

## THE NATURE OF MIND

1. Man is personal - embodied - living - mind. That is the fundamental datum of experience which you can't deny without contradicting yourself.

All reflection on man's nature and situation must therefore start from it.

2. When we reflect on this experience we find ourselves driven to conclude that the real nature of this mind is: A CREATIVE ENERGY ALWAYS MAKING FOR 'HARMONY'.

3. What is meant by harmony? To answer this all we have to do is to reflect on harmony as we experience it, e.g.

(a) The organism. In our bodies every organ (brain, heart, stomach, etc) is different and yet each only exists to make a unique contribution to the 'whole' - the unity we call the body. Thus it is the very variety and uniqueness of each function or organ which makes the unity real and intimate. Equally, the functions are real only as functions (members) of this unity or wholeness we call the body.

(b) This is the universal characteristic of anything we can call a harmony. <sup>Thus</sup> Now when we reflect on the activity we call the mind, we find exactly the same characteristic.

Take the work of art. The more it is a true and successful work of art, the less is there anything irrelevant or out of place. In the perfect or ideal work of art, every single detail would be unique, and make a unique contribution to the whole experience which is the work of art; and the work of art is nothing but the integral unity of all these unique parts

together; words, notes of music, strokes of the brush, etc. Now the work of art is the expression of the creative activity of the mind. It is the mind being spontaneous, just being itself because that is the kind of activity it is.

(c) But the mature mind is an activity of knowing. It is not the mind just being creative (creative imagination producing a work of art); it is mind controlled by reality, i.e. discovering objective truth. How does it work now? The answer is: look at a logical demonstration. In so far as 'thinking' is true (accurate, correct, real) and successful, it is a process of inference. Every step in the argument contributes something new and unique -- after each inference you must be able to write Q.E.D. But the argument itself is a whole; a unity of all the unique inferences, from the premise to the conclusion; <sup>ie. it</sup> and forms a unique whole composed of all the inferences.

And so on. So we find that man is, in all his activities as personal embodied mind, a creative activity which makes for harmony. This is his essential characteristic as a living mind, and expresses his innermost nature.

4. Man is a growing concern. His existence, his life, is a passage from embryo towards maturity. In so far as he is embodied mind (organism), this passage is a definite, <sup>(finite) is closed</sup> limited cycle; birth, maturity, old age, death. But both as personal mind, and as 'mankind', the growth of the mind is not



3.

closed at the growing point; there is (potentially) no limit to its growth; its potentialities are in-finite. Thus the 'law' of man's nature is a law of growth. Growing is becoming something new. So to be really alive as mind i.e. to be a mind - is to be living at the point of CREATIVE ADVANCE.

5. Put these points together (and they are all simple facts of experience revealed by simple reflection), and you have a conception of man as A CREATIVE ENERGY OF MIND WHOSE NATURE IS TO BE ALWAYS STRIVING TO ACHIEVE A NEW, FULLER, RICHER, MORE VARIED HARMONY.

6. Having reached this fundamental principle, let us consider the different aspects of it in more detail.

Man is personal embodied mind. What 'mind' is (mind in its full sense: Plato's 'soul', etc.) is the creative energy already defined. Let us consider him as embodied mind. Man is aware of the 'objective' world of which he is a part or member, in virtue of his being 'body' (through sense-experience). Reflecting on sense-experience we discover two aspects of the objective world of which man finds himself a member: (a) the world of 'body', i.e. the 'physical' world; what modern science calls 'the world of nature'; (b) a world of other personal embodied minds like himself. Since these are different aspects of reality, both his understanding of them, and his relationship to them must also be different.

7. The world of NATURE, the physical world, is the 'not-mind', 'not-self'

aspect of the objective world, or 'reality'. The way to understand it is the method of physical science. Man's attitude is here detached. We don't identify ourselves with the material world. But in trying to understand it the mind, as always, proceeds by seeking harmony. The harmony it seeks and finds in the physical world is what we call 'the laws of Nature'. These are universal, necessary patterns, composed of sub patterns, and so on down to the elements (atoms, electrons, etc.) Having found them, science regards them as unchanging repetitive patterns of facts or events (patterns in space and time). This is what makes scientific understanding, prediction, and hence control, of physical nature possible. The point to note is that these laws (<sup>spatial</sup> local and temporal harmonies which the mind picks out and traces) are regarded as unchanging; and it is because of this that man can control nature.

