really belong to himself and he knows no other.

A second distinctive trait of primitive mind is how it secures its knowledge. Normally when modern man thinks of the cognitive process, he thinks of the scientific method—of hypothesis, observation, measurement, recording, controls; or he thinks of dialectics—of classification, generalization, abstraction. But for the most part knowledge comes to the primitive mind in the form of a series of visual images. His thinking appears to be largely picture thinking. It is therefore vivid, convincing, emotional. No sharp boundary lines separate the images. A sequential series of pictures shows no causal connection; hence, primitive thinking often appears to be devious and startling to the more rational mind. Images whose edges dim out and blur become superimposed upon each other in strange and capricious combinations which give primitive mentality an undirected, uncontrolled quality. Thinking almost assumes the autonomy of a separate agent. It further obliterates a subject-object distinction and tends to remove thought itself away from any particular person. It detaches thought from a thinking self.

Archaic thinking may be described as being gestalt-free. Its content consists of vague, incoherent, inarticulate forms, many of which arise out of the unconscious layers of the mind; whereas controlled observation structures our perceptions into manageable configurations. More specifically, gestalt psychologists explain, this structuring occurs always in terms of figure and background for the figure.\(^8\) By figure is meant the center of interest, the focus of attention, the pattern which we are consciously perceiving. It arises through conscious effort, the ability to categorize, to distinguish. Archaic man does not experience his environment in such clearly definable figure-ground relationships; therefore his experi-
ences are less judgmental, but instead tend to be unique and unprecedented.

A third aspect of mythic thought which promotes integration rather than alienation refers to the logical processes which guide the thoughts of primitive man from one idea-image to another. These processes themselves can only be inferred, but indirect evidence does reveal some relevant features. An analysis of poetry can furnish some information on this problem since it seems likely that the logic of poetic thought resembles in some of its features that of mythic thought. Both present a sequence of images; both are stimulated into activity by deeper layers of mind where rational distinctions do not exist; both rely heavily upon symbolism to express meanings dredged up out of the unconscious level; both condense, distort, superimpose.

We may distinguish three processes in poetic or mythic thinking: the logic of metaphor, the logic of adjacency, and the logic of immediacy.9

Logic in the first place may be described as a study of inference, a study of the legitimacy for moving connectedly from one idea to another on the basis of the form of the ideas rather than on the basis of content. Logic presupposes that ideas can be fully expressed in conceptual form, in propositional form. Formal logic therefore has difficulty in handling imagistic thought; that is, since the thought content of primitive mind consists largely of imagery rather than conceptualizations, the laws of formal logic hardly apply. And any logical system which describes how one image relates necessarily to any other becomes ambiguous and perhaps capricious. We need to ask: Under what conditions does one idea-image evoke another, which can effectively and convincingly carry forward meaning?

The logic of metaphor suggests that mere resemblance among two or more images constitutes a legitimate logical connection. Resemblance need not extend far; it need en-
compass only those aspects which can coalesce into an imagined whole. It proceeds according to the laws of visual association. Metaphor does not wait upon necessary connection nor coherent argument. It proceeds on the basis of visual logic only, and therefore may focus upon connections which our rational faculties cannot accommodate. This quality of metaphor performs one most interesting function: it disengages the content of imagery from its environmental connections and removes it to the world of the imagination. It gives plasticity to language, and consequently to thinking; it creates conditions for poetic and religious thought.

Resemblance may extend to auditory imagery as well as to visual. Thus rhyme, assonance, dissonance, alliteration perform metaphorical functions. They build into unities an assortment of sounds which have in common only phonetic similarities; the unity need not exhibit necessary logical connection. The immediacy and vividness of sound relationships convinces us more thoroughly than causal connection. Sound compositions, like music, do not require corresponding orders of verbal meaning in order to gain serious acceptance by the mind. They appeal directly; they have an uncanny quality about them which gives them a mysterious spontaneity and life of their own.

Metaphor ends in synthesis rather than analysis; it is an integrating device.

The logic of adjacency suggests that in the primitive mind thought-images establish quasi-causal connections with each other in accordance with the principle of proximity. But proximity means something very special to archaic man. It does not merely refer to nearness or remoteness in space, nor indeed to any geographical signification which our rational minds impose upon space. Reason abstracts space into mathematically measurable entities; whereas to mythic thinking spatial contiguity means psychological contiguity. We tend to internalize space and to organize our living in accordance with these internalized notions. Only that space has meaning
which evokes responses in the living organism, and it is our psychological experiences of space relationships which evoke these responses.

Again we come upon the idea that it is largely in the process of man's knowing the world that he knows himself. As man has concrete experiences which are significant, his experiences of space relationships become concrete and significant. Logic of adjacency imposes upon location a religious or psychological character and removes it from its geographical orientation. Space then begins to function as a symbol: a Mecca, an altar, a temple, a World Navel, a world center of spiritual activity, a Mt. Sumeru, or a ziggurat tower. Extension in space is now a matter of ritual and of metaphor rather than mathematics or geography; its fourth dimension is psychological. Reflective thought secularizes space and transforms it into external environment, into objective mathematical formulations. Descartes' description of a "thing" as extension in space teamed with Newtonian physics to destroy for modern man his earlier reliance on a logic of psychological adjacency—and it helped to establish alienating processes in modern culture.

To the primitive mind it is not so much that some particular place belongs to some particular person, but that the person belongs to the place. Boundary lines do not indicate possession or domain so much as an occasion, especially an occasion for evoking very special powers which are operative in the living and dying of the people. These are usually spiritual powers, healing, life-giving powers which rejuvenate, cleanse, and purify. Adjacency then connects man's own personal life to these magical powers in a psychological nearness; it is a nearness which borders upon causality. No mathematics can formulate these juxtapositions and religious compulsions which make up the space experiences of the primitive man. He is possessed, but not of real estate. Space as estate does not exist except as a vague limit until man defines it through concrete, ritual action. Boundary lines merely
separate the more sacred powers from the more profane or undefined, the created from the uncreated land, the dangerous and taboo from the trivial.

The symbolism of gateway entrances to such sacred places as temples and cities takes its meaning from the notion that boundary lines define psychological and religious experience rather than proprietorship. The circular Buddhist stupas built upon large square platforms require a gateway entrance at each of the four directions. These entrances are guarded by ferocious beasts in the form of Korean dogs or Shinto monsters to prevent the uninitiated and the psychologically unprepared from entering a place where dangerous spiritual powers can be released. These powers can destroy the unprepared; but they can confer the boon of rebirth to those who are qualified to make use of them. Hindu temples and temple cities make use of the same symbolism. The frightening monsters have been replaced by gargoyles on Christian temples, though they have for the most part left their guardian positions by the doorways and have become merely decorative motifs or else functional members, as waterspouts. Even so they do not encourage man to enter into his own soul until he is properly equipped to do so.

The widespread use of directional symbolism in mythic thought also offers evidence for the psychological character of space. Buddhist stupas, Muslim mosques. Hindu temple areas must be oriented in very specific ways with respect to the north-south and east-west coordinates. Ancient Egypt and the Mayas use directional symbolism.

Space exhibits highly plastic qualities. We define it with significant experiences as ritual; we can define it with a variety of symbols, as architectural ones. Perhaps the most universal of these symbolic forms is what has been called the mandala the circle inscribed within a square. It occurs in almost every mythology, every religion and ritual, even in psychological clinics. It is the basic plan of Hindu, Shinto, Muslim, and Buddhist temples; it appears in dream form in
schizophrenic patients; it occurs in Christian eschatology as
the plan of the City of God as described in Revelation and in
Dante's Paradiso; it furnishes early Rome, and Australian
bushmen, the design for building their cities and villages.

Generally, to ancient man time is cyclical and turns back
upon itself; space is always square. The circle symbolizes the
Sky God, the Sun, Solar Power, the Wheel of Law or the
Disc, the Halo—it represents the spiritual aspect of man. The
square on the other hand represents man material, the four
elements—earth, air, fire, and water—the four corners of the
earth, the four humors of man whose mixtures determine
man's physiological states. To square the circle is to discover
man's most baffling and esoteric secret: How can man who is
earthy and material also be spiritual and immortal? How
can he exist as a creature both of time and of timelessness,
both of space and spacelessness? The primitive rarely con-
cerned himself with the question in this form, for its quest
betrays the work of a rational process. The mythic mind
simply expressed the eternal unitary character of man
through this mandala symbol; it means to him that man lives
as an integral part of the whole of nature. He is not alienated
from it. Not until a more probing intelligence unfolds does
man set out to solve this unsolvable paradox. The first step
in man's tragic estrangement consists in this fragmenting act
by the rational faculty, the division of man into opposite
natures, the material and the spiritual.

Perhaps the primitive logic which depends on spatial con-
tiguity for its legitimacy accounts for taboo phenomena.
Sigmund Freud\(^2\) has analyzed taboo as a self-imposed re-
striction on behavior; it arises out of unconscious compul-
sions and exists as a prohibition against the transmitting of
dangerous, demonic power from one object or person to
another. Spatial contiguity appears to be necessary for trans-
mision of these powers. We contaminate ourselves by bring-
ing ourselves into spatial relationship with a forbidden
object. In some instances to approach within a hundred feet

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of a taboo person is sufficient to endanger us. For example, in early India an untouchable contaminates at this distance. Any physical contact confers immediate uncleanliness and even guilt. The touching need not be intentional nor skin-to-skin contact, for even the shadow of a taboo person which falls upon another carries a fatal contagion.

Perhaps the inference is that nothing endangers the primitive so much as immediate proximity. Whatever can touch him can threaten him, and this condition causes unbearable anxiety. For example, the Navaho feels the need to purify himself after every contact with a stranger.13

The logic of immediacy refers to the irresistibly strong claim which vivid imagery makes upon our credulity. Our inner feelings seem very real and genuine. Even though they may be chaotic and fleeting and be of the moment only, they nevertheless have an integrity which attracts our loyalty. Perhaps this is because the whole jumble of images, thoughts, and feelings seem so intimately a part of us, so well unified into a consciousness having a personal identity. Normally we experience ourselves as integral personalities; we are separate selves, unified selves, if we can rely upon the continuous flow of our inner experiences. It appears to be language which splits up the integrity of this experience; the problem of reducing the flow of experience to language form and of exhibiting the connections between language and what we might call this inner reality has long been and remains a fundamental problem in philosophy. Bradley’s solution to this problem, for example, points up both its complexity and also the integrated quality of our inner experiences.14 These experiences, he suggests, are overwhelmingly convincing in their realness; yet, they cannot be preserved nor even described through the artificial and fragmenting vehicle which language is. Language destroys immediacy; it carves up the oneness of ourselves and leaves the fragments to wither away. Since it is immediacy which makes for man’s
unalienable kinship with nature, language contributes to his alienation.

Whatever is most vivid seems also the most believable, and vividness belongs to the living moment, the immediately present moment. Mere presence in consciousness constitutes sufficient proof. Whatever presents itself to the imagination demonstrates its existence by this very act and convincingly establishes itself as a part of the world order.

We know time only as the ever-present moment; we never know it except as an occasion, as an aspect of concrete personal experience. It is the rational mind which secularizes time, as it does space, and abstracts from its concreteness the conceptual qualities of a category of explanation. Reason removes time from the circumstance to the mathematical, from symbolism to causal connection. Reason creates time which is objectively measurable. Because our rational faculty deflects and delays gratification of inner impulses, it forces consciousness to reach out into the future. It breaks up the integral quality of inner experience. Thus, abstract time belongs to the rational order, concrete time to the psychological order. Temporal experience which submits to measurement and discrimination, which seeks its place in a causal series, loses its freshness and spontaneity. For example, in Peter Pan our conscious fears of growing up, which are symbolized by the Pirates who try to capture the Lost Boys, disappear when measured time imposes its order upon them. The ticking of the clock which has been swallowed by the Crocodile represents time, and the Pirate leader destroys himself immediately after the Crocodile has approached him.

A study of sound symbolism reinforces our theme that the primitive mind, and perhaps most civilized minds as well, are more easily convinced by the vividness of immediacy than by logical proof. Believability rests on the fact that the mythic mind internalizes duration and retains it as a part of its on-going mental processes. The properties of internal
time differ from those of the external world. Thus, time functions as a psychological rather than a mathematical category and manifests itself only in symbol form.

The peculiar quality of immediacy which sounds have makes them universally used as time symbols. Sounds represent both internal states and internal states projected outward into the form of Cosmic Powers. They have therefore a very special character: they are divine, and they require that man bring his living into an adjustment with divinity.

This divine quality of sound endows the spoken word with creative powers, and it tends to make the written word very suspect to the primitive mind. The most sacred of all sounds to the Hindus is the word Aum, which harbors within itself the infinite, creative power of God. It is the Word which issues out of the mouth of God and which, when repeated by the properly qualified priest, acts as the agency of restorative power for man. As the holy man imitates this sound, it transforms itself into the Vedas, the ancient Hindu sacred scriptures. These are called Sruti, which has the meaning of "being sounded out," to distinguish them from Smriti, which refers to what has been written down and preserved through tradition. Only the "sounded out" symbols contain divine power.

Schopenhauer makes use of this logic when he analyzes music as being an immediate and direct revelation of the Will, the final power of the cosmos.

Granet's description of ancient Chinese language emphasizes this same theme. He explains that a major problem for the Sinologist arises in connection with word order, and therefore the meaning of sentences. The written form of language uses strict rules of syntax to determine the position of words; however, in language which is spoken or sounded out, the word order is determined only by the succession of the speaker's emotions in a given circumstance. Logical syntax breaks down in the face of immediacy and emotionality and invites the subconscious to impose its own
psychological order. This buckling under of rational aspects of language prevents the estrangement of our inner experiences and reinforces the integrity of personal experience.

Sound symbolism may also explain the efficacy of the curse. As the source of mysterious power, the spoken word can unleash energy which will destroy as well as create, and it becomes legitimate to use it in securing the ill fortune of an enemy. Jung holds that it is no mere accident if indeed ill fortune befalls a cursed person. Through a suggestibility mechanism bordering upon hypnosis the curse sets in motion a series of psychic forces which lie outside of the conscious control of the victim—and we have succeeded indeed in victimizing him with our curse.

We have seen how the mythic mind resists the transformation of a temporal order into a causal order; it prefers either to impose its own psychic causality upon a natural sequence, or it prefers to isolate a given event from the surrounding causal factors. Externally caused moments have no real existence; they exist rather as nonrepeatable inner experiences. Causality thus becomes a matter of propitiousness. There is a propitious time for every event—for war, for travel, for building, for sacrifice. The propitious moment means the right psychological moment rather than a time which the external environment might approve. Historical moments simply have no meaning; they exhibit auspiciousness merely, and the auspicious is known to the subconscious rather than through rational inquiry.

Archaic man developed several techniques for revealing the opportune, for determining the right psychological moment. Among these devices are divination and astrology. Chinese priests of pre-Chou times interpreted the cracks in tortoise shells for their insights into the auspiciousness of a given moment. These shells had been placed in the sacrificial fires, and the cracking produced by the heat of these fires established a connection with the wishes of the gods which was strong enough to warrant the interpretations of
the priests. Many other forms of divination have prevailed among primitive peoples. All forms have in common this one feature: the Diviner has some means of securing power over time.

The form of logic we are discussing makes the keeping of the calendar the most important job of primitive man.

Astrology still flourishes as one of these techniques. However, in modern times it has rationalized and systematized itself into a state of sterility. It actually prevents rather than encourages the expression of unconscious states, and to this extent it loses its meaning. It has become simply another repressive system as it did with the Mayas whose family and civic affairs came under its domination so thoroughly that living lost its spontaneity. No individual, either a member of a family or of government, could take a step or perform a deed however perfunctory without securing the approval of "propitiousness."

The same hardening process set in to destroy Hindu divination systems. These developed into systems whose chief purpose was to control and repress the inner freedom of individuals, whereas they began as mechanisms for the specific release of these inner energies. The Brahmanas, sacred scriptures which describe the order of ritual to be followed by priests, claim that causal power resides not in the gods but in the ritual ceremony itself. The priests actually deified this power which their own ceremonial words and actions created and released.

A fourth characteristic of primitive thought concerns the kinds of things which it selects to be the objects of its knowledge. Philologists, psychologists, and anthropologists generally agree that archaic man experiences the uniqueness and individuality of events and shows little or no regard for the abstract qualities which signify their membership in a class and which make them available to rational inquiry. What can be known are individual instances, concrete situations rather than conceptualizations.
Jung\textsuperscript{16} believes that this greater interest in the chance occurrence is due to the apparent connection which these kinds of events have to an arbitrary, invisible power. An accidental event belongs less to a causal order than to the caprice of some invisible agency. Hence, man must attempt to know all that he can about these occurrences in order to be able to control the power which lies behind them; these measures he must take for his own safety and good fortune. He then focuses upon the unpredictable, the omen, the unexpected breaks in the patterns of nature. Jung says in explanation, "What happens regularly is easily observed because we are prepared for it. Knowledge and skill are only needed in situations where the course of events is arbitrarily disrupted in a way hard to fathom." \textsuperscript{17}

Snell\textsuperscript{18} points out that whatever is unique and individual eludes the rational categories and as a consequence remains incomprehensible. It remains unknowable by the rational faculty—but not to magic mentality. In its search for natural causes reason invents the categories of time, space, number, causality, etc., but these have the effect of classifying individuality out of existence. Snell believes that the greatest difference between mythic and rational thinking is the disparity of their explanations of causal connection.

Perhaps the most elaborate system ever developed specifically for the purpose of helping man to understand and to control chance happenings is to be found in the ancient Chinese classic, the \textit{Book of Changes}.\textsuperscript{19} This book, by far the most highly esteemed one of China, supplied the basic wisdom for the various philosophical systems to develop in that country. Taoism, Confucianism, and Legalism look to it for their basic premises. So thoroughly did its influence seize the Chinese mind that China never developed any science as we know it, nor any mathematical tradition, nor for that matter any epistemological tradition.

The fundamental teaching of the \textit{Book of Changes} is that
any given individual event takes its real character from indeterminable, chance interferences rather than from natural law. The total concrete situation which we face at any specific moment requires that we examine not those properties which place it in a causal series, but rather the accidental features which give it its own unique status.

The book teaches that the unique moment has its model in the spiritual world, that invisible agencies contribute to human events their apparent capricious qualities. This means that what appears to be accidental and meaningless is only the spontaneous behavior of the spirits. Man's most urgent problem then is to discover some clue to the expression of divine caprice. For this purpose the complicated hexagramic system of divination evolved. A throw of the yarrow stalks will reveal all that we need to know about an event for the very reason that the sixty-four hexagramic patterns into which it is possible for the stalks to fall reproduce the same states of affairs in the spirit world. Since these symbols link man with heaven and give him access to its power, he can look into the future with some measure of confidence.

The use of these oracular stalks furnishes a prime example of metaphoric logic. The yarrow stalks belong to the vegetable kingdom; they derive from the sacred plant of life and of knowledge. They are the correlate to the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, to the plant of immortality sought by Gilgamesh; hence, rather than the fruit of the tree as in Genesis, or the leaves of the tree as in Revelation, it is the stalks of the plant which can give man access to the wisdom of heaven.

The Chinese concern for the chance occurrence led him to develop a mode of thinking which has extended down to the present century, and that is what Sinologists call parallelistic or double-harness thinking. A completely unique event eludes the rational categories. How then can we describe it or get at its essence? Aristotelian metaphysics assumes that absolutely fixed and eternally unchangeable
essences exist prior to the existence of individual things and that they determine the things’ nature. These essences are what members of classes share with each other. Laws of logic were designed to isolate and to illuminate these fixed characteristics. But the Chinese mind, forced into its methods by a more archaic dynamism, never came upon this Aristotelian methodology. A thing’s essence dissolves when we apply the Greek categories, for it is constantly changing from what it was into some opposite quality. This fact of change is what gives individuality to events. How then capture the uniqueness of the moment? The best we can do, the Chinese believe, is to say what the thing is, and also what it is tending to become. We need to say two things, and two opposite things, about an event. We need to come at an event from two directions, from two angles, if we expect to get at its real nature.

These two positions—the Greek rational and the Chinese primitive—imply a contradictory metaphysics: to the former, ultimate reality is substantial; to the latter, it is relational. And only in the former, as we shall see, can tragedy flourish.

I have tried to show that the very thought processes of archaic man unify him unalienably with the cosmos and that this unity produces the kind of nuclear experiences which may be designated as the religious. We have seen that the fundamental mechanism which creates this indissoluble bond between man and the gods, between man and nature, is the tendency of the mind to project its inner contents upon the world and to regard them as objective phenomena. Just how early in the life of the child, or in the history of the human race, these mechanisms begin to function seems not to be very well known. Glover points out that his clinical observations both of children and of patients suffering from various neuroses indicate the onset of pre-conscious mental activities as early as the infantile stage.

This projection and deification of mental apparatus provides man with the weapon of mental omnipotence; it makes
his own separateness even more indistinguishable. He thinks that he knows the world, but he really is knowing himself. This weapon establishes one common substance which pervades the whole of nature and permits free transformation and permutation of its various parts. Zeus performs no miracle when he transforms himself into a bull or a swan; the Pharaoh and the Mikado indeed belong to the same order as the gods; human actions are continuous with acts of nature, and it is understandable why Abel's blood will pollute the ground and prevent the growth of vegetation; a Navaho's rain dance will literally bring on the rain, and Oedipus' incest cause a plague in the land. Similarly, Jahweh speaks as a whirlwind, Marduk becomes a cyclone, and Poseidon a raging flood. Nature rejuvenates herself every spring, and man can do the same—though we may need to anthropomorphize this rejuvenation into the Navaho's Changing Woman, or into the Greek's Dionysius.

The omnipotence of our thought processes even allows us to participate in the creation. Merely to think a thing, even to recall a name, creates the thing. The Memphite Text from ancient Egypt describes this particular phenomenon in considerable detail. A thought came into the heart of god, the text explains, and the mere utterance of the thought set into motion the creation of the universe. Just as the human and the natural are identical, so also are the thought and the act, the symbol and the thing symbolized.

Within the framework of this archaic mode of thought, man's understanding of nature is a matter of concrete, immediate experience. He requires no abstract categories in order to specify the causes of things. He knows automatically what causality is, for it is identical with himself. His language need not express relationships among abstract categories so long as it secures responses from other people and from nature. Nor need he investigate nature mathematically, for he has already measured it by the intensity of his feelings. Neither does man's behavior wait upon carefully devised
systems of politics and morality. His inner compulsions instruct him in the pursuit of ritual, or divination. If he would regain strength after a disease, purify himself after contact with strangers or with the dead, he performs a life-renewing ceremony, for in doing so he imitates nature. Ritual integrates: "One purpose of ritual is to extend the personality so as to bring it into harmonious relation with the powers of the universe." These rites bring man into direct, magical relation with the final powers, which is to say, with himself. Causality expresses itself in the image of an arbitrary will rather than as an impersonal, mechanical force.

In summary, the modes of thought of primitive man provide for his complete integration with the cosmos, and they keep his life vital and spontaneous. However, the level of integration is a very inadequate one; the security it affords is not very providential. Though man remains unalienated, his living is nonetheless poor and fraught with suffering.

Perhaps the greatest cause of his suffering, the most serious threat to his harmonious living, is related to a precarious food supply. Food scarcity, whether brought on by wars, famine or other causes, compels him to accept one of two opposing actions: he will follow his fertility rituals all the more rigorously, or if his suffering reaches prolonged intensity, he will be forced into facing his problem with a new insight, a more critical one. He will begin to question his former methods and must look to himself for authority. That is, in his suffering he discovers himself. This questioning attitude, if persistent, terminates in two new facts: intelligence, and the consequent alienation of man from his world. Together these produce the tragic experience.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEATH THEME IN TRAGEDY

The fact that tragedy arose out of the Dionysian death drama led us to consider why it was that the primitive mind found it necessary to engage periodically in this mysterious dying ceremony. We found the roots of the death wish to reach deeply into both man's physiological and psychological make-up. He needs to die at regular intervals in order to keep on living and growing both as an organism and as a psyche. Very early in the history of the race and of the individual this symbolic act came to dominate his religious behavior, which is to say, all of his daily activities. His mental apparatus, especially his projective mechanisms, the pseudo-logical techniques connected with imagistic thought content, and his undifferentiated consciousness produced in him a feeling of oneness with all other aspects of the universe. He experienced himself as nature and therefore found himself related in unalienable kinship with it. Demonstrating this kinship creates the techniques of magic; celebrating it constitutes religious ritual. Integration and religion are correlatives: the feeling of oneness, the absorption of man into nature, and the consequent de-emphasis upon the self constitute the religious experience. Thus it is that the unconscious compulsion to be recurrently restoring oneself, for example from the debilitating ravages of a winter spent in hunger, manifests itself in the form of a religious rite,
and it explains why the death-and-resurrection theme occupies the central place in this rite.

If we are to understand tragedy, we need to examine the constituent elements of religious ritual, for tragedy emerges as one of its transformations. In this chapter we will focus upon the first half of this rite, the dying part of the cycle.

The elements of ritual, we have repeatedly indicated, represent the fundamental but paradoxical impulse to restore ourselves through an act of dying. They manifest themselves as religious content in a great diversity of forms and actions, for they often need to assume cultural disguises which will make them publically acceptable, or acceptable to a more civilized society. They often displace themselves upon unrelated materials, for their original character stems from a very primitive, and to a more cultured mind, a shameful act such as that involving frank sexuality. It is not always easy to detect these ancient compulsions in some of our more modern religious behavior; yet it seems certain that they are merely parading under a new mask.

These elements appear also in tragedy, but they lose their original character even more fully as they become re-fashioned into an aesthetic expression, for the dramatist faces the paradox of presenting the legitimacy and necessity of the dying part of the rite, which the religious experience likewise demands, but of presenting it by means of the very same events which demonstrate to the rational mind, or to aesthetic visions, its utter meaninglessness.

This inquiry divides itself into two parts. We must ask what the values are which primitive religion—let us call it animism—sought to preserve; and we must describe not only the dying and rebirth aspects of the religious drama but also some of the most common vehicles which have symbolized these events. These inquiries are closely related. We preserve what we value by the things we do; hence, drama demonstrates a value theory and dramatic behavior exhibits a personal ethic.
Emotionality serves as a major clue to value systems. We become emotionally aroused by those things which we value most highly, and our feelings appear to intensify to the degree that what we value is threatened. This connection is probably a psychological one. Since mythic thought content originates in the sub-conscious levels and since it manifests itself as disguised wish-fulfillment, then it can be inferred that emotional intensity accompanies thought processes and dominates religious behavior. Emotionality is the projective force behind our wishes and impulses; these in turn reveal our most vital concerns and interests. Thus, the activities which evoke within us such deeply moving feelings as terror, excitement, fear, or anguish also reveal to us our sense of values.

Of course I do not mean to imply that primitive man formulated a system of values which he consciously followed. Quite the opposite is true; values also suggest thoughtful choice, deliberation; and ancient man probably could not sustain these kinds of mental functions long enough to develop a positive ethics. Even the most civilized person has found it painfully difficult to describe in a positive way the things which have greatest value to him. Socrates' Voice only warned him of an impending bad action, and he lamented the fact that it could never indicate to him in a positive manner a suitable course to follow. But our prohibitions and negative commandments are nevertheless suggestive of our interests.

They suggest, for example, that primitive man's most urgent concern was food supply—that almost all of his energies were channeled toward the acquisition and preservation of this one object. It is difficult for us who depend upon scientific production of food crops, canning industries, and deep freezers to comprehend how utterly precarious it was to live from season to season in ancient times—or even at the present time in many parts of the world. So marginal is living now in certain Asian areas that if the monsoon rains
delay in coming, or do not arrive at all, or if a flood destroys a season’s crops, then people begin to starve by the thousands. Food therefore becomes the symbol of value. It is the focus of ritual, of sacrifice, or morality, the central fact in all religious ceremony. It is the basic Sacrament in all religions. It is the link between life and death, the means of rejuvenation, of restoring life’s spontaneity. It symbolizes, and indeed it literally contains within itself the secret power whether it be taken in the form of bread and wine, a totem animal, or an oaten wafer.

It is not difficult to see that man’s most dramatic and crucial experiences revolve around the disappearance in the winter and reappearance in the spring of vegetation, his chief source of food. His life is inseparably bound up with the fate of vegetation. If it grows, he lives; if it dies, he also dies. For even the animals which he might use for food depend upon the vegetation cycle. So from the earliest times man developed a strange sensitivity to seasonal change, to the waxing and waning of life in nature and in his gods as well.

Unconsciously his own life imitated the seasonal flux; he underwent like the rest of nature an annual disintegration and restoration. We have seen how easy it is to displace upon himself what he has experienced in nature. He himself, along with nature and the gods, must die and be reborn every year. And he must undergo the same rites in the course of every major change in his life, for change is fraught with dangers which must be avoided. Hence, the nuclear ritual, the basic religious ceremony among primitive peoples as well as in civilized groups, developed around the dying and the rebirth of the psyche. Since a major threat to life was the failure of rain, every conceivable action which was related to this phenomenon was incorporated in the ritual for the purpose of insuring the return of its fecundating power. The desperation and panic of early man can be detected in the often brutal, revolting rites performed to insure the fertility of the crops: he sacrificed the first-born son;
slaughtered human sacrificial victims by the score to propitiate the reluctant gods; engaged in cannibalism, ritual combat, torture, and an assortment of sexual orgies. All of these are variations on the death-and-resurrection theme.

One of the most common ways to insure the fertility of the land was to secure the reigning king or a substitute—a hero, a demi-god, or person marked with special magical power—and slaughter him so that his special power would pervade the whole of nature and the community and restore them to life. He was the bearer of special life-giving energy; he was the totem animal, the hero-savior who must be killed and eaten in order that others may be saved.

Many other ceremonies give man the means for recapturing a lost vitality: the Hindu renews himself by his daily ritual of bathing in the Holy Ganges, or in any other body of water; even his god, residing in the sacred image as at the famous Juganath Temple, himself experiences a renewal of spiritual energy by his annual baptism in the Holy Water. The Jains symbolize this revival by a change of the holy garments on the statues of their Tirthankaras or gods. The Muslims of Egypt provide each year a new black silk drapery for the Kaaba stone in the holy mosque, the Haram al-Masjid in Mecca. People throughout the world rededicate themselves at New Year by turning over a new leaf in the Book of Life, or by adopting an improved set of resolutions.

Since human behavior and its accompanying passions are continuous with nature, and could therefore establish reciprocal influences upon it, the primitive mind had at its disposal a tremendous weapon for releasing nature's energies and for manipulating them in its own interest. We may note three ways in which this instrument can be used.

First, if nature were hesitant in fecundating itself in the spring preparatory to the rebirth of life, then man himself could perform fertility ceremonies in order to imitate the fertilizing processes in nature. Second, he could select an animal or person who had been designated as a special bearer
of life-giving power, dismember it, plant it in various places in the community compounds, and share parts of it with other community members in a common meal. Third, he may secure his rebirth by trying to influence the powers which lie behind the facade of nature by verbal means rather than through imitative behavior. Through invocation and chant he would predispose the final powers to grant him his prayer for his daily bread. We are told in Matthew's Gospel that the model prayer includes the prayer for daily bread.

But precautions need to be taken. The power which lies mysteriously behind the operation of nature may endanger man's security as well as confer the boon of an eternal banquet. The weapon has a double edge. Unlicensed fertility functions may produce floods instead of fecundating rains; uncontrolled killing of a sacrificial victim may yield only famine; prayer to an improper god can blight the land. These are the three cardinal sins, the three causes of the shrinkage of life, the three forms of dying, the three actions which can alienate primitive man and throttle his spontaneity. In concrete, dramatic form they appear as incest, murder, and idolatry, and they therefore constitute the substance of the Dionysian death ritual, and for the purposes of our present inquiry, the plot of every tragedy.

Early man could never escape the terrifying ordeal of the death-and-rebirth cycle. His economy imposed it upon him; his own mentality imposed it upon him. But what was even more terrifying was that the dying part of the cycle placed him in double jeopardy. Attempting to live without periodic renewal ends in defeat. But the forces which can bring on his rebirth may also be unleashed in such unmanageably destructive ways that death remains unredeemed; it becomes a final fact. Certainly the cosmic forces which are involved remain for man in a precarious balance, and man's earliest experiences taught him that catastrophe always follows the upsetting of this balance, that the three cardinal sins themselves arise from the imbalance.
In psychological terms this imbalance means that the forces in the unconscious have been stirred into activity apart from the guiding and controlling agency of the community, or in the absence of the rational factor which could moderate the unmanageable impulses. In dramatic terms the imbalance means that the Hero has committed the fatal, but inevitable, sin of *hybris*. He has overstepped the mark; he has pushed his own experiences beyond the limits which have been established as proper ones. The primitive religious mind created the condition of taboo as a technique for arresting and restraining the uncontrolled release of unconscious impulse, which is *hybris*. The more modern man evolved a rational faculty for moderating his impulses. But both the primitive priest and the tragic hero encounter situations which unlock the flow of irrational energy; both commit the cardinal sins; both must pay the price of death since neither taboo on the one hand nor rationality on the other can dam the onrushing floodtide.

To minimize the dangers from dying, to insure that a renewal will follow, man must try to avoid these three destructive situations. That is, man must live his entire lifetime under those restraints and prohibitions which will guarantee that the cosmic forces will not become unbalanced and which will therefore promote his survival. To prevent man from violating those conditions which bring on excessive and destructive responses from nature, early man developed a constellation of prohibitions which acted as social controls over individual behavior. These prohibitions were unyielding, harsh, complete. Any violation called for immediate redress and for very special measures of atonement. These restraints solidified into ritual, into the wisdom of previous generations, into infallible customs, into the Voice of the Father. The chief virtue—indeed the only virtue—consisted in conformity with tradition, for in no other way could man escape the dangers of incest, murder and idolatry, and so insure a food supply. These controls applied to every
aspect of living. They had one common program: to awaken the dormant energies in nature without at the same time arousing them to ruinous excess.

Ritual behavior must always be collective and public; tragic actions are individual ones. If an incestuous fertility rite is to be performed upon Mother Nature, if a god in the form of a totem animal or sacrificial victim is to be killed and eaten, then every member of the tribe must participate; for every member must share equally in the guilt as well as in the rewards. Not only do the Dionysian spring festivals require the active participation of all living members in the community, but they also invite the spirits of the dead to return and to assist in the renewing ceremony. Only individuals' actions endanger the community. If an individual kills or commits sexuality on his own initiative and authority, then he runs the risk of stimulating nature into similar but uncontrollable acts. Actions performed apart from the sanction of ritual lose their redeeming power, and they bring on a dying which cannot generate a new life.

For this reason taboos apply with severity and immediacy. Any individual who violates them must be cleansed forthwith or else summarily punished so that the gods will know that his behavior did not represent the wishes of the entire community. The Erinyes hounded Orestes for his matricide; blight and famine ravaged the land of Thebes because of Oedipus's incest. That is to say, if an individual commits incest, or murder, or if he worships false gods, he commits a tragic sin and invites destruction; but if these same acts are ritually performed by the group, they provide a redemption. As individual acts, they make death permanent; as religious rites, they convey the gift of a new life. The individual who rebels against his tradition in order to establish a higher order of controls becomes, to be sure, the Culture Hero. But he also destroys himself in the process of breaking up an older tradition, and he thereby transforms himself into the Tragic Hero.

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Let us examine more closely the three acts which a tragic hero must perform if he is to achieve the individuality requisite to the Hero’s role. (These, we have indicated, are incest, murder, and idolatry.)

Incestintrojects itself into the Dionysian ritual, and from thence into the themes of tragedy, by virtue of the hope it offers for rebirth. As a death symbol it poses a threat, perhaps the most calamitous threat which man can face, to his food supply, to his traditions, and to his own existence. The dread of incest which primitives show is far out of proportion to its actual danger and can be explained only by the kind of theory that we are suggesting here. Incest expresses itself in a wide variety of actions and attitudes. First, it is obvious that it does not refer to the infantile longings for sexual experience with the mother; rather, its import is psychological and religious. The earth has always been Mother Earth. She alone can procreate; she alone can give birth to the teeming life which inhabits her. Thus every operation performed upon Mother Earth by one of her creatures becomes automatically an incestuous act. Plowing a furrow signifies an incestuous union. When Jason harnessed the brazen bulls to plow the field as a condition for winning the life-renewing power of the Golden Fleece, he fertilized Mother Earth. The falling of the rain which causes food crops to grow epitomizes the mating of Father Sky with Mother Earth. The Hindu wedding ceremony still has the bride repeat that she is the Earth, the bridegroom, that he is the Sky.

The Mother is the Great Nourisher. Whatever lives and moves and has its being takes its nourishment at the breast of the Great Mother, and through its very hunger expresses its incestuous desires. Paradise itself is but an eternal banquet in the form of the Cornucopia, the Mother’s Breast, with its inexhaustible food supply; or a planet filled with Nectar, Ambrosia, or Amritsar, a drink which confers immortality because of its source; or a Valhalla hall where grows the everlasting world tree, Yggdrasil, whose branches
nourish Odin's goat, Heidrun, which in turn supplies heavenly mead to the gods and other immortals; or the banquet table itself which bears the magic boar, Saehrimnir, which renews itself with every serving. The perfect life is a life of eternal nourishment, a life untouched by anxiety over food. These hopes turn us inevitably to the Mother, but in turning to her, we surrender our own individual existences.

The Great Mother represents the primordial creative power which underlies the whole of nature. She intermingles on her lower levels with sheer physical energy: She is Prime Matter, the First Material, Chaos, the Void. It is no accident that the word "material" derives from Mater, or Mother. She also expresses Herself as organic growth, and finally as psychological power. Anyone who grows, who realizes his potentialities as the tragic hero struggles to do, must go back to this original source of power and renew himself at its fountain if he is to be carried forward again to fulfillment. He can never realize himself through his own machinations and contrivances. Rather, he must die from these. This act, a psychological one, is also incestuous,—and as we shall see in a later chapter establishes severe mental conflicts for the tragic hero.

Incestuous regression assumes many forms. It shows itself in neurotic infantilisms, in inertia, nostalgia, melancholia, and narcissism. In all of these psychological conditions there is the same Hamlet-like loss of vitality, the same failure to integrate disparate elements. They may be initiated by a great variety of alienating circumstances: an outright inadequate food supply, guilts, anxieties, unrelieved toil, social injustices, personal traumatic experiences. They are forms of withdrawal from harshness, from the binding chains of duty imposed by the real world, from the insecurities which always accompany the assumption of adult responsibilities. Failure to cope with the tensions of the real world weakens our will to live, places doubts on our ability to survive, sets us longing for a permanent cessation of tension, for a state
of eternal rest and blessedness. This instinctual renunciation which causes the tragic hero to attract death to himself drags heavy on all of us and invites us to exalt this state of actionlessness into a paradisal bliss.

Dionysius, who for the purposes of this essay epitomizes this struggle, was born of Semele, Mother Earth, and as the god of vegetation—specifically the vine, the fig, and all fruit trees as well as animal life—he must return to Her each winter and be reborn of Her every spring. Elements of narcissism, of self-concern appear in connection with his original birth. As is the case with every culture hero, his birth constituted a threat to the old order of the Titans, and accordingly they attacked him with knives in order to dismember him, but as with Osiris, the dismemberment only prepared for a resurgence of life energy. The significant feature of this account is the fact that Dionysius was looking at himself in a mirror at the time of the attack. That is, he was engaged in an act of self-love, of regression, of incestuous withdrawal.

The incestuous form of the death wish not only takes the form of self-absorption and narcissism, but also of meditation, melancholia, and suicidal tendencies. These flights from reality, from life and its struggles, are compulsions to restore the more primitive condition because it is less tensional. It is less tensional because it belongs to the inorganic and not to life.

The relationship of incest to tragedy now becomes clear. It is a form of death. Every year vegetation dies and is absorbed into the earth; every year Dionysius returns to his Mother. He dies and is absorbed, but through some mysterious process Mother Earth is fecundated and produces the new-born babe on schedule. This descent to death is a terrifying journey, but it is inescapable. We must die, enter the Womb, the Underworld, be dismembered and scattered, engulfed in a flood, or lost in a Hamlet-like melancholia of world-sickness. We must in a word die, for to remain alive is to live in a kind of death. Man renews himself in the same
manner. He imitates nature; that is, he imitates his god. He tries to identify himself with god, and the most normal identification mechanism at his command is the pantomime. He acts, performs; he engages in a ritual of death and rebirth, and out of this ritual drama emerges.

As we have previously noted, the retreat to the mother forms the core of the various mystery religions. The “mystery” was enjoined upon the worshipper because of the unspeakable perils which lay in wait for the uninitiated. The sheer act of dying is terrifying enough, but an incestuous death aggravates beyond imagination the terrors to be encountered in the journey. Only if the hierophant follow a rigorously enforced ritual can he hope to descend and to return. The slightest variation thrusts him into the area of the profane and instead of a renewal of life, there will ensue certain destruction. There exists therefore only a razor’s edge between a rebirth from the mystic marriage and a painful death, between adequate food and starvation. And this fine line is drawn by what things are done and what things are said in the drama.

The second most grievous sin of ancient man, we have suggested, is murder, for it too invites nature to the same dire deeds. It pollutes the land and imperils man’s livelihood through famine and drought, which are nature’s modes of murder. But despite its perils, killing must nevertheless be committed. How else transfuse the vigor of a hero-god into the veins of the community members except to dismember and consume him in a public banquet? How else awaken nature’s dormant energies except to plant the dismembered pieces of the life-giving god in the fields and forests? How else win life except we lose it? Only if Hamlet dies can he urge upon Horatio the solemn duty, “Go tell my story . . .”; let the community life be renewed through my dying for I have returned to the Mother and bear the secret power. The fact that the hero-god appears as vegetation or an animal does not remove the danger. He may become manifest in the
first fruits of the season, the first grain of corn to be harvested and made into a cake and ritually eaten, or as a totem animal—a bull among the ancient Greeks, a bear among the Ainu, or a wallaby for the Australian Bushman—all of which are slain in public ceremony at the spring festival, but which are strictly taboo for all individuals at all times; in these forms he must be slain and eaten, and the consequences of his killing—the guilts, the terror, the anguish—have to be faced.  

How killing could occur so that the village may enjoy the boon of rebirth without incurring the threat of pollution and starvation was a central problem of the primitive mind. He solved it by elaborating a cluster of stringent taboos which forbade the individual to murder for his own advantage and by a death ritual which required the participation of every member of the community. A community killing, still terrifying, becomes legitimate not merely because all members share equally in the guilt and equally enjoy the boon, but rather because killing serves as the mechanism for transferring life-giving power from one source to another.

In its religious meanings murder parades behind a host of disguises. Chief of these is the rite of purification. Killing serves as a cleansing process, a condition requisite to rebirth. The killing, and the ritual surrounding the event, removes the guilt acquired in historical moments—always moments of individual growth.* Archaic man developed the technique for removing his own uncleanness by sloughing it off onto some other person, a scapegoat, and then banishing that person forever, or else slaying him.† Only later did he learn to substitute an animal in this sacrifice, as Abraham did in place of Isaac, or perhaps a straw figure as surrogate for the real person. Nonetheless, the essence of the sacrifice is ritual murder.

The psychological explanation comes less easily. Killing appears to cleanse, even when committed in anger upon a person we love, because what we have really murdered is
the monster of aggression within ourselves. The victim hardly matters, and the criminal often proclaims that he is glad he did it and would do it again. What he means is that he has psychologically purged himself.

Purification always entails a sacrifice, and every sacrificial act is an act of dying. We surrender or "slay" our more infantile and primitive impulses, our uncleanness, in preparation for the new life. In this sense the death instinct functions as a cleansing agent. Symbolically, if man is reborn, then he must die. But in the sacred mime which effects this transformation the actual slaying appears in various disguises: cutting, blinding, burning, engulfing, flooding, vows, chastity. Sacrifice by dismemberment, as in the Osiris myth, includes castration, circumcision, or the knocking out of a tooth. Oedipus blinded himself with his mother's broach, a broach significantly worn at the mother's breast, when he discovered his incestuous relationship with her; Buddha cut off his hair as a sign that he had renounced all former relationships to the world, and to his wife; and Buddhist priests still shave their heads in imitation of this original sacrifice. Delilah committed murder upon Samson by cutting his hair. In Euripides' Bacchae, Pentheus' mother, Agave, tore limb from limb in an orgy of mutilation, and the dismemberment in this instance signified an aborted rebirth. Perhaps the most universal form of sacrifice involves the burning of the victim so that the new life, Phoenix-like, can rise from the ashes. The burnt offering furnishes food for the worshipper and a banquet for the gods; relatively little attention centers upon the sacrificial victim itself, upon the fact that it has been killed in order that other lives may be renewed.

Sacrificial killing on a mass scale often occurs in the form of a great flood. For example, God sent the flood to destroy the Jews, and indeed every living thing on the face of the earth, because He saw that they were wicked and that even the land itself was corrupt and required a renovation. God's destructiveness was complete: it included man and beast and
creeping things and even the birds of the air. God evidently believed this rather harsh act to be an effective purgation, for He promised not to resort to it again. Rather He says, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." Such drastic slaughter by means of flood was soon replaced by less disturbing and more symbolic forms of dying: anointing, baptism, bathing in the holy waters, or ceremonies of washing the hands and feet. The purification significance of these acts have long replaced their murderous connotations.

Idolatry is of a piece with incest and murder. It imperils life by inviting famine and plague which in turn endanger the food supply. God sent a plague upon the Israelites because of the Golden Calf which Aaron made at the very time that Moses was receiving the tablets of law from the proper god on Mt. Sinai. And He visited a severe famine upon the same people during the reign of Omri because this Israelite king had dared set up idols of the Baal gods to be worshipped. Elijah, true prophet of God, could easily predict the onset of drought on the basis of this renouncing of tradition. "There shall be," he warned, "neither dew nor rain these years."

These examples make clear that it is not merely the worship of a graven image which makes idolatry a grievous sin, but rather it is the rejection of a specific cultural tradition which has bound together a group of people over a period of long constraint. Since God Himself originates the laws which govern man and therefore define his community and his culture, since it is God who creates man’s protective societal institutions, then a renunciation of this God in favor of another of an unknown name means the turning aside of an established way of life. God confers not merely moral law, but political, economic, social, and dietary law as well. We thus commit idolatry when we question a rule of society, when we doubt the Voice of the Fathers, when we turn from a protective tradition to the graven image of our own mak-
ing, when we discover a new truth less confining than the older beliefs, when we undertake the task of creating our individual personalities. (The Book of Deuteronomy defines the idolatrous act as the act of serving a god which is unknown to tradition, unknown to the Fathers.)

In its widest meaning, idolatry describes man's need to disengage himself from a tradition too narrowly confining and to attach himself to a new idol, a new object. This idol, always a golden image or sun symbol, represents the exploratory tendency of the human mind and of personality; it is a lure, but a dangerous lure, for it attracts the mind away from the attachments of the older god, attachments which symbolize the protective bonds which tie a people together. From the viewpoint of the endangered system, idol worship signifies devotion not merely to an inappropriate object but to destructive ones as well, for the new worship will indeed break up the older tradition.

Whereas in religion idolatry means the rejection of a tradition through the symbolic act of focusing our devotion upon a new and more glittering object, in politics it is rebellion and nihilism; it is sedition and iconoclasm; it is transfer of loyalty from one authority to another. The idolator is thus the rebel, the subversive, the destroyer. Psychologically, the idolator is he who dares to stand alone, to stand on the authority of his own individuality, on his own inner voice, in the manner of Socrates. The tragic hero thus becomes the arch idolator, for he selects his own object attachments, he discovers his own truths and consequently turns to a new god, his own god—or perhaps his own demon.

But he runs inevitable risks. Whether a success or a failure, he dooms himself to destruction, and he may even imperil his community as well. If he fails in his unguided exploratory quest for self-fulfillment, or if he succeeds—but succeeds only in fastening himself to a new system, represented by the new idol, which is unauthentic and therefore which does not authorize his quest, then he must die. In this latter instance,
he becomes merely dependent and not creative; he becomes dependent upon inappropriate forms, which means that he survives as individuality only through criminality. Or if he succeeds in creating a genuinely new idol and in attaching himself to it, then he automatically breaks up the older tradition.

This breaking up of forms and the subsequent uncontrolled release of impulse upon the world constitutes *hybris* in its most extreme form; it becomes man's most heinous sin. The unbelievably oppressive measures with which primitive man sought to prevent it indicate the unrelieved horror which it engenders. For example, the *Book of Deuteronomy* requires the Israelite to search diligently into every city for possible idolators. If any are found, the Israelites are, "... to put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, destroying it utterly, all who are in it and its cattle..." After Elijah has proved to his people that his god is the authentic god, he had his followers seize the several hundred prophets of the opposing Baal gods, "... and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there." It is possible to read the same thing in the Koran. Any measure, even the annihilation of a people, is justified in order that a tradition be preserved. "And fight for the religion of God... for temptation to idolatry is more grievous than slaughter." 

Idolatry appears to be both inevitable and defective; it is therefore essentially a tragic condition. It represents the incompatibility of the free self with permanent systems. The self which seeks fulfillment and which demands freedom in its efforts can form no lasting attachments, no binding associations, and therefore it must perish.

How do we collect these sins and inadequacies which cause so much distress that they have to be displaced upon a scapegoat and thence destroyed? By performing any act which threatens the food supply, by violating a taboo, through physical contact with unclean things and persons, by an idolatrous venturing outside the limits of an enslaving tradition
of the forefathers: These are alienating acts. Their most primitive expressions occur, as we have seen, as incest, murder, and idolatry. We purify ourselves by performing the same kind of act, but the purifying performance proceeds under carefully controlled ritual conditions, under community approval. Incest, murder, and idolatry alienate and destroy, but under appropriate auspices they also heal and refresh. As symbols of death, the kinds of death which lead to rebirth, they have their place in the Dionysian rite. They signify man's willingness to surrender himself, to renounce his identity as a condition for becoming a new person. This sacred rite proposes to effect the terrifying transformation; its very re-enactment of the dying and of the resurrection calls in all of the powers of nature to witness and to assist. The new man, the hierophant, is reborn into a new life; he has left a life-in-death, an alienated life. The guilt-cleansing sacrament integrates the psyche, exalts it, confers autonomy through the abandonment of all of the enchaining forces which formerly constrained his freedom. The sacrament dissolves the reality principle, induces it to leave, and allows the individual full exercise of a transformed personality.

The religious drama then re-enacts the growth of the psyche. It often transpires in an inner temple, as at Jerusalem, in a secret place, as the Omphalos at Eleusis. The officiating priests have also abandoned their human roles and perform from behind painted faces, impersonal masks, ritual robes, or a mystic language. These symbolize the non-historical, the timeless, the final powers; and they symbolize unity rather than separation and estrangement. The drama, in effect, introduces the initiate to his own inner consciousness, to his own psychic world.
CHAPTER V

THE REBIRTH THEME IN TRAGEDY

In Chapter IV we analyzed the dying aspect of the religious drama and found that the death theme expresses itself through the symbols of incest, murder, and idolatry. When executed on the authority of an individual's own desire, his own yearnings for self-fulfillment, these acts endanger the community and remain therefore unredemptive and final. They remain what they are—forms of death, and cannot confer the boon of rebirth. The conditions which disrupt this cycle of death-and-resurrection and which prevent the religious experiences from reaching its full fruition are alienating conditions. The primitive man alienates himself by releasing the flow of his own life energy in forms unacceptable to his tradition, and he thereby commits the grievous sin of overstepping the limits. He violates taboo, and so he must die. Power which can save can also destroy when it is turned upon inappropriate objects.

The civilized mind, we shall see in subsequent chapters, alienates itself through its efforts to achieve salvation by imposing a rational order upon its life energy. In both cases the religious rebirth is an abortive one. Perhaps the nearest approach to a renewal of life which the primitive mind makes affords him but a brief glimpse of himself as an unfolding individual before he is cut off. To this extent he suffers. But any spiritual reawakening which the rational
mind undergoes disguises itself in the aesthetic experience of catharsis. Thus, in the present chapter we need to examine the various transmutations of the resurrection theme in order that we recognize them, and consequently appraise them, in their artistic expression.

Whereas the materials connected with the death theme of religious drama appear as an objective series of causally related events—which is to say, as plot—the rebirth materials take the form of responses in the minds of the audience. And we move from hero psychology to audience psychology. These responses appear as psychological events; or rather they emerge as internal images which correspond to the external states of affairs. The progression of plot, an inevitable progression toward alienation and death, mirrors itself in the psyche as an aesthetic integration. But it is only a mirroring: the plot is myth, the events are unreal, and even the necessity of their connection may be illogical. Hence, they can produce only a make-believe rebirth, an aesthetic purgation rather than a genuinely religious resurrection. Art produces an emotional image, and the integrity of this image unites the fragments of an estranged mind. What we feel symbolizes what we see and hear. So compelling in integrity is this image that we disengage our rational faculties from the logical and real possibilities of renewal which seem to be indicated by the objective events, and we focus our energies upon this make-believe object which exists albeit ever so tenuously as an emotional symbol. And we experience the purgation, the healing, the being-made-whole-again which characterizes religious rebirth, but we recognize that what has been transformed is only a mirroring of the dying events and not the real events themselves.

Hero psychology teaches that the Hero must die with some hope of a restoration; audience psychology permits a catharsis which is aesthetic only, and not religious as it originally was. Therefore it is common for the tragic hero in his last dying breath to grasp frantically for the clues to a rebirth.
Knowing his death to be meaningless, he still makes the futile gesture toward a reawakening. Hamlet who lay dying in the arms of his good friend, Horatio, pitifully pleads, “Go tell my story...” in the hopes that his own death can generate a ritual which in turn will bestow a healing power upon the hearers of his story. But his tragedy has already worked itself out to its merciless conclusion, and any healing which derives from the story belongs in the minds of the audience.

Willy Loman succumbs to the lure of his brother's voice which invites him into the jungle darkness where lie the jewel truths that can confer a renewal of life energy. But the coercive forces in the image of economic production have already stilled his life energies, and his suicidal efforts to regain a lost vigor have failed even before they have occurred.

Perhaps of all tragic heroes King Lear most nearly experiences a genuine religious rebirth without actually accomplishing it. He submits to a necessary dying ritual by divesting himself of his kingdom and of all other accoutrements of a rational-political order. Through the machinations of his two evil daughters, Regan and Goneril, his retinue is stripped from him, and finally his shelter and even his clothing. This regression is a withdrawal to an original state of innocence symbolized by his full integration with the natural elements during the storm scene and with the elementary mind of the fool, and it becomes complete with the falling away of the rational faculty, with the destruction of intelligence. He becomes as a little child and indeed experiences himself as the essential man. All of the requirements for a resurgence of life energy appear to be present in these circumstances except one, and it is the one which in his case confirms the tragedy and prevents a resurrection: the King's sacrifices are not voluntarily chosen.

Every decision—except perhaps his first one to divide his realm among his three daughters—is forced unwillingly upon him, and though indeed he does undergo a radical transformation, the change is externally coercive. Thus, he
recovers his sanity just long enough to recognize the wronged Cordelia, to recognize that she is indeed dead, and that he has been living in death himself. He cannot be reborn, but he can repudiate the enchaining social and political forms which have brought him to his present state. Consequently, he pitifully pleads with Cordelia to enter a make-believe world where “... We’ll live, and pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies.”  

There is no apotheosis here for King Lear, but there is in the audience an arousal and a purgation of psychic materials.

The difficulty which the dramatist has in making death a final fact, in freeing himself from the ancient lure to provide a rebirth for the hero after a ritual death, appears in Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus. King Oedipus has not at first followed all of the necessary procedures for entering the mysterious realm of death, symbolized in his story as a return to the Womb. His marriage was genuine, if somewhat other than mystical as indeed a ritual marriage ought to be; and from the wedding, which represents the new unity, offspring were born. But Oedipus’s regression awakens the wombal energies without his having prepared himself through proper ceremony to utilize them in a transformation process. His actions are individual, historical. His dying lacks the approval of ritual; he fails to suffer castration or even circumcision as a condition of returning to the Mother. His self-castration, dramatized as the blinding by his mother’s broach, occurs after the act and only then as a form of punishment for his guilty incest feelings. Thus, in the Colonus drama, Oedipus’s problem is to suffer a second regression, a second form of death, one which will terminate in a renewal rather than in tragic death.

In the apotheosis at Colonus Oedipus appears to have broken up the rational order so completely and to have followed religious ritual so meticulously that authentic rebirth might occur. If it in fact does occur, the event violates the hero-psychology principle which I have sought to develop
in this essay. But I believe that it can be demonstrated that this event, though certainly the culmination of the Oedipus myth, belongs outside of the dramatic conflict of this particular tragedy. It is not his apotheosis which furnishes the emotional image to which the audience responds.

The prime prerequisite to his deification in the grove at Colonus is his ceremonial castration: the voluntary blinding of himself to the external world so that he can enter into the realm of his own existence. This act permits the reinvigorated powers to issue from within his own psyche rather than from the less symbolic mother's womb. That the death ritual is appropriately followed is proved by his actual resurrection; this means that the objects of his attachments throughout the drama are authentic ones, namely himself rather than his mother. But even so, I believe that this final deifying act of Oedipus's is less a rebirth than a form of dying, a form of self-destruction. It must be remembered that the actual act consists in Oedipus's entering a cave in the grove at Colonus; he enters the Womb, Mother Earth, and consequently destroys himself as an individual. In effect, he commits incest a second time by fecundating Mother Earth, but just as surely and just as finally he gives up his own existence in the process.

Standing near the Mother, symbolized by the cave, he sacrifices himself, and he thereby gains the mysterious knowledge which teaches him that he himself through his own contact with the Mother will restore to life the very land of the country in which he will be interred. The land will prosper and will produce abundantly. This actually is the tragic theme in the Colonus drama rather than any conflict which engulfs Oedipus or the particular manner of his death. This rejuvenation-of-the-land theme propels the plot, gives motivation to the protagonists, and leads to the climactic ending. It creates the dramatic conflict, provides the basis of characterization, and arranges the expression of sentiments. The hero therefore is not King Oedipus. Audience reaction
focuses upon the unfolding of the plot and does not follow Oedipus through his religious renewal. That is, neither the death of Oedipus nor his deification figures directly in the real tragedy which is mirrored in audience psychology. These are secondary forces in the plot, albeit genuinely causal ones.

Only this kind of interpretation will save the play for art and prevent it from becoming a religious tract, as the Book of Job tends to be. There may be only a fine line between tragedy and the religious experience, but to the extent that a genuine restoration to life occurs, tragedy does not. To make the tragic conflict hinge upon the rebirth theme, as Sophocles has done in this play, indicates not merely the inseparable relationship between these two modes, but points to the author’s consummate skill as a tragedian as well.

Writers with less vision and less craftsmanship confuse these issues and appear to move freely from religious to aesthetic purgation, from hero to audience psychology. T. S. Eliot’s Cocktail Party is a case in point.²

Eliot’s play describes the classical tragic situation: man in alienation. The cocktail party at which our principal characters are gathered symbolizes all of the sterile, empty forms of a dead tradition. No communication, no communion occurs among the guests—nothing except pointless jokes, conversational fragments, hollow gossip. Every character is estranged from every other one by an unbridgeable abyss, for every person has lost his autonomous personality within the sheer diffuseness of an empty culture. Distraction and dilettantism afford the only possible escapes, and these have already failed with the collapse of Lavinia’s Thursday salons. Hence, no one—as in the case of Willy Loman—knows who he is. As a result of this lack of self-knowledge, each person experiences feelings of guilt, and it is guilt which calls for atonement, the kind of atonement which can restore a lost freedom.

This Dionysian urge to die and to renew oneself appears
in the person of the Unidentified Guest, who is later known as the somewhat mysterious psychiatrist, Sir Henry. He becomes the Demon Voice of every character in the play; he scolds and cajoles all of them into a search for their freedoms, into the dangerous journey into their own identities. He personifies Thanatos, the attraction for death, the Dionysian impulse in the psyche of each character, each one of which is the hero, for each one engages in some form of dying and reborning. He represents the unconscious stirrings in the minds of all of us, and warns that when life becomes machine-like, that when it continues on even though we have no conscious control over it, then one must prepare to die. He represents both the hope of redemption and the terror of annihilation. He is the Devil as well as Dionysius; he is the Satan who lured Job into a dissatisfaction with his former existence and into a higher consciousness. This means that the true hero of the tragedy is this composite character; it is not the person who goes under the name of Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, or the Unidentified Guest, but the Dionysian impulse in every one of the characters who undergoes a psychological transformation. He is the chief instrument of plot and therefore the focus of audience psychology.

On the other hand, hero psychology centers upon the person of Celia Coplestone and her sacrificial death. Eliot passes easily from one type of psychology to the other, and the spectator ends up not knowing quite whether he has witnessed a religious miracle or an aesthetic catharsis. Somewhat ironically Eliot calls the play a comedy, but we soon see that its only claims to comedy rest in the fact that it prescribes a formula for the kind of dying which can confidently terminate in a rebirth, and it dramatizes in a rather optimistic manner the successful operation of this formula. With smugness and even self-satisfaction Julia and Sir Henry receive the news of Celia’s sacrificial—but horrible and painful—death. The news is not unexpected by the audience, for the entire scene between Celia and Sir Henry
outlines in a clinical fashion what her troubles are and what she must do to overcome them. We discover that she suffers Hamlet-like guilt feelings because she does not know who she is, and she insists upon atoning for these sins. She reveals all of the prerequisite ingredients for a Dionysian transformation: feelings of guilt which are brought on by an ignorance of who she is, her consequent alienation from all other persons—even her lover, her inability to establish meaningful communication with others, and her cosmic loneliness which results, her suffering the uncertainties and terrors of the journey into death, and her freedom in being able to choose the death journey in the first place. All of these prescriptions Celia Coplestone followed, and even though she died ingloriously at the hands of some aboriginal natives during a chance insurrection while working for them as a nurse, the audience is given to believe that somehow out of her suffering and dying she will indeed come upon herself and fulfill her destiny. To this extent Eliot writes a religious piece; he preaches. He has Sir Henry lay out the design for death, anticipate it, and even approve when it finally occurred. This emphasis on hero-psychology traps us into a religious experience; whereas any aesthetic purgation will derive from the cocktail party where Dionysius is enjoyed rather than worshiped and where we remain a satyr instead of a martyr and where we only imitate the suffering and the dying of our god.

To the degree that Celia discovers the universe to be essentially meaningless and that she experiences a genuine metaphysical anguish, she ranks as a tragic heroine; but the fact that the author permits the audience to witness neither her struggles nor her suffering, the fact that her apotheosis appears only in fragments of conversation and not in dramatic situations, makes of her a religious saint. She hopes that there is something wrong with her, she had told Sir Henry, for if there isn’t, then the world is awry, and that is all the more frightening. To a meaningless universe
she can build no attachments and therefore she lives in alienation, a condition which produces her guilt feelings. These are prime conditions of tragedy, or of religion as the case may be. Eliot never quite decides.

These residual religious elements which reappear in tragedy in the form of the hero's sudden reaching out to discover meaning in the world, and the effort to apply to human living the new vision which the hero's death evokes has led most critics to set up a morally ordered universe as the major characteristic of tragedy. For example, W. J. Oates in the General Introduction to the *Complete Greek Drama* describes as an essential ingredient of tragedy the existence of a supernatural force which vouchsafes the ultimacy of goodness and moral order. A. C. Bradley's classic analysis of Shakespearean tragedy points out that the genuinely tragic experience can occur only in a universe which is controlled by moral forces.

I hold that these views are mistaken ones, that they are holdovers from an essentially religious culture that the critic seeks to impose artificially upon the tragic circumstance. These judgments certainly apply to the religious situation, for every worshiper, Christian or Dionysian votary, must accept the ultimate meaningfulness of the Universe. He is obliged to believe that death will prepare for a new life. But the genuinely tragic hero must make the discovery that life is pointless and that the universe vouchsafes no karmic order to man, and he still must struggle, suffer, and die in this kind of world.

Celia rises to heights of tragedy for this very reason—though as explained above, she ended as saint rather than tragic heroine. Sir Henry explains to her that he can effect a quasi-renewal of her life; he can reconcile her with "the human condition": living in a routine, traditional manner, avoiding any excess of expectation, becoming tolerant, never understanding other people, "breeding children whom they do not understand and who will never understand them."
This is the good life, the best possible, but Celia sees its pointlessness and repudiates it. This vision that the human condition is an unsolvable and pointless puzzle, that life is at its very best a fragmentary existence, that it is devoid of authentic objects to which personality can establish meaningful attachments causes her to seek an integration which will afford some measure of finality. This vision lures her into withdrawing from the human condition. Had she died still believing in the final unsolvability of this condition, she would remain a tragic heroine; otherwise, she suffers and dies as a martyr.
CHAPTER VI

ALIENATION THROUGH INTELLIGENCE

If the life process could unfold itself in a continuously unimpeded manner, it could retain its autonomy and would consequently have no need to undergo a periodic renewal by means of the death ritual. But both the primitive and the more civilized minds discover as an intrinsic part of their experiences certain forces which tend to deaden life's spontaneity. To archaic man these hardening processes occur for the most part in connection with his constant efforts to maintain an adequate food supply; to civilized man they manifest themselves as functions of a self-criticizing intelligence. Rationality replaces food as the alienating agent in civilized living after reason's invention of never-ending toil has largely solved the food supply problem. We therefore need to describe in this chapter what intelligence contributes to tragedy, that is to say, what the alienating tendencies of intelligence are.

Despite all of the benefits which it bestows upon man, intelligence also has the effect of breaking up and solidifying life's freedom. By forcing it into abstract but orderly relations, reason stultifies the living process and imposes the need to restore itself. It is therefore the rational faculty which alienates man from his own life energies. This separation of man from himself is the essence of tragedy.

Though brought on by reflective thought, alienation
nonetheless remains an irrational condition; though all logical efforts be made to avoid it, it remains inevitable; though intelligence seeks to integrate the fragments which it has created, these demand to be sacrificed. In effect, estrangement—being paradoxical, inevitable, and sacrificial—contains within its nature the conditions which generate the Dionysian death drama which must also imitate the paradox, the necessary, and the sacrifice. As Willy Loman well knew, it is a tragic thing to remain alive when cultural forms have forced living into oppressive systems. But because reason still operates and points out the logical fallacy of the renewal process which our psyche demands, it is likewise a tragic thing to die, for death no longer insures a rebirth of freedom.

Intelligence breaks up existence—individual existence—by creating orderliness and security. These cannot accommodate the concrete and the historical, but only the abstract and lifeless. They cannot succeed in protecting what is most human: the inner flow of experience. Rational systems become self-alienating when they internalize themselves in the form of conscience, and they continue to drive us from the advantageous status of an inner principle, now named duty.

Intelligence also breaks up a more primitive logic; it transforms imagery into abstract relations, metaphoric unity into analytic duality. It separates the thinker from the objects of his thinking. It destroys man's omniscience and replaces it with piecemeal information and probabilities. It erodes away the uniqueness of events and of objects and leaves their dead universal bones. Intelligence distills off the thrill and charm of chance occurrences and forces them into causality-laden patterns, for reason recognizes only the impersonal. Intelligence centers thinking upon a specific subject. It is intentional, directed, controlled. It separates things and then reunites them on the basis not of their individuality and uniqueness but in accordance with logical,
abstract relations. That is, it destroys living totality and erects empty structure. Though it does construct wholes, these can never come alive. Its work is irreversible: what it destroys in preserving can never be revitalized. It can build systems, integrate fragments but only as theoretical form. Intelligence looks to the past, which is dead; experience is of the moment, which is vivid. Reason banishes the incoherent, the incommensurable, the wild, the thrilling.

But for our purposes the crucial function of reason is that it organizes the revolt against death. Reason instills a yearning for the timeless and the changeless. Gilgamesh undertook his journey to discover the plant of immortality so that he would never die. Though warned by Ishtar to enjoy his earthly pleasures and to disregard death, and though counseled by his uncle, Utnapishkin, to exercise extreme caution, Gilgamesh determined to fight death, only to have death triumph in the end. So with Adam and Eve. As soon as they have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge they too demand to know the secret for by-passing death. They wish to know their way into Paradise. Job belongs on the list of those who rebel against death at the instant he discovers intelligence. These heroes have been beguiled by their new-found enlightenment into disregarding Dionysius, into denying death as a proper means for winning a future existence, for the rational faculty finds no connection between dying and reboring. Thus, intelligence separates man off into tensive fragments, for it can neither accept the authenticity of our death nor can it banish the impulse from our psyche.

The full complexity of this tragic struggle between Dionysius and his greatest enemy, intelligence, reveals itself dramatically in one of the late plays of Euripides, The Bacchae. The tragedy depicts the shallow narrowness and the consequent aggressiveness of the typical rational mind. In the play this attitude is personalized in the character of King Pentheus—a name, incidentally, which suggests sorrow; and it describes how his pedestrian practicality teams with a more
profound logical doubt to create the resistance to death, which Dionysius holds out as an attractive lure. Rationality refuses to surrender itself willingly; it cannot by its very nature negate its own powers. Pentheus cannot accept as evidence the fact that his own mother, Agave, sister to Semele herself, the Mother Earth, together with all of the procreative powers in nature personalized in the chorus of maidens, that indeed all of nature, sacrificially surrenders itself and experiences a new birth; he cannot connect this evidence with the fact that Reason must yield. Despite his noble struggle, Pentheus, the Sorrowful One, must surrender unconditionally, and the terrible conditions of his surrender are that his death will involve such complete annihilation that he can never undergo a restoration. And the further tragic irony is that he shall be dismembered by the very creative powers which begat him in the first place, his Mother and her sisters.

Euripides was bold enough and genius enough to let Dionysius portray himself in the play, and the god appears on the stage as an omnipotent Being whose powers can transform. Dionysius justifies his mission in Thebes on historical as well as religious grounds: he offers his followers a new life because he was born of Semele, daughter of Cadmus, Theban king; and he also has experienced a mysterious second birth from his Father, Zeus, and having conquered death himself, he is now prepared to confer the same boon on his devotees. He was born both of his Mother and his Father, both of the Water and of the Spirit.

Dionysius' second birth endowed him with a universal and sacred power, the power not merely to overcome death by means of a second birth but also the power to enter into death itself. It is a form of incest. It is power to integrate, to unify, to withdraw from separateness into a realm where opposites converge and coalesce. This power, of course, constitutes a direct and immediate threat to orderly, rational living, for it manifests itself as a process which destroys all
rational distinctions. From an examination of the play, we can identify two specific ways in which it manifests itself. This suggests two forms of death, two threats to intelligence.

First, Dionysian power dissolves away any distinction between man and the rest of the natural world. The Bacchae no longer live in alienation but in a state of innocent cooperation and oneness with all plants and animals. They even identify themselves under the animalistic image of the fawn skin. This integral relationship of man and nature appears to the audience through the report given by the messenger who has just witnessed the Bacchantes in worshipful revelry on Mt. Cithaeron,

There beneath the trees,
Sleeping they lay, like wild things flung at ease
In the forest . . .

The description continues,

And one a young fawn held, and one a wild
Wolf cub, and fed them with white milk,
    and smiled in love,
Young mothers with a mother’s breast . . .

The rocks furnished jets of water, the ivy offered honey, wine flowed from the breast of Mother Earth herself wherever a thrysus struck, and all nature joined in praise of the god.

And all the mountains felt,
    And worshiped with them; and the wild things knelt
And romped and gloried, and the wilderness
    Was filled with moving voices and dim stress.

As an immediate consequence of this integrative power, the Dionysian votary experiences an invincibility. No other power can touch him and injure him:
The village folk in wrath took spear and sword,
And turned upon the Bacchae. Then, dread Lord,
The wonder was. For spear nor barbed brand
Could scathe nor touch the damsels; but the Wand
Blasted these men and quelled them, and they fled
Dizzily.

Second, Dionysian power not only integrates man with the
rest of nature, but in the process of doing so it also erases
all rational distinctions, all logical contradictions, all moral
choices between good and evil. It is therefore a power which
belongs to the mystical mode, to darkness. What a majestic
thing the darkness is, Dionysius tells Pentheus; but this
realist thinks of darkness only as a cover for immoralities.
It is an irrational power and appears under the contradictory
forms of madness, of frenzy, of wild barbaric ecstasy, of
reverence and holiness, of spontaneity in its most unhamp-
ered expression, of careless brutality. Never is it accom-
panied by approval and disapproval, nor by judgments of
what is good and what is bad; for these distinctions belong
to the intelligent order. This means that the Bacchae's very
first act consists in the voluntary renunciation of intelligence.
Thus, Dionysius decides to "... stay the course of reason
in him, and instill a foam of madness" when he finally
resolves to destroy Pentheus for his persistent opposition to
the lure of death. He destroys Pentheus by breaking up his
rationality.

Dionysius as the leading character in the play epitomizes
this unitary principle. Although Euripides does not expressly
say so, it appears that Dionysius has both male and female
characteristics, that he is indeed an androgynous individual.
Pentheus refers to him as "this girl-faced stranger"; like a
girl he wears his golden hair in long curls. Pentheus commits
the symbolic act of shearing off these curls in a vain gesture
of reducing him fully to maleness, to one member of a pair
of opposites so that reason can function. As long as the god
is both male and female, he eludes the power of rationality and remains impervious to analysis. "I have vowed it to my god; 'tis holy hair," Dionysius warns him; but the mystical significance of the statement falls upon uninstructed ears. Immediately Dionysius pronounces his curse upon Pentheus; perhaps it is less a curse than a description, for it refers to all men who live in tragic alienation. Like Willy Loman, Pentheus does not know who he is:

Thou knowest not what end thou seekest, nor
What deed thou doest, nor what man thou art!³

It is the absence of moral distinctions in the Dionysian impulse which seems most confusing to Pentheus and which creates a major danger to the state. He is certain that Dionysius' only purpose can be to "prey on the wives and maids," to stimulate them into sexual orgies, and so to undermine the very foundations of his state. As a rationalist he cannot begin to understand that moral distinctions simply do not apply to the Dionysian mode, that it does not try to make a person either more or less moral but that it invites the mind to abandon all judgmental activities. The integrated mind finds no motive either in the concept of good or of evil; rather, it transcends both of these attitudes, for either one of these will fasten the mind to a structure which is dead rather than alive, rigid rather than spontaneous. Teiresias, a recent convert, tries to explain:

Thou fearest for the damsels? Think thee now;
How toucheth this the part of Dionys
To hold maids pure perforce? In them it lies,
And their own hearts; and in the wildest rite
Cometh no stain to her whose heart is white.

The chorus maidens themselves clarify further the inapplicability of moral distinctions to the Dionysian world.
It is true, they confess, that they seek an earthly, erotic love appropriate to Paphos and to the goddess Aphrodite; but also they cleave to Olympus, dwelling place of the creative Muses and home of heavenly love. No question of morality arises in these conflicting expressions of desire; no contradictions exist here among such divergent wishes; they are not conscious of making either good or bad choices.

But the most shocking demonstration of the lack of moral content in the Dionysian impulse consists in the frenzied mutilation and dismemberment of animals and humans at the hands of the Bacchantes. Paradoxically, at one moment the "wild white women" are suckling the fawns and the wolf cubs, and even the serpents, and in the next instant they are tearing animals limb from limb in orgiastic revelry. The climax occurs when Agave, mother of Pentheus, lays hold of her son and rends him into pieces with her own bare hands and brandishes his head on her thrysus as she makes her return journey from Mt. Cithaeron to the city of Thebes. Only after she has "come to herself," after she has regained her rationality, her home in Thebes, does she realize the gruesomeness of her monstrous act. And so the scene ends; Dionysius offers no justification, for none can be given which intelligence can accept.

The real explanation of such behavior lies buried deep in the impulses of the unconscious mind, for it equates Dionysian power with incest. Dionysius, symbol of Pentheus's own unconscious wishes, thrusts him into a regression toward the Womb in spite of all the practical measures which he takes to prevent it. In the end Pentheus cannot resist; his death wish wins out, and indeed he does return to his Mother. He returns to her symbolically, for she becomes the Pine Tree from which he observes the Bacchanalia; and on the stage he returns to her physically, only to have his physical existence shattered. This scene parallels the crucifixion scenes of the various Savior-Sons, such as Tammuz, Adonis, and Jesus, all of whom renew themselves and the universe by returning
to their mothers and fecundating them, only to be mutilated, castrated, or nailed on a cross or on a tree. The power bestowed by the death ritual can be a destructive power, for it is released through an incestuous act and inevitably entails the destruction of the individual who improperly prepares himself, and in any case it destroys the rational order to which he belongs.

The completeness and the monstrousness with which Dionysius shatters the rational mind arouses the suspicion that he is going to extreme lengths to disguise a threat which does not appear on the surface. Intelligence must indeed harbor a power which so greatly endangers death that death reacts in an unexplainably violent manner to maintain itself. Since what we mean by death in this context is an integrating force, then intelligence appears as an alienating one. Therefore, we need to examine in detail how the analytical processes of reason alienate man and create unbearably tragic tensions.