So much for the way the mind understands nature as 'other than mind'.

The next question is: What is the right relation of man to this physical world? Science is a two-fold relation to it: (a) understanding (= theoretical science); (b) control and use of it for the promotion of human purposes (applied science) - the right relation being control for human welfare.

Note: Since man is embodied mind, this physical aspect is as essential and fundamental as any other aspect - Karl Marx.

8. We now come to the other aspect of man's objective experience: what about man's relation as personal mind to the world of other personal minds?

9. Now, as a person the individual is not an isolated fact, but a member



of the world of persons. Here we find the supreme example of the truth that the human mind is a creative energy always seeking harmony. For reflection immediately makes it clear that, as a matter of sheer objective fact, personality is social in its innermost nature and to 'the finest fibre of its being'. For example: a person could not be conceived, or born, or survive, or grow as a body or a mind or a person, except by and in his relationship to other persons. (A person begins by being conceived through the union of two parents; as an embryo he lives as part of his mother; as a baby he survives by parental care; as a mind he grows by language, education, intercourse; he becomes a civilized being by division of labour, etc.) The facts therefore compel us to conclude that a person only exists and is only real, as a member of the world of persons. So it follows from the premises already established that man can only 'find himself', become a 'person', and realize his true nature in so far as he achieves a right relationship to the world of persons; and that this right relationship can only be one of co-operation, i.e. the achievement of 'harmony' as defined above. i.e. Every individual is a unique member of 'whole' (the world, the society) of persons, with a unique contribution to make to the whole; he is only real as making that unique contribution to and living as a member of that whole as a unique part of it. Further, the law of human nature is a law of growth. Therefore MAN AS PERSONAL MIND IS BY HIS NATURE A CREATIVE ENERGY WHOSE LIFE CONSISTS IN THE UNCEASING EFFORT TO REALISE HIMSELF AS 'THIS' UNIQUE MEMBER OF THE WHOLE SOCIETY OF PERSONS, AND IN THE GROWING REALIZATION (bringing into being)

OF THIS SOCIETY AS AN INTEGRAL HARMONIOUS UNITY OF ALL ITS UNIQUE MEMBERS.

10. This creative activity has two aspects:

Man as personal:

Man as mind.

11. As mind, man is this creative energy seeking this harmonious wholeness through understanding (knowledge). This can only mean the development of man's capacity (a) TO LIVE IN THE MINDS OF OTHER PERSONS, seeing their world through their eyes, and entering into their feelings, thoughts, intentions, actions, achievements, etc; (b) TO MAKE ONE'S OWN MIND AVAILABLE TO OTHER MINDS, in the same way. Thus the 'harmony' human nature always seeks is here created by EACH MIND CONTINUALLY ENRICHING ITSELF FROM THE WORLD OF OTHER MINDS (in so far as it is capable of doing so) and IN TURN ENRICHING THE WORLD OF MINDS WITH ITS OWN UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION. The life of the mind (or spirit) is the life of this two-fold rhythm of giving and receiving. The law of its growth is the law of increasing mutual enrichment through this rhythm.

We may sum this up by saying that the principle of living growth for the mind is the principle of the OPEN mind; the principle of evil and death is the principle of the CLOSED mind (the denial of the real nature of mind).

12. But all this is only to say that all the functions of the mind, all forms of human understanding, pass into HISTORY: -- history in the sense of living minds (here and now) entering into the life of 'past' minds. And



history culminates in mind, thus enriched, gathering itself into the present moment of CREATIVE ADVANCE. And this creative advance must be a creative energy directed to the achievement of new, wider and deeper harmony.

13. The practical aspect of this growth of the person as a member of the world of persons, is the development of this same 'harmony' in all personal and social relationships; in other words, co-operation for the common welfare - the achievement of the 'common-wealth' of the whole world of persons. Thus the practical principle of goodness and life for persons is the principle of LOVE (in the religious sense: Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself); and the principle of evil and destruction and death is the principle of HATE. Or, to put it otherwise, it is the principle of living as a fully conscious cooperative