The act of analysis, and consequently of knowing, is a dividing, separating, fragmenting act. Every function of intelligence is a comparing function. To know means to detect similarities and differences, and to classify; for when we make distinctions we separate one class of things from other classes of things on the basis of some abstract relation which exists among them. We know the world, indeed we create it, by throwing it into dichotomous relations, into opposites. Knowing fragmentizes. There appears to be no other way for a critical intelligence to operate. We create the world in the process of our knowing it, and we know it by separating its elements into realms of opposites. In the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. Then occurs man’s first intellectual act—and his first creative act: he divided the world into light and dark. Self-consciousness appeared. He began to divide and to classify. And the creation continues in the pattern of finer and finer divisions: the earth separates from the heavens, and on the earth itself the land divides off from
the waters. Finally the various plants and animals come into being. But the final act of creation was man himself; he was in the beginning whole and undivided, neither male nor female. Then the female half of man was removed, and Eve emerged from Adam's side. This division into the sexes has served ever since as the symbol of man's falling away into duality and separateness, and consequently into evil. Until man became separated he could have no knowledge; undivided man lives in a state of innocence. But immediately upon his separation he became a seeker after knowledge. He ate of the Tree of Knowledge, and the Tree supplied him with the instruments and methods for handling classes of things; it offered him a universe which was made up of pairs of opposites: good and evil, male and female. In the process of making these distinctions, man discovered both the world and himself, self-discovery in Adam's case being symbolized by the discovery of his sex role.

Mythology pictures the advent of rationality in more graphic figures, and in every case emphasizes its divisive nature. The mutilation and dismemberment themes prevail. Marduk creates the universe by cutting his Mother, Tiamat, into two parts, the upper half becoming the heavens, the lower part the earth. This separation corresponds to the division into the light and the dark in the Genesis account. Chronos mutilates his Father, the Sky, to separate him from his Mother Earth so that the creation of the offspring-gods can proceed. Our animalistic instincts appear to resent the incursion of reason and we prolong the alienating act as long as we can. Chronos refuses to separate himself from his spouse; even Zeus swallows his offspring only to give birth to them later through his thigh or his forehead.

Certainly the emergence of this alienating power constitutes man's original sin, his tragic curse, for he has lived in a state of self-estrangement ever since. His search for knowledge, which means his efforts to break up the essential unity of experience into fragments, led to his expulsion from the
Garden of Eden; it destroyed his original innocent attachments to nature; it violated his integrity. The Flaming Sword which prevents his return to his infantile state of innocence represents under the fire symbolism the new dawn of self-consciousness or his newly won power to make rational distinctions, and under the sword symbol represents the cutting or divisive power which the instrument of reason carries. It is a godly power too, for it is the Sword which issues out of the mouth of God as the Divine Logos, the Word, and is the instrument whereby God creates the cosmos. The Sword serves as an appropriate image of the knowledge process, for knowledge always culminates in division. Its products are opposites: good and evil, male and female, life and death. It separates dying from rebirth; it isolates the knowing subject from knowable objects; it divides consciousness from the world by removing the inner magical connections from events. In the process of making thinking itself an object of thought, reason divides man into subject and object and thereby creates for philosophy an unsolvable dichotomy, and creates for human existence an inevitable and tragic alienation.

In philosophy the knowledge process is analytical. We analyze an object or an idea by dividing it into its various parts and by classifying the parts. Intellectually, we “know” a table by analyzing its members: the legs, the side panels, the top, the drawers. Distinguishing similarities and differences allows us to classify the side panels together in one group and the legs in another. Classification divides one kind of thing from another kind. Thus, the intelligent person is one who can perceive connections among things; he can split hairs, make sharp distinctions. If he readily detects causal connections among natural phenomena, he tends toward science; if his facility is for logical distinctions among ideas, he tends toward philosophy; if the expressive connections are sensuous qualities, he tends toward the artistic.

Not only does intelligence alienate by carving up the
unity of existence into disparate elements, but it also tends to solidify the fragments into which experience has been torn. Reason searches out the permanent features in human existence, and these are always abstract and depersonalized. Though the inner flow of experience seems fluid and spontaneous, our rational faculties would reduce the spontaneity to rigid conceptual form, for only the concept can maintain itself permanently. Experience belongs to time and to history and therefore undergoes continual decay; whereas, reason would salvage for the eternal what it can, namely theoretical relationships. These theoretical forms once adopted and put to work then function as coercive systems upon the historical individual. They nurture him and secure him, but they also dominate him. Successful domination produces a shrinkage of consciousness despite the fact that it appears in the form of moral codes, political ideologies, or religious dogma, and despite the fact that it installs the prime virtues of loyalty and obedience. Security and comfort are bestowed by tradition, and no man can hope to survive who violates the wishes of the previous generations. Their codes and dogmas claim for themselves the qualities of authenticity, finality, of absolute truth, of permanent and abiding virtues. Reason thus supports man's yearnings for the changeless, but at the same time that it eternalizes, it dehumanizes. The rigid and unyielding character of rational systems transform the spontaneous self into a structure of frozen, abstract relations. Cognition moves from the concrete to the universal, for only generalized form can endure, but universality is alien to the dynamic quality of individual existence; consequently, the more arduously we seek to eternalize ourselves, the more rigidly we fix life.

By fostering the belief attitude, intelligence creates a second alienating condition. Belief is psychological commitment to an ideational fragment. The art of believing waits upon analysis so that ideas can be broken into pairs of opposites. Allegiance to a dogma is allegiance to one mem-
ber of a set of opposing beliefs; it is allegiance to an incompleteness. The more firmly we commit ourselves to one belief, the more strongly must we disbelieve its contradictory. If we accept one notion as being true, we must also accept its opposite as false.

The tragedy is that life cannot be chopped into such artificial dichotomies. Whatever quality we discover in the world belongs in the world, and the more persistently we repudiate any one aspect, the more certainly will it return in disguise to haunt us. Opposites belong to thought, not to being; forcing them upon the life process alienates. Hamlet-like, our intelligence separates love from hatred and instructs us to expel the one and to court the other; it teaches that we cannot at the same time love our mother and hate her however much the circumstances appear to warrant it. To love what we also hate endangers moral conventions, for these do not permit such ambivalent feelings. But psychologically we do anyway, and we find ourselves caught up in this mental struggle. Reason, and our community, require that only the good be accepted and practiced, but evil seems just as persistently present and often much more attractive.

Reason transforms uniqueness which is instinctual into contradiction which is logical; it compels commitment to one member of a set, and denounces the other as heretical. It establishes dogma by ferreting out the permanent. Reason compels us to make choices when the integral flow of life experience presents no genuine alternatives. Reason has little patience for skepticism, for doubt denies the existence of opposites. The skeptic rejects duality. The more certain our descriptions of the cosmos are, the more rigidly into unsolvable dichotomies does it fall. The discovery of his standard of certainty enabled Descartes to divide the universe into the two opposite metaphysical substances of Mind and Matter. Along with the skeptic, the less rigid mind, the ever-expanding mind, has less need for finalities and for the principle of contradiction. If proof is required, it can be
uncovered in the impulse to camouflage rigid belief under the subtleties and arabesques of argument or in the tendency to displace stereotyped thinking upon some irrelevancy. The extent to which the dogmatist quibbles over the niceties of logical proof, to that extent does he reveal his alienated condition. For human experience is one and undivided; it is intelligence which forces it into artificial dichotomies and enjoins upon us the choice of being heretics or believers. We must believe in order to know, we are taught. We must not doubt, yet whichever we choose will afford only a half truth, and in permitting our critical faculty to dissipate our creative energy we shall have violated our own integrity. If we believe, we must believe fragments of truths. Belief alienates, condemns man to piecemeal existence; it sets him searching for fragments of himself which, on discovery, he then deifies into eternal essences.

The wisdom of the primitive mind, as expressed in its mythology, teaches the essential unity of experience; it teaches that personality results from the union of opposites, that living is paradoxical. The integral person exhibits opposite natures; these are symbolized by the good and bad thieves who were crucified and placed on either side of Christ, and of Mithra. The Hero often appears in the image of two persons, or as twins, in order that his contradictory nature can be most dramatically exhibited. The Twins of the Changing Woman, who figure in the religion of the Navahos, represent the unity of life flow, as do Castor and Pollux, Romulus and Remus.

We have described how the analytical method which characterizes intelligence divides experience into unreal dichotomies in a vain effort to understand and to preserve it. We have seen that intelligence encourages us to take a personal stand among the fragments. Analysis knows the inner world of experience by dividing it up, but it makes the fatal error that the divisiveness characterizes the things known rather than the mental processes which do the knowing. The trag-
edy lies in the inability of reason to correct itself. It finds itself inadequate to the condition which it has created. It cannot integrate, it cannot heal, except by integrating empty structures; its syntheses are theoretical ones. It heals only by contrivance and design. This means that reason cannot know life without abandoning life. This was perhaps the greatest discovery of Hamlet: that thinking contains no self-corrective, that it only enhances alienation. The more diligently one reasons, the more certainly he will fail in integrating himself, in experiencing a restoration, in uncovering some new therapeutic insight.

Intelligence produces one further condition which must prevail before tragedy can emerge. It produces self-consciousness; it breaks up group thinking and makes all thinking individual. The tragic circumstance consists in the fact that the individual becomes aware of himself, discovers his own autonomy, in the very process of divorcing himself from his group. Individuality is a quality of alienation. Tragic experience is always individual experience, and a personality is most completely individual when it separates itself off from its culture and relies upon its own demon voice for its decisions. Rationality makes individual personality aware of the possibility of freedom and lures him into a tragic isolation from others.

Whatever causes individual thinking to differentiate from the group mind must be an alienating force, for the first thinking personalities which the record of history describes are also the tragic heroes, the isolated individuals who have somehow found themselves to be alone, misunderstood, and repudiated by the group and even by the cosmic powers. Let us examine what agencies might cause this transition from group to individual thinking, for this force will be one of the prime ingredients of tragedy.

To begin with, we have noted that group thinking as an integrated process remains undifferentiated from other forms of human behavior and is regarded as a function of some
strongly felt, if somewhat dimly conceptualized supernatural power, mana. If every single event in human living, however commonplace, mysteriously expresses the wishes of an invisible force, there is neither need for individual thinkers nor for individualized subject matter to think about. Individuals need concern themselves only with how this power could be contacted and induced to perform in their behalf. Thus, ritual in a sense dominates group thinking, for ritual makes no attempt to explain phenomena. It seeks only to take advantage of an impersonal power in the interest of the whole community. The individual needs only to participate. He will not need to think until it is demonstrated to him that the ritual in which he performs proves to be untrustworthy.

Individual thinking therefore arises out of a floundering and failing ritual. The medicine man who uses magic words to control the mysterious powers is the first to know that he has failed. He cannot help but wonder and doubt. For example, some of the poems in the ancient Chinese Book of Odes describe the bankruptcy of ceremonial solution to problems. The ritualist cannot stave off frustrations and defeats; either famine or the war lords invade his land and lay it waste. The supernatural powers are no longer available to man; mana has failed him. Individuals are forced by these repeated failures to renounce the tribal explanation and to rely upon their own ingenuity for discovering “logical” explanations for their plight.

Suffering appears to be the prime condition of self-discovery. What is required is not so much a physical kind of suffering as simply a bewilderment at not being able to make sense out of things. The supernatural power has without reason become capricious, or else it has ceased to be a power for human welfare at all. Man must suffer his irritations and defeats, for he finds himself alone and abandoned by the cosmic powers. Suffering for no apparent cause creates self-awareness. When men face a situation in which Heaven
itself has turned upon them in incomprehensible and even malevolent fashion, the individual must carve out his own destiny. He does so by doubting the tribal lore. At this point he must think as an individual, think differently from his community, and he must think about a particular problem in which ritual has failed him.

Herbert Read and others have tried to show that the artists were the first individual thinkers in a particular society. Read believes that this applies even to the cavemen. His evidence derives from the work that Margaret Mead has done with certain present-day primitive tribes. She has found that the artists among them, the individuals who paint and who do handicraft work, are set off apart from other members as possessing a kind of mysterious power. Their treatment by the community, Read believes, transforms them into genuinely individual thinkers.

I reject this thesis for the reason that artists perform an integrating rather than an alienating function. They control and release life-giving energy into the community through the vehicles which they produce. These objects themselves symbolize tribal unity; this means that art and religion converge, for in this case the artist acts as a surrogate for the medicine man. As long as the artist dominates society, tragedy will remain submerged, for the individualizing, rational process will remain inhibited. Tribal art is community art; it is not the kind of activity which isolates individuals and confronts them with unsolvable difficulties; it presents them with no recalcitrant cosmic powers.

A further reason for rejecting art as the creator of intelligence is the fact that during primitive times art cannot be separated from any other activity. For example, in Shang-Yin times in ancient China there were simple and composite drawings of objects, and there were simple tools and weapons, but perhaps none of these could be defined strictly as art objects. Their religious and economic meaning was just as important. Written language as well as pictorial represen-
tation possessed mystical power. It is difficult to know to what extent the ornamental figures of human beings, clouds, and dragons which are found on the bronze and jade vessels during early Chou times were regarded at the time as being purely ornamental and artistic and to what extent they served as religious symbols. In his *Spirit of the Brush* Shio Sakanishi maintains the inseparableness of art from other aspects of living: “Painting as an art in China goes back to antiquity, and in the light of historical accounts, even the oldest examples we now possess are probably comparatively modern. By art, the ancient Chinese meant ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and numbers, and painting was considered a branch of calligraphy.”

Thus, the Herbert Read-Margaret Mead thesis that the first individual thinking to emerge from primitive culture is related to artistic expression seems to be valid only if we define art so broadly that the original thesis itself is no longer meaningful.

Although the most common repressive systems are those which reason has created, there are, to be sure, non-intellectual forms of domination as well. Existentialism as a metaphysical theory presents such a system. It defines existence as concrete, individual experience and repudiates the prior existence of any formal essence which might determine the nature of any particular thing. Rather, the basic datum, the unanalyzable fact from which all other speculations arise, is the fact of being-with-others and being-in-the-world. By definition the life process cannot be alienated by theoretical systems, for it exists as irreducible historical process.

Cognition is likewise non-alienating. We know the world and we know ourselves not through analysis, but through the emotional, subjective experiences of nausea and anguish. Our knowledge is emotional and synthetic rather than empty and divisive.

But even so, the existentialist finds himself in an even more unsolvable paradox than the thorough-going rational-
ist, an even more tragic dilemma. For in escaping the be-
numbing systems which destroy his autonomy, he discovers
himself alone in a meaningless universe with unhemmed
freedom and unrestricted autonomy. It is a universe which
offers no comforts and no security. Hence, his living confines
itself to the moment, to the uncertain historical instance. His
experiences are all threshold experiences—ever unfinished,
forward pointing, and meaningless. For man can never fully
know himself, nor indeed can he ever fully be himself at any
given moment.

By emphasizing the conditions of freedom, Existentialism
escapes the self-alienating tendencies of intelligence and of
its products, but just as surely it creates tragic conditions of
an extreme opposite nature. No man can live in full auton-
omy any more than he can live autonomously under domina-
tion. Repressions which limit the free individual are those
which interfere with decision making. They are the blunders
he makes as he projects himself over into the future, for he
alone creates himself and defines himself in this process of
moving forward from moment to moment under the impul-
sion of a limited ability to decide what he shall be. Thus, he
is dominated by uncertainties, by the suffering and the
anguish he experiences in his free moments, by death itself
which he knows can put an end to his freedom at any mo-
ment. Death alone is the winner in this struggle between
freedom and domination. This struggle is the essence of
tragedy.
CHAPTER VII

ALIENATION THROUGH LANGUAGE

Once upon a time, we read in the Book of Genesis, the whole earth had one language and few words, and, having one language the people were one. Communication among them had the immediacy of communion, and communion gave the people integrity and wholeness. It also gave them power, and they decided to build a tower unto heaven to express the fullness of their being. So they made brick and mortar and built the Tower of Babel. But communion with one language, and no words, marks the divine way; man had come upon the secret of God, and God was not pleased: "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the earth, and they left off building the city." 1

These are the words of a jealous and begrudging God who could not countenance the threat of man's invasion into His own bailiwick, and He used a subtle but powerful weapon to prevent it: through language He separated man from his own godly capacities. And man became split, both as an individual and as a people, for now he has many words and many languages. The people are no longer one. With lan-
guage, God prevents man's return to Paradise and forces upon him a mean and derelict life. But wherein lies the alienating power of language?

As soon as God has created the heavens and the earth, the nights and days, the lands and waters, and all of the living things on the earth, He assembles these things into the presence of Adam and invites him to perform one final creative act: the giving of names. So it is man, not God, who invents words and language and applies them to objects. God brings to man all creatures to see what he will call them, and whatever man calls them, that is its name. God's knowing needs no language; rather His knowing is creating. To contemplate life without words is the divine way. But human intelligence can know things only through the screen of words. What can be named can be known; what cannot be named remains unpredictable, dangerous, chaotic.

Naming things constitutes Adam's original sin, his initial alienating act. It makes inevitable his expulsion from his Eden state of innocence. The naming process represents intelligence already in action even before Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge. The decision to eat or not to eat from the fruits of this Tree affords Adam no real choice. The humanity in him has already made the fateful decision by inventing symbols to call things by. This decision condemns man to a kind of life which is to be dominated by symbols rather than reality, communication rather than communion.

What Adam invents is an artificial barrier of language through which all of man's subsequent experiences of the world are to be screened. No longer can man know nature directly and intuitively. He always runs the risk of mistaking words for the world, for his knowledge has the possibility of reaching no farther than words. Symbol systems can grow to the point where they constitute the total environment and become the only object of human experience. It is to language and through language that man reacts before he reacts
either to his own life energy or to nature. In this sense, all men indeed inherit the curse of Adam.

The interposition of language between man and his world destroys his originally innocent object relations. It produces intelligence, for it is precisely the artificial and abstract characteristics of language which make it useful as a knowing instrument. But these qualities also create conditions which not only scatter people over the face of the earth but also shatter their psyches. It is language under the image of the Flaming Sword which prohibits Adam from returning to the Garden of Eden. Language stands between man and his earlier infantile dependence upon the Mother, between man as subject and world as object. The flame signifies the new enlightenment, the new intelligence which has been won; the sword symbolizes the divisive power of words. The entire tragedy of human life appears in this single symbol. Man offers up his personal autonomy to the cutting edge of the Flaming Sword as a price for an increase in human intelligence. And the Sword, we are told, turns every way. There is no escape for man in any direction, and there is no retreat.

But the people who are shattered by the confusion of their tongues find this dislocated and contourless existence intolerable, and they continue to probe into every conceivable condition which might vouchsafe an escape from the Sword and a return to Paradise. In order to circumvent the Flaming Sword and to regain their oneness, they require a ritual which simultaneously provides them with intelligence and autonomy.

The ancient Jews hit upon the most dramatic of all solutions. Let intelligence in the form of the Word be deified, and then let the Word be sacrificed! In the beginning, then, was the Logos, and the Logos was God. This deified Word creates all things and becomes the fountain of life, and the light of men. Crucifying the Word will eradicate forever the ever-present danger that man will again, like Adam and the people who built the Tower of Babel, gain in some manner
the secret power in the word and loose into the world its cutting edge. Or else conquer the word so completely that they have no need of it, and so they themselves built a psychological Tower of Babel, a level of personal integration which we call God.

Thus, man's psychological history provides the means for a final banishment of language-creating faculties. The way of life is the way of sacrifice, and it is the deified word which must submit to this ritual of expiation. Hence, the Word becomes flesh and dwells among men. With Him comes the true light that enlightens every man. The light issuing from the Flaming Sword transforms itself into a saving, healing light, and the Sword has lost its edge here on the eve of its sacrifice. This is why it is necessary to deify the word before the atonement: it harbors too much power to be left in the hands of mortals, for they either destroy themselves or become gods, both possibilities being unacceptable to God. Thus, when Sigmund draws forth the sword of Odin from the flaming torch, Branstock, he also draws forth the wrath of the gods; his sword breaks. King Arthur's sword emerges also from a flaming brand, and his torch breaks or is extinguished at the time of his death.

The cutting edge converts into a saving grace, for grace attends the sacrifice. In the hands of man the sword divides God's oneness into dualities and thereby creates possibility of conflict; in the mouths of man the word separates thinking into dichotomies and thereby creates the paradox. But the enshrinement of the Word together with its subsequent incarnation and sacrifice, the fragmentation of peoples and of psyches comes to an end. God's unity is preserved.

This voluntary surrender and subsequent crucifixion demonstrate to man how to overcome his own fragmented existence and how to achieve a rebirth of himself. It becomes a model for man to imitate in a ritual drama. Man must sacrifice his human rationality; he must return to Dionysius. And his surrender must be both voluntary and total. The
two criminals who are sacrificed alongside the Divine Logos symbolize this requirement. Being fruits of the divisiveness of the word, they too must be crucificially purged. Not merely the evil in man must be expiated, but the good as well, and indeed everything in human experience which can be delimited by names. Only that remains for which there are no words. The degree to which existence surrenders itself to the Unnamable measures its wholeness and charts its pathway to survival.

This prescription for man's salvation, for his escape from the Flaming Sword, appears among the ancient wisdoms, and describes one of the most fundamental urgencies in the human psyche. It dominates the teachings of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, which was composed about 500 B.C. in China. The opening lines of this little book establish the theme:

Existence is beyond the power of words
To define:
Terms may be used
But none of them are absolute.
In the beginning of heaven and earth
there were no words,
Words came out of the womb of matter...

Existence cannot be put into words, nor can the reality of experience be given a verbal definition. The creative power in nature and in man cannot be identified through the instrumentality of symbols. Such distinctions as exist between the Logos crucified and the human word, between Dionysius and his arch enemy Intelligence, between the core and the surface of existence, emerge out of the uses of language. If we achieve wholeness, we must leave off such linguistic exercises as classifying and abstracting, for these processes yield only dichotomies and fragments; whereas sameness characterizes existence. Lao Tzu expresses his mild contempt for those who would know their way to salvation:
Leave off fine learning! End the nuisance
Of saying yes to this and perhaps to that,
Distinction with how little difference!
Categorical this, and categorical that,
What slightest use are they!

In gentle phrases, Lao Tzu describes man's need to die. The Jewish version is more personal and more climactic. Let us return to it.

Not only must the word be apotheosized into the Logos, incarnated, and subsequently sacrificed; it must also become the substance of a common meal. The Logos must be eaten in eucharistic rite and thus transformed into man's own being. When communion replaces communication among men, integration can proceed. He who would be saved must, in the terminology of slang, "eat his own words" so that they can express what is truly himself. But healing occurs if the words which have been taken in communion have been consecrated, which means that they have undergone apotheosis and charged with divine power.

Being a dead thing, language can never fully express existence and therefore necessarily fails in communication. The lack of a one-to-one correspondence between words and experience allows a leakage in intercommunication. Furthermore, through language we communicate only dead abstract relations. The word alienates because it fails to convey the integrity of personal autonomy. It therefore isolates the tragic hero from any communion with others, or even with himself. It is little wonder that Hamlet finds it impossible to communicate with Polonius, who made a faltering attempt to get in touch with Hamlet's innermost thoughts. In response to Polonius' inquiry about what he was reading, Hamlet could only reply, "Words, words, words." A statement more futile nor more tragic could hardly be spoken. Words act as barriers in social intercourse, and they thwart the expression of the psyche. Hamlet can be saved if Polo-
nius, or any other person, can communicate with him. But communication stops at the language barrier.

The failure of communication produces the isolation of tragic heroes and alienates them from companions and friends. Willy Loman mutters to himself, Hamlet feigns madness, Job cannot be understood by his three friends, and King Lear loses his mind. Failure to communicate prevents them from contacting reality, or contacting each other. They lack a kind of wisdom, wisdom which heals, not the kind of wisdom which can be transmitted through human communication, but a wisdom which is the fear of the Lord. They lack the secret wisdom which belongs to the eternal mysteries and which issues out of the Whirlwind.

The sacrificed word no longer serves as the divisive, deadening instrument which human intelligence makes of it. The designating function of language requires that words carry determinable boundaries to their meanings, for the very use of a word, as horse, separates all the members of a class of things from other classes of things, and it does so on the basis of abstract qualities. Words make for anonymity. Words erect boundary lines, and they therefore fragmentize the world, and ourselves. Whatever can be put into words is subject to arrest as well as mutilation. Words can never fully express the spontaneity and wholeness of human experience. Existence which can be described is a dead existence. The wide gap between words and the world parallels the gulf between what is alive and present and what is dead and past.

But there are uses of language which are not alienating. If the discursive can be replaced by the metaphoric function so that language presents existence, it can have a healing effect. Poetic language offers an escape because it functions creatively rather than scientifically. That is, it expresses wholes rather than fragments, existence rather than truth. It flourishes on paradox, withers on logical analysis. It unifies rather than distinguishes; it presents sameness and not differ-
ence. The earliest human documents, even the political and legislative ones, assume a poetic form for they express life's inner spontaneity rather than fixed external relations.

But the escape into metaphor proves to be only temporary. Reflective thinking lays strong claims on the uses of language and seeks irresistibly to adapt language to reality. Poetic thinking remains only a playing with thoughts, but it is play which heals and pleases even when it shades off into phantasy. Because metaphoric language makes no distinction between the poem and the world, because it creates the world in the very process of creating the poem, it is pushed all too quickly into sheer phantasy when the world indeed becomes too much with us. The scientific uses of language cannot be restrained; the Flaming Sword appears and forces man into a separation from nature and from his own life energy. His escape into myth offers no finality.

A further attempt to attach an integrative function to language appears in connection with religious ritual. Those words which are spoken in the course of ritual, or the chants which are sung, refer to states of affairs which do not belong in the external world, but rather they help to carry forward the human psyche in its renewal drama. Language used in ritual, as in poetry, assumes a metaphoric role instead of a cognitive one and serves therefore in the guise of a healing symbol. The power of ritual replaces the referential employments of language with expressive ones. This means that since ritual is always in the service of the psyche, specifically of the integrative forces operating in its unconscious levels, the psyche for once dominates language and uses it for its own ends. This circumstance explains why ritual makes such wide use of unknown or foreign tongues. These are temporary but vain efforts to reduce language to the oneness it had at the time of the building of the Babel Tower. They are attempts to dominate life instead of being dominated by it, but as with poetry, this method affords no finality.

Another classic attempt to escape the Flaming Sword occurs
in the philosophical system of Plato. We have seen that man's efforts to revitalize his existence requires that he retreat from the fragmentariness of the real world, that he sacrifice his analytical intelligence in a mystical, unifying experience. This entire process assumes the form of an incestuous act. It is a return to the wisdom of childhood, a retreat to the infantile state, to the Mother. Hence, the Platonic prescription for preserving an adult intelligence and an integrated self at the same time assigns the intellectual mode to the infant state, or even to the pre-conscious state. Plato goes to the extreme of locating intelligence in a state of pre-existence. Knowledge lies germinal in an undifferentiated mind and exists prior to the human reflective process which brings it into our awareness. This apotheosis of reason serves the same psychological purpose as the enthronement of the Word in the Gospel of John. Both equate the rational with the real, with the original source of life, that is, with the Great Mother principle. But whereas John teaches that the Word must come forward into an incarnation, be sacrificed and shared in a common meal, Plato holds that a psychological regression to the source of this creative power itself provides autonomy for personality. There is no need for it to manifest itself in the real world and to assume a human form. The epistemological process becomes a form of retreat, a reminiscence, a return to the phantasy modes of childhood.

Rapaport's description of the origin of thinking closely parallels that of Plato. Thinking, he says, is the production of hallucinatory images of objects which we need to satisfy ourselves and which are not presently available for gratification. The delay in gratifying ourselves is imposed by the world and makes it necessary to rely upon memory traces of objects for fulfilling our desires.

The Platonic theory of intelligence permits the seed of separateness to remain dormant, yet ever-present in the Mother, or more specifically in what he calls the Demiurge, another name for Reason deified. The threat that man will
build his Tower of Babel has not been eliminated. John proves himself to be the better psychologist. He senses this danger and recognizes it as constituting the essence of the human tragedy; therefore, he insists that the deified word be sacrificed. Plato commits a fatal error in his failure to provide for a sacrifice. There is no means by which individual men can avail themselves of the power in the Demiurge except through a regression to a pre-infantile state. This regressive act becomes in practice a recollection and is the core of Plato's epistemology. But it is essentially an incestuous act, and psychologically this act can never be permitted apart from a sacrificial rite involving circumcision or castration, else the powers evoked will release themselves in dangerously destructive ways.

But the Plato view does have initial appeal. A reintegration into the original source of creative power does produce a feeling of oneness, a feeling which perhaps characterizes every authentic religious experience. The fact that our knowledge arises from memory traces of an infantile state when experiences remain undifferentiated produces the feeling that truth is one and undivided. This kind of truth bespeaks the wisdom of childhood, and indeed the knowledge process requires that we become as little children, that we remember the truth we had before we became split off. Thus, Plato has reduced cognition to regression, intelligence to a deity called Demiurge. He permits man to re-enter the Garden of Eden, but only as a little child. And he has failed to eradicate from the child the irresistible urge to give names to things, to search out the Tree of Knowledge, and to build another Tower to heaven.

Plato gains wide support for this view from certain contemporary psychologists. Intelligence arises, they agree, out of an infantile state of free gratification. Marcuse and Freud believe that all thinking arises from memories of childhood wish fulfillments, that the impulses which produce the intellectual processes derive from the memory traces we
have of long lost pleasures. With Plato they agree that intellect results from the recollection of a previous state of full satiation of desires which has long been submerged in the unconscious. This condition is an infantile one in which we experience the free gratification of every desire, and it parallels Plato’s pre-existence. Psychologically, the outside world does not yet exist. It has not yet been created, and all contacts which the infant has take the form of egoistic pleasures and pains. At this stage the desire for gratification produces gratification, and thinking things produces those things. Gradually there develops the quality of omnipotence about our experiences which Plato calls by the name of Demiurge or Reason. This Being, we read in the Timaeus, desires only pleasure and order for man, and it is entirely without rancorous feelings.

Unlike the Hebrew God, who was constantly jealous of man’s aspirations for what was godly, Plato’s Demiurge desires that man become as near to his own perfection as possible. That is, the Mother welcomes the return of the child and absorbs it into Her existence. In Plato’s terminology, Demiurge ungrudgingly wishes man to achieve His own state of immortality and goodness. No Flaming Sword appears here to prevent man from returning to the Garden of Eden. Plato’s transmutation of intelligence into infantile bliss is not too far from John’s apotheosizing of reason into Logos, as far as it goes. Both attempt to achieve integration by deifying the human capacity for reasoning, and for reasoning through the instrumentality of language.

But contemporary psychology also provides another theory of the origin of intelligence, a theory which emphasizes the alienating rather than the integrative function of language. Glover,9 Nunberg,10 and Carl Jung hold that intelligence arises at the tensional boundary line between the psyche’s regressive tendency and the barriers it encounters in this process, which force it to engage in reality testing. The harshness of the outside world pushes the psyche into a narcissistic
return to the Mother, but at one point the incest threat throws up a barrier which has the strength to halt the regressive tendencies and which therefore forces the mind to discover the world. The mental apparatus, including the invention of language and its adaptation to things in the environment, emerges out of this relationship between the psyche and the Mother and between the psyche and the object. Object relationships sometimes threaten us or shatter us, for to develop such relationships in the first place requires a sudden and stern thwarting of our egoistic desires to return to the comforts of infancy states. It requires that an adaptation mechanism begin operation; this is what is meant by consciousness.

Two other circumstances accompany this adaptive process: traumatic suffering, which is necessarily associated with the emergence of intelligence, and a sacrifice of our desires for the Mother. Ferenczi believes that our intellect is born only of traumatic suffering and that suffering itself is defined by the sacrifice of the Mother and the facing of the world. Memory is mental scar tissue. Suffering, he says, brings on a cessation of our more conscious mental operations and a loosening of our constraining defense mechanisms. The full power of the unconscious is then free to unfold. The organism becomes more efficient, assesses correctly any encumbering factors, and dominates the environment. In a sense, this experience corresponds to the Platonic recollection of infantile wisdom. Both produce the feeling of oneness, of omniscience; both tempt us to project this feeling upon a Deity; both symbolize death. Suffering signifies a form of dying, and because of this sudden resurgence of mental maturity brought on by trauma, it becomes a form of dying which creates the illusion of a rebirth.

If the psyche makes an adequate adaptation to the world which it has newly discovered, it must painfully relinquish a desire for the Mother. She must be sacrificed. This means the surrender of our own infantilisms, a partial dying of
ourselves, a resignation of egoism in favor of object attach-
ments which may be hostile. Thus, the creation of intelli-
genence occurs in connection with alienation, for when we exchange the Mother for the world, we psychologically sepa-
rate ourselves off from our life energies. Carl Jung uses these words to describe this condition: “The problem of the child at this period is the discovery of the world and of the great trans-subjective reality. For that he must lose the mother; every step out into the world means a step away from the mother.” Continuing, Jung points out that psychologically the following three events are identical: the creation of the world, the sacrifice of the Mother principle or of our omniscient feelings, and the sudden flowering of reflective thought. The Mesopotamian god, Marduḵ, sacrificed his monster mother, Tiamat, and out of her very body he created the world. He sacrificed her by dividing her into two pieces, one of which became the heavens, and the other the earth. This division signals the first intellectual operation in the creative process and stands as the model mental act.

We discover the world then by knowing it, and we know it as names. We invent nouns, as Adam did. And we there-
fore divide up existence into its ten thousand fragments so that each fragment can have a designating label. This frag-
mentation permits intelligence to function even though it also makes for a psychological estrangement. The incestuous regression which has been interrupted with the appearance of intelligence is another version of the Death drama; thus, intelligence prevents this drama from completing itself. The strong retrogressive pull of Dionysius upon the psyche creates an unbearable tension among the incest barrier forces, but for the most part we surrender these and painfully approach the world. And we thereby condemn ourselves to the possi-
bility of a fragmented existence.

For purposes of our present theme, the climax to intellec-
tual development occurs when we, Hamlet-like, having sacri-
ficed the mother, discover the world but discover it to be
meaningless and pointless. Our sacrifice has been in vain. This is the essence of human tragedy. We surrender our demands for full gratification of all desires in order to win the world, and we win only self-defeat. The Demiurge, which wishes only the good and the orderly for man, deceives us. It forces us to still the impulses to restore ourselves through a dying ceremony, but presents only a chaotic reality in recompense. This substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle leaves us rational and adult, but fragmented and sequestered. This reality principle now assumes the form of cultural forces which dominate the growth of psyche to the point that authentic personality is constrained, or else the psyche becomes merely a facet collection of faint mirrorings of the coercive forces which shape it.

Language becomes the chief instrument of intelligence and the means whereby man adapts himself to the world. The very structure of language itself requires that man's adaptation occur as classifying and abstracting processes. The ability to utilize symbols in these ways permits a rapid and effective adjustment to reality—even though it might at the same time reveal a reality which is ultimately meaningless. Man invents language and attempts to escape its consequences at the same time. But tragedy teaches that we cannot escape even though we enthrone Reason as the Divine Logos, the primordial creative god, as the Gospel of John does. We cannot escape even though we cast Reason into the image of Death itself, as Plato does. Reason prevents any resurgence of life whether we deify it as Death or as a Creator God.

In the case of the former, we equate intelligence with the Dionysian death wish. In the latter, we associate it with the world, which is the greatest enemy of Dionysius. In the former the death drama only partially completes itself and succeeds in destroying the individual by absorbing him. In the latter, man finds himself split off from his life energies and existing among static structures.

Language also alienates by detaching itself from its users
and going off on a life of its own. It appears to function autonomously, for it turns upon man and is capable of coercing him through regulatory signs and symbols. We resist this coercion, and through prayer and other ritual forms of speech we attempt to regain control of language and so to manipulate it in our own behalf. Reichard, describing Navaho ceremony, declares, "The word . . . is of great ritualistic value, and in order to be complete, man must control language." 13 But it is not easy. Our public behavior and our community thinking are determined not so much by individual decision but by the labels and symbols which dominate us. These labels prevent communication. They interpose themselves between man and his world. Thus, when Confucius was asked what one major change he would make in the ways of things if he could choose, he replied that he would engage in a rectification of names. He would push labels and names in the direction of things until the two, meaning and reality, merge.14

The numbering of things, as well as the naming of things, estranges man from himself. Quantification stills the spontaneity of personal existence as effectively as classification and abstraction. Both language and mathematics function as symbol systems which intervene between the individual and his world and draw off his energies and interests into the pursuit of shallow forms.

This inherent fear that the archaic mind has of numbers explains why some cultures, as that of China, never developed a mathematical tradition. If reality is concrete and unique, it cannot be described through any statistical method or numbering process. The primitive mind often shows an unexplainable fear of being numbered, and looks upon it as a deadly instrument wielded by the devil himself. Numbering kills.15

There is, for example, a most curious story told in Chapter 24 of Second Samuel. It is repeated again in Chapter 23 of First Chronicles with some interesting variations which will

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bear examination. In *Samuel* we read that the anger of God was kindled against Israel and that He therefore incited David against the Israelites, saying to him, “Go, number Israel and Judah.” But Joab cannot understand this terrible task, and after the army commanders have carried out the census, David’s heart smites him, and he says, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done.” So deeply runs David’s guilt that he asks God to take away his iniquities and his foolish deeds. But the sin has been committed, and not only David, but all of Israel must suffer punishment. “So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men.”

So sinister was this numbering that even God repented, and ordered his destroying angel to desist, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” In *Chronicles* another version of the story omits this particular episode of God’s own repentance, for in that account it is Satan who stood up against Israel and incited David to take the census. The later writer still recognizes unconsciously the evil of the numbering, but obviously exhibiting a more logical mind, associates the event with the originator of evil, namely Satan. Thus, the responsibility for the mass slaughter devolves upon the devil rather than God.

But the central theme remains: numbering kills. It transforms individuality into emptiness and reduces personality to a meaningless cipher. Its effect is to remove value from the individual and to place it among lifeless structures. Quantification transforms individuals into numerical units and creates a uniformity among them which absorbs whatever worth and dignity are present. It is little wonder that the ancient Jews resist the counting and recording of their persons and that they experience such a profound guilt that they feel impelled to undergo a purification ceremony.

Perhaps the real danger which the Jews sense is a metaphysical or religious one: the danger of the annihilation of
self without the assurance of a spiritual transformation. To quantify or to number makes for the kind of anonymity which is sheer nothingness. It empties the person of his essential human qualities. The Jew has no qualms about losing his individuality as an earth-bound being, but he knows that the kind of supra-individuality which preserves value comes through a transformation process which can in no way offer itself for a mathematical interpretation. He still insists upon a qualitative difference which marks him off from mere collective units, and he demands an evaluation which is other than a strictly numerical one.

Perhaps there is even a more profound significance in this story of the numbering of Israel and the consequent punishment of David. We read that David is on the verge of building another great Temple to God, another Tower of Babel, a tower which signals the healing of the separative tendencies in the psyche and its integration into the fullness of its spiritual possibilities. But again, this condition marks the divine way, and God continues to begrudge man his rightful destiny. On this occasion, however, God incites man into an alienated condition by reducing him to an anonymous, numerical unit, a condition which parallels the earlier confusion of tongues by which God accomplished the same purpose.
CHAPTER VIII

ALIENATION THROUGH TOIL

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* dramatizes a form of alienation which is as old as Adam, as ancient as the very first culture hero, but which came to be significantly distinctive of the tragedy which arose out of the industrial revolution in Western Europe. Adam's curse condemned him to earn his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. Unlike the lilies of the field and beasts of the forests which toil not nor spin, man must channel off his energies into a form of labor which will forever dominate him and separate him from his godly destiny. This is his original sin. His struggle for existence materializes into fixed economic patterns and creates the conditions of never-ending toil. With civilized living comes the need to repress our spontaneous impulses and to shape them into activities which become economically productive. Life becomes drudgery, and work an ideal.

The tragedy is that toil is a condemnation. It is painful and repressive, for it divorces man from his instinctual urges for self-fulfillment. Toil destroys autonomy. It erodes personality. It eats away at the edges of a man's individuality until it succeeds in reducing him to anonymity. It separates what man does from what he is or can be. This is the tragedy of Willy Loman.

Willy Loman's tragedy developed out of his belief that man can only realize himself through work. He sold this
ideal to his two sons, Biff and Happy. But at the climax, Biff discovered the tragic flaw in this system: the more vigorously his father pursued his ideal that hard work produces the good life, the greater was his estrangement from the life process and from himself. Willy Loman never knew who he was, nor who his sons were. He alienated himself from them, and indeed from all other people. So complete was his alienation that not a single friend came to his funeral. No one knew him.

Willy’s tragedy was lost on his wife, Linda. So completely had her personality collapsed under the dominating ideal of her husband that at the funeral she could only explain, “We were almost free. We only needed a little more salary!” She had not learned after a lifetime with Willy that the conditions which yield salary destroy freedom. Charley, the wise neighbor who had furnished some free salary to the Loman household, tried to point out Linda’s paradox. “No man only needs a little salary!” he explained. Linda’s imprecation at the funeral, “We are free! We are free!” confused economic freedom with a free self.

Neither does Happy learn the lesson of his father’s tragedy. He resolves all the more firmly to come out the number-one-man, to conquer life through toil, to perform tasks alien to his own faculties and needs. The absorption of his father’s system was so complete that he mistook it for his own free choice. This was his tragedy: these external economic demands transform themselves into inner compulsions and present themselves to consciousness as one’s own most urgent and necessary desires. Coercive systems internalize themselves and in the process they dehumanize. They constitute a form of dying. In the name of conscience they depersonalize the individual by separating him off from his own life energy; they compel him into a “phony” relationship with the world. Biff called his father a phony; he recognized his father as being only a solidification of culturally approved economic repressions. But Willy believed these to be his
infallible guiding principles, until, unconsciously, he began to feel the Dionysian pull of death, which in the play is personalized in the voice of his brother, luring him into the jungle darkness to search there for the diamond truth of his salvation.

The tragedy is that man cannot win his way to life through toil however arduously he tries, but being human and therefore having within his nature the curse of Adam, he cannot escape making the effort. Being human he cannot live, as the gods live, in complete freedom. To live without toil is the way of the gods, for they alone can live spontaneously. In Mesopotamian culture it was Ea, the Mother Earth Goddess, who supervised the creation of man and imposed toil upon him so that the gods could live in freedom. She gave the command, “Let him be burdened with the toil of the gods, that they may freely breathe.” Memory creates a vision of the Good Old Days of a Golden Age when no one had to work. Marduk, for example, created the heavens and the earth and then in order that all of the gods be free to pursue their own ends he created man to do the work. This has consistently been man’s cosmic role: he was created in the first place to labor so that the gods could be free. But the bitterest blow of all is that though man can still conceive of and aspire to a life of spontaneity and fulfillment, he must needs stand by and see these aspirations dimmed by the over-burdening harshness of labor and see his conceptions of an unhemmed godly existence transformed by unrelenting repressions of the environment and of economic need into what he finally accepts as an ideal, an ideal of hard work.

It is in relation to this notion of labor that Aristotle’s requirement that the tragic hero be a noble-type person can be in part understood. The hero, says Aristotle, must be somewhat “above the common level.” He must be above the common man, but somewhat less than the gods—though many of them indeed actually were gods, yet did not violate the Aristotelian standard. What Aristotle means, in part, is
that his hero should belong to that class of society which is free from any necessity to work. Free from coercive toil, he then becomes free to create himself or to fail in doing so as his nature determines. More specifically, Aristotle says of the Hero, "He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous. . . ." A part of this definition refers to the economic status of the Hero. For purposes of drama, the concept of nobility means financial security and freedom from want. Kings and princes and demi-gods do not find their life energies drained off into laborious endeavor and can therefore concentrate upon their own personality formation. Vocation remains with them a call to become a kind of person rather than, as we think of it now, a form of manual labor the end of which is the production of a marketable commodity. Thus, if the hero fails, he fails because of his own weaknesses and not because of some repressive system which imposed itself upon him.

The society which Aristotle knew provided for slaves who did the work; whereas the single purpose of the noble class was to realize its own inherent nobility. Whatever work the nobleman performed had little economic relevance and was certainly not oriented toward the production of commodities. The common man, the working man, could not function as a tragic hero simply because he could perform no task which was productive of himself; he could only produce goods. The fruits of his labors lay in his handiwork rather than in his own being.

What happens now when a society emerges in which everyone becomes a worker? What happens when it becomes the ideal for men to labor, as it did during Puritan times when man, hounded by a stinging conscience, turned his energies upon the economy and created a capitalistic system which made hard work the socially unifying ideal? Can we have tragedy in such circumstances?

The answer appears to be that we can. But it means that tragedy in its literary form will proceed in two directions.
In the first place, the writer will remember the curse of Adam and will picture the laboring man not as an Aristotelian slave who lacks any essential human qualities at all, but as a worthy individual who struggles against the dehumanizing power of the machine. He will depict the modern Adam who finds his autonomy endangered, whose full and free expression becomes thwarted under the grinding need merely to stay alive. Aristotle simply did not recognize this possible form of tragedy, though enough material appears in the backgrounds of Greek culture to have provided for it.

A second development waits upon the philosophical idea that the common man is a noble man, that work itself is noble, but most important of all that man can fully become himself and identify himself only as he knows what kind of work he can do, and does it. Life which is uncommitted to labor is not worth living, for labor defines man. Thus, tragedy dramatizes the common man who is both ennobléd and destroyed by his work. Tragedy involves the problem of vocation. Man now has the capacity to choose his work: how can he be sure that his vocation will aid in his full realization? Though we may know who we are only after we have discovered our proper work, there remains the problem of choice and therefore of error. The result can be, as it was with Willy Loman, that we may never know who we are. And we will die, as we have lived, anonymously and pointlessly. The razor's edge which separates toil which ennobles from the toil which destroys intensifies the choice and determines the risk.

But perhaps the real tragedy remains with us whether we choose our vocation correctly or not. Toil of any kind commits us to institutional systems and forms; toil engages us in preserving fixed permanent relations. These in turn sooner or later cease their ministrations to individual fulfillment and therefore have to be broken. Regardless of how successful they are, regardless of how noble or kingly we become, very soon, like King Lear, we will need to surrender
them all; we will need to search out a means of dying from them. We must turn from toil to ritual. For we cannot fully become ourselves until we die and are reborn. We must cease all labor, and listen for a voice as Willy Loman did, which can guide us into an ennobling process unrelated in any way to toil. Toil destroys ritual, and a ritual death appears to be necessary for man's continual unfolding.

Thus, tragedy describes the inevitable and unsolvable conflict between man's economic needs and his psychological urge to create himself as a person. The Greek tragedians chose their heroes from those strata of society which never had to face the problem of vocation. Theirs was a nobility of birth and of family. The same principle applies to Shakespeare's characters. Though the question of whether Hamlet performed an action was crucial to the play, this activity never had to be toil which would produce economic rewards. His actions had other aims and purposes. Indeed Hamlet might have saved himself from his tragic fate had he been able to commit himself to a particular kind of work; though of course he would never even then have become himself and would instead have been overtaken with another and perhaps slower tragic fate. A catharsis which toil makes possible relates more to physical exhaustion than to psychological growth. One aspect of Hamlet's tragedy was that he could neither drain off his libido into vocation nor focus it upon his own personality development.

It is also the tragedy of Frederic Henry in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Unable to discover vocation, Henry arranges his own private truce and withdraws from the war. His farewell to arms signifies his retreat from life and a return to a more irresponsible and infantile attitude. Henry enjoys many advantages of the classic hero. Economic need offers no impediments to his self-realization. He can write a draft for as much money as he needs and at any time he needs. His search for himself proceeds under no inhibitions imposed by toil.
As the novel begins, Henry has already taken the first crucial step toward selfhood. He has broken away from a coercive and deadening order. Parental domination does not exist. To this extent he falls into the typical heroic mould. He rebels. He finds himself in Europe, as did so many rebels of his generation; he is searching for a kind of work to which he can without qualification commit his energies. He studies architecture. That fails. World War I begins and he drifts into the Ambulance Corps as a driver. He chooses not to participate in the action of warfare, that is, in the tensions which characterize life itself. He wishes merely to observe the war and perchance to savor such pleasurable aspects as might present themselves to him.

He fails again. Electing to avoid responsibilities, he finds no vocation and no meaning in the war. Then with the retreat from Caporetto comes his own retreat from life and from vocation. The condemnation to death of the army officers during the retreat dramatizes the meaninglessness both of war and of life. Even his good friend the Doctor was destroyed by the same agency which he had dedicated his very life to eradicate, namely disease. His vocation not only failed to supply meaning; it ironically found itself impotent in its own field.

Having discovered a universe which makes no sense, it becomes senseless to search further for a kind of work which can assure a meaningful existence. Hence, for a while during his own private retreat and desertion from the Corps, he must become someone else, go about in disguise, surrender his own identity.

His most prolonged efforts to discover some meaning to his existence concern his love affair with Catherine, who symbolizes the Mother figure in Henry's headlong regression to the womb. She comforts him. She makes whatever decisions are necessary—what they shall do, when and how they can escape, whether they shall marry. Like Oedipus, he did fecundate the Mother, but could beget only a dead child,
a child in fact which could not be born. And that child was himself who could never leave his Mother's womb and so battle his way to life. The new child could not bring with it the renewed energies which would be required in the creation of personality. Thus, Henry ends his existence, as far as the novel itself is concerned, just as he began it—walking out into life meaninglessly, having failed to awaken the energies which could carry him forward to a vocation.

The two tragedies, *Death of a Salesman* and *A Farewell to Arms*, dramatize the two relationships which vocation can have to the tragic experience. They are correlatives. In the former example, the Hero alienates himself through the thoughtless pursuit of a work ideal; in the latter instance the Hero never discovers a kind of work which can liberate the psychic energies which lie unfulfilled within him. The former Hero is absorbed by an external system of economy; the latter remains absorbed by the Mother and can never be born into the world in the first place. Willy Loman feels that he must die from such a world, but having no knowledge of a renewal ritual, finds only suicide available. Frederic Henry cannot experience death for he has not yet been born; he therefore remains alive, but it is a shadowy kind of living death.

It lies outside the scope of this essay to outline the social revolution which elevated work to the rank of an ideal; the forces accomplishing it made it a function of the superego, which in turn imposed a moral imperative upon man's public self. Following the Reformation the Puritan conscience sought to replace former ritualistic behavior by the ideal of hard work; it sought domination over man by forcing him to channel his energies into economic production, for it had just freed man from the dynamics of an authoritarian, medival ritual. But man cannot live in freedom and so easily submits himself to the compulsion to work. The sense of duty imposed upon him by the ideal of thrift to be sure reaches a climax in our present-day high standard of living,
but it transformed life into a tool of an impersonal productive power. Erich Fromm's book, *Escape from Freedom*, traces out in greater detail the story of how man freed himself from despots and tyrants and rigid family structures based on the nobility ideal, but how man has not yet won the freedom to create himself as an autonomous person. He finds the ideal of toil to be too compulsive, the lure of the marketplace too strong, his dependence upon commodities too significant, and he cannot escape. It appears inevitable that he fail in his escape, for his very tastes and wishes and ideals themselves emerge out of the economy.

Toil alienates because it separates us from our creative instinctual energies. In the modern economy the worker has become reduced to an anonymous entity. The object to which he devotes himself expresses little or nothing of his own feelings and wishes. His relationship to the object is mechanical and economic. Thus the energies which are available for creating himself are drained off into extraneous activities.

Toil transforms not merely the objects of man's labor but man himself into a commodity for sale. He offers his services, and thus literally becomes a "hand"; to his employer he has now become a "hired hand" rather than a personality. The individual consequently appears alone and insignificant; he has enslaved himself to a system; he has transformed himself into an instrument, a thing, a commodity. He can never be himself. In this circumstance the active use of his power can no longer be used to carve out a destiny. The tragedy is that his submission to an authoritarian system occurs in the name of conscience and under the compulsion of duty. His submission solidifies under the aura of morality under which the work ideal now parades, for disobedience produces guilt feelings which drive him back into conformity.

In his book *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud seems to agree that man has no native instincts for work; that instead the great majority of work which man accomplishes
is forced by necessity, and that this natural aversion to toil gives rise to some of man's most serious social problems.

Labor itself has social commitments. It involves community life; its center is the marketplace. If we sell our goods and services, there must be others who will buy them and the quality of our work must be judged largely in terms of its salability rather than the manner in which it improves ourselves as persons or in terms of its own inherent qualities. Society has established what our work will be like; it has organized the role we will play as workers. These choices are not our own. What is good will have less reference to our individual achievements than to our acting out these pre-established social roles. And the work we do consequently will yield a minimum of satisfactions.

But perhaps the greatest alienating power of toil is to destroy ritual which alone can insure the necessary renewal and growth of man's psyche. Work makes everyday life profane and non-symbolic. Work binds us to externals. And though it might require manipulative skills and repetitive actions such as often appear in ritualistic behavior, and though it usually has a social dimension, work nevertheless binds the worker to his object and prevents his withdrawal from the rational world of fixed relations to the inner realm of his own psychic forces. The tragedy is that we believe that our desire to work issues from our inner selves; whereas these wishes actually appear as internalized forms of repressive external systems. What appear to be freely chosen labors associated with the wish to do one's duty actually emerge as compulsions which have been unconsciously accepted from an authoritarian society.

As with language, so with labor there do appear to be non-alienating forms. If it can be put to ritual uses in the service of the psyche, work can assist in bringing on the fulfillment of self. Labor can have therapeutic value when its purpose is for atonement rather than economic production, as the labors of Hercules. In this instance labor becomes identical
with ritual, for its fruits consist of personality growth rather than increase of commodity. This form of labor redeems; it liberates the psyche from the bondage of its products by detaching the products of the action from the act itself and thereby culminating in a ceremony of expiation. Labor can perform a healing service to the soul if it can transcend the historical and proceed as a form of sacrifice.

The problem of whether labor can be made to serve sacrificial functions occurs from the earliest times in the world's major religions, and the solutions given to the problem illuminate a given experience as being religious or aesthetic, as being an act of absolution or of tragic failure of human efforts. It is the problem of faith vs. good works. Can we lay up treasures in heaven through hard work? What religious or aesthetic significance does hard work have?

For the most part the various religious solutions agree that the kind of labor which gives spiritual release becomes distinct from that labor which dominates and alienates the psyche in proportion as the motivations of the worker can be focused upon the quality of the action itself and to the degree that he is able to renounce all interest in the fruits of his actions. This is the great lesson which the Lord Krishna in The Bhagavad Gita teaches the hero of that work, Arjuna. In the largest sense the problem reduces to the task of separating off the moral components of work, or of any kind of action, from its economic consequences. If the work we do contributes to the formation of self, then the significance of the work attaches to the work itself rather than its fruits. As soon as our interest shifts to the products of our labors (in the sense of commodity) work has lost its value, and a life of work and vigorous activity become incompatible with spirituality or with a free self. Work which culminates in a kind of knowledge, specifically a knowledge of who one is and what he is, heals rather than alienates. Therefore it has religious rather than tragic implications. Work which culminates in the creation of desire for the fruits of work and
which therefore turns our interest away from what has occurred or what might have occurred within the psyche, allows the self, even encourages the self, to submit to repressive external forces. Merely to renounce an interest in the fruits of our labors hardly suffices for a sacrificial gesture. A subtler form of renunciation seems necessary if one wins a spiritual or autonomous existence. Man must renounce the idea of himself as a doer. He must achieve through ritual effort a desirelessness and a selflessness which completely detaches him from the fruits of his labors, and indeed from the thralldom of his material existence and of his individual existence. He must, that is, become god and his works divine. Then he will know who he is; he will have fully realized himself.

Let us briefly review. The kind of work which builds and sustains civilization involves the repressive utilization of man's instinctual energies. Capacity for work arises out of our harnessing of the pleasure principle and the coercion of it into socially useful forms. Economic production therefore represents sublimated pleasures and is the condition under which culture can exist. But the price paid for culture is man in alienation; it is a humanity whose pleasure drives are forced into painful toil. Freud develops this theme in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Marcuse formulates a philosophical explanation of it in his *Eros and Civilization*. To the extent that toil separates man from his own creative energies, toil serves a tragic purpose. Thus, the civilized man has always had on his hands the problem of retaining his civilization and his freedom as well. We have just examined his religious solution to this paradox. In a sense it is hardly a solution. What he seeks is release from alienating toil; what he achieves is complete submission to God. What he seeks is autonomy within human cultural limitations; what he achieves is the non-human state of absorption into divinity.

But there remains a second solution: through artistic activity man can have both freedom and culture, both
autonomy and hard work. Aesthetic activity pursues aims which do not repress and therefore which do not alienate. Just as in poetry, where the free play of human impulse for full gratification dominates the conceptual tendencies of language, so it is that in art activity man's impulse for free expression takes precedence over the demands of want and need, which are economic. The art object then, because it exhibits orderliness without domination, uncouples itself from the enchaining bonds of the marketplace and dissociates itself from any purposiveness other than its own free expression. The work expended upon art remains a form of play which submits only to its own lawfulness. But this kind of work always endangers a social order, for it bakes no bread and builds no bridges in the sense that these symbolize the solving of the scarcity problem. The pressure of want and need requires a stable economic order, and it also requires that most men engage in disagreeable toil as the only long-range means for meeting these needs. A social order which would be completely non-repressive, which would produce individuals who had the freedom to fulfill themselves uninhibited by a coercive ideal of hard work, would need to be an aesthetic social structure, and it therefore would of necessity presuppose a full and steady flow of economic goods for the use of mankind. Man could then be freely himself, just as art objects are freely themselves apart from any moral or practical uses to which they are put. But the tragedy is that in the face of scarcity man must toil, and through toil he alienates himself from his own self-determining potentialities.

Art offers the only possibility available to man for defining himself through vocation. Any tragedy which develops would therefore relate to the desertion of one's vocation, for desertion equates with the abandonment of selfhood. Non-aesthetic labor makes culture technological and gives life an air of contrivance. It deadens. And man no longer establishes his identity by what he does; rather, he loses his identity.
Furthermore, this form of tragedy makes life a struggle rather than a form of play, of imagination and creativeness. The struggle occurs in the marketplace rather than upon a moral battlefield; it is a struggle of man with things rather than with himself. It therefore reduces to sheer aggression. Man loses his integrity, for having no identity he places his loyalties upon an ideal which his time and custom dictate, which belong to a dominating order rather than to his own imaginative endeavors. Man's search for his identity is tragically misplaced when he seeks it among external authorities. He flits from one absolutism to another, from one repressive system to another and willingly surrenders his own autonomy in the face of the alienating toil which the authority places upon him with the promise that the individual thereby will discover his identity and his meaning. This form of sacrifice is not the kind which heals, for it can never be completely voluntary. It is not the act of an autonomous self.
PART II.

RESULTS OF ALIENATION:
TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES
CHAPTER IX

RATIONALLY: THE TRAGIC FLAW

Our thesis has been that tragedy depicts the efforts of personality to battle its way to autonomy by discovering and releasing the creative energies which lie untapped within its depths. The battle appears to be fought on at least two fronts. If the individual is to become more than a set of conditioned social responses, he must oppose those forces in his tradition which would coerce his creativity into predetermined patterns. This battle requires a violation of authority, a repudiation of the Voice of the Father. A second and even more crucial struggle occurs within his own psyche as he seeks to uncover the sources of his personal creative powers and to recognize them for what they are. This is the struggle for certainty, the struggle for decision, the effort to overcome doubt. It is the struggle to recognize the authentic within himself in the absence of authoritarian standards which would otherwise serve him. It is the search for authentic objects upon which his creative powers can be released, and he alone must measure the authenticity of these objects by the degree to which his personality has grown.

The tragedy is that he can win neither battle; yet he must try. If he succeeds in his rebellion against traditional forms and breaks them up, he has not by virtue of that circumstance achieved his autonomy. His demon voice bids him seek freedom; his intelligence presents it to his vision and
goads him into violent effort to realize it in his living. But comes the great deception, the grand disillusion: he cannot exist apart from confining form; his actual existence demands the comforts of the type which remain attached to authority. Thus, he fails in his second struggle, which is perhaps but a continuation of the first. It is a psychological struggle. To win life means to die from it but to die in the manner which will insure a rebirth. Just as death assures a rebirth, rebirth assures a renewal of vigor for self-fulfillment.

He fails because this kind of death means an incestuous return to the Mother power; thus, he cannot die without surrendering himself irretrievably even though he might fecundate the Mother in doing so and provide for a revival of life in the symbolic sense. Neither can he be reborn, for his newly won intelligence invalidates the act. His rationality has intervened and makes logically clear that the renewal of self cannot occur through a rebirth ceremony; rationality reduces the death-and-resurrection dynamic to ritual only and abrogates its actuality. But the psychological need to die remains. And the Hero must perforce undertake this dark journey out of respect for his own demon voice despite the fact that this voice cautions him about its inevitable failure.

Thus, he dies knowing that death is no prerequisite to rebirth. He attracts death, but to no end. In the largest sense it can be said that tragedy describes the tensions arising out of the conflict between our psychological urges to retreat to the irrational, the unconscious, the ritual, and our more rational demands that we face the harsh, divided world as revealed by our conscious existence.

We need now to describe the effects of alienation on tragic character, which may be epitomized in the person of the Hero. This means that we move from psychological analysis to literary interpretation. What explanation of the Hero’s struggle for self-formation can we give which will be aesthetically defensible? How can the tragic experience become an object of aesthetic delight?
The traditional explanation, based on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, involves the well-known theory of the tragic flaw. This theory proceeds from the belief that a given Hero contains within his moral make-up some weakness which will trap him into defeating and frustrating decisions. Our own thesis is that this theory becomes woefully inadequate and that it highly oversimplifies the tragic situation. As a superficial literary device it has a certain usefulness for the beginning student, but it leaves the basic problems unresolved.

The tragic flaw theory rests upon two premises, but these appear to be contradictory. The first one postulates as a field of action for the Hero a universe which operates from beginning to end as a morally ordered system. The universe itself can accept no responsibility for any destruction of mankind which may occur, and only if we can believe that goodness and moral order will assert themselves in the end, the theory goes, can we look upon the tragic defeat of individuals as proper objects of art. As we shall see later in this chapter, the more accurate description of the kind of world view which supports tragedy unfolds its structure as empty, meaningless and controlled by no forces of morality which can gainsay its stability and continuation. The universe itself, we will maintain, contains a tragic flaw as does human nature, and every successful tragedy portrays such a flaw.

A second premise which the tragic flaw theory requires is that other than his particular weakness the Hero must display an upright and noble character. His flaw both produces and justifies his downfall; his noble character makes it terrifying and meaningful. The paradox that the Hero be both noble and ignoble at the same time appears to intensify the tension rather than dissipate it, according to the theory. However, though these two corollaries of the theory are historically relevant, they appear not to be aesthetically necessary, nor do they turn out to be psychologically accurate.

If some defect in moral character be used to validate the tragic experience, then it should exist universally in human
nature and not merely within a particular person designated as a Hero. As a matter of fact, heroic qualities themselves, no less than ignoble ones, appear to be imbedded in human nature as such. The Hero represents all mankind, and indeed in a genuine sense actually is all men, for he is a projection of ourselves, a projection of our unconscious desires and abilities. All of us are heroic, no less than ignoble ones, appear to be imbedded in human nature as such. The Hero represents all mankind, and indeed in a genuine sense actually is all men, for he is a projection of ourselves, a projection of our unconscious desires and abilities. All of us are heroic, especially when we pretend, when we exaggerate, which inevitably we must do. Hence, the Hero materializes out of our efforts to know ourselves and to come to terms with ourselves, though he symbolizes our rather immature attempts.

Now if the Hero stands for the projections of our own heroic proportions so also do his moral weaknesses become our own. Whether the evils we witness localize themselves within separate villainous characters, or whether they appear as a limiting power in the person of the Hero, they are our own. We recognize them all, and therefore we develop sympathy and understanding for them. The Hero then represents only that aspect of our personality which remains untamed and invincible; he personalizes those forces which will carry us forward to an independent psychological existence. As we test our strength against the harshness of the world, we discover that after all we are somewhat less than heroic, that indeed we border upon the inadequate if not the depraved. We come upon ourselves, and we find some shameful and humiliating qualities.

But what does this projective theory mean with respect to the tragic flaw concept? It means that the tragic flaw furnishes no definitive information about the character of the Hero; it means that the Hero is like the rest of us, both mediocre and noble. It is less an aesthetic than a moral explanation to assert a causal relationship between one's destiny and his moral nature, whether this moral nature unfolds out of an inherent good will or from a will tainted with some evil thing. This law, the law of karma, stabilizes human conduct and sanctions the religious beliefs of im-
mortality and perhaps of transmigration, and it may even appear under this image in tragic drama, but it cancels itself out when required to furnish aesthetic explanation. The relationship between the Hero’s moral character and his subsequent destruction need be aesthetically necessary only. To insist upon an ethical determinism would erect a moral-religious order of belief rather than an artistic structure of enjoyment. The dramatist succeeds if he can establish artistic reasons why the Hero must die; death need not occur as a penalty for base deeds which one has done, or for immoral feelings which one has harbored.

If we grant that the Hero figure epitomizes our own adolescent wishes to be a grand and noble person, then we need an explanation of tragic character which is both more complex and more accurate than the tragic flaw concept. However, before we leave this theme, it might be interesting to note the extent of this “projection-of-ourselves” material. We project into an external image our historical selves as well as our personal identities. Indeed, history itself in the sense that it is a history of a race or of mankind or of one’s ancestors corresponds to the Hero qualities which we impose upon events. Carlyle’s famous hero-theory of history develops this thesis in one of its most complete versions. Earlier ideals express in quantitative symbols the Hero-qualities of the people. For example, followers of the Jain religion in India regard their earlier jivas or heroes as being morally perfect and therefore as giant-like in size. Their statues of the Heroes reach tremendous proportions, varying from twenty-five and thirty feet in height at Gwalior to 65 feet at Sravana Belgola in south central India. In ancient Jewish culture the notion of longevity expresses the same heroic ideals; the early Jewish heroes lived to be several hundred years old, and this life span corresponds to a moral quality. These Gargantuan or Lilliputian symbols, as the case may be, give us some insights into the nature of Hero formation; that is, they tend to support the “projection” theory of the origin of the Hero.
And they supply evidence of the inadequacy of the "tragic flaw" idea.

There is even more conclusive evidence available. We have said that if the tragic flaw theory can explicate the problem of tragic character, it must somehow appear as an ingredient of universal human nature. And obviously in this case it must be a function of man's original sin—his achievement of rationality. If the tragic flaw theory serves meaningfully in aesthetic theory, then it must be associated with man's intellectuality, which has been shown in the course of these chapters to constitute the alienating force in human nature. The tragic flaw of the tragic hero is no different from that which is found in every man. It is the curse imposed upon Adam as a consequence of his eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

Man's first halting image of himself is one of heroic proportions; our first knowledge of ourselves belongs to the heroic mode. But with maturity and the socializing of our experiences comes a more rational appraisal, and the Hero figure begins to crack and even to crumble. The Old Man of the East with his golden, silver, and brass aspects terminates with a broken clay foot, which symbolizes the fragmentation of ourselves by a self-criticizing intelligence. The Hero image breaks up and reveals its flaws under the mercilessly and unrelentingly disintegrating power of rationality. This progressive moral deterioration corresponds to the giant Jain Hero and his subsequent shrinkage, and to the Jewish Methusalah whose descendants can live but threescore years and ten. Our hero images are but short-lived, and exist always in the past, though their time is gloriously spent. We soon discover that we are not built in heroic proportions but that instead we partake of the commonplace and the mediocre, even the vile and unsavory. This discovery often shatters the Ego, as it did in the case of Biff in Death of a Salesman. His coming upon the knowledge that his father was a phony, that we are all phonies, and indeed that really
we are nothing, so completely estranged him from himself, his family, friends, and even his work that his personality collapsed under the impact.

Like his father, Biff symbolizes in many ways the typical tragedy of modern man. The tragedy unfolds out of the efforts of the common man to achieve an autonomous living. His only tragic flaw is the sheer mediocrity which he soon discovers in himself. The strong individual, the Hero, can battle his way to self-fulfillment, for he has uncovered the secret ritual which unlocks the life energies in the psyche. But he in whom the life energy lies unawakened, how can he become a free person? He lacks the means for invigorating his will. His contact with the world and with educational systems has sharpened his intelligence sufficiently to preclude a dying and rebornng; thus, he lacks both the capacity and the techniques for self-abandonment. He cannot sacrifice himself without doing so to no end or apart from clumsy suicidal gestures. If he lives, it is in alienation; if he dies, it is to no purpose. Tragedy describes the incompatibility of mediocrity with a free self.

The outcome of the Hero’s struggle for self-mastery, or at least one feature of it, consists in the knowledge of his own inherent blemishes. The tragic flaw then becomes not some defect which the Hero may avoid, but rather it is an un-avoidable aspect of human nature. And as we shall describe in Chapter XV, it produces the guilt feelings which appear always to accompany the discovery. The Lord Buddha’s long struggle for self-mastery terminated in the revelation of man’s essentially evil nature. Therefore the substance of his teaching as contained in the Four Noble Truths makes note of the fact of evil, describes ways to eradicate it from personal living. Job’s experiences disclose to him also that either man is evil, or that God is, or that somehow the universe is. He believes himself to be morally upright, and his faith that God is also good remains unshaken. Hence, Job never fully understands the implications of his lacerating
experiences. But he is on the right track. He instinctively
knows that the trouble somehow is bound up with his in-
tellectual apparatus, and he inquires deeply into the kind of
knowledge man can have and how this knowledge relates to
his particular circumstances. But his inquiry fails; he cannot
solve the riddle of the tragic flaw despite the fact that he
directly experiences it.

When confronted with the same riddle, Oedipus comes
up with an answer. The riddle takes the form of the question,
What does it mean to be a human being and to live a life
time? The initial solution, though a tentative and provisional
one, gives sufficient satisfaction to the Sphinx, a symbol of
Oedipus' own unconscious anxieties and fears; and Oedipus
becomes capable of understanding the dangerous but neces-
sary work requisite to the fulfillment of his potentialities.
Thus Oedipus continues his journey, enters Thebes, be-
comes the king and thereby identifies his vocation. But he
also marries the Queen, his mother. And these strange cir-
cumstances reveal the tragic flaw in human nature, the
infamous stigma, the monstrous depravity of which human
nature is capable. Oedipus's tragic flaw cannot be explained
by means of some simple literary device. It requires a full-
fledged psychological theory, for it must relate to human
nature and not to some particular idiosyncrasy of the Hero.
It is closely related to the discovery that all men, both the
heroic and the commonplace and dull, are built in much the
same way; they exhibit the same selfish motives, as
Buddha found out, the same hatreds and jealousies, the same
rebellions, the same satanic malfeasance.

We have maintained that if the tragic flaw theory retains
any meaning at all, it must describe the alienating power
present in all mankind rather than some individual trait of
a given tragic Hero. And we have said that this universally
estranging force is nothing more nor less than human intel-
ligence. Intelligence alienates because it invites man to over-
reach himself; it discovers to man his fragmented, corrupt
nature; it imposes duality upon experience and thereby sets up conflicts, as between love and hate, between having and losing. It is the source of all painful paradox. It creates the notion of universality, of eternity, of permanence. Rationality alone can conceive of deathlessness, and it therefore creates in man the urge to become immortal. It forces man to expand his personal, limited, finite experiences to a cosmic scale. Thus, it makes possible the idea of an ultimately meaningless universe. It is an agent of domination; yet it creates the conditions of freedom. It militates against aggression; yet aggression cannot occur in its absence. It softens our motor experiences and makes for indolence. It saps life of individuality by forcing it into institutional molds; yet when the individual discovers it within himself, he becomes the rebel. It sublimates sexuality, creates guilt feelings, and invites punishments. In a word, it produces the tragic flaw.

For the Greeks too the tragic flaw was related directly to the rational faculty. It often took the form of *hybris*, which means an overstepping of limits, going to extremes, missing the mark. As it appears in the tragic hero, it becomes a kind of arrogance, intellectual arrogance. It is the condition which tempts the Hero to a daring deed which can be justified only by his own disdainful pride and not by any appeal to a rational law. It is a form of vain intellectual imbalance which pushes a person beyond the bounds of due measure.

This definition of *hybris* is based on the typically Greek doctrine of the Golden Mean, a doctrine which teaches that morality is a mean between the two extremes of excess and deficiency. Virtue means maintaining a balance, a harmony, due measure. Only intelligence can steer conduct down the middle way, for it alone can recognize when limits of the unharmonious and the inappropriate have been reached. Rationality can moderate the impulses and temper the passions and so prevent excesses of conduct. This doctrine of moderation belongs to the rational world; it is a philosophical construction, a product of intellect. To commit *hybris*
then is to become irrational and to surrender to the forces of chaos, which means to violate the fixed order of the world and to awaken the Dionysian forces which lie within the unconscious. *Hybris* means reliance upon one’s own demon, upon one’s own voice in opposition to the claims of ordered society, hence the flavor of arrogance and contempt which often accompanies its expression. The Hero must pay the price for such dangers to society; he must die as a penalty for his immoderation.

Thus, a prime requisite of the Hero’s character must be his capacity for extending himself beyond the limits of his own existence and the embracing of a cosmic view. His is a restless spirit, a soul diseased with metaphysical longing, a mind searching for solutions among the ultimates. The hero must be a person whose capacities prove endlessly unplumbed and who submits to his Dionysian impulse to realize fully these capacities through some kind of action; and, as previously explained, the universe in which this self-fulfillment occurs must be an ultimately meaningless one. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* exhibits these characteristics more clearly perhaps than any other Hero.

The most important trait of Hamlet, and the one which marks him as a genuine tragic hero, is the ever-expanding quality of his sensibilities. Mind extends itself endlessly in order to integrate the fragments and disparities which clutter up living. Thus, even though Hamlet’s initial tension arises out of the need to refashion his emotional allegiances because of his mother’s defection, his mind quickly moves on in search of nobler objects upon which it can attach itself. Hamlet’s tendency to extend himself beyond his particular entanglements soon settles him upon a nobler object which his emotions can properly embrace and this is no other than life itself and the role which it plays in the total scheme of things.

Not merely, then, has Hamlet lost his bearings emotionally with respect to his mother, but he has come to recognize,
precisely on account of his feelings toward her, that the universe itself, which he has apparently heretofore accepted as a meaningful, stable structure, is essentially base, pointless, and out of joint. He generalizes his mother's guilt and infers that human life is equally commonplace and meaningless. The very first glimpse we get of Hamlet's mental conflict indicates that already he is beginning to accept that the conditions producing his tragedy are rooted in world structure and in human nature generally:

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seems to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! oh fie, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely.  

This tendency of Hamlet's emotions to transcend his mother's guilt increases throughout the play until they are almost completely fixed upon the more general theory that human life is inherently self-defeating and aimless.

Act II indicates that Hamlet is more concerned with metaphysics than with his mother, that the object of his emotions is an inherently vicious world which he so aptly describes, "... this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man!" A following soliloquy reveals further overreaching of Hamlet's emotions. Of the more than fifty lines in the soliloquy only two refer directly to his mother—to be sure, these two lines are supercharged with hatred, "Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!"

By Act III the shifting of Hamlet's emotions away from his mother onto a world view is almost complete. For ex-
ample, in the “To be or not to be” soliloquy there is not a single reference to his mother or to the particular circumstances which remain unsettled. The objects of his grief are more general, more profound. He contemplates the nature of life itself, and he sees it as bound up in heartaches and shocks, full of whips and scorns, and characterized by,

The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of dispriz’d love, the law’s delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns,
That patient merit of the unworthy takes . . .

Thus, this mother-guilt theme with which the play begins develops into nothing less than a world hypothesis, and it is an hypothesis which describes depravity as a final fact. Hamlet’s traumatic shock on discovering his mother’s weakness begins to generate in him a nobler passion than mere disgust; it is a passion which incites him into contemplating the ways of the world and of human life. This extension of sensibility compels Hamlet to accept the view that human living is purposeless, bestial and vile. Therefore Hamlet can remain a truly tragic hero.

Our thesis is that the essence of tragedy is to accept that life is without final aim, that it is ultimately meaningless and paradoxical, and that one is nevertheless forced by circumstances to take action in such a world. To be strongly motivated to act but to be so motivated in a purposeless universe produces tensions which are torturously agonizing and creates suffering which destroys. Shakespeare brought together with consummate skill the two themes which produce these two ingredients of tragedy: from the mother-guilt theme comes the conclusion that human life is valueless and the universe pointless; from the revenge theme emerges the impulse to action, which becomes transformed under the softening effects of the metaphysical views so recently uncovered into the tragic trait of irresolution. This extended version of the
revenge theme now becomes aesthetically functional. It replaces the old and inadequate explanation that Hamlet’s character is cursed with the tragic flaw of irresolution, for no one rushes headlong into action, even to avenge a father’s murder, when facing a purposeless universe. Such a world invites the strongest hero to humility and irresolution.

The refashioning of this revenge theme begins immediately in Act I. Just at the moment when Hamlet is agonizingly accustoming himself to detest what he ought to love, his father’s ghost challenges him to avenge the murder. Bewildered and lost in his new discovery of life’s aimlessness and at the same time shocked by the knowledge of the murder, he swears revenge. And he accepts the murder too as further proof of the essential baseness of human existence. But no sooner does he vow revenge than he realizes how pointless would indeed be such revenge. To slay his uncle solves no problems; to satisfy the ghost’s demands solves no problems. Hamlet’s tragedy is that there is nothing he can do to readjust the times which are out of joint. If he acts, he accomplishes nothing; if he fails to act, he accomplishes nothing. And the reason is that his problem is no longer a guilty mother and an unavenged father: it is that life is inherently vicious and sterile. Avenging a murder will not refashion the world, nor will it erase the foulness from his mother’s character. This is the tragedy; Hamlet’s indecision is only a means of dramatizing it. The tragic flaw does not inhere in the hero, but in the cosmos. This means that even the Final Powers can guarantee no redemption, that death remains a final fact.

The finality of evil then is the metaphysical basis for tragedy. Sooner or later the Hero comes to this discovery by the nature of his own experiences. He describes this condition variously. When Ivan in the Brothers Karamazov bursts in upon the trial of Mitya, for the murder of their father, he believes himself guilty and attempts to prove his guilt to the court. With his visions of the devil fresh in his mind
he begins to rant, "He is somewhere, no doubt—under that
table with the material evidence on it, perhaps . . . I told
him I didn’t want to keep quiet, and he talked about the
geological cataclysm . . . idiocy! Come, release the monster . . . he’s been singing a hymn. That’s because his heart is
light! . . . Oh, how stupid all this business is! Come, take
me instead of him! Why, why is everything so stupid?"8 And
Mitya himself fails to understand the world’s cruelty, and it
drives him to nightmarish dreams which even linger on to
torment his waking hours. "Why are people poor? Why is
the babe poor? Why is the steppe barren? Why don’t they
hug each other and kiss? Why don’t they sing songs of joy?
Why are they so dark from black misery? Why don’t they
feed the babe?" 9 he demands, knowing all the while that
his questions will go unanswered. Again Ivan says, "And
second, the stupider one is, the closer one is to reality. The
stupider one is, the clearer one is." 10

The prosecutor at Mitya’s trial sums up the tragic nature
of the Karamazov character in these words: "... he was of
the broad Karamazov character . . . capable of combining
the most incongruous contradictions, and capable of the
greatest heights and the greatest depths. . . . The sense of
their own degradation is as essential to these reckless, un-
bridled natures as the sense of their lofty generosity. . . .
Two extremes at the same moment, or they are miserable
and dissatisfied and their existence is incomplete. They are
wide, wide as mother Russia; they include everything and
put up with everything." 11

Dostoyevsky relies heavily on this idea that the Hero must
live in a world which does not make sense. Life must be
without purpose and without final direction. The universe
is so ordered that no final answer to any question is vouch-
safed to any man. Human beings in this kind of world con-
front situations which have no solution. This becomes the
basic aesthetic requirement of tragedy: the hero finds him-
self moved to action in a kind of world which insures that
these actions be self-defeating. His problem therefore remains ultimately unsolvable, his behavior pointless. He has the leading character of his novel, *The Possessed*, exclaim, "The world stands on absurdities!"

It is interesting to note that those cultures, such as the Chinese and Japanese, which created no metaphysics also produced no great tragedy. There appears no doctrine of original sin in Confucianism. Neither human nature nor the world is engaged in some monstrous and meaningless conflict between forces which are trying to fragment reality. Man and nature exist as an indivisible whole. The integration is complete. The way of life for the individual is the way of society and of the state and the way of government is the way of the universe. This famous doctrine of the Master precludes any genuine tragedy, for the same underlying power at work in human lives is continuous with that in nature. An ordered and meaningful harmony prevails throughout, and it becomes itself absurd to assert that the world stands on absurdities. The following quotation expresses the Chinese point of view: "The men of old who wished to shine with the illustrious power of personality throughout the Great Society, first had to govern their own states efficiently. Wishing to do this, they first had to make an ordered harmony in their own families. Wishing to do this, they first had to cultivate their individual selves. . . . Wishing to do this, they first had to extend their knowledge to the utmost. Such extension of knowledge consists in appreciating the nature of things." 12

In Chinese thought there can be no alienation, for there exists no bifurcation between man and his world or between any other sets of opposites. The very existence of the physical cosmos demonstrates the integral harmony between individual affairs and political affairs and between these and metaphysical affairs. The cosmic order repeats itself in human life, and human living expresses a metaphysical unity. Proof of this theory lies in the teaching that the history of
the cosmos begins at the same time as the history of man, for without the Emperor to maintain order on the earth, the cosmic order could not sustain itself. This is a far cry from the Dostoyevsky view, spoken by Mitya in the *Brothers Karamazov*, that disorder is the way of life, that even beauty is a terrible and awful thing, that "God sets us nothing but riddles." "Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed, I'd have him narrower. The devil only knows what to make of it."
CHAPTER X

REBELLION: THE FATAL ACT

The Devil who appears to Faust and bewitches him into a search for the supreme gratification of his impulses, who challenges Job's servitude to God and tempts him to rebel, who materializes in Ivan Karamazov's sitting room to taunt him with his rapidly dimming aspirations forms a part of the character complex of all the tragic Heroes. The Devil is not only Prince of Darkness, but at the same time he is Lucifer, Star of Light. As a source of light He symbolizes intelligence, enlightenment, and perhaps cunning, but He is the dark side of intelligence, that aspect which dares the individual into becoming himself in disobedience to the Father-authority. He is thus the Spirit of Rebellion, the Spirit of Alienation. He seduces man into a separation from his own Garden of Innocence, from that part of himself which is God-the-Father, from his own infancy. He is the Spirit of Freedom, the Adversary of Servitude. In the Book of Job and in Faust He challenges this servitude to God. The one thing which God seems to care about is the fact that Job and Faust are his servants; complacently, He calls this to Satan's attention. And the Satan in man rebels in order to reinstall a diminishing freedom. Even after He has been hurled by the Almighty from heaven, still in the image of a flame of enlightenment, and having been lodged in Hell, He can still say, in Milton's words, "Here at least we shall be free. . . . Better to reign in Hell that serve in Heaven". And
freely He sits in Hell with his flames still unextinguished, with his rebellious spirit still smoldering and ready to burst forth at any time that a Hero who is daring enough to fight his way to the earth's center can release it.

He is the Promethean Trickster who resorts to thievery in his efforts to improve the lot of man. Through ruse and stratagem he tricks the Zeus-Father into choosing the fat and bones as his part of the sacrifice, and he retains the flesh for himself. He traps man into civilization, seduces him into manhood. Thus, he symbolizes the clever and the cunning. Ivan's Devil enjoys his own cleverness with words and alacrity of argument; Faust's Mephistopheles revels in his powers of transformation; he relishes his various disguises, as when he insinuates himself initially into Faust's study in the form of a Poodle Dog. He is that aspect of intelligence which shades off into sheer cleverness, for it is still through trickery that we can often gratify our wishes.

For purposes of drama He is the Adversary, the haughty foe of the Zeus-God who becomes personalized into a fixed tradition. Being that part of each one of us that longs for freedom, He becomes our own Adversary and wages His battles in our own souls. What He battles for is progress. He is the Spirit of Progress; He represents that part of us which would reach beyond the limits of our own existence. He is found wherever the individual exists, whenever the individual marks off an advance in culture, a growth in intelligence, an increase in awareness. These are the qualities of the Hero. Therefore, the Devil-character is a part of the make-up of every tragic Hero.

But just as the Devil is the creator of man and of culture, He also brings Death into the world. Only the intelligent creature can conceive of Death, accept it as an inevitable but terrifying limit to his existence, dread its coming and rebel against it. Death is truly the Devil's invention. But to the tragic Hero, it can sometimes come as a comfort.

The three elements appear to be inseparably connected:
the emergence of Intellect, the organization of Rebellion, and the subsequent sellout to the Devil. What do these symbols mean? Why should it be the Devil who tempts Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, who bargains with Faust for his soul in return for plenitude of delight and increase in wisdom, who needles Job into a more responsible relationship with the final powers, and who extracts from Ivan Karamazov the promise to confess the murder of his father? In what sense does intelligence alienate man and stimulate him into a rebellion against the established order? Under what unifying principle do the images of the Intellect, the Rebel, and the Devil converge to produce the tragic experience?

The answer to these questions is not a simple one, for the answer would solve one of the most baffling of all the mysteries connected with human living. The solution would need to describe those conditions which cause the Hero to listen to his own demon voice in his battle for selfhood, a battle to destroy the father, as the Karamazov brothers destroy theirs, and consequently a battle to break up the father's world. The explanation would need to account for the psychological processes involved when out of the heeding of one's own inner voice emerges a new insight and a new knowledge. It would describe how the Hero, armed now with his new knowledge, his Flaming Sword, poses a constant threat to orderly existence. It would relate how out of the destruction of the Father arises the greatest danger of all: the possibility that his destructive activities can at any time terminate merely in nihilism or in idolatry.

The content of the three symbols is obviously the same. The inner voice of the Hero cannot be stilled by repressive measures of tradition; hence it thereby becomes a dangerous demon voice, the voice of the Devil himself. He automatically becomes a Rebel, for he has arrived at the new truth without the approval of society. Thus, Ivan suspects that the rather seedy and pitiful Devil who appears to him at the
time of the trial of his brother Mitya is speaking his own thoughts and acting in his own manner. Certainly the Mephistopheles who accompanies Faust on the journey into his own unconscious mind acts as the alter-ego of Faust himself. Selling one's soul to the Devil implies assuming the risk of relying upon one's own personal revelations, endangering as they may be. Satan, rather than God, engineers Job's hazardous advance in knowledge and in spiritual maturity. The devil figure therefore becomes one of many masks which the Hero must wear in the perilous drama of self-creation. The devil mask represents the hazard that the play will have an unhappy ending, that the demon voice will not have been accurate enough or strong enough to carry forward the Hero against the entrenched tradition.

Psychologically, the Rebel theme represents the overcompensations of the Hero in his efforts to avoid the kind of meaningless existence which a reabsorption into the father's tradition would entail. This kind of existence destroys individuality; that is, it constitutes a form of death, but the kind of death which is meaningless and which affords no reinvigoration through a rebirth. Yet the Hero still feels the strong attraction for Thanatos and therefore must probe for other forms of dying than that which a submission to a dominating authority would provide. To make sure that his death wishes will not succumb to this unauthentic lure, he takes up arms against it and by opposing ends it. Thus his individuality will not be eroded away by an authoritarian system. The fact that the Hero must submit to his own ideals and not to those of his father's world requires a kind of intellectual segregation of the individual person. He renounces his own integrity when he passively yields to external authority, whether this authority be erected by the father, by society, or by God. But he forever runs the risk of criminality or nihilism if his rejection remains only a rejection.

One aspect of Hamlet's tragedy was that he could not successfully repudiate his father's world. It intruded upon
him even from beyond the grave and sought to determine the course of his conduct and to formulate his moral standards. Hamlet could not resist his father's voice; neither could he heroically shut it off and put it behind him. His irresolution obviously stemmed from these psychological conflicts. The tragedy of Hamlet was that he lacked a Devil. If at any time during the course of his soul-searching soliloquies he had confronted himself with the form of the Devil, the Father's ghost would have dissolved away. This is not to say that Hamlet would have succeeded in avenging a murder. He may even have failed more miserably, which simply means that the Rebel theme is only one aspect of the total situation which may be called tragic. For example, Hamlet would have failed, as he did indeed fail, largely because he could not die and renew himself through a rebirth ritual. As a Hero he could not completely submit to his Father's Voice. Of necessity he must disregard that. And he could not return to the Mother for a rebirth, for he had discovered there a Monster Mother. He met not only an incest barrier but a monster figure which forced him back into his alienated existence. His only recourse was to drain off his energies into play acting, phantasy, and melancholia.

This unholy trinity converge to make up the Hero figure; they personify the assortment of psychic powers which lie deep in the unconscious mind and which are at work in the creation of a free self. They belong to an ancient dynamism. In Hindu culture they become Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. Their functions are separable in thinking only, and for dramatic purposes remain distinct characters. Mephistopheles speaks lines which may well be given to Shiva:

I am the Spirit that denies!
And justly so: for all things, from the Void
Called forth, deserve to be destroyed:
'Twere better then, were naught created.
Ivan's Devil has goaded him into the same contemptuous repudiation of order when he shouts out at the spectators in the courtroom, "They keep up the sham with one another. Liars! They all desire the death of their fathers!" The father's death, of course is only symbolic. What they really desire is the death of a dominating authority and it does not matter whether that authority be the Father, God himself, or God's orderly creation.

The opening scene in Faust emphasizes the authority of God's creation. God's aspect, which can never be comprehended even by the angels, furnishes the power which moves the universe in its majestic rounds and provides the regularity which gives its operation sublimity and splendor. The Devil reacts to such over-powering order with his classical denial, and he bases his denial upon the torment which the God-given "gleam of heavenlight," man's Reason, involves him in. Reason degrades man and abrogates any celestial order; it makes man beastlier than any of the beasts; it furnishes aspirations which serve only to lure men to their deaths.

Reason transforms man into a Rebel, and what he rebels from in the first place are rational constructions. This paradox lies at the heart of man's tragedy. He rebels in order to nullify a power which would engulf him and nullify his own personality. Two such orders exist as threats to man's freedom: a social-political order created by man, and a metaphysical order created by God. These converge into the same figure in Dostoyevsky's The Possessed. The title of this novel refers to those who are possessed with the Devil, or who are possessed with rationality, and who would on the basis of their own authority revolutionize society to the extent that it no longer could force upon individuals its traditional set of norms and standards, leaving the individual with no autonomy but with only an existence made up of a frozen constellation of conventional forms. But how develop a drama on the basis of this theme? The answer is that the People
who make up society must serve as both the Mother and the Father symbols, that they contain the new knowledge and the power which needs to be retrieved through a form of regression to them, a form of dying, if the Hero is to succeed. This is Dostoyevsky's favorite theme and recurs in most of his works. Out of it he develops a variety of tragic experiences. Let us examine the theme more closely.

The theory is, in Shatov's words, that the Russian people are, "... the only 'god bearing' people on the earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of a new God, and to whom are given the keys of life and of the new world."

And it is the common people who contain the life-giving energies which must be recovered by the Hero; they become therefore the Great Mother to whom the Hero must retreat in his search, to whom he must die. Dostoyevsky equates God and the common people, for as a religious person and perhaps unaware of the psychological symbolism which he is using, he cannot but help associating creative power with the idea of God. God is reduced to a quality of nationalism; or as Shatov insists, the nation is raised to a level of God.

The nationalism theme persists here for dramatic purposes. If a rebellion ensues, it must be localized within historical and geographical limits, if for no other reason than to meet Aristotle's requirement of plausibility. The Rebel needs to rebel from a specific political-social order. Hence, the God-People-Russia equation. There is no mistaking Dostoyevsky's meaning. He has Shatov explain, "The people is the body of God. Every people is only a people so long as it has its own god and excludes all other gods on earth irreconcilably; ... If a great people does not believe that the truth is only to be found in itself alone (in itself alone and in itself exclusively); if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up and save all the rest by its truth, it would at once sink into being ethnographically material, and not a great people. ... But there is only one truth. ... Only one nation is 'god-bearing'; that's the Russian people." Shatov
summarizes this dramatic thesis with his expression, "God is the synthetic personality of the whole people." 7

This theme erects the nuclear tragic condition. Man can only make his individual life meaningful by identifying with the people; yet in the very process of doing so he surrenders his selfhood. Once absorbed by the people he can never achieve freedom as a self. Therefore, if one destroys the people, revolutionizes them, he asserts his individuality and forever prevents his own annihilation in them. But the tragedy intensifies, for having saved himself from the people, he enslaves himself all the more to another power. Without having availed himself of the power which rests in the people, the Hero dies; but he cannot afford to become one of the people in an effort to release the power in his behalf. He rejects the people and rejects God; but in order to carry out his great denial, he must become Possessed with his own devil power.

In the novel this theme is dramatized by Pyotr and his fellow revolutionists. To repeat, it is a tragic plot because revolution as such, and all the ruination which it entails, is not self-sustaining; revolution tends to sanction destruction as an end in itself. And yet it is annihilating the very order which could give it direction and meaning. Social revolution is inherently defeative because it extinguishes the possibility of releasing any creative power in the world; it denies God. The contradictory of God expressed in social terms becomes self-destruction for its own sake and expresses itself as nihilism. The revolutionists know better than anyone else that there is no possible way for man to organize a political-social order which will have final meaning and which can confer complete security, and that even if it were possible, it should never be permitted. This cynical defeatism becomes an admonition from the leader of the group: "It's urged that, however much you tinker with the world, you can't make a good job of it, but that by cutting off a hundred million heads and so lightening one's burden, one can jump over the ditch more
Furthermore, the revolutionists would be the first members of society to rebel against themselves in the event that their efforts produced a stable social order. It is precisely order and security which the Possessed Ones cannot abide.

Nihilism is the contradictory of God. It "... aims by systematic denunciation to injure the prestige of local authority, to reduce the villages to confusion, to spread cynicism and scandals, together with disbelief in everything..." The most complete and vivid descriptions of Nihilism are put into the mouth of Shigalov, who describes the destruction of culture and science, of conventions and morality, of love and family ties: "The moment you have family ties or love you get the desire for property. We will destroy that desire; we'll make use of drunkenness, slander, spying; we'll make use of incredible corruption; we'll stifle every genius in its infancy." Such, then, are the methods of the revolutionists. But the tragic fact is that they are more than methods—they become the ends of activity as well. Destruction is sought for its own sake. Just as Stravrogin on the level of personal morality found perversions to be beautiful and worthy of being pursued, so on a scale of social morality, ruination has its own fascination. Values are laid out according to the sheer amount of destructiveness which can be accomplished: "We will proclaim destruction... Why is it, why is it that idea has such a fascination... and there will be an upheaval! There's going to be an upset as the world has never seen before. Russia will be overwhelmed with darkness and the earth will weep for its old gods..." Pyotr emphasizes time and again the ends and methods of the Nihilists, methods so inconceivably inhuman that we could accuse Dostoyevsky of fantastic exaggeration had subsequent history not unfolded in bold and shameless outline some of the features of this revolutionism. Pyotr explains what is left to be done: "But one or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed..."
into a loathsome, cruel, egoistic reptile. That’s what we need! And what’s more, a little ‘fresh blood’ that we may get accustomed to it.”

The revolutionists, like Kirillov in the field of personal morality, attempt to justify their rebellion and their destructiveness as a search for individual freedom. This venture assumes tragic proportions to the extent that it lures the Possessed Ones into accepting that Unlimited Freedom is the only freedom outside of God, and that Unlimited Freedom implies either unlimited despotism, which they object to in the first place as being Godly, or complete social anarchy, which is Nihilism. Kirillov objected to the despotism of God’s will in his personal life; he sought freedom from it but reasoned that the only possible chance for freedom involved an assertion of his own self-will to the point where it rivaled and overcame the will of God. This assertion took the form of self-destruction. So it is with Shigalov. If society is to achieve freedom from God, which means freedom from itself, it must resort to mass destruction—provided, there might be the possibility of a compromise.

A compromise might be worked out whereby a few people, the instigators of the revolution, could live in absolute freedom while the majority of the people lived in absolute submission. This is the only possible arrangement, Shigalov points out. It is logical, and is in fact the only possibility of building an earthly paradise. In this kind of state there shall be masters and slaves, masters who will draw out of the people the God-binding principle and wield it themselves, and slaves who will yield over their Godliness to become as a consequence something just less than human. “One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and, through boundless submission, will by a series of regenerations attain primeval innocence, something like the Garden of Eden.” But, although Shigalov claims that his theory is “founded on the facts of
nature and is highly logical,” the other revolutionists find this compromise unsatisfactory. Pyotr is most outspoken when he answers Shigalov: “This is pretty thorough rot.”

It is rot because it hints at some semblance of social order, even though it is one based on the slave-master distinction. And even if the revolutionists were the masters, it would be an intolerable arrangement, for it would still be meaningful. What Pyotr is after is complete disorder. To discuss ordered social reform is merely a pastime, a form of entertainment; anything except destruction for its own sake is pure stupidity, or else merely aesthetic entertainment. A further tragic prerequisite to revolution is the necessity for the rebels to destroy each other as the only basis for achieving cooperation among themselves. The power which would bind The Possessed Ones into a destructive unity is bloodshed. Stavrogin explains, “All that business of titles and sentimentalism is a very good cement, but there is something better; persuade four members of a circle to do for a fifth on the pretence that he is a traitor, and you’ll tie them all together with the blood they’ve shed as though it were a knot. They’ll be your slaves, they won’t dare to rebel or call you to account.”

Thus the inference is clear: Revolutionists can work together only if they can occasionally slay each other, with or without a reason. If they kill each other, they need to gain followers in increasingly greater numbers; hence, killings among themselves will increase proportionately. There is no terminating point for this snowballing process except in the random annihilation of whole peoples, including the instigators of the revolution. This is why social agitation is inherently self-destructive.

The murder of Shatov, which was originally meant to be the central plot of the novel, indicates how important is the need for blood-cement, because this murder above all other events in the novel claims the most time and efforts of the revolutionists. In his introduction to the novel Yarmolinsky explains that Shatov’s murder follows in some de-
tail the events surrounding a murder which occurred in Moscow in 1869, in which a member of a revolutionary circle was slain by his fellow-conspirators. Dostoyevsky followed the proceedings of the trial in the press, and the details of the murder plot which came to light and the motivation back of it gave him the clue that he needed: not merely is social insurrection self-defeating but the insurrectionists themselves can maintain themselves only at the expense of members of their own group. Stavrogin is clever enough to guess that this fact explains the plot against Shatov even before it is brought off. He confronts Pyotr with his guess, "I told you this evening why you needed Shatov's blood. It's the cement you want to bind your groups together with."

Another concept which goes into the structure of the tragedy of The Possessed is that of equality. It was Shigalov, Pyotr explains, who discovered equality. When he divided the people into the masters and the slaves, and endowed the masters with the attribute of absolute freedom, he discovered a need for some binding power which would keep the slaves submissive. This discovery is equality. The slaves shall all be equal. "Everyone belongs to all and all to everyone. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. In extreme cases, he advocates slander and murder, but the great thing about it is equality." But how shall equality be accomplished? The process is simple enough if we know what kind of equality we want. It is not, for example, equality under God which we are after. God has already been banished. What we want is equality in submission. This is achieved as follows: "To begin with, the level of education, science, and talents is lowered. A high level of education and science is only possible for great intellects, and they are not wanted. . . . Great intellects cannot help being despots, and they've always done more harm than good. They will be banished or put to death. Cicero will have his tongue cut off, Copernicus will have his eyes put out. Shakespeare will be stoned—"
What is needed now is not people who can take a new step and utter a new word, people who are creators and discoverers. What is needed for the revolution is utter submission and discipline: "We'll reduce all to a common denominator! Complete equality! . . . Absolute submission, absolute loss of individuality, but once in thirty years Shigalov would let them have a shock and they would all suddenly begin eating each other up, to a certain point, simply as a precaution against boredom . . . Shigalovism is for the slaves."  

The theory of Shigalov is in Pyotr's eyes, "... a rare specimen of the jeweler's art. It's an ideal; it's in the future." But the theory still lacks an essential ingredient. A more apocalyptic event must transpire, something more immediate and compelling, but at the same time something coarse and deceitful. Pyotr has already invented his climactic event, and it will be the culmination of Nihilism. Socialism can destroy all of the old conventions and moralities, the old cultures and sciences, but it is left to Nihilism to bring forth the New Savior, the new Anti-Christ whom the rabble will follow and worship. This will be Ivan the Tsarevitch!  

But Ivan the Tsarevitch fits into our tragic picture, for he is only an invention, a legend, a hollow dream. This will be the greatest deception of all, the New Ivan who will come forth uttering the New Truth and proclaiming a New Law for the land. Every deceptive trick in revolutionism will be used to destroy the old culture and to create the new. The Invented Ivan will be described as being in hiding. "Do you know the magic of that phrase, 'he is in hiding'? . . . We'll set a legend going better than the Skoptsis." Pyotr continues, "He exists, but no one has seen him; he is in hiding. And do you know, one might show you, to one out of a hundred thousand, for instance. And the rumor will spread all over the land. 'We've seen him, we've seen him.'" The only important thing is the legend, the deception.
That is sufficient for the people; they do not ask for more. They are perfectly happy worshipping legends, even the legend of the God of Anarchy.

Well, what about the people? Will they worship a deception? Do they really bear God in their hearts?

If we accept this theme, we accept the possibility—even the inevitability—of tragedy in the lives of those who deny either God or the Russian people. These lives would be tragic because they would be without final meaning. Theirs is a necessary, automatic self-destruction. We have seen the theory operate. It works without fail. Every person in the novel who dared stand aloof from it was cut down. There were no exceptions, not even for those who saw their initial mistake, repented, and tried to become one of the people again. Since this is true and since it is true because of the Messianic doctrine that the Russian people are the chosen ones, the most crucial question which we can now ask is, Are the Russian people really the God-bearing people?

The answer to this question plunges us to the very heart of the tragedy of The Possessed, for the answer is, No. The Russian people as depicted by Dostoyevsky himself are servile and stupid, cruel and murderous, deceitfully destructive. They are no different from the Possessed Ones. That is the great tragedy of The Possessed. Life on any basis is aimless and without meaning.

The supreme tragedy is that the Russian people cannot bear God in their hearts. On a national scale the people disclose the same moral perversions as Stavrogin, the same deceitfulness as Pyotr, the same rebelliousness as Kirillov. Pyotr is half aware of this truth. He knows that the motives and the conduct of normal people differ in no way from that of his revolutionists. He describes in the following words some of the “people” who are on his side, who are unknowingly, but inherently, evil: “I’ve reckoned them all up: a teacher who laughs with children at their God and at their cradle is on our side. The lawyer who defends an educated
murderer because he is more cultured than his victims . . . The schoolboys who murder a peasant for the sake of a sensation are ours. The juries who acquit every criminal are ours. The prosecutor who trembles at a trial for fear he should not seem advanced enough is ours, ours. Among official and literary men we have lots, lots, and they don't know it themselves . . . On all sides we see vanity puffed up out of all proportion; brutal, monstrous appetites . . .”

Dostoyevsky himself is just as harsh with the people. Whenever they appear in the novel, they are bent on destruction. Their social life is built upon sham and deceitfulness, even the aristocratic among them. They babble about infantile absurdities. They engage in debaucheries, and it is more than a picturesque saying that their God is all too easily banished by cheap vodka. Pyotr describes them thus: “The peasants are drunk, the mothers are drunk, the children are drunk, the churches are empty, and in the peasant courts one hears, ‘Two hundred lashes or stand us to a bucket of vodka.’” It is the peasants who rise up and murder an innocent Liza; they beat her to death, but their action is excused as being accidental, for the people were, “. . . scarcely conscious of what they were doing—drunk and irresponsible.”

No revolutionist was more savagely brutal than this irresponsible mob of peasants who reputedly are the God-bearing people. Even the revolutionists were surprised at the limits to which the people had gone when they burned and murdered the Lebyadkins. The peasants had out-revolutionized the revolutionaries.
CHAPTER XI

THE DEVIL: THE ALIENATED PERSONALITY

The political rebel which Dostoyevsky describes in *The Possessed* relies more heavily on action than on thought and consequently never fully projects from his own personality into a separate agency his Devil voice. Satan does not appear as a distinct character in the novel despite the fact that He remains an integral part of every person and dominates every mood and every action. The Devil need not emerge in individual form, for the tragic conflict develops in a sense out of the clash of various devil forces rather than between the desires of a Hero to return to his Mother and his drives for a spontaneous, self-defining existence, the latter power being that aspect of his character which would assume the Devil form. But in order to present this kind of conflict, which fundamentally is an intellectual one, it is often dramatically effective to objectify the Devil. He then becomes reason incarnate, the tormentor of man, the goad, the hazardous gamble, the vision of unrestrained pleasure, the trickster. He symbolizes all that man can imagine with respect to his ability to attain absolute knowledge, final satisfaction, supreme rapture—in a word, full autonomy. He represents man tugging at his finitude.

Only the Devil can offer food which fully satiates, pleasures which have their source "in the spheres we dream of yonder," knowledge which encompasses the infinite. If man
would aspire to these, he must league himself with his own Satanic powers. Reason infects man with a metaphysical sickness for which there is no cure in piecemeal human knowledge. His thirst increases with each new addition to his fund of information and, as it does with Faust, leads to frustrations:

I feel, indeed, that I have made the treasure
Of human thought and knowledge mine, in vain;
And if I now sit down in restful leisure,
No fount of newer strength is in my brain:
I am no hair's breadth more in height,
Nor nearer to the Infinite.¹

As if Goethe does not wish us to miss this crucial point—this theme of the entire Faustian legend—he has Mephistopheles repeat it again to the student who appears at Faust's study for some instruction in "all that there is in Earth and Heaven, in Nature and in Science too." Responds Mephistopheles, having enumerated in irony a course of study for the naive student,

And after—first and foremost duty—
Of Metaphysics learn the use and beauty!
See that you most profoundly gain
What does not suit the human brain!²

But the Devil's original description of man's tragic flaw remains the classical statement. As a direct challenge to God's complacency with respect to Faust's loyalty to His authority, Mephistopheles says accusingly,

Forsooth! He serves you after strange devices:
No earthly meat or drink the food suffices:
His spirit's ferment far aspireth;
Half conscious of his frenzied, crazed unrest,
The fairest stars from Heaven he requireth,  
From Earth the highest raptures and the best,  
And all the Near and Far that he desireth  
Fails to subdue the tumult of his breast.

A cluster of complex ideas makes up the tragic circumstances which are so clearly delineated in Faust. Intelligence emerges in the human psyche. It torments man into aspiring for finalities. These superlatives betoken his longings for complete satiation of impulses, including his intellectual ones. God represents the established order which has reduced his followers to submissive servitude—He refers to Faust as servant, just as God in the Book of Job refers to Job as His servant. God's repressive authority reaches the width and breadth of the land, and of the human psyche. The Angels proclaim its majesty and beauty—but do not understand it. Man's longings to be free must therefore of necessity materialize into an arch enemy of the established regime, which has already been identified with what is good in view of the fact that it provides comforts and security. In the image of the Devil the rebellion against God can then proceed.

The opening gun in this titanic struggle is fired by Satan when he accuses God of such complete domination of man that man has little choice but to submit to His authority. God's coercive power appears under two guises. First, it resolves itself into a protecting and comforting wall which insures man's personal safety. Though a protection, it nevertheless constitutes a threat to man's freedom; therefore, the Devil accuses God of buying off man's loyalty for the price of security. "Does Job fear God for nought?" Satan asks. "Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side?"

The second version of this theme has it that God buys man's freedom with happiness. A grandiose treatment of this theme appears in the account of the Grand Inquisitor in the Brothers Karamazov. In this novel Ivan develops the insidi-
ously disturbing theory that, though man is born an intellectual rebel and is therefore doomed to suffer in misery, God has bought him off with the lures of contentment. God's offer includes bread as well as happiness, and man cannot resist these temptations, and he yields over his freedom, or at least what pretenses to freedom he might claim. It is the lot of man, Ivan explains, to follow in the complacent belief of God's that men will rush to surrender their freedom for the security of a godly order. Thus has God purchased the servitude of Job and Faust. God cannot understand how Job might heed the voice of Satan and depart from the economic security which his own contractual agreement provides. So certain is He of man's submission that He is willing to give full rein to Satan's efforts to seduce man into freedom; God knows that even the strongest of the Heroes can reach only a small distance and that they will return when hungry to lay their freedom upon the altar of security and contentment. Or else they face the peril of self-destruction. In either instance God's celestial order prevails, and the Devil voice which has whipped man into a frenzy of aspiration and hope gives way to the Voice out of the Whirlwind which announces the glory and majesty of God's handiwork—and the impotence of man.

Let us trace out this theme in greater detail as it unfolds in the *Book of Job*. For dramatic as well as for psychological reasons the Devil appears only once, and this is as the protagonist. Dramatically he is equal to God, for He initiates the tragic conflict; psychologically He then submerges himself into Job's unconscious mind to torture him into rebellion. We must then identify the Devil with the tortuous questioning of God's order which Job undertakes. Job has been taught that if he worships God, he will prosper. His economic security comes as a reward for his allegiance to authority. He worships God; he is a good man, and he does prosper. It is that simple. On the other hand, men who fail to prosper are evil, and a signal that a man is no longer upright
in God's sight is his lack of material resources. This view is clearly expressed by Elihu: "If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their days in pleasure. But if they obey him not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge." But now it turns out that Job's family, his property, and his livestock are destroyed without warning and without any apparent reason. God removes the hedge. The Devil begins his operations. Job then experiences a mental anguish in rebellion against the established order.

Job requires an entirely new sanction for his relationship to God, else he must believe that life has no explanation at all. Without any warning he faces the problem of understanding how a good man can receive the same treatment from God which evil men receive. The principles according to which he has ordered his affairs with God are no longer any principles at all. Events which are happening to him contradict every law by which he has lived and by which he has found meaning in life. Job's tragedy is that he can find no explanation of these new kinds of events without violating these authorities, and the only grounds for his rebel attitude lie in his own experiences, his own Devil voice. The result is that his life has become purposeless and unexplainable. He cannot explain human existence according to any understandable principles. Like Ivan, Job is tempted to take his own measures and to accept that anything is lawful. These attitudes readily identify themselves as the essence of Devil doctrine.

More specifically, Job can no longer understand what it means to do evil or to do good and to what extent these are identified with himself. There never is any doubt in his mind that men should do good and eschew evil. Job knows what the moral principles are according to which man can achieve the good life, and until the series of misfortunes strike him, he knows what sanctions the moral principles as being the right ones. The sanction is God; it is
the contractual agreement between God and man, but with the destruction of Job's properties this sanction is removed. Job then is required to discover some new meaning to human suffering; some new explanation of good and evil. That is to say, Job faces the problem of growing out of an infantile attachment to authority. He must take the dangerous but heroic journey into himself in an effort to win his own freedom. Reluctantly and perhaps without realizing it, Job surrenders to his Devil.

Job's tragic struggle is a deeply moving one. His relationship to God's authority had been a personal one; hence, when the way of life to which he had so long been accustomed has been abandoned, Job feels that he has been abandoned too. Personal abandonment without a cause is the reason for Job's mental anguish. He ponders long and deeply; he sits for seven days and nights in silence trying to discover some new meaning in life which would account for these new facts. Job's own description of his emotional conflict indicates the depths of despair to which he has sunk. Life is so empty and meaningless that he curses the day he was born:

"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning." 6

Job's anguish is intensified by his failure to find a rational explanation for the conflict between his inner righteousness
and his external misfortunes. It is a typical tragic conflict in that it involves a bankruptcy of human intelligence. His faith remains unshaken; there never was any faltering in this respect. It is his understanding which no longer serves him, yet which pushes him into rebellion. He demands to know the answers to some fundamental problems in terms of human reason, but he finds his own reason inadequate. His intellectual frustration causes him to wonder if even God can supply answers which the human mind can grasp: “For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together to judgment.” This then is Job’s paradox: he requires to know truths which are available only to an infinite wisdom. We need hardly add that these demands are made in the name of Satan, just as they were in the case of Faust. He demands to know what the final answers are, what destiny man can hope for, what God’s nature is. “I will say unto God, Do not condemn me: shew me whereof thou contendest with me.” 7 Job’s rebellion reaches the point of impiety; he demands that indeed if God exists then He must reveal himself and declare to Job what the solutions are to the problems which are bothering him: “Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress . . . and shine upon the counsel of the wicked.” “Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?” “Are thy days as the days of man? Are thy years as man’s days, that thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?” 8

Job’s intellectual probing does not cease until it has seized upon the most tantalizing of all questions, “If a man die, shall he live again?” He questions man’s ability to know anything at all about human destiny: “But man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fall from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” 9 Like Adam and Eve, Job now is seeking knowledge of human destiny; like them he is warned
not to concern himself with these affairs—because they are God's affairs. And unless man presumes to be God, he must temper his intellectual curiosity by his faith. Job's friend, Eliphaz, berates him unmercifully for his intellectual curiosity: "Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?" 

The three friends' conventional views place them on the side of God. Job is aware that he is spiritually far beyond them, that their arguments are pointless—even insipid—as an interpretation of this new fact which he has discovered. Hence, the friends serve the aesthetic function of aggravating his tragic grief by their intolerantly narrow views of human destiny. Their wisdom is the wisdom of tradition, wisdom which has long since outlasted its ability to serve; a shallow, pointless wisdom, a wisdom which forbids a man's taking a new step and his uttering a new word. Had they convinced Job to adopt their views, God would have won his wager; and man's capacity for a deepened spiritual experience would have been postponed until a Hero stronger than Job could arise and take up the battle again.

Finally Job is trapped. His restless mind soon stumbles upon the most disturbing of all questions. How can a man know? What can he know? Of what, exactly, does wisdom consist? In what sense can it be said that man knows that there is a harmony in nature which implies the existence of God, which in turn might imply an immortal existence for man? Job undertakes this analysis in Chapter 28. He begins by noting that everything in nature is patterned; it makes sense; it has its appointed place and function: "As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire." Again, speaking of the orderly manner of God's creation, Job says, "He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overthroweth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eyes seeth every precious thing."
Then comes the question, But where is wisdom? What is its nature? Where is it to be found? And most important, can it help solve the problem of good and evil? Of human destiny? Can human wisdom answer the question, If a man die shall he live again? Job moves from an inquiry into nature's orderliness into an inquiry of human nature. The solution to these questions is that knowledge which is ultimately reliable is not to be found in any part of nature. "The deep saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me." Indeed, the kind of wisdom that Job is seeking is not related to any material thing. It has no price. It is hidden from the eyes of man. It is, as a matter of fact, an attribute of God, and if man is to become wise he must also become God. Only God knows where knowledge is to be found: "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knows the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." The wise man is the man who fears God. The understanding man is the man who eschews evildoing. These are the answers to Job's questions.

What do they mean? They suggest to Job that the wisdom which heals becomes available only to the Hero who can engage in the dangerous ritual of dying and being reborn. God's nature softens in the course of Job's agonizing experiences and now becomes a Mother image as the fount of truth and power to which he can retreat in search of a secret wisdom. The rebel finally surrenders, but not to God's authority. The Devil voice is hushed, at least temporarily. It has lost the wager, but only until it can emerge again in a renewed effort.

Ivan Karamazov is of a piece with Job. His also is a rebellion against a metaphysical world view, and as in the case of Job, it is initiated by humiliating personal experiences. Ivan's rebellion stems from his intellectuality. But like all tragic Heroes, and especially those in a Dostoyevsky novel, his is not a simple character: he is broad, paradoxical, mysterious, unfathomable. He remains an enigma to himself,
to his brothers, and even to the reader. But certainly his prime motives and his passions cluster about his intellectual probings, his consequent conflict between belief and unbelief, and his rebellion against all authority, which in his case comes to be symbolized in the person of his father. His unconscious desire to murder his father reaches beyond any personal relationship to a parent; it expresses his rebellious attitude toward all coercive systems, especially to religious ones, for to him the beliefs in God's existence and in immortality constitute the ultimate in the power to dominate.

The natural unfolding of the intellectual processes is perhaps enough to cause a man to embark upon a rebellious adventure; but if the system against which he rebels permits injustices and absurdities, he can justify all the more strongly his rebellion and can more easily allay the guilt feelings which arise. Ivan finds evidence of injustice, and the enormity of it almost drives him insane. The world is indeed absurd, and the proof of it lies in the fact that God's harmony apparently includes suffering which has no cause, and what is more, it includes the suffering and the torture of children. Therefore he rejects such an order, even if it is divine. He outlines these arguments to his brother, Alyosha, presenting instance after instance of the unbelievable cruelty to and the torture of children. Any cosmic harmony which requires the pitiful suffering of children, he rejects. The tears of all humanity soak the earth from its crust to its center, he says. And there is no reason for it. No cause. And none of the victims are guilty. Thus, in disgust, but with an aura of humility, Ivan expresses his withdrawal: "Let me tell you, novice, that the absurd is only too necessary on earth. The whole world stands on absurdities, and perhaps nothing would come to pass without them . . . I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men themselves are to blame, I suppose; they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven, though they knew they would become unhappy, so
there is no need to pity them. With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is there is suffering and that there are none guilty . . . and I cannot consent to live by it!"

These lines reveal Ivan as a member of that noble group of rebels which includes Prometheus and Faust. They rebel because the world and human life are absurd and because they must of necessity be absurd, for they are literally created out of absurdities. There is no escape—except in self-annihilation. And this is the tragedy: the Devil and chaos are the authors of civilization. These produce culture. The very creation of the universe proceeds on the basis of the ridiculous and the illogical, and the most pointless farce of all grows out of the meaningless anguish which men must suffer.

But the heavenly scene is hardly brighter. Suppose that God has created a divine harmony, Ivan suggests; do we have to pay for eternal harmony with the torture of little children? It is beyond all human comprehension to assert that any kind of godly plan can include meaningless suffering, even on the basis of some final justice which God might vouchsafe to the sufferers. Says Ivan, "What pulls me up here is that I can't accept that harmony, and while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures . . . I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one tortured child." 12

In fascinated horror Alyosha listens to Ivan's recitation, then quietly says, "That's rebellion." To which Ivan responds, "Rebellion? I am sorry you call it that. One can hardly live in rebellion, and I want to live." This conversation makes clear that Ivan understands the consequences of his rebellion: he must die. As a human being, he cannot live in complete freedom; there is no other alternative which can be rationally justified than to "take my own measures."

Ivan accepts his tragic fate. He accepts it almost too easily, yet a struggle in the face of such monolithic ridiculousness
hardly seems appropriate. One runs the risk of transforming himself into a fool or a ludicrous Quixote jousting with windmills. The only solution Ivan sees lies in his youthfulness. Youth in the end can triumph over disillusion and disgust. But come the age of thirty, he shall face the inevitable: “Do you know I’ve been sitting here thinking to myself that if I didn’t believe in life . . . lost faith in the order of things, were convinced in fact that everything is disorderly, damnable, and perhaps a devil-ridden chaos, if I were struck by every horror of man’s disillusionment—still I should want to live. . . . At thirty though, I shall be sure to leave the cup, even if I’ve not emptied it, and turn away—where I don’t know.”

Thus, the nature and consequences of Ivan’s rebellion: how does he translate it into action? First, he accepts the principle that in the absence of a cosmic order which can vouchsafe a meaningful life, he can take his own measures, and he understands this to mean that literally anything is lawful. If there is no immortality, then there is no virtue; consequently, one’s own desires become the sanctions for what one does. Second, he rebels against authority through his unconscious wishes to murder his father. Fyodor senses these unconscious longings and comes to fear Ivan even more than he fears any other of his murderous sons. He claims that Ivan is not one of them, that he loves nobody, that indeed he is a victim of his own devil. And Fyodor speaks more accurately than he thought.

Now what of Ivan’s Devil? What is his role in the tragedy? Unlike the Satan of Job and the Mephistopheles of Faust who make their appearance in the beginning as protagonists in an act of challenging God’s ways with man, Ivan’s Devil appears only at the end of the tragedy and never in the role of an equal of God’s or as a threat to God’s authority. In some respects he resembles the Faustian devil: both are scholarly, though somewhat seedy, and they even border upon the sordid. They dote upon argument and like to display their
cleverness with words and with ideas. They are characterized more by guile and trickery than by nobility of spirit, as was the case of Prometheus. How explain these Devils? What is their dramatic necessity for tragedy?

If the general thesis of this essay applies, we can begin by assuming that the explanation will be psychological rather than religious or even strictly literary. We shall see that the Devil is only the other face of the Hero, and that the Hero is the materialization of the individual’s inner yearnings for self-fulfillment under the impulse of a newly won intelligence. To realize himself the Hero must do battle with authority, with his parents whom he really loves. Now it is a sorry and shoddy thing to battle one’s parents or to wish their annihilation; yet the achievement of full independence seems to require it. Out of this circumstance grows our ambivalent feelings, our vacillation between disgust and desire for parental comforts, our agony over belief or unbelief. Our sensibilities revolt against such infamous desires, and we must remove them from us, feeling meanwhile a lacerating guilt for having them in the first place. It is precisely these projected feelings which materialize into the seedy Devil character. The apparent paradox is that this Devil still symbolizes our aspirations for self-hood, our hopes for final satisfactions and for final knowledge. It is only the very limited and piecemeal way in which these aspirations relate to our daily lives that removes their prideful grandeur and which occasionally transforms the Devil into a shamefully ridiculous character.

Ivan’s relationship to his Devil is a masterpiece of dramatic subtlety. In the case of Job the identity with Satan is hardly apparent. The construction of the tragedy treats them as independent characters, and the separateness is emphasized by having the Devil disappear after he creates the original disturbance. Neither Job nor the reader becomes aware of the identity until we accept Satan as the protagonist who spurs Job on into an intellectual rebellion against God’s
order and into the creation of a new level of spiritual experience. Like Ivan, Job also unconsciously desired the destruction of God’s authority and even the death of his own family. The actual annihilation of Job’s family suggests that his rebellious spirit was far more intense than Ivan’s, whose murderous wishes focused only upon his father. Job’s rebellion reaches the proportions of the monstrous; therefore we could expect his guilt feelings to torment him all the more intensely. But his Devil was dramatically so far removed from his own awareness that when his family and his property were destroyed, Job hardly felt any pangs of conscience. Only his wife comprehended the full significance of this act—namely that Job himself had symbolically murdered his family and had destroyed his economic order—and in sheer horror she advised her husband to curse God and die. At this point she is more perceptive than Job.

Job’s failure to solve the problem of why suffering exists which has no justification is closely related to his inability to recognize his own Devil voice. This is another way of saying that perhaps his rebellion remains an intellectual one only, that he has in fact already surrendered to the celestial harmony which the Voice from the Whirlwind so majestically describes. Job’s doubt never drops so deeply into disbelief as does Ivan’s. He never loses his faith, only his rational capacity, and he soon acknowledges that even human reason can be sacrificed to the fear of the Lord. Thus, God reerects the hedge about him, restores his family and property, and order once more prevails. Dramatically, this means that Satan need appear only once, and only in the beginning. Job’s ritual of self-formation all too quickly dissipates itself, and the Devil relinquishes the field. He fails, as he always does. Which of course is the tragedy.

Ivan’s devil appears in at least three forms, or in three degrees of identification with him. Only gradually does the devil-aspect of his mind separate itself off from his other impulses. The devil first appears as a simple mental state;
he symbolizes Ivan’s lacerating doubts, the anguished unbeliefs which hold him in bondage. These uncertainties, he believes, are grounded in fact, but they nonetheless terrorize. They function as if they have a life of their own, as if they could detach themselves and torment Ivan from a distance. If he can project these doubts away from himself, at least he will be left alone with his personal sentiments, however fragmentary his living becomes. He can then go on living in spite of logic, and he can “... love the sticky little leaves as they open in the spring ... the blue sky ... great deeds done by men.” Thus, he tries to repudiate this devil-intellect which has enchained him, “It’s not a matter of intellect or logic, it’s loving with one’s insides, with one’s stomach.” This is what counts, and the only way Ivan sees to be rid of the Devil.

His second attempt to extract the Devil figure from his own inner life concerns his relationship with his bastard brother, Smerdyakov, who was begotten by Ivan’s father upon an imbecile girl as a monstrous joke, and who therefore symbolizes to Ivan that the whole of mankind was procreated in jest. Ivan becomes dimly aware that Smerdyakov represents his own Satanic impulses, and therefore finds him both revolting and familiar. For Smerdyakov, a foppish sexless creature, the only truth is that anything is lawful; Ivan had taught him this. Perhaps we should say that Ivan’s former devil-figure merely transmitted this doctrine on to his present devil-image. At least there is continuity of metaphor as well as of drama. Smerdyakov becomes the guiltless rebel to which Ivan aspires, but he represents only the intellectuality of defiance. He completely lacks the grandeur of a metaphysical entity. The uncertainty of his sex mirrors the indeterminacy of his status at this stage in the development of Ivan’s tragedy and reflects the indistinctness of his moral principles. He could, and did in fact, murder his father without any qualms. Ivan recognizes and unconsciously accepts Smerdyakov’s actions as being identical with
his own wishes; therefore, the bastard brother, though for dramatic purposes a separate character, psychologically mirrors Ivan's worst nature. He therefore was a constant source of disgust and irritation to Ivan. Proof that Smerdyakov remains identified with Ivan's personality is the fact that Ivan feels guilty for Smerdyakov's insinuations and his behavior, which is to say, his own.14

Dostoyevsky's dramatic genius would have the third and most complete objectification of the Devil occur immediately upon the suicide of Smerdyakov. This means that the unfolding of the Devil's independent character must proceed from Smerdyakov's role. It means that the rebel spirit had indeed murdered the father; hence it separates itself off into a full-fledged entity. Smerdyakov undergoes a transformation into the Devil who then appears in Ivan's study to torment him with his murderous deeds. The act of rebellion was consummated, as it was with Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment. But Raskolnikov could not extricate his Devil, and it remained within his personality to torture him into physical illness. But Ivan's alienation became complete; he now confronts himself as a fully independent Devil power. The Devil visits him, torments him with all of his old thread-bare logical arguments about the meaningless universe, outlines again his path of rebellion and reminds him of the consequences. He reminds Ivan too that his youth is running out, that his lust for life which alone can tolerate a world built on absurdities calms itself into acquiescence with the committing of the rebellious act of murder. Like Faust, Ivan has bargained away his autonomy in the very search which would discover autonomy to him.

Of all the characters in The Cocktail Party, only Celia seems to have comprehended her relationship to the Devil figure. We have suggested that the Uninvited Guest in this drama is the Hero since he represents the psychic forces within each person and since these forces are struggling against a brittle and hardened social order for some measure
of self-formation. This Guest is uninvited because he is already present in everyone at the party. His function is to discover to these persons their own identities; he seeks to instruct them in such manner that they will recognize him, their own Devil voice, as their own possibility of self-hood. They have in the course of the cocktail-party life which they have led up to this point become nothing but different sets of hollow and worn-out responses. In this role, the Guest, for dramatic purposes a psychiatrist, becomes the Devil. He is the objectification of the dangerous aspect of each party-goer, but only Celia senses his real devil-role. In recognizing the Devil's methods, she anticipates her own sacrificial death. Thus, her identity with the Devil was only vaguely achieved and was not even witnessed on the stage as a part of the drama.

Ivan's Devil is more completely conceived; it represents a progressive constriction off of the psychic energies which cluster around the intellectual mode and which are brought to a focus in the act of rebellion. Being human, his sensibilities are offended by the wishes to destroy a parent generation, and he therefore responds to this aspect of his personality in disgust and horror. Being intellectual, he still stands by facts as he knows them to be. Hence, the Devil embodies in the same figure the sense of being rational and the repugnance at witnessing rationality being drained off into patricide. The Devil both disgusts Ivan and intrigues him. He attracts Ivan because both His and Ivan's intellectual constructions remain intact, and their justification for rebellion unchallenged.

In the image of intelligence, the Devil is capable of the most delicate and cunning irony. Though Ivan's logical convictions stand despite their involving him in alienation, the Devil still taunts him with its consequences, "My dear fellow," he says to Ivan, "Intelligence isn't the only thing! I have naturally a kind and merry heart. I also write vaude-
ville of all sorts.” He chides Ivan for taking seriously a world which he as a Devil power helped to beget; such a world can only be a gesture of farce and irrationality. Says the Devil, “For all their indisputable intelligence, men take this farce as something serious, and that is their tragedy.” 15
In Chapter II we made note of the fact that the birth of every Hero constitutes a threat to the established authority and that in order to avoid his disruptive influence, whether for good or for ill, his father, or perhaps some father surrogate, attempts to destroy him. But by making use of either of two devices, the Hero manages to escape. Either he is spirited away by a friendly person to a foreign country, or else he is endowed with supernatural powers which enable him to neutralize his attackers. For example, the Pallantide try to kill Theseus, but he is hidden away and reared by a maternal grandfather; King Amulius attempts to slay Romulus, but this Hero is taken by some foster parents into a distant land and brought up as their own child; the Pharoah would do away with Moses, but Moses is wafted away and secretly reared. Hera endangers Apollo at the time of his birth, but this god also manages to escape to a land which lies outside the influence of the enemy.

Another set of parallel incidents in the lives of the Heroes describes their return to their native land on reaching maturity, struggling with their father for the throne, and becoming king before they are finally destroyed. What do these stories mean? Do they furnish any clues to our understanding the nature of the tragic Hero? The most significant fact seems to be that the Hero must spend his childhood
away from the influence of his parents and even outside of his own native land. Many of them believe themselves to be orphans. Some do not even know their parents, even when struggling with them for control of the kingship, as in the case of Oedipus who slew his father unknowingly, an act which made it possible for Oedipus himself to become king in his father's stead.

The explanation which seems most in accord with the general thesis of this essay relies upon psychological interpretations. It suggests that every child normally attempts to repudiate the parents and that one posture of repudiation involves the child's acting out the role of the orphan. Every child at some time in his life secretly imagines that he is an adopted child and that his parents are really unknown or else exist in some mysterious manner as kings or nobles. His orphan status becomes a gesture of independence. Only if the Hero grows up apart from any dominating influence of parents will he become completely free. What these stories symbolize, then, are the yearnings of every person for freedom. If he does succeed in winning his autonomy, he threatens his father's reign; and if there is to be continuity and permanence in society, the father must eliminate the threat. Abiding social relations which can confer security often appear under the image of God, and consequently on these occasions it is God who commands the father's action. God commands Abraham the father to sacrifice the son Isaac in order to insure that continuity. But in this particular case Abraham's ambivalent feelings toward his son betray him, still his hand, and force him into a ritualistic sacrifice of the danger which the son's birth brought on. The significant aspect of this story is not that he slaughtered the ram instead, but that still he must needs slaughter at all.

Lord Raglan has pointed out another important characteristic of the Hero: once he has overcome his father and won back his kingdom, he himself becomes a lawgiver, a creator of orderliness, initiator of a new authority.² This fact
implies two things: having erected the same conditions from which he rebelled in the first place, he himself will be destroyed in his turn; and, as a condition of his being able to create the cultural order, he develops a new quality of intelligence.

Intelligence creates the possibility of freedom but denies its actuality and therefore produces a tragic alienation in man. It dangles before him the chimerical vision of an autonomous human existence. It taunts him to rebel against authority and to denounce God, and consequently to assert that now everything is lawful. Complete freedom as either a guide to living or an actual experience reveals itself to be a seductive but monstrous spectre. Man, finite and bound down to an earthly existence, cannot live in complete freedom. It contradicts his nature, invalidates the humanness in him. Yet his mind encourages him to imagine it and to aspire to it. The tragedy of the intellectually free mind develops out of the discovery of its own inherent stupidity, its own sordid, vulgar qualities so that it ends up in metaphysical terror or in a meaningless stupidity.

But the tragic Hero makes a desperately magnanimous effort to achieve spontaneity, a condition vouchsafed perhaps only to God, or to the infant whose entire existence consists in gratification of impulses, albeit these impulses be limited in range to the appetitive ones. It is appetite which defeats the mature Hero. Ivan’s account of the Grand Inquisitor teaches us that man will sell his freedom for bread, that any ritual, whether religious or psychological, which promises a free self must renounce itself when men have become hungry. They wish only food. Freedom then remains the great deception, the cruel temptation which intelligence holds before us. The history of the entire human race is telescoped into this one tragic contradiction: man demands freedom, but he wills to submit. He demands a spiritual existence, but he gladly settles for bread. Furthermore, he enjoys the comforts of community in his compromise. In submission man saves
himself from the agony of free choice; therefore he can win some measure of happiness.

The great deception completes itself as soon as the dominating agency internalizes itself and assumes the form of a voluntary submission. Such willing surrender allays intelligence and offers some hope for happiness. To hold to the intellectual way is to court danger and certainly to experience anguish. It is even to associate oneself with the sordid, as Ivan admitted when he said that though his father was a pig, his ideas were right.

The renunciation of intelligence for happiness sometimes occurs in the form of a dramatic conversion, as it does with Mitya on the eve of his trial. He seeks out Alyosha and excitedly reveals to him his great new secret: he has been transformed into a new man. His regeneration occurs simultaneously with the discovery that we are all responsible for each other, that life's meaning grows out of an identification with humanity rather than out of an unfolding individuality, and that we shall all therefore remain in bondage and there shall be no freedom. But from our sorrow, he explains, we shall rise again to joy, for God gives joy. Thus out of the dark depths to which intelligence has pushed man will rise a lofty soul, a soul without aspiration for freedom, but withal a soul filled with happiness.

This solution reflects the influence of Alyosha, for it is essentially a religious solution. Father Zossima outlines this method of salvation in great detail. It is thus only through obedience, fasting and prayer that one achieves true freedom. This involves a paradox: freedom which releases cannot be individual freedom, but rather a form of obedient submission which really means nonfreedom. But the paradox is only apparent; psychologically an explanation seems possible. If we obey an agency other than our own demon voices, we engage in a form of chastisement. This self-punishment then is merely an internalized version of parental domination, but being transformed into a seemingly volun-

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orary act it now provides a feeling of freedom and even of spiritual happiness. The psyche, suffering this great deception, magnifies itself and praises itself. It submerges itself within the "people"; it lifts itself to God, who in Dostoyevsky's novels is always identified with the people.

But the genuine Hero wishes the kind of freedom which only an independent individual can experience. Therefore, if he achieves this manner of freedom, he must destroy God and destroy the people. Kirillov in *The Possessed* makes this incredible proposal. But he goes even further than an enthronement of atheism and a destruction of God: he proposes that these ends can be accomplished only through an act of voluntary but violent self-destruction. His freedom occurs under the guise of Death, just as was Alyosha's mentioned above. In either case the individual person surrenders himself. For Alyosha and Mitya, self-surrender is accomplished through obedience and prayer; for Kirillov, through suicide. Only then can man be free, they all say. The tragedy is that in neither case does the individual actually experience freedom; he lives a great deception.

But again it is intelligence which charts the path and relentlessly leads to the final end in suicidal death. Intelligence is responsible for inventing the vision of freedom in the first place; hence, intelligence must describe how it can be reached. The pathway outlined in *The Possessed* revolves around the Messianic doctrine that God resides in the Russian people and that whoever embraces atheism or tampers with the authority of the people will automatically come to a tragic end. Kirillov represents man in rebellion against domination of traditions, which means against God. He cuts himself away from the people because he wants to achieve intellectual freedom as an individual. In this sense, he belongs alongside those other great Promethean heroes who have dared to achieve godhead in opposition to tabus and restraints imposed upon them by the masses. But these two ideas—the existence of God in the masses, and the need for
intellectual freedom of individuals—are contradictory; and if the first one is true, then Kirillov’s destruction is unavoidable. This is his tragedy.

But Kirillov hits upon a possible way out: he must kill himself. “Everyone who wants the supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has found out the secret of the deception. There is no freedom beyond. He who dares kill himself is God.” Kirillov’s alternative theory is that the individual himself can become God! This theory in itself is a tragic one—if, that is, we measure it in accordance with the theme which has already been established. It is tragic because it denies the people. To that extent it is atheistic. But it is doubly tragic in that it is grounded in reason. His approach to the solution is intellectual; he has not learned with Shatov that these are problems of faith and faith alone. But exactly how can man project himself as an individual into godhead by killing himself. The answer for Kirillov is simple enough and it is reasonable.

We must begin with the fact that life is a sorry business: “Life is pain, life is terror, and man is unhappy. Now all is pain and terror. Now man loves life, because he loves pain and terror.” Kirillov reasons from the facts that man loves life, and that life is an endless succession of fears and terrors. This implies that man really loves fears and terrors. The only way, therefore, that we can conquer fear and terror is to destroy our love of life, which means literally to destroy ourselves. If we can kill ourselves just for this reason alone, and not rashly or in anger or in fits of despondency, we can immediately become God. The great deception is that we think that we really love life; whereas we love only fear and terror. To destroy this deception, we must destroy ourselves, for self-destruction means that we have conquered pain and terror. We shall then be God.

The conventional belief in God has been created by man, Kirillov explains, to make it possible for man to go on living: “Man has done nothing but invent God so as to go
on living, and not kill himself; that's the whole of universal history up till now. I am the first one in the whole history of mankind who would not invent God."  

Man can then go on living because under these circumstances he surrenders his freedom, and for whatever fear and terror there is in life God is responsible. But this is living a lie. The God of the Russian people does not exist and cannot exist. Further, Kirillov believes that Christ, even though he was the loftiest of all men, was unable to find either Paradise or a resurrection. And he goes on, "And if that is so, if the laws of nature did not spare even Him, have not spared even their miracle and made even Him live in a lie and die for a lie, then all the planet is a lie and rests on a lie and a mockery. So then the very laws of the planet are a lie and the vaudeville of devils."  

Here is sufficient proof that the old beliefs concerning God are lies and deceptions; hence, Kirillov needs only to discover some all-embracing principle which can logically relate his individual existence to a future godhead in order to carry out his purposes. He is not long in finding it: "For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my godhead and I've found it: the attribute of my godhead is self-will! That's all I can do to prove in the highest point my independence and my new terrible freedom. For it is very terrible. I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom."  

And this is the theory which Kirillov finds it impossible to live with. If God exists, then man is forever a slave to His will and man then is nothing. The Russian people are nothing, and are living a lie. God's will encompasses all that there is; everything, including man, is what it is because God's will is expressed through it, and there is no freedom and no independence for any man. For Kirillov this is an intolerable situation. If man must be nothing, or indeed everything, then let him try to become everything; let him try to become God himself! If God's chief attribute is the expression of an omnipotent Will, let
man himself become God by exhibiting the omnipotence of his own self-will. This is the way that man can become God.

The way to show self-will is to destroy oneself to this particular end. This is possible because All Will becomes in this instant the will of an individual self. That's why Kirillov wants to kill himself: "Can it be that no one in the whole planet, after making an end of God and believing in his own will, will dare to express his self-will on the most vital point? . . . I want to manifest my self-will. I may be the only one, but I'll do it." He then continues his justification for suicide: "I will begin and will make an end of it and open the door, and will save. That's the only thing that will save mankind and will re-create the next generation physically: for with his present physical nature man can not get on without his former God." The consequences of individual freedom which result from the conquering of pain and terror and from the assertion of self-will through self-destruction have implications not only for the regeneration of man but for the entire cosmos: "Then there will be a new life, a new man; everything will be new . . . then they will divide history into two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God . . . to the transformation of the earth, and of man physically. Man will be God, and will be transformed physically, and the world will be transformed and things will be transformed and thoughts and feelings." 10

So Kirillov shoots himself; his death becomes the price he pays for his dream of freedom and independence from the Russian people, and from God.

It is clear that Kirillov's rational arguments which establish the alleged logical connections between freedom and death only disguise his more irrational Dionysian attraction for death. Feeling the need to die from the binding chains of a rational authority, he justifies his feelings by a direct appeal to that authority! The supreme irony of this appeal gives assurance that his dying will not regenerate a new
freedom and that the dying therefore remains tragically meaningless.

A less grandiose but more poignant gesture for freedom occurs in Falder's struggles to escape the throttling effects of Law in Galsworthy's play, *Justice*.11 In this tragedy it is not the people who bear God in their hearts, who symbolize a repressive authority, but it is the Law. Ironically, Falder's vocation is the Law; he works as a clerk in a law office. Thus, the very forces which sustain him economically are those which destroy his chances for freedom. Thus, we have the normal tragic circumstances: a repressive system, the Law, and a rather average young man who suddenly discovers a yearning in his heart to become himself, and he can find no way of doing it without violating the Law. His only recourse is rebellion, and a consequent yielding up of his freedom.

What of the Law? The Law is God, and one cannot rebel against God and live. Yet the Hero must still try. Hence, Falder's tragedy arises out of the belief that justice among men can be achieved only under the presupposition that there are general conditions to which all men must subscribe without exception even though it be discovered that individuals are sometimes sacrificed in the process. These general conditions are Laws. They must be permanent, fixed, abiding. They shelter all of us, protect all of us on the basis of fair play and honesty. But the tragedy is that occasionally a man finds that what he values most highly cannot be reached within the framework of these general conditions. He discovers that instead of the Great Shelterer, the Law becomes the Relentless Persecutor. It is the tragedy of the man who cannot find Justice within the Law even if he knows that there is no hope of Justice outside the Law. It is tragic because he cannot escape the responsibility of choosing one kind of conduct or the other. The Judge in Galsworthy's drama proclaims this philosophy of Law as he sentences Falder to penal servitude: "The Law is what it is—a majestic
edifice, sheltering all of us, each stone of which rests on another."

What of Falder and his desperate gamble for freedom? His incentive to act is as strong as it is complex. Its strength is given by the powerful emotions of love and sympathy which have come to be the wellsprings of his every thought and action, and perhaps a common man can love no less deeply than a noble man. Its complexity stems from the fact that his own growth in emotional maturity is involved. The object of his love, Mrs. Honeywill, is the long-suffering victim of a wretchedly insupportable home life with a drunken, violent husband. There appears to be no escape for her from this situation. Thus, Mrs. Honeywill moves Falder first to a sympathetic understanding of her predicament and then to an active participation in its amelioration. This grows into love, which is for Falder a noble and even sacred kind of love. Perhaps Falder's unselfish love for Mrs. Honeywill is his only noble trait; at any rate, it is the trait which impels him to action, and so to his tragic defeat.

Falder is perhaps never quite aware of the subtle changes occurring within his own personality. He has discovered the kind of freedom and power one feels when he is identified with a worthy mission. He has discovered the secret, without being conscious of it to be sure, that life is most meaningful when the living of it is tied up with one's own fulfillment. Falder's life up to this moment has been a commonplace, humdrum affair. It is doubtful if he ever once experienced the sharp pangs of individuality which incite men to realize what every man aspires to realize, their self-hood. Now, for the first time in his life he has a chance to become a full human being by playing an effective role and an important role in the lives of other people. He is needed by someone else; he can be of use to someone else. He can serve, and serve in a highly necessary manner. He belongs. Thus, not for self-aggrandizement does Falder act, but in response to an urgent appeal for help, an appeal which few of us, noble or
common, could disregard. Such an appeal would extract from any of us the noblest motives and an immediate pledge to take action. So it was with Falder. And it matters not that his beloved Ruth Honeywill, was both a married woman and a common prostitute.

Falder’s defeat arises from his need to take a kind of action which lies completely outside of that which convention approves. Not merely is his conduct unconventional; it is immoral and illegal as well, and Falder is not the kind of individual who is strong enough to live competently outside the law. In his crisis he finds himself alone. He is opposed by the uncompromising nature of social conventions. Social structures suddenly become inflexibly coercive. The most valuable thing in Falder’s life, his love for Mrs. Honeywill, is precisely the thing which his society refuses to tolerate. It prefers that a woman live under impossibly brutal but legal conditions with a man than to accept the attentions of a man in a relationship not sanctioned by the group.

In the larger sense, Falder is living in a world which does not make sense. This world view is pointed up poignantly at the very end of the drama. Falder tells us that the one thing which he had to look forward to while he was in prison was Ruth Honeywill, and now after that agonizing wait he must choose between her and a job. He must surrender either Ruth or his chances for economic stability. Again he decides, wondering all the while why society is so organized that a man is confronted with these frustrating decisions, “I couldn’t give her up. I couldn’t! Oh, sir! I’m all she’s got to look to. And I’m sure she’s all I’ve got.” But finally the world literally crumbles about his feet when it is made clear to him that Ruth, the object of his love—his sacred love—is nothing but a common prostitute. Here is final evidence that life can have no meaning on any basis. Hence, rather than continue living in such a world, he prefers to destroy himself.

The only solution to such a paradox is that either the general concept of Law prevail and individuals be sacrificed,
or that considerations for individual personality supplant the theoretical concept of Law. Why should individuals die, and the Law prevail? But if the Law is changeable, it is not law at all. It must be of such general application that all men are sheltered by it equitably; hence, it must be immutable to the degree that it cannot be modified in the interests of any particular individual. If the claims of individual personality conflict with those of Law, the Law wins out. It must be that way. The Law is a general thing having little relevance to the personal idiosyncrasies of individual human beings. But tragedy is a personal thing. It happens to individuals. It is closely tied up with the personal differences of individuals. And sometimes when these individuals seek justice which is personal, they needs must sacrifice their own personalities.

There is a tremendous gap between the kind of justice which the Judge was dispensing in the name of the Law and the kind of justice which Falder requires. Frome, Falder's lawyer, believes that Justice is a very human thing, that it lies somewhere within individual human personality, that it is tied in with, "... the background of 'life'—that palpitating life which ... always lies behind the commission of a crime." Falder's case requires a very personal law, a kind of law which is immediate and compelling, a kind of law which is more interested in individual freedom than in the preservation of a social convention. Falder sees little meaning in the kind of Justice which is spelled out in capital letters, the kind of Law represented by the Judge's Magnificent Edifice.

Falder's efforts to win his own freedom and to win the freedom of his beloved are quickly and ruthlessly thwarted. The law shows no mercy; only individuals such as Falder are capable of mercy. The ever-marching momentum of Law rolls on.

The "four minutes of madness" during which Falder altered the check to become an embezzler are minutes which are lost forever, and the consequences of that act can in no
human way be evaded. In few dramas of modern times has man's doom been ground out with such precision and apparent unmercifulness as in Galsworthy's *Justice*. Rarely is so little hope offered; rarely is the ruin of the hero so inevitable and certain. Quickly the Law is applied to Falder's misdeed, and with dispatch the punishment is meted out. And just as precisely the Judge calls for the next case, having just sentenced—perhaps unavoidably so—the lives of at least two human beings to their destruction; and he remains secure in his belief that justice to mankind, if not to Falder, has been achieved.
CHAPTER XIII

DOUBT: THE COLLAPSE OF INTELLIGENCE

With intelligence comes rebellion, but also comes uncertainty; and with uncertainty the tragic Hero’s experience moves toward its climax. Rebellion, he soon begins to glimpse, cannot justify itself. It proceeds on the basis of a set of new values which have not yet been brought to birth, and which indeed have no assurance on the basis of mere rebellion of ever being born. The ensuing doubts force the Hero to consider whether values attached to the established system of his Father’s world may not after all serve him adequately. And he asks the fatal question, Rebel for what? He can never be sure, for the very reason that the fruits of his rebellion lie dormant within his own unripened psyche. The rebel must therefore proceed in blindness. He will never know why he rebels until afterwards, if at all; and doubts persist that mere rebellion will ever bring the fruit to harvest. These uncertainties remain unfocused; they manifest themselves as diffuse anxiety states which even the Hero fails to understand. As such they erode away his confidence and cast doubt upon the entire human enterprise.

The tragedy arises out of this inner conflict between his impelling urge for autonomy and the absence of a purpose which can direct it. The Hero cannot be sure that his new idol will bring a new life. He may be stillborn. He hesitates to lay hand upon his Father’s world because he sees
no warranty that his own transformation will occur as a result. But lay hands, he must. Life compels him into rebellion; the gathering forces in the psyche force him into idolatry with its visions of freedom. And he may press forward with ardor and confidence, assert his will and win the day, but he may discover that he only wins chaos and lawlessness until, like Kirillov, he may be tempted to kill himself in a grandiose gesture of self-assertion. Falder also acted without hesitation, but the monstrous and inhuman steamroller of society crushed out his existence. Kirillov and Falder were tormented, but not tormented with doubts about their own destiny and meaning, and they quickly carried off their plans. Others hesitate, and they too are lost, though their hesitation, engendered by doubt, intensifies all the more their mental anguish. Job’s uncertainty tortures, Hamlet’s indecision brings ruin, Othello’s bewilderment drives him to murderous insanity. They can never be sure, and that is their real tragedy.

There is a further consequence. When the Hero begins to doubt his right to assert his own will, his right to be free, he begins to doubt life itself and finds overwhelming evidence that it is trivial and meaningless. With doubt comes a sharpened intellect and therefore a greater awareness of the commonplace and the dull. The Hero finds himself uneasy in its presence; he experiences a general anxiety with mere existence, yet his rational doubt stays his hand from action. It requires some strong and compelling circumstance to push him into doing something about his mere existence, the dreariness and triviality of which will soon smother him, drive him to suicide or into criminality.

Such were the tragic circumstances surrounding Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment.¹ The crime is the crime of mere existence; or rather, crime is any attempt on the part of an individual to elevate mere existence. Crime is escape from triviality. Punishment is being forced to recognize mere existence and to live with it; or, rather, it
is the unjustified guilt we feel for failing to improve man's lot. It should be made clear that guilt does not derive from any criminal acts we need to perform in the attempt to improve man. The only real crime is mere existence; the only real punishment is living it; the only real guilt is failing to eliminate it.

Let us analyze this tragic condition in detail as it works itself out in the Dostoyevsky novel. The opening pages of Crime and Punishment introduce the Hero, Rodion Raskolnikov, as a contemplative, morose youth who has become so moodily absorbed in himself that he has isolated himself from his friends and family. It irritates him even to meet people. He dreads meeting his landlady both because he is in her debt and also because he fears meeting anyone at all. Though impoverished, he no longer tries to remedy his impoverishment.

Raskolnikov himself tells us what his trouble is. He explains to Sonia, "I told you just now that I could not help myself at the university. . . . But I turned sulky and wouldn't. I sat in my room like a spider. You've been in my den, you've seen it. . . . and do you know, Sonia, that low ceilings and tiny rooms cramp the soul and the mind? Ah, how I hated that garret! And yet I wouldn't go out of it! I wouldn't work, I wouldn't even eat, I just lay there doing nothing. . . . At night I had no light, I lay in the dark and I wouldn't earn money for candles. . . . I preferred lying still and thinking. And I kept thinking. . . ."

It is not mere sulkiness which stays the hand of Raskolnikov from his work, causes him to sell his books and to lie hour after hour in his darkened garret. Strange ideas swirl through his mind, ideas almost too big for him to grasp, ideas too daring for him to live with, certainly too dangerous to share with others. For the first time since his university life began, he has looked closely at life, and the vicious, meaningless facts he discovers there shock him into a radical reappraisal of his own life and of human existence as a whole.
He continues, "And I kept thinking . . . And I had dreams all the time, strange dreams of all sorts, no need to describe! . . . You see I kept asking myself then: Why am I so stupid, that if others are stupid—and I know they are—yet I won't be wiser? Then I saw, Sonia, that if one waits for every one to get wiser it will take too long. . . . Afterwards I understand that it would never come to pass, that men won't change and that nobody can alter it, that it's not worth wasting effort over it." 2 (Italics added.)

This sordid view of mankind is confirmed when Raskolnikov meets Marmelokov in the tavern and listens to the pitiful story of that old drunkard's family. He is moved to exclaim, "What if I am wrong. . . . What if man is not really a scoundrel, man in general, I mean, the whole race of mankind—then all the rest is prejudice, simply artificial terrors and there are no barriers and it's all as it should be." 3

Raskolnikov's discovery is that life is a stupid, meaningless enterprise; it is ignoble and base, it doesn't make sense. The slum areas of St. Petersburg, where he lives, daily offer him overwhelming proof. Few of the characters in the novel achieve any kind of nobility, and those who do are motivated for completely idiotic reasons; thus, Sonia is forced to become a prostitute to maintain a drunken father and a psychoneurotic mother. Raskolnikov's own sister, Dounia, though highly educated, must work as a servant girl and tolerate the insulting conduct of the sexual pervert, Svidrigiiälov. There are no comic characters in the novel; there is no comedy relief of any kind, and we must therefore infer that life cannot be tolerated even on the basis of a joke. The characters who have the greatest possibilities for comedy evoke only pathos and pity in the reader, for their lives are timid and shabby from beginning to end.

So Raskolnikov asks himself, "What had he to live for? What had he to look forward to? Why should he strive? To live in order to exist? Why, he had been ready a thousand times before to give up existence for the sake of an idea,
for a hope, even for a fancy.” He comes now to the heart of the matter: “Mere existence had always been too little for him; he had always wanted more.” (Italics added.) This then, is the cause of all the trouble. This is the tragic fact. A sensitive, thoughtful person can find no justification for living if it is to be a “mere existence.” Yet, if nothing more than “mere existence” offers itself, what can he do? How can the individual overcome what is stupid and clumsy so that “mere existence” is transformed into a driving will to live and to accomplish? Raskolnikov requires so little; for the sake of a principle to live by, or an idea, or even a fancy, he is willing to surrender his own existence. But where, where can he find such a principle? He lies hour after hour, day after day in his darkened garret alone with his thoughts and his dreams, thoughts so dangerously exciting that he cannot sleep; dreams so temptingly provocative that he dare not waken. Slowly an idea takes shape: perhaps some men, the men who are truly the strongest, can by skillful use of the herd-type man project themselves onto a new higher level of creative activity and accomplishment. “And I know now, Sonia, that whoever is strong in mind and spirit will have power over them: Anyone who is greatly daring is right in their eyes. He who despises most things will be a lawgiver among them and he who dares most of all will be most in the right.”

Life, then, can be rescued from its triviality if the few strong ones are daring enough to assert themselves, willful enough to rule and to seize all of the profitable contributions of the servile man. The will to power is the solution, the only solution. There is no hope for man on any other basis; he cannot be altered; he is forever doomed to a life which is commonplace and petty; and, what is more, it is crassly foolish to waste any effort in lifting mankind out of the ignobility of his “mere existence.” Hence, let the strong man, the extraordinary man, the man who is able to take a new step and to utter a new word, let him use the mediocre
man, and even destroy him, in order to grow stronger. Life ceases to be meaninglessly hum-drum if an individual can lift himself above its enervating dullness; hence, let the strong man do what he will. Separate him from the herd. Give him freedom. Let him be a Superman! Then life can be justified!

Nature itself makes this division among men, Raskolnikov reasons. There are the ordinary men and the extraordinary men, the men who live only to be controlled and those whose will to power forces them continuously and restlessly to create. These latter are the creators, the leaders, the lawgivers, the men who are capable of uttering a new word and of taking a new step. The need to sacrifice the common man is no mere temporary and man-made arrangement. It is bound up with the way nature operates. It is, as a matter of fact, one of nature's inexorable laws. "The vast mass of mankind is mere material, and only exists in order by some great effort, by some mysterious process . . . to bring into the world at least perhaps one man out of a thousand with a spark of independence . . . there certainly is and must be a definite law, it cannot be a matter of chance." 5

Now the danger, and the excitement. A new word is uttered only if the old one is consumed by it, and the Superman thus becomes a Destroyer. Every great lawgiver must desecrate the old law when he proclaims the new one. Every leader of people must live beyond the commonplace moral rules of the people whom he leads, and to him belongs the right to commit breaches of those rules on his own authority. It is a right which his own conscience determines; he is his own authority because he determines his own standards of worth.

The escape from triviality is not merely likely to destroy the old order, Raskolnikov hints; destruction is logically necessary. Life of the common man makes sense only if it can contribute to the will to power of the strong man, and its full contribution can occur only through its destruction.
He who would live must be strong; he who would be strong must destroy! Such were the ideas which were swirling through the feverish mind of Raskolnikov as he lay in his darkened garret. He must destroy!

He announces his program to Sonia, “What’s to be done? Break what must be broken, once for all, that’s all, and take the suffering on oneself. What, you don’t understand? ... Freedom and power, and above all power! Over all trembling creation and all the antheaps! ... That’s the goal, remember that!”

The reactions of Raskolnikov’s friends to this theory are typically those of the servile man. Razumihin finds the whole idea fantastic and incredible; it is too horrible to be considered seriously, and he is quick to express his horror, “What is really original in all this ... to my horror, is that you sanction bloodshed in the name of conscience ...”

Sonia is stupefied. When she cannot fathom these monstrous thoughts, Raskolnikov explains in more graphic terms, “Yes, that’s what it was! I wanted to become a Napoleon, that is why I killed her.” Whereupon she cries out in distress, “Oh, that’s not it, that’s not it. How could one ... no, that’s not right, not right! ... as though that could be the truth! Good God!”

Raskolnikov is not long in translating his Superman theory into practice. If he is required to destroy in order to be counted among the extraordinary people, destroy he will. So he carefully lays his plans and murders the old pawnbroker and her sister.

Two facts connected with the crime have important implications for the ensuing tragic conflict. The first is that Raskolnikov believes his actions to be coldly rational. After he has confessed and has had time to reflect upon the crime at length, he explains to Sonia that he has traced his reasoning step by step from the preparation, through the act itself to the consequences of the crime and that there is not a single logical flaw in the argument. He remains intellectually
intact. His greatest concern even during the moments of the murder is the maintenance of his intellectual faculties at all cost, "He remembered afterwards that he had been particularly collected and careful . . ."

Now even though Raskolnikov believes that his rationality remains intact throughout the crime and the punishment, the reader is aware that this is not quite true. For at this point, and for the first time, doubt floods his mind and remains the great tormenting protagonist until the very end of the tragic conflict. It is his doubts which constitute his punishment. These uncertainties begin almost immediately. He begins to be fearful that he may be doing the deeds of a madman. "Dark agonizing ideas rose in his mind—the idea that he was mad and that at that moment he was incapable of reasoning, of protecting himself, that he ought perhaps to be doing something utterly different from what he was now doing." This fear takes possession of him and ends by torturing him into a state of physical illness.

These doubts are not put to rest by Raskolnikov's remembering the series of coincidences which by their nature and sequence seem to sanction the murder by suggesting to his already receptive mind that the murder ought to occur, and that it could occur easily. Raskolnikov must have sensed in these coincidences the hand of fate on his shoulder.

First, he has a psychological link with the old pawnbroker because it is she to whom he comes groveling to seek relief from his poverty. He hates her because he hates the conditions which make him servile; he detests her miserliness and her uselessness to society. Thus, psychologically he is prepared for the murder. Then, in the chance conversation with other students he hears the suggestion that the old miser ought to be killed, and that no one should feel remorse from having committed the murder. Since these are the precise thoughts of Raskolnikov, this conversation provides him with an unconscious endorsement of his intentions. Finally, the chance remark overheard in the Hay Market
that the pawnbroker’s sister, Lizaveta, would not be home at a particular time made the murder irresistible, almost inevitable.

All that is now needed to turn Raskolnikov into a murderer is some initial impulse, some spark, some stirring event which would bridge the gap between planning and acting, which will cause him actually to pick up the axe and to wield it. But it happens. The letter from his mother arrives. He learns of his sister’s plans to sacrifice her integrity by marrying a scoundrel in order that Raskolnikov himself might have money with which to continue his education. This idea is repugnant to Raskolnikov, and it upsets him so profoundly that he is moved to utter his first new word, to take his first new step. “It was clear that he must not now suffer passively, worrying himself over unsolved questions, but that he must do something, do it at once, and do it quickly. Anyway he must decide on something, or else . . . or throw up life altogether! . . . accept one’s lot humbly as it is, once for all and stifle everything in oneself, giving up all claim to activity, life and love!”

Thus, in order to maintain his hold on life, Raskolnikov is moved to destroy a life and to destroy it in a manner least flattering to nobility—he splits open the skulls of two old women with an axe. But the crime turns out to be a gigantic hoax, an intellectual trick. It fails to transform Raskolnikov into a Superman. He is aware of his failure even as he wields the axe, and the realization drives him to the verge of insanity; for it entails his adoption of the former view that life is stupid and without purpose. *Life doesn’t change after the crime—that is the tragedy.* The one chance to turn life into a meaningful endeavor has been muffed, and the only alternative is to accept the triviality of human existence. His self-abuse begins immediately after the murders and continues to the end of the novel. The one overpowering emotion which he feels is self-contempt; he describes himself many times as vile and stupid. “Ech, I am
an aesthetic louse and nothing more . . . I am perhaps viler and more loathsome than the louse I killed." Later he explains to Sonia why he is giving himself up to the police, "It's simply because I am contemptible and have nothing within me . . ." 10 But it is not himself alone who is vile and contemptible. It is everyone; it is human nature—the people on the street who clamor for his conviction. Raskolnikov speaks scornfully of them, "Look at them running to and fro about the streets, every one of them a scoundrel and a criminal at heart, worse still, an idiot . . . Oh, how I hate them all!"

Psychologically, Raskolnikov's persistent doubts, and this means his intellectual operations, prevent his engaging in a dying ceremony which could insure a rebirth. His friends cannot grasp the nature of his tragic situation. They agree that his problem is a religious one, that he must feel remorse, confess, and be forgiven.

For Sonia the issue is simple. Raskolnikov has violated God's laws and the laws of man. He must therefore confess and suffer. She can not comprehend even the possibility of Raskolnikov's having no feelings of remorse.

Even Porfiry, the police inspector, offers the same advice even though he comes nearer to understanding Raskolnikov. He advises, "You have long needed a change of air. Suffering, too, is a good thing. Suffer! Maybe Nikolay is right in wanting to suffer." 11 "It's not a question of suffering for someone's benefit, but simply, 'one must suffer.'"

The most surprising advocate of this "suffer theory" is Svidrigiälov, the most despicable of all the characters in the novel. He agrees with Sonia that Raskolnikov has committed grievous sins and that he must expiate them. He says, "Ah, everything is in a muddle now; not that it ever was in very good order. Russians in general are broad in their ideas, broad in their land and exceedingly disposed to the fantastic, the chaotic. But it is a misfortune to be broad without a special genius." 12
Now this advice to Raskolnikov is completely beside the point. These people are sure that he must feel a moral guilt, a guilt which requires confession, contriteness, and penance for its forgiveness. They misinterpret his motives completely, and by urging upon him in the name of piety a type of action which is utterly pointless and irrelevant heightens all the more the real nature of the mental struggle. The parallel with Job in the Old Testament is striking. Both Raskolnikov and Job are certain that they are guilty of no crime, moral or legal, and therefore they see no reason for repentance. Even less reasonable seems the advice of their friends. Even after Raskolnikov has been sent to Siberia, he says, "My conscience is at rest." And later Dostoyevsky says of him, "But he judged himself severely, and his exasperated conscience found no particular terrible fault in the past, except a simple blunder which might happen to any one. He was ashamed just because he, Raskolnikov, had so hopelessly, stupidly come to grief through some decree of blind fate, and must humble himself and submit to 'the idiocy' of a sentence, if he were anyhow to be at peace." 13

Raskolnikov tries to explain, but his explanations are misunderstood. Hence, he gives up in despair. "Dounia darling, if I am guilty forgive me . . . Good-bye! We won't dispute." And again he pours out his heart to Dounia as he seeks understanding, "They say it is necessary for me to suffer! What's the object of these meaningless sufferings? Shall I know any better what they are for, when I am crushed by hardship and idiocy, and weak as an old man after twenty years of penal servitude?" At the very end he asserts unequivocally that he is innocent of any crime, "... and I am further than ever from seeing that what I did was a crime. I've never, never been stronger and more convinced than now." 14 All he did was commit a blunder and that remains an intellectual fault rather than a moral one.

It is Raskolnikov's doubts which catch up with him and bring him down. He thinks too much. He never ceases to
evaluate his motives. He can never be sure his decisions are
the proper ones. Pitifully he explains to Sonia, "I have kept
wanting to make a new beginning, Sonia, and leave off
thinking . . . you mustn't suppose that I didn't know, for
instance, that if I began to question myself whether a human
being is a louse it proved that it wasn't so for me, though it
might be for a man who would go straight to his goal without
asking questions. If I worried myself all those days, wonder-
ing whether Napoleon would have done it or not, I felt
clearly of course that I wasn't Napoleon. I had to endure all
the agony of that battle of ideas, Sonia, and I longed to throw
it off." 15

His reflective attitude for the most part prevents him
from resolving the conflicts. He tries, but he cannot throw
off this propensity to weigh every decision, to ponder every
act which he performs. Because he cannot boldly act, he
fails. If he can question his right to kill, he forfeits his right
to do so. Success in such an endeavor is vouchsafed only to
the man who is direct enough, bold enough, and daring
enough to assert himself without critically reflecting upon
his motives. The only requisite for success is that a man
must dare. The only personality trait which Raskolnikov
lacks is daring; this he hopes to acquire by means of the
murder. "I wanted to have the daring . . . and I killed her.
I only wanted to have the daring, Sonia!"

Porfiry is almost shrewd enough to comprehend this tragic
flaw in Raskolnîkov's character; he is clever enough to
realize that he is dealing with a man whose ideas are out of
line with his actions, and who sought to act only to justify
an idea. In an interview before Raskolnikov confesses to the
crime, Porfiry describes the motives which lie behind the
crime so accurately that Raskolnikov in amazement leaps to
his feet, his face twitching convulsively; Porfiry has plumbed
his soul with this explanation, "This is a fantastic, gloomy
business, a modern case, an incident of today when the heart
of man is troubled. . . . Here we have bookish dreams, a heart unhinged by theories." 16

This rather detailed analysis of the tragedy which befalls Raskolnikov and of the part which the concept of doubt plays in his tragic experience has seemed necessary for one reason. The element of doubt is not normally included among the necessary conditions for the tragic experience as this experience has been analyzed by most literary critics. Hence, to give it the prominence which the thesis of this book seems to require suggests the need for a more closely reasoned and more carefully applied treatment. To be sure it is not uncommon to discover occasional critical comments regarding the hesitancies and uncertainties which the classical tragic heroes suffer during the course of their momentous struggles, but they seem to be treated as literary devices for heightening a dramatic effect or for intensifying a feeling of terror, whereas this essay would have it that as a feature of the collapse of intellectuality the notion of doubt becomes inevitably associated with the tragic experience and therefore one of its necessary conditions. To the extent that rationality serves the psychological functions described in the first two chapters, to the extent that it intercepts and invalidates the more primitive Dionysian impulse to restore life through a ritual death, then doubt as an invariable accompaniment to the reflective process must manifest itself in the form of a tragic conflict which the hero suffers. It becomes an alienating force. It estranges the hero from his own inner impulses, and it cuts him off, as it does in the case of Hamlet and Job, from family and friends. For one thing, it renders him incapable of love.
CHAPTER XIV

LONELINESS: THE FAILURE OF LOVE

A form of alienation which the tragic Hero experiences in the course of his mental struggles expresses itself as a kind of psychological isolation from his fellowman. The fully alienated person, of course, would have no basis whatever for communicating with his friends; he would have lost all contact with reality and could therefore not sustain himself as an integral personality. The Hero's estrangement and consequent withdrawal from normal affairs only approaches the extremes of pathology, though his behavior often appears to his friends to be strange and erratic, and as in the case of Hamlet, even to be quite mad. This tragic isolation dramatizes itself through a variety of literary devices and in many concrete forms.

The Dostoyevsky hero, Stavrogin, is socially secluded. He retreats from his people to a relationship of snobbery. Hamlet has recourse to a feigned madness. Job's isolation is a spiritual one; his is a cosmic loneliness, a separation from his God. Raskolnikov becomes ill, mentally ill, as a means of hedging himself off from his neighbors. Willy Loman mutters to himself and bumps his automobile into things; his contact with reality becomes tenuous. Each of the Karamazov brothers separates himself from the others, and from his Father, because of the common guilt feelings they all have toward their Father. Ivan's aloneness almost over-reaches
itself when a part of his personality, lacking other sustaining social relationships, materializes itself into the image of the Devil. Alyosha would voluntarily sequester himself in a monastery and attempt to regain his integrity through the willing renunciation of his attachments to others.

Exactly what is it that the Hero retreats from? Why should his self-isolation occur about the time his mental anguish reaches its climax? It seems rather obvious that the world has become too much with him. It is harsh, and it is meaningless. It permits suffering which has no cause and feelings of guilt which have no grounds in fact. It is the world of his Father. It is Authority, God. It is the reality principle and consequently a constant threat to his freedom. The world's senselessness and its repressive systems drive the energies of the Hero inward. His suffering appears all the more intense because now he can no longer share it with others. He cannot even communicate with them except through futile make-believe, Hamlet-like gestures, or through jokes, aggressions, or perversions.

One common characteristic is shared by such tragic Heroes: they lack the capacity to love. Hamlet drives the lovely Ophelia to her death through his tragically misunderstood efforts to express his personal relationship to her. Stavrogin can love only the perverted and the monstrous. Love for the Karamazovs reduces to unbridled sexuality.

Love appears in these perverted forms because of the psychological nature of isolation. It is a form of death, a withdrawing to one's own inner authority, a retreat to the womb, a falling away into infantilism. It is therefore incestuous and dangerous. So great is the danger that the Hero rarely extricates himself from the situation. As a form of infantile regression, the Hero psychologically loses his adult human relationship, including those which deal with love and sex. Hence, love becomes incestuous, perverted, or perhaps a love of children, as in the case of Oedipus's love for his daughter. Stavrogin violates a child, Oedipus commits
incest, Hamlet expresses his own emotional sterility in his admonition to Ophelia to get her to a nunnery, Fyodor rapes a crippled imbecile; even Faust succumbs to the same general pattern. Such other Heroes as Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* and Dmitri Karamozov, and perhaps Faust as well, associate sexuality with the infantile attitude of full gratification of all wishes, and thus in their sexual relationships express themselves as children. Their love cannot become productive of more integral relationships.

The love of Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* presents an interesting variation of the same theme. The isolation which separates her from Helmer also maintains their love relationship on the doll level. Helmer can love a doll, but he cannot love a woman even though he begets a family with her. Nora's love really remains sterile and unproductive. She herself cannot be born by means of it. Her personality remains unfulfilled and barren until she commits the final act of separation and leaves her husband. She withdraws from the conventions which permit a doll-like relationship to continue. This act corresponds to Oedipus's blinding of himself, which signifies his separation from his Mother-wife and indeed from the world of reality. He seeks ways other than incest for returning to the womb.

Edward in *The Cocktail Party* also feels his own independence slipping away because of the oppressive role which his wife has always imposed upon him with her "obstinate unconscious, sub-human strength that some women have." He explains that when she left him he began to dissolve and to cease to exist, for she has made it impossible to have an existence separate from her own. He cannot live in her world except on her terms. Therefore, he is forced to withdraw from her world and to be alone with himself if he is to regain any measure of self-hood. Like Nora, he is searching for the kind of loneliness which will reveal his own existence.

The alienated person then lacks the capacity for love; and it appears that this incapacity closely relates to the psycho-
logical loneliness which accompanies the Hero's tragic tensions. Love to be sure is a form of sacrifice, a form of self-surrender, of humility. It seems to require a withdrawal from oneself but only so far as one can fully identify himself with others. The Hero's withdrawal in tragedy is not from a self but rather to a self. It is restrictive rather than productive, regressive rather than expansive and embracing. It is infantile and demanding at best, perverted and lustful at its worst. The alienated person cannot attach himself to any authentic object on the basis of love, or any other social relationship for that matter, for an authentic love object is one which contributes to the individual's growth. This is Nora's tragedy. And it is Ivan's.

Ivan's search for authentic love objects fails rather miserably. "I could never understand how one could love one's neighbors," he says. "It's just one's neighbors, to my mind, that one can't love, though one might love those at a distance." Such love can be only another form of self-laceration or charity which is a penance imposed upon the individual by a parental authority. When such authority comes to be apotheosized into deity, love serves as a sacrificial act, for it becomes an inescapable duty forced upon man by God's command. In this sense love for mankind betokens a great deception.

Ivan does not love his father, Fyodor, and the father certainly does not love him. He cannot love his son because he doesn't even know him; both live their lives in alienation and in distrust. Fyodor refers to Ivan in sneering terms: "But I don't recognize Ivan, I don't know him at all. Where does he come from? He is not one of us in soul . . . Ivan loves nobody." In his discussions with Alyosha regarding his affair with Katerina, he proves his father's words to be true. He explains, "I fell in love with the young lady, I worried myself over her and she worried me. I sat watching over her . . . and all at once it collapsed! But I went away and roared with
laughter. Would you believe it? Yes, it's the literal truth."

The only people whom Ivan can genuinely love are little children, and this is comprehensible, for in his psychic regression he has emotionally become a little child himself and cannot sustain adult love relationships. Children can be loved in the abstract, at a distance, or even in close quarters, and they can be loved whether they are ugly or dirty; they can be loved because they have not eaten the apple and so cannot distinguish between good and evil. Thus, they are near to God in whom there are no distinctions and separations. His love for children never develops into perversions as it does with Stavrogin, but the conditions which cause both to focus upon children as love objects are the same.

Dostoyevsky is sensitive to the tragic nature of isolation. There is an isolation which heals, a renunciation of selfish interests through a complete identification with mankind. Though spiritual in nature, this form of solitude also destroys individuality and therefore the Hero finds it to be in conflict with his own impulses. It requires a tremendous act of will.

Father Zossima teaches this doctrine in the *Brothers Karamazov*. "Until you have become really, in actual fact, a brother to everyone, brotherhood will not come to pass. . . . It will come to pass, but first we have to go through the period of isolation." As a form of death, isolation breaks up individuality, Father Zossima seems to be saying; therefore the problem resolves itself into choosing that form of dying which can regenerate new life. So long as the Hero seeks the greatest possible fullness for himself, he will end in complete solitude. This is the logical outcome of the person who succeeds in keeping his individuality intact and apart. For this fragmentation of life, Father Zossima would substitute a ritual kind of isolation, ritual which would cut him off from his superfluous desires rather than from a love of his brothers, which would subdue his proud will with chastisement rather than free his will for heroic exploits.

The monkish life exists on paradox; the monk withdraws
from others in order to be able to destroy that aspect of his own individuality which prevents his identification with his fellowman. Here is a form of death without destruction, but it is suitable to the monk and not to the tragic hero. His separation is of a different order and appears inevitable, as in the case of Stavrogin, in which all of the facets of the theme of isolation are present.

It may at first glance appear strange to develop a genuinely tragic character around the motif of snobbery, but if we recall that snobbism expresses a concealed distaste for people, and that for Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* it is the people who bear in their hearts the qualities of godliness, then we see that Stavrogin's seclusion estranges him from any creative power. This Dostoyevsky theme out of which Stavrogin's tragedy develops becomes essentially the same one to be found in all religions: it is the doctrine of the common brotherhood of man. Specifically, it is "the people," the common people, the peasants of Russia who bear God in their souls and who, therefore, alone harbor the secret power for making life purposeful and rewarding. Shatov explains it more graphically: "The people is the body of God. Every people is only a people so long as it has its own god and excludes all other gods on earth irreconcilably; so long as it believes that by its god it will conquer and drive out of the world all other gods. . . . But there is only one truth, and therefore a single one out of the nations can have the true God, even though other nations may have great gods of their own. Only one nation is 'god-bearing,' that's the Russian people." Again he summarizes this strange doctrine of Messianic racism: "God is the synthetic personality of the whole people . . ."

It is a tragic theme because it implies that anyone who gets separated from the people also loses God and so is irrevocably lost. This is the tragedy: the people do occasionally produce a Hero, an individual who dares to rise above his fellows. These are *The Possessed*; they are possessed with the Devil,
for they do not bear God in their hearts as the Russian people do.

Stavrogin is a tragic hero because he isolates himself from his people and thereby prevents the spiritual renewal which an identification with them on the basis of brotherly love would supply. In psychological terms he cannot die the kind of death which would lead to rebirth of psychic power. Therefore he becomes both an atheist and a snob. Shatov taunts him with his snobbishness, but for philosophical rather than for social reasons: “You are an atheist because you are a snob, a snob of snobs . . . . A new generation is coming straight out of the heart of the people, and you will know nothing of it . . . nor I, for I’m a snob too.” Again Shatov becomes frenziedly indignant at this display of prideful deference: “While I am talking . . . drop your tone, and speak like a human being! Speak, if only for once in your life with the voice of a man . . . Have done with being a snob.” Stavrogin’s snobbery is not merely objectionable as a personality trait. It is the condition which cuts him loose in a meaningless world upon an equally meaningless venture. His life is without direction, his accomplishments without purpose. Stavrogin appears to be aware of this condition; yet he seems unable to do anything about it. Just prior to his suicide, he writes to Darya and tries to explain why he has failed so miserably: “Your brother told me that the man who loses connection with his country loses his gods, that is, all his aims.” He has explained previously, “I have no ties in Russia—everything is as alien to me there as everywhere.”

One consequence of his aloneness is the continual boredom which makes every day of Stavrogin’s life miserable. Boredom is a correlative of snobbery. In his confession, Stavrogin says, “The main thing was that life bored me to the point of stupefaction. I vented my anger on whomever I could . . . The year before I had already had the idea of shooting myself.” Bishop Tihon confronts Stavrogin
with this same explanation: "There is one punishment that falls upon those who divorce themselves from their native soil: boredom and a tendency toward idleness even where there is desire for work." This quality of intellectual boredom is the nearest approach to a genuine mental conflict which Stavrogin ever exhibits. It is perhaps less a tragic struggle than a state of mind; hence, lacking the qualities of conflict, it never becomes the central theme of the tragedy.

A second tragic quality of Stavrogin's character is that, though possessing great power, he is nonetheless wretchedly powerless to take any kind of positive action. A man who loses touch with the people and so lives an aimless, Ishmaelitish existence cannot be expected to have convictions strong enough either to motivate him to initiate an action or to sustain him in any strenuous endeavor. A man with no beliefs has no motive for action. And a man who has no God can have no beliefs. His actions then are lukewarm, provisional, hesitant, undirected. They do not flow from convictions. This is a major characteristic of those who are Possessed.

This aspect of Stavrogin's moral impotence is perhaps his most tragic characteristic. He himself is aware of this weakness. He says in his letter to Darya, "I've tried my strength everywhere . . . But to what to apply my strength, that is what I've never seen, and do not see now . . . My desires are too weak; they are not enough to guide me." He continues his self analysis. " . . . from me nothing has come but negation, with no greatness of soul, no force. Even negation has not come from me. Everything has always been petty and spiritless . . . I can never believe in an idea to such a degree as he (Kirillov) did." 10

Somehow he derives a satisfaction—I think it is almost an aesthetic satisfaction—from reflecting on his inability to release his energies. Perhaps he is intrigued at the tremendous amount of sheer power he has stored up, yet which lies idle and unspent. It is largely intellectual power, and it hypnotizes
into a slave-like worship every person whom it touches. Shatov and Kirillov have felt the heat of this intellectual power, and it consumes. They seize upon an idea which Stavrogin has tossed off casually in an unreflecting moment and attach themselves to it so blindly yet so tenaciously that it ends by consuming them. Even as Shatov feels its corrosiveness eating away the grounds of his own existence, he cannot surrender his servile devotion to Stavrogin's overwhelming intellect. “Stavrogin, why am I condemned to believe in you through all eternity . . . Shan’t I kiss your footprints when you’ve gone? I can’t tear you out of my heart, Nikolay Stavrogin!”

Not merely then do Stavrogin’s unspent intellectual energies torture him with boredom and idleness until he is on the verge of suicide, but they also permanently disease the lives of other and lesser minds. The inference appears to be that we cannot lose contact with the people even intellectually, for it is belief in God which can return intelligence to the people where it can be put to profitable use. When intelligence is removed from the people, it becomes a great coil of energy which, if allowed to unspring, will release itself in a purposeless and destructive manner.

Stavrogin seems morbidly curious about his own idle powers and the reasons why they must forever remain idle. He is aware of the nature of the tragic theme—he knows that first must come a belief in God. He has even memorized the Biblical passages in which Christ has described his very condition: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Stavrogin is lukewarm in belief, lukewarm in action. His feelings are weak and petty. Therefore he is rejected by the people and by God.

Stavrogin’s suffering is less emotional than intellectual; he is not only incapable of any emotional experiences, but he also lacks the capacity for recognizing them if they should
occur. Thus, his tragedy is failure to understand the nature of these feelings as well as inability to experience them. For example, in his confession to Bishop Tihon he makes it clear that he feels no regret at having ravished the little girl, Matryusha, and caused her death. He feels no sorrow, no remorse. But worse still, he cannot distinguish these feelings: “Never has anything like this happened to me. I sat until night fall, motionless, forgetful of time . . . Was this what is called remorse or repentance? I do not know and cannot tell even now.”

Not merely is Stavrogin morally impotent; he is morally perverted as well. His snobbism renders him incapable of love. Intelligence remains his only means for relating himself to his fellowman, and intellect alone has never been able to come to grips with good and evil. This is subject matter for faith alone. Good and evil belong to the people to determine, for the people are God-bearing. Intelligence can speak only half truths in these matters. The implication is clear: he who loses touch with the people also loses his ability to distinguish good and evil. This is another mark of those who are Possessed.

In his memorable conversation with Stavrogin, Shatov suddenly realizes that this tragic fact explains Stavrogin’s perverted conduct. He confronts Stavrogin with this same explanation: “Is it true that you declared you saw no distinction in beauty between some brutal obscene action and any great exploit, even the sacrifice of life for the good of humanity? Is it true that you have found identical beauty, equal enjoyment, in both extremes?” Shatov fails to get a commitment from Stavrogin, but he persists: “I don’t know why evil is hateful and good is beautiful, but I know why the sense of that distinction is effaced and lost in people like the Stavrogins . . . Simply because the shame and senselessness of it reached the pitch of genius!”

Stavrogin himself describes an instance of his perverted sense of values. After witnessing the brutal beating of the
little girl (whom he later ravishes) because of her alleged theft of his penknife, he throws the penknife away to make the theft appear to be authentic. And he says, "Immediately I felt that I had done something vile. At the same time I experienced a pleasurable sensation." 15

Stavrogin's inability to love and his snobbish withdrawal from society cause his actions to become erratic, aberrant, corrupt. Normally, he finds it impossible to act at all; but when he does take positive action, it is perverted because he cannot act on principle. A large part of the novel consists of accounts of Stavrogin's perversions. Being unable to distinguish anything in life which is worthy, he finds that he can live in such a world and come to grips with its problems only on the basis of self-abasement or humiliation. If the world appears to him to be pointless and ridiculous—even criminal, then he will accept it with ridicule and with criminality. He does not dare do otherwise, for in his eyes there would be no greater stupidity than to act generously and uprightly in a world which excludes these qualities completely. He can never be sure that any cause which he might espouse might not turn out to be farcical, and he can not tolerate even in a ridiculous world the ridicule of others nor being associated with a sham. He even fears killing himself for fear that suicide too is the greatest sham of all, and that he would appear supremely foolish. These fears he reveals to Marya: "I know I ought to kill myself... but I am afraid of suicide, for I am afraid of showing greatness of soul. I know that it will be another sham again—the last deception in an endless series of deceptions."

As previously explained, his incapacity for love is implied by the central theme of the tragedy. His convictions are lukewarm; his feelings are petty; he is unable to respond to any situation emotionally, and the love which he does feel for others is grounded in physical desire. Motivated then by lust, Stavrogin can express himself merely in debaucheries and perversions. As long as sexual desires are expressed
in unconventional or illicit ways, he seems to succeed in satisfying them. Thus, at various times he carries on illicit relations with Shatov's wife and with Darya. This apparent need for perverted sex expression reaches its repulsive climax in his marriage to the crippled idiot, Marya, and in his rape of the little girl, Matryusha. Of the former incident, he writes, "The thought of... marriage to a creature like that, the lowest of the low tickled my nerves. It would be impossible to imagine anything more monstrous." 

But Stavrogin is intelligent enough to know that he ought to be able to love genuinely. He even wants to love, and to love deeply. For example, he relates in his confession to Father Tihon a dream which he once had. It was a fanciful dream peopled by gods and goddesses, beautiful men and women. The striking feature of the dream was that "... the great overflow of unspent energies poured itself into love and simple-hearted joys... Oh, how happy I was that my heart was shaken and that at last I loved! Oh, marvelous dream, lofty illusion! The most improbable of all visions, to which mankind throughout its existence has given its best energies, for which it has sacrificed everything, for which it has pined and been tormented, for which its prophets were crucified and killed, without which nations will not desire to live, and without which they cannot even die!" 

He explains that he had awakened from this dream, his eyes wet with tears of joy and with a feeling of happiness in his heart. This was the first time either of these experiences had even been available to him. This desire to be able to love normally and genuinely remains, albeit, as weakly expressed as Stavrogin's other passions, and he never quite deceives himself into believing that he can ever achieve a normal relationship. He admonishes Darya, who had offered to lavish upon him a love of such beauty that it would move him to a normal love and a normal life: "No, it's better for you to be more cautious. My love will be as petty as I am myself and you will be unhappy."
Nonetheless, the idea remains with Stavrogin that perhaps love is the only thing which can furnish him with meaningful goals to live by. It might be his one hope, his one salvation from a life of debaucheries and perversions, from aimlessness and boredom. It is this hope which pervades his relationship with Liza during their brief one-night affair. But his hope remains unfulfilled, for they are not able to consummate a satisfactory sexual relationship even though Liza is the one person Stavrogin comes nearest loving genuinely. After this failure, Stavrogin explains what his hopes had been: "I knew I did not love you . . . I had a hope . . . I’ve had it a long time . . . my last hope . . . I could not resist the radiance that flooded my heart when you came to me yesterday, of yourself, alone, of your own accord. I suddenly believed . . . Perhaps I have a faith in it still." But Liza knows Stavrogin perhaps better than he knows himself. She responds in this manner to his explanation: "I don’t want to be a Sister of Mercy for you . . . though, of course, you need one as much as any crippled creature. I always fancied that you would take me to some place where there was a huge wicked spider, big as a man, and we should spend our lives looking at it and being afraid of it. That’s how our love would spend itself." 18

So Stavrogin hangs himself, but being a snob to the very end, uses a silken cord to do the job.

The psychological condition of isolation has dramatic as well as aesthetic implications. The tragic hero’s inability to adjust himself to his world often makes his behavior appear to be ludicrous and erratic and it causes considerable consternation among family and friends. Hamlet’s condition is perhaps the best known. A world which is mad invites him to feign madness; a world devoid of purpose would mock a meaningful and rational pursuit of ideals. So Hamlet isolates his personality under a cloak of madness. He is perhaps as much driven to it by his own unconscious guilt feelings as by the apparent state of Denmark and of the world, for he embarks upon his insanity disguise immediately after dis-
covering that his Father had been murdered. His own conscious desires to destroy the Father recoil upon him and sicken him. A melancholia hardens into disgust, and his madness appears to be as much an attempt to get away from his own guilt feelings as from a world which no longer makes sense. His apparent insanity assumes dramatic intensity when it brings on the genuine insanity and the suicide of his beloved Ophelia. Being unable to love, Hamlet can only admonish Ophelia to retreat as he had retreated, but symbolically to a nunnery where, like Alyosha, she may discover the kind of withdrawal which can heal.

As if madness were not sufficient, Hamlet also approaches reality through the device of play-acting. He can face life and deal with his present difficulties if he can withdraw from them to his own make-believe world. A world which is ultimately meaningless can vouchsafe no solutions to his difficulties, but if he can arrange them in a make-believe situation, he may be able to handle them. And even if he fails, he has won the only reward possible: a kind of aesthetic enjoyment of the tragedy. Thus, Hamlet becomes the director of a play instead of his life; but, as with madness, he fails in this device for though he proves the guilt of his uncle he cannot carry through the plan which the real world imposes upon him. It seems clear that Hamlet’s play-within-a-play sequence is chiefly an effort on his part to communicate through gestures of make-believe. He already knew of his uncle’s guilt and required no further proof.

So complete was Job’s estrangement from his friends that they had to sit for several days before they could even elicit a response from him, and even then they were never able to communicate. They failed and failed miserably to understand the nature of Job’s problem, and Job’s tragic tension is intensified all the more by their failure. Specifically, they could not comprehend that his intellectual inquiry is motivated by a strange new fact which he has discovered, the fact that upright men receive the same punishment as evil
men, and that an explanation of this new fact requires something more daring than the conventional type of wisdom which they were insisting upon. For these three friends the explanation was a simple one, one which has been handed down from father to son for many generations: the wicked man will be punished all of his days and "in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him." The authority of the Fathers is all the knowledge one needs to explain human existence. No need to talk sacrilegiously of new possibilities of human destiny; no need to question God's ways with man, or to doubt that some intellectual contradiction lurks deep within human nature. No need to behave so erratically. Eli- phaz had little sympathy and less understanding of Job's metaphysical speculations. He cut Job short with the question, "Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind." Obviously, if Job was being punished, then it was blasphemy to suggest any other solution than that he had been a sinful man.

We have already seen how much consternation Stavrogin's erratic behavior caused among his friends. For example, on the day of his arrival in his home town he is publicly insulted by Shatov, who slaps him in the face before a family gathering. The village expects him to defend his honor by killing Shatov the following day and they wait expectantly for the event. But nothing happens. Stavrogin appears to disregard the insult. Again, when challenged to a duel by Gaganov, he appears at the dueling grounds and stands unflinchingly while Gaganov fires at him. But he does not fire back. He does nothing. And again his friends try to excuse this spiritless behavior as a superior nobility of mind. Another example of this type of behavior is his affair with Liza; he has no part in desiring the affair, and he has no part even in arranging it. He passively accepts the arrangement after Pyotr has decided that it would help his particular plans at the moment. But perhaps his most blameworthy failure to act was his unwillingness to prevent the murder of his
imbecile wife, Marya, and the subsequent burning of the village. He accepts his guilt in these circumstances; yet he finds it impossible to be moved to responsible action in connection with them. The only decision which he made in the entire novel which ended in overt action was to commit suicide.

The most irretrievable form of isolation to which the tragic Hero retreats would be some form of psychosis. Most of the characters in Eliot's Cocktail Party have separated themselves off into such hardened shells that all need the help of a psychiatrist to assist in their reestablishment of normal human feelings. He becomes the hero of the play. Clym Yeobright in Hardy's Return of the Native withdraws to the wombal qualities of the Heath but fails to secundate this Mother-force and so win a new life. He ends his life in tragic loneliness, and in supreme irony, becomes an itinerant preacher who is regarded by his fellowman as a harmless but demented babbler of stale moralities. Raskolnikov just escapes being driven to complete insanity and never quite regains his attachments to other people.

The divisive action of intelligence isolates men into separate units and destroys community. The feeling of brotherhood depends upon a community-binding ritual which cannot proceed against the estranging forces of individuality. Lacking the ceremony which binds man into a community relationship with his fellowman, he also lacks the power to love. Therefore the aloneness which the tragic Hero's emerging self-consciousness renders inevitable prevents the kind of communion with others which can save him from self-destruction.

Ritual de-emphasizes the self and its problems even though it arranges for a participation-in-life, for a being-with-others, which allows the individual to become meaningfully active. But even so, he must often stand behind some depersonalizing mask, some uniform, ceremonial paint, or community activity, as a ritual dance, in order to belong to the group.
activities. This form of attachment is a primitive one, and is able to release the psychic energies of individuals in ways which will benefit rather than endanger the community, but remains an inadequate relationship for the strong person. Ritual supplies one major solution to the problem of tragic isolation: it provides for a kind of domination by authority, but one which confers a sense of freedom and which allows for expressions of spontaneity. If a tribal dance proceeds in strict accordance with tradition, if the masks and paint have been properly applied so that no single individual accrues to himself all of the power released through the dance, then the individual can express himself spontaneously. Ritual is therefore close to art, and in fact in community behavior replaces art activity. Both are examples of authority without repression, domination without control. Both allow for a purgation of private feelings without allowing these feelings to run riot and endanger the community.

Carefully controlled ritual, even the most primitive variety built around animal sacrifice, appears to integrate the individual into his group, but if such ritual confers freedom in doing so, it must be of a very special kind: it must celebrate the dying and resurrection of life. It must be a renewal ceremony in which the spiritual life of the community is reinvigorated along with that of the individual. This ritual of course assumes many forms, and some of them have been discussed in previous chapters. To the extent that ritual fails to give release to psychic energies of the individual, he will seek other outlets, though the range of possible outlets for the primitive mind is small.

It is interesting to note that intoxicants have always played a major role in these ceremonies. The ancient Vedic religion of the Hindus revolved around the taking of soma, the sacred nectar, which was an intoxicating beverage. It literally contained within its essence the power of god, as did the wine of Dionysius and the hoama of the early Zoroastrians. The connection with our theme is obvious. If a tribal ritual
failed to grant spontaneity to individuals, they took recourse in intoxication and experienced through this means a sense of freedom. But they never realized that such freedom was illusory. The American Indian found more comfort in the white man’s fire water than he did in any other of his civilized gifts. Alcohol brings with it the feeling of autonomy. Little wonder primitive man called it god, and that we use it as a symbol of our own spiritual renewal.
CHAPTER XV

GUILT: THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

We have often referred in these pages to the suffering which the tragic hero experiences in his vain attempts to realize his own individual potentialities in opposition to the restrictions with which tradition would saddle him. His suffering occurs in the form of mental anguish which extends itself outward from its particular impeding object to embrace the entire cosmos; it is a cosmic sickness, a metaphysical terror engendered by his discovery that evil belongs in the world as rightfully as the good. In the most fundamental sense, suffering results from the thwarting by an external order of free expression. It is forcing life into frameworks for which it was not necessarily designed. It is a conflict between self and the world, between Eros and Thanatos, between individual desires for independence and duty to an authoritarian system, between domination and authority, love and hate, toil and autonomy.

Psychoanalysis has it that suffering becomes most intense at that instant when we realize that our death wishes cannot furnish a resurgence of ourselves. It is that moment when, having been driven back into ourselves by the harshness and rigidity of reality, our own psychic forces drive us forward again out of sheer terror of being incestuously absorbed by
the Mother Power. At this moment we know that we must inescapably put up a fight in order to bring ourselves to birth, and we know that our fight will be to no end. Our rationality has meanwhile illuminated the world, fragmented it, and revealed there the possibility that only lifeless structures persist, that only empty forms have any permanence and eternality. We witness there the coming and going of individual existence with distressing regularity; yet we know that we must attempt to win there some meaning and autonomy for our own individual selves, however transitory we know our existence to be. Our first vision of freedom is associated with the destruction of the authority which would confine us, but we soon realize that this rebellion terminates in an empty gesture. We turn to Dionysius and seek immortality in a renewal ceremony, but our intelligence has already forewarned us of the illogicality of this effort. Thus, we remain thwarted, unfulfilled, and anxious until the intensity of our mental conflicts overpowers us and we yield to the pull of our unconscious death wishes. The death of the hero, as we shall see, is voluntarily chosen. He attracts death, for his very alienated nature precludes any real solution to his tragic condition. Or whatever solution he achieves will require that he die at least a symbolic death. If he submits to external domination, he dies as an independent self. If he retreats into the region of his own energies, he must surrender to the engulfment of the Mother principle and so return to infantilism.

Thus, traumatic suffering grows out of the Hero's relationship to the personality-formation forces of the external order. For dramatic purposes this order manifests itself in the persons of his family, his parents, wife, beloved. The normal relationship, and the most productive one, emerges as a form of love, which may be regarded as an emotional attachment which the Hero develops for the orderly system which nourishes him. Attachment to order means attachment
to the Mothering person; this in turn engenders other love relationships. When this relationship is violated, when he is cut off, he suffers. Suffering then arises out of a violent and sudden violation of standards as when he discovers a loved one to be the opposite of what his fixed notions had been. The unprepared defection of a loved one can initiate a break-up of our existence; it can shatter our personality and call for a radical reassessment of our total cosmic kinships. For the tragic Hero it becomes a metaphysical matter as well as a personal one.

It could well be that the chief characteristic of the tragic Hero is that his personal traumas awaken within him a world vision which is a vision of chaos. He discovers through suffering that the gods are unreliable and capricious, that the world at best is fragmentary and impermanent, at its worst, evil. His expanded vision teaches him that there is no real healing of his alienated personality, that no selfhood lies within the reach of his powers. This disclosure then forces him to discover himself and forces him to attempt the creation of an order which is his own.

It should be understood that these damning revelations need be only symbolic. Actually the chaos which he discovers in the universe is only a projection of his own inner turmoil. If he fails to escape from the meaninglessness in the world, it is because he cannot withdraw from himself. His withdrawal occurs in the direction of his original conflicts, and therefore they sharpen and intensify all the more.

With a quickening of suffering comes a sharpened intelligence because of the greater awareness of self. Intelligence emerges out of the boundary conflicts involving the inner wishes of the psyche to avoid both the sternness of the reality principle and the incest barrier to which it has retreated. The psychic tension arising out of this conflict generates rationality, self-consciousness, the habit of reflective thought. It expands our vision, stimulates the imagination, and sometimes leaves us with a feeling of omniscience or perhaps
clairvoyance. We are forced to assess our own status in relation to the total external order.

Suffering and the sharpened awareness which results impose upon the Hero another tragic trait: he experiences a rapid decline of volition. His newly won thought processes permit him to solve his problems in his imagination with the least possible expenditure of energy. This means that the tragic Hero is doomed to an existence of intellectuality, of tortuous soul searching, of soliloquy and confession. The man whose vision is broad does not rush headlong into projects; he prefers to tinker with them in his mind, to explore all possible implications, to round out the evidence. This for example, is Arjuna's trouble. He hesitates. He cannot bring himself to act out the timeless role imposed upon him by the authority of his particular caste. He knows, as Hamlet and Job know, that action solves no problems.

Though Arjuna's volition remains weak, he does not end up as a tragic Hero as does Hamlet or Job. He achieves a religious regeneration, but he surrenders his individuality in order to accomplish it. More specifically, what he surrenders is intellectuality as such, or at least the function of intelligence which divides reality into unsolvable dichotomies. The active person must be committed to the good as against the evil, for his work is directed to the eradication of evil. These opposites exist only to reason; they do not exist in actuality, Arjuna discovers. It is a mistake therefore to address oneself to one member of a pair of opposites only. The mistake is in failing to see that the life force expresses itself equally in each of the opposites. Man is both good and bad; hence, the way of life is not to eradicate the evil through aggression and to install the good. Such a program would continue to force life into fragments. The lesson Arjuna learned from the Lord Krishna, his Charioteer, was to live in such manner that all distinctions are erased, all opposites reconciled, all paradox resolved. But this means becoming god and surrendering human rationality.
But the same problem confronts Hamlet and Stavrogin and Job and Ivan and all the rest. Intelligence has so thoroughly hardened them that a religious restoration is impossible.

We noted in Chapter XIV that the tragic Hero lacks the capacity to love. As an alienated personality, he lives in a world of fragments and can establish no productive relationships with it. A fragment cannot serve as an authentic love object; its very nature commits the lover to a world of opposites, to a love which remains but a razor's edge from hate, to honor which is but a short step from degradation. It seems reasonable, or at least easy, for the alienated Hero to love what is evil and even monstrous. Stavrogin marries the crippled imbecile; Mitya Karamazov swears that he loves vice and cruelty and therefore admits to being a licentious insect. But in the same breath he insists that though he is low, and loves what is low, he still retains his honor. Almost every character in this Dostoyevsky novel erupts into a passionate speech at some point in which he proclaims his love of evil. Liza is a good example. She says, "I should like some one to torture me, marry me and then torture me, deceive me and go away. I don't want to be happy." To which Alyosha responds, "You are in love with disorder?" And Liza says, "Yes, I want disorder." ¹

It is evident that there is a new element present in these attitudes, and that it consists of some deeply distressing feelings of guilt. Only a compelling sense of guilt together with all of its accompanying negative feelings of belittlement and castigation could trick us into demanding hatred instead of love, torture instead of sympathy. One large section of the *Brothers Karamazov* is entitled "Laceration" and tells the story of Katerina, Liza, Mitya, the captain—and all the rest—all of whom experience such agonies of guilt that they must need lacerate themselves in order to win a measure of penance. Madame Hohlakov says of Katerina and Ivan, "I tell you it's lacerating; it's like some incredible tale of
horror. They are ruining their lives for no reason that any
one can see. They both recognize it and revel in it.”

Mitya’s self-defilement seems almost exaggerated, but his
general behavior renders his wild ravings somewhat plausi-
ble. His Hymn to Joy ends with the lines, “Sunk in vilest
degradation Man his loathsomeness displays”; and then
Mitya feels compelled to exhibit all of the vileness of which
he believes himself capable. He thinks of nothing but de-
graded man; he is pleased to be falling into degradation, to
know that he is an insect, a sensual insect, that he is base and
vile, and like the mass of mankind, that he finds genuine
beauty in Sodom.

There is one interesting feature about all this self-defile-
ment: each character still insists that he is morally upright
and honest. Their guilts reach much more deeply than any
personal trespass of moral conventions. No simple misdeed
could drive them to such agonizing self-lacerations. Hence,
their is no simple moral guilt of being right or being wrong
in their behavior. They are not morally inept, even Mitya,
the greatest sensualist of them all. It is not a question of
ethics, but of psychology. They are guilty of being human,
of having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. They are guilty
of alienation, guilty therefore of being unable to handle
their own psychic forces, guilty of mankind. They are guilty
of desiring to live as independent individuals, yet guilty of
desiring to die in order to escape the terror of individuality.
The tragic Hero bears in his soul all of the guilts of man-
kind; this includes all of the guilts which the masses of
mankind feel at having failed to become heroic.

Thus, Ivan soon realizes that his guilt feelings do not
stem merely from the wish to murder his father. And Ham-
let moves quickly from the position of having assumed his
mother’s guilt to having assumed the world’s. It is the world
which becomes rank and unweeded. The more personal
traumas only jar loose the unconscious flow of blame
which the tragic Hero comes to feel. After only a short
while Job hardly considers his family and he entirely forgets about his lost property. Celia Coplestone in *The Cocktail Party* warns Edward that he cannot humble her, that already she feels degraded and humiliated, that she sees in him now only a projection of something which she wanted but which remains vaguely focused. It is her own freedom which she desires, freedom from the alienation of the continuous cocktail party which human life tends to become, freedom from the world which now seems all a delusion.

Edward’s discovery that he does not after all love Celia Coplestone injures his vanity and causes him to be suspicious that he is incapable of loving anyone. His wife, Lavinia, makes the same discovery when she learns that her lover has forsaken her for Celia. Neither the husband nor the wife can love, nor can they be loved. Their alienation appears to be complete at the time they meet the Uninvited Guest, who reveals himself to them as their own Devils, their own inner voices. Perhaps Celia experiences her guilt more profoundly than either Edward or Lavinia. Out of her estrangement grows her awareness of solitude. She is alone and has always been alone. Everyone is alone despite the fact that they communicate with each other, pretend to love each other, and even to understand each other. And out of her solitude grows her sense of sin. She suffers from a sense of guilt, and she points out to the Uninvited Guest that it is not guilt in the ordinary sense. As with Ivan and Mitya Karamazov, regardless of how vile she might feel, she still cannot believe that she is immoral. Mere immorality never produces the feeling of sin which she experiences.

Neither can Job’s condition be reduced to a matter of ethical transgression. From the beginning to the end Job maintains his moral uprightness. God even admits that he has not sinned in His sight, and what is more, God brags about Job’s righteousness before Satan. It seems clear that his despair therefore is brought on by the Devil, which
is to say, by his own unconscious urges to rebel against God's order and to establish his own. His guilt stems from his new-won knowledge that God's way of organizing things has proved to be faulty and that he cannot escape violating that organization if he is to maintain his integrity. His wife, who advises him simply to curse God and die, cannot suffer in the tragic way because she only suffers deprivation and pain. Hers is not a world anguish. The three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, join the wife in holding to the sanctity of God's authority.

We indicated in Chapter XIII that the entire tragic theme of Crime and Punishment grows out of this distinction between guilt feelings which are more narrowly moralistic and those which rise from a darker and deeper source. None of Raskolnikov's friends can understand why he suffers no moral remorse from having committed his murders, and they believe him to be a monster when he tries to explain to them why he does not. The guilt feelings which he experiences from the very beginning and which drive him to commit the murders have no connection with any ethical standard. They arise from deep within his unconscious mind and remain a mystery even to himself. He can experience their torment without understanding their nature and origin. His tragedy is that he only compounds his sins by committing his crimes and by enduring a punishment which has no relation to his real condition. If he can adjust his condition to a moral convention, his tragedy vanishes. Moral punishment is irrelevant; legal punishment is superfluous. His punishment must be as unexplainable, and as endless, and as inevitable as his guilt. And it must be a form of punishment which is imposed by his own Devil voice rather than by some authoritarian agency, legal or moral. Perhaps Celia's words describing her own sinful state best summarize this tragic condition:
But even if I find my way out of the forest
I shall be left with the inconsolable memory
Of the treasure I went into the forest to find
And never found, and which was not there
And perhaps is not anywhere? But if not anywhere,
Why do I feel so guilty at not having found it? 4

No account of tragic guilt would be complete without some reference to Captain Ahab of Moby Dick. Few men in literature have been driven so relentlessly and so helplessly by their own uncontrollable psychic forces as Captain Ahab. His immense guilt feelings are projected into the figure of the White Whale which "swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them . . . that intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds." 5 The Whale thus symbolizes all that maddens and torments, all the truth with malice in it, all the subtle demonism of life and of thought. It epitomizes Ahab’s intellectual and spiritual exasperations.

Ahab appears to understand his condition, but remains powerless to do other than what his guilt feelings compel him to do. He attempts to force his way through sheer will power to a victory over himself and over Moby Dick. His tragedy is that his soul is over-manned. But the only victory he can envision requires unswerving aim. "What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad—Starbuck does; but I'm demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to comprehend itself! . . . Swerve me? Ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve yourselves! Man has ye there." 6

Ahab is clever enough to recognize that his own madness is but the madness of all men intensified, and that his crew dare not stay his hand in the pursuit of Moby Dick, for they
would in a sense be surrendering their own dreams of independence, however mediocre and unheroic these dreams may be. He realizes too that he is driven not by madness but by his own demon voice, his own Devil, which, like Stavrogin's power, seduces the incompetent and the common, the mongrel renegades and the cannibals, the morally enfeebled and the indifferent alike upon his dangerous journey into his own soul to expunge the monster whale. But just what the demon power is and what it means he doesn't know; he only knows it as a frenzy, "a boiling blood and smoking brow" which drives him on for forty years, and that after these forty years he knows himself to be a fool to have won only his wearied and palsied arm, and his grey hairs, without ever having come upon himself. Life has become nothing but mockery—bitter, biting mockery. Searchingly he asks, "What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this arm?"

We know, however, from the symbolism of the lost leg that Ahab cannot win, that he can never have the answers to these frightening questions. Prometheus long ago tricked Zeus into accepting the thigh bone as god's part of the sacrifice so that man could have the meat for his own sustenance. He made the thigh bone sacred, and every great Tragic Hero must therefore, like Jacob who wrestled with the Angel, go lame in his thigh, or break down at the heel. Out of the thigh of Zeus was Dionysius himself born, having been taken yet unborn from his mother, Semele, when she was destroyed in anger by Zeus. Melville makes much of the various manufactured legs which Ahab requires; these
are made of whale bone and have the appearance of bone; but these were artificial and therefore impotent. His divinity, his power to succeed, has already been taken from him.

This theory that the guilt of the Tragic Hero is not a moral guilt but rather a metaphysical one also implies that his suffering will consist less of remorse than of cosmic despair. This theory will find such views as those of Professor Werkmeister somewhat inadequate. He holds that the Hero's guilt derives from his forsaking his highest value commitments. Such violations will entail his destruction; whereas, lesser minds may thrive. Any violation of value implies guilt, and life is so complex that the Hero often finds himself in situations which not only permit him a right choice but which offer such a variety of values that he cannot help but violate some of them.

This kind of theory appears to be weak on several counts. The literature, in the first place, will not support it. The lacerations which Hamlet and Job feel, for example, plague them long before they have involved themselves in any action, before they have been required to make choices and so violate or fail to violate the prevailing value systems. What values did Hamlet violate which could account for the mental anguish which he initially feels, an anguish which almost drives him to suicide?

Neither does this theory account for the disproportionate amount of guilt which attaches to violations of minor values. Guilt which is so deep-seated must arise from other sources. As a matter of fact, it appears to be precisely those characters who consistently violate values who also experience no pangs of guilt and therefore who do not suffer. Only the honest person can suffer, for only the honest person can feel a tragic kind of guilt. The mind which is engaged in deception; either self-deception or in deceiving others, concentrates upon the particular instance, upon contrivance, upon finitude. He can only become angry or fly into a rage when he makes a blunder or when his dishonesty comes to light.
Dishonest minds are narrow, limited and confined to visions which are petty. Even the unsavory Karamazov brothers were broad, as broad as Mother Russia and as complex and unplumbed. Their visions could therefore expand into cosmic proportions, and so infect them with the typical disease of tragic Heroes, the sickness unto death.

It is the villain rather than the Hero who is concerned with ethics, concerned, that is, with violating them and scorning them. Iago disdains morality however it is sanctioned; for him virtue is a fig, and love is lust. He would lie and deceive, he would violate every value which any noble character in the drama would extol, and never once does he feel guilty, nor does he know what suffering means. If tragic guilt and suffering grow out of a violation of values, how can we explain the Iagos? He only becomes angry when his stratagems come to light, and in the very last scene he is even willing to murder his wife as being instrumental in uncovering his network of lies and deceptions. Edmund in King Lear seems to be made from the same cloth. No moral principle is too sacred for him to violate; no contrivance too deceitful or too wicked to arrange. And such violations leave him coldly cynical and emotionally unmoved. There is something then other than attachment to or rejection of a given moral system which defines the tragic hero and provides for those moments when he must suffer a blameworthiness which lacerates with its fury.

Literature provides a great many intermediate characters when judged on the basis of this principle. Madame Bovary is one of the most interesting. Her interest lies in the strange mixture of the heroic and the villainous which make up her character. She has the possibility of becoming a great tragic heroine. She suffers, she lives in continual misery, she is desperately unhappy even when most in love. Her unrest drives her to disregard with disdain any morality or any traditional pattern which might have thwarted her amorous plans. She detests mediocrity in any form, and comes to
loathe her husband for this reason, to loathe him both as a lover and as a professional person. She hates the banality of middle class existence and seeks to escape from it within her own romantic visions, and in her love affairs.

But her tragedy was that she could never quite achieve proportions of the tragic! Her visions never lifted. They never left the level of her own person and her own passions. Neither the drabness of provincial life nor her own inner impulses could move her into a righteous battle with the final powers. She detested a commonplace society, but she never questioned it, nor did she shout defiance at the universe. Her passions remained too narrowly circumscribed, her visions of romantic love too self-indulgent. Despite the fact that the grand passion of her love affairs soon dissipated itself into a thin and boring fever and finally into the same unproductive monotony which characterized her marriage to Charles, the misery which she invariably experienced in connection with these affairs could never thrust her into an awareness of a relationship to the universe. Though she vaguely realized that she required something more solid than sexuality if she were ever to escape her alienated self, she still continued to dream of another love affair which would be just a bit more exciting and more lasting than the former one. The result is that she constantly experienced unhappiness and misery, but never the kind of guilt which a genuinely tragic person must feel or a mental anguish to accord with her guilt. Her death is just as necessary aesthetically as that of the tragic Hero, and it arouses a flood of pity for her condition; but her death does not carry with it the feelings of fear which despairs and terror which is unfathomable.

Unlike Lady Macbeth, Emma Bovary had no devil voice to goad her into a soul-searching journey. She remained undivided; sequestered in adolescence and unable to grow out of her adolescent relationships to other people or even to herself, she acted only to gratify sexuality. The sheer drabness of life drove her back irretrievably to this earlier psycho-
logical level and it confined her there, hopelessly bound to a dream of romantic love, because she could not experience such love without having it and in boredom. What was left but to prop her head against the wall and weep at the injustice of life which could not be carried on in pursuit of shameless pleasure and wild delights. Or else take the poison.
CHAPTER XVI

DEATH: THE HEALING SACRIFICE

It is obvious from everything that has been said up to this point that the tragic Hero must die. But this is a strange requirement of art, or even of life. What is the aesthetic necessity for death? Why should it become an object of aesthetic delight? Or better still, what is the psychological necessity for death? The answer to this latter question will provide clues to the former. The work of the dramatist is to transform psychological need into aesthetic necessity.

The theme of this essay has been that the Hero must die in order to renew himself. His living unfolds itself within a framework of limitations which deaden his individual responses and therefore endanger his autonomy. He must break away from these circumstances and revitalize himself in an effort to regain a lost spontaneity. If he yields to these constraining forces, he surrenders his independence as a free self; and as an individual with strong personal inner feelings he cannot bring himself to submit to them. Therefore, he fights. But he can struggle only so long. Soon he begins to realize that a genuine victory cannot be won by taking up arms and opposing the forces which would hold him in bondage. Hamlet teaches us this lesson. He suffers, and the suffering which grows out of his struggle sharpens his awareness and reveals himself as existing in a new relationship to the cosmic powers. Within the framework of his new
vision mere aggression becomes pointless.¹ It cannot win him back his life. His victory now requires a new kind of action, and a new kind of courage. He must die. He must relinquish all attachments to this world and to the powers which would enslave him, and he must retreat to an original source of creative power, which, having been won, will automatically neutralize his former attachment to alienating images.

But this death ritual beguiles with strange and intriguing paradox: it terrifies at the same time that it holds out the offer of long-forbidden pleasures. It terrifies because it demands his own life and his own world as a sacrifice; it offers pleasures, for it releases him from a tensional, guilt-laden existence.

Nothing is more terrifying than the discovery that it is pleasurable to die. So fearful is this idea that we normally thrust it completely out of our consciousness. We repress our death wishes and vigorously deny that we could possibly entertain them in the first place. But it appears to be nevertheless the case that the Hero voluntarily surrenders to them, and that in attracting death to himself, he is expressing the unconscious feelings of the audience, of ourselves. This means that through the tragic Hero we as audience fulfill desires which are normally prohibited, and we experience pleasures which have long been forbidden.

The Hero finds death attractive because he can retreat from the tensions of duality to the blissful integrity of wholeness, from the conflicts which opposites always engender to the peace which comes with unity. It is better to be dead than to suffer the unbearable agonies of loving a person and hating him at the same time, as Othello loves and hates Desdemona at the time he strangles her and then takes his own life. It is almost better to be dead than to suffer the tortuous vacillation between belief and doubt, as when Raskolnikov's intelligence assures him that what he has done is logically justified, whereas his emotions betray to him the monstrosity of his murderous act. For the Hero
the act of dying is a healing act. By means of it he banishes all dichotomies; he sacrifices his attachments to all opposites and consequently replaces the tension of polarity with the peace of wholeness. He sacrifices his commitments to all opposites, both good and bad. No longer must he labor to achieve the one and eschew the other, believe the one and doubt the other, love the one and hate the other. He sacrifices both. Not merely must the Good, the Logos, the Christ be sacrificed, but His opposite as well. Thus, the thieves take their place on the cross beside Him, and banished forever is the possibility that man will alienate himself, that he will pursue fragments instead of oneness, parts rather than the whole. In a word, through death man heals his tragic flaw.

The Hero attracts death not merely to escape an unbearable conflict, but also to renew himself through a rebirth. This renewal ceremony involves, as we have seen, three or four aspects each one of which holds out the lure of comfort to the Hero. First, the death rite holds out the promise of a blissful existence, for it involves a return to infantilism and thence to all of the narcissistic irresponsibilities with which infancy is associated. In this state the harsh, demanding world does not even exist; life is inertia and cessation of toil. As infants our only energy expenditures consist in the formation of wishes, and even some of these are unconsciously expressed. Our experience is limited to the fulfillment of these desires. Thus, for the Hero whose world is too much with him, the regression to an infantile state, which death symbolizes, becomes an irresistible attraction.

The death drama attracts the Hero with a second form of pleasure: surcease from the gnawing feelings of guilt. Death becomes a retreat not only to infantilism, but also from feelings of inadequacy, of finitude. It is escape from limitation and ignorance to the fantasy of omnipotence. It is retreat from our humanness and all of the guilt which we accumu-

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late from being human, guilt for not having carried through our Hero's role. It appears that we will go to any lengths to gain release from our guilt feelings. We gladly sacrifice our existence, our very bodies, or any part of them. If our eye offend us we must pluck it out—we read in the Scriptures. Sacrifice it; sever it. Separate it from our persons, for it is now a guilty object, and our overwhelming sense of sin can be expelled as we expel the offending part.

Sacrifice in this sense becomes a form of death, for sacrifice is not limited to the offending eye, or the hand, but includes our total persons. In order then to win complete release let us in humility renounce our very lives and through this voluntary submission hope to win a new and lofty existence which will be free of our former transgressions and indeed free forever from any sins.

The extremes to which men will go in sacrifice indicates something of the uncontrollable power which our guilts have over the psyche. We sacrifice our lives, our bodies. We sacrifice our children, our community, and perhaps an entire nation. The earliest cultural records left to us by primitive man attest to this strange circumstance. On the walls of caves which date back to Aurignacian times of prehistory we come upon dozens of handprints. It is remarkable enough that these early records have survived for 25,000 years along with other of cave man's masterpieces, as at Lascaux and Altamira, but more remarkable still is the fact that these painted designs characteristically depict hands which have from one to several fingers missing. Anthropologists point to the ritual of various primitive peoples, as the American Plains Indian, which requires the sacrifice of fingers in propitiation of the gods. Guilt feelings can be expiated through the ritual. The custom is widespread, for it appears to belong to the make-up of the human psyche. No part of the body is safe from this sacrificial impulse: if the eye offends, it is plucked out, or the hair shaved from the head or
from the body, or a tooth filed down or knocked out, or the foreskin cut off, or in some cases the individual suffers castration.

These mutilations symbolize death, a sacrificial form of death. They are meant to release the sufferer from the bondage of sin. Thus, they confer freedom. They cleanse; they purge the psyche from the lacerations of evildoing, and it seems not to matter whether that evildoing is imagined or real, done with intent or accidentally, unconsciously felt or consciously earned. Death becomes the supreme penance in atonement for the massive accumulation of guilt which each individual seems to inherit from the humanness in his nature.

The psychological basis of this need to suffer physical pain and to renounce a part of one's physical self in a purgation ritual remains, perhaps, a mystery. But we can hazard some explanations which are based on anthropological data. A primitive society which is dominated by a tribal lore and almost exclusively by group activities permits the individual a minimum amount of opportunity to discover his own personal ambitions if these in any way violate the customs of the tribe. Such individuals cannot be permitted to express themselves. Their beliefs must conform to those of the tribal tradition. Their social relations, their dance, and economic activities are tribal affairs. I do not mean to suggest that domination by the group is complete; it is perhaps difficult to know exactly to what extent the individual is conscious of himself as an autonomous individual. But his opportunities for emerging as an independent self must have been less than they are in a society which is more advanced, which is to say, which allows greater freedoms to its individual members. Thus, in the sacrifice of a finger or a tooth or a foreskin, the individual achieves a kind of independent status, perhaps for the first time. The simple reason is that suffering and pain are individual experiences. They cannot be felt by a group as a group. Suffering invites recognition of
the individual as a person. It not only makes him more aware of himself but it compels others to regard him as a separate self. We are all aware of the infantile attitude of displaying an injury for the purpose of gaining individual recognition. Illness or injury, especially when voluntarily chosen, makes a strong appeal for selfhood. To this class of behavior belong also dietary restrictions, self-starvation for a cause, and perhaps in general the attitude of passive resistance in political affairs.

The sacrificing person can well say, "I suffer, therefore I exist." In more ways than one suffering and atonement constitute dramatic gestures toward individuality. Through suffering we come upon ourselves, upon our guilt-laden psyches; and through atonement, we release ourselves from them.

A third form of pleasure which death affords grows out of our renunciation of the physical world and of its mechanical hold over our psyches. Through death we express our unconscious preference for the miraculous over the scientific, for the dark and the irrational over the logical and the necessary. Why is it pleasurable to sacrifice the world? Simply because it is too much with us. Like a great monster-machine it runs our lives, and there is nobody who can turn it off. It is the steam roller in the form of Law which runs us down and leaves us thin and lifeless, as Falder discovers. To escape from the monster is to yearn for death; desire to escape signifies an unconscious preference for chaos over an ordered universe. In psychological terms, it is, as Kirillov sought to demonstrate through suicide and as Osiris perhaps did demonstrate, the terrifying but supremely ecstatic act of the individual's dismemberment, and consequently the purgation of all guilts and limitations. This frenzied joy in sacrifice is compounded of both the yearning to be free and the terror of being annihilated in the process. How else explain the universal expressions of sadism and masochism than by the joy one feels—uncon-
sciously to be sure, for we can never admit to such feelings even to ourselves—in the act of dismemberment. Less cultured societies are less reluctant to describe this psychological condition.

For example, if mythology and folklore are to be taken seriously as projections of our unconscious wishes, then we have abundant evidence for this dismemberment theme. It occurs in literature from Egypt in the south to Finland in the north and in various cultures around the globe. In these examples the fragmenting agency represents the external world, the father's authoritarian system. And it is the Mother-wife power which reconstitutes the severed pieces into a new and nobler life.

The Finnish Hero of the Kalevala, whose name is Lemminkainen, goes out to perform the customary labors imposed upon such Heroes if they are to win life, symbolized in this instance by the Princess, Louhi's daughter. He harnesses the fire-breathing steeds and is about to shoot the swans of Tuonela when the blind old cowherd, another universal symbol-character, who has been waiting for this opportunity, hurls a serpent through the heart of Lemminkainen and kills him. The cowherd then dismembers him; he

\[ \text{Drew his sword and smote the hero,} \\
\text{With his gleaming blade he hewed him . .} \\
\text{And he hewed him in five fragments,} \\
\text{And in pieces eight he hewed him,} \\
\text{Then in Tuonela's stream, he cast him,} \\
\text{Where are Manala's abysses.}^{3} \]

But Lemminkainen's dismemberment, like that of Osiris and of Frey the Scandinavian Hero, symbolizes only a ritual death, just as his rebirth symbolizes a sacrifice of the world. His mother goes in search of her fragmented son, fashions a magic rake—the more common symbol is the sword—from the sacred fire, and dredges up the pieces of her Son's body
from the dark abysses of Tuonela. With magic salves and ointments she brings him to life again. At the time of his death Lemminkainen commits aggression against nature in order that through this form of sacrificial behavior he may come to some sense of who he is and perhaps what his mission might be. The "labors" which he must perform parallel those in various other mythological accounts. The labors of Heracles and of Cupid and Psyche come to mind. These stories suggest that there exists a curious relationship between aggression—or at least some measure of strenuous if not violent activity—and the hero's cathartic release from his tensions.

Exactly how do the facts of death, aggression, and catharsis converge into the tragic circumstance? Is their relationship merely dramatic, or is it psychological? Or both? Critics have often noted that typical tragic heroes, as Hamlet or Oedipus, are characterized by irresolution and indecision. The heightened awareness of their newly discovered cosmic status softens their actions and tempers their violence, for intelligence teaches that their real problems cannot be solved through any kind of action. An increased sensitivity draws attention away from their particular entanglements and focuses it upon metaphysical issues.

The shift from the particular to the universal, and the consequent tendency toward passivity and non-violence produces a dramatic reorientation in the forces of the psyche. The shift occurs as a form of repression, and the impulse which is repressed is one of the most powerful and ineradicable—the instinct for aggression, which Freud refers to under the name of Thanatos. It means that since we cannot repress any instinctual urge with impunity we can expect some compensating form of behavior to emerge.

Both Freud, and more recently Theodor Reik, associate guilt feelings with the suppression of the instinctive urge to do violence. Tormenting guilt is the price we pay for civilized behavior. Hamlet wishes to commit violence against his
mother, and perhaps even against his father, but his "large discourse" of reason tempers his deeds, and he experiences guilt instead. Those who can engage in direct action suffer little remorse and therefore lack a tragic dimension. Fortinbras is not guilt-laden; he engages in warfare instead. Even the Iagos feel little remorse, for they too have engaged in violence, if only surreptitiously. As long as Hamlet fails to destroy his parent image, he suffers, as do Mitya and Ivan Karamazov. Ivan, like Hamlet, attempts to rationalize his behavior, and he literally reasons himself into a state of insane irrationality. This component of his personality materializes into the Devil, and it continues to argue from this schizoid state. But Ivan continues to suffer lacerations of guilt and doubt.

What now is the end result of sacrifice and of death? It is being made whole again. It is purgation of guilt. It is release, abandonment. But psychologically it is the hope for a rebirth; it is the vision of a new unity. Lemminkainen's violence against nature ends in his fragmentation. But his resurrection can occur only after his Mother, who gives him his second birth as well as the first, enlists the aid of the whole of nature: the sun and the rainbow, the bees and the flowers, and all of the other cooperative agencies in nature. The Hero in this case does win a new unity. Such indeed is the hope of all Heroes.

The whole of nature emulates the annual death and resurrection of the Hero, Osiris. Therefore, death only insures a new life and even though it may terrify, the terror converges with joy, for the act of dying also produces the cathartic effect of release from guilt. This catharsis in turn signifies an abandonment of finitude and the possibility of a limitless existence. Fear and joy are both present whether we sacrifice the world or sacrifice God; for in the end it is ourselves that we renounce.
NOTES

CHAPTER 1
RITUAL AND REASON

3. Ibid., p. 15.
5. Ibid., p. 1000.

CHAPTER II: ALIENATION: PSYCHICAL ORIGINS

4. Cf. Frederick Perls, Ralph F. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, GESTALT THERAPY, Julien Press, 1951. Chapters II and III are especially useful. “You and your environment are not independent entities, but together you constitute a functioning, mutually influencing system.” P. 73.


CHAPTER III

INTEGRATION: THE PRIMITIVE LEVEL

2. Cf. C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Chapter VII.
3. Ibid., p. 148
6. This event is described in some detail by Frankfort, Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen and Irwin in their Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man beginning on page 177.
7. The reader may wish to refer to W. E. Soothill, The Lotus of the Wonderful Law, Oxford, 1930; especially to Chapter I.
8. More complete descriptions of this process can be found in such sources as Wolfgang Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, Chapter VI.
9. Outwardly these three processes appear to be closely related to David Hume’s three laws of association; however, Hume’s analysis relies on a rather mechanistic treatment of the sensory data which become organized in accordance with the three laws which he describes.
11. The Secret of the Golden Flower, a Chinese Book of Life, has been translated by Richard Wilhelm and commented upon by C. G. Jung. It describes in some detail the religious as well as the psychological significance of the mandala symbol.
12. Freud's work, *Totem and Taboo*, develops this theme in some detail.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEATH THEME IN TRAGEDY

2. *Ibid.*, Chapters XXIII and XXIV.
3. *Ibid.*, Chapter XII.
5. For a full analysis of the Great Mother as a psychological archetype and as a concept running through various mythologies see Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, Bollingen Series XLVII.
6. *The Mysteries*, Bollingen Series XXX, which contains a selection of papers from the ERANOS Yearbook, reviews such mystery religions as the Eleusinian, the Orphic and the Osirisian.
8. This ceremony is described in some detail by Jane Harrison in Chapter IV of her book, *Ancient Art and Ritual*.

CHAPTER V

THE REBIRTH THEME IN TRAGEDY


CHAPTER VI

ALIENATION THROUGH INTELLIGENCE


CHAPTER VII

ALIENATION THROUGH LANGUAGE


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5. This doctrine appears in Plato's Dialogues in several places. Perhaps its occurs in its most forthright expression in the *Phaedo*.


14. Confucius believed that the first step to take in the improvement of political life is the correction of language. "If language is incorrect, then what is said does not concord with what is meant; and if what is said does not concord with what is meant, what is to be done cannot be effected." Cf. Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, Allen and Unwin, 1938, p. 171.


CHAPTER VIII

ALIENATION THROUGH TOIL


4. Perhaps more than any other single person, Karl Marx has been responsible for clarifying the condition of alienation as it relates to man and his work, to personality and its products. Though this theme appears throughout his book, Capital, Modern Library, it comes most completely into focus in Section 4, Chapter I. In his book, Escape from Freedom, Erich Fromm summarizes this thesis, particularly on pages 188 ff.

5. Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom, Rinehart and Company, 1941; cf. Chapters II-IV.


CHAPTER IX

RATIONALITY: THE TRAGIC FLAW


4. Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics will of course present the classic version of this theory; cf. Book I, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, and 9; The Basic Works of Aristotle, Richard McKeon, ed., Random House, 1941.

5. Hamlet, Act I; Scene ii; lines 132 ff.

6. Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, lines 310 ff.

CHAPTER X

REBELLION: THE FATAL ACT

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVIL: THE ALIENATED PERSONALITY

2. Ibid., lines 419-423.
5. Ibid., 36:11-12.
6. Ibid., 3:3-8.
7. Ibid., 9:32.
8. Ibid., 10:3-6.
9. Ibid., 14:10-12.
10. Ibid., 15:8-9.
12. Ibid., p. 254.
13. Ibid., p. 238.

CHAPTER XII

FREEDOM: THE GREAT DECEPTION

2. Ibid., p. 177.
5. Ibid., p. 114.
6. Ibid., p. 628.
7. Ibid., p. 629.
8. Ibid., p. 630
CHAPTER XIII

DOUBT: THE COLLAPSE OF INTELLIGENCE


CHAPTER XIV

LONELINESS: THE FAILURE OF LOVE

CHAPTER XV

GUILT: THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

2. Ibid., p. 187.
3. Ibid., p. 112.
6. Ibid., p. 167.
7. Ibid., p. 535.
8. Cf. unpublished MSS.
9. Theodor Reik’s recent book, Myth and Guilt, Braziller, 1957, undertakes a detailed analysis of the origin and meaning of guilt. He defines it as a form of temptation anxiety, the ambition to become God, but more accurately, “It is repressed aggressiveness whose energy is transformed into guilt feelings.” Cf. p. 24 ff. Helen Merrell Lynd defines guilt as a type of response to standards which have been internalized; it is, as Freud indicates likewise, a form of self-reproach. Cf. Lynd, On Shame and the Search for Identity, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958.
CHAPTER XVI

DEATH: THE HEALING SACRIFICE

1. As indicated in Footnote No. 9 of the previous chapter, Reik regards the lack of aggression to relate directly to feelings of guilt which arise.


5. Cf. Note 9, Chapter XV.
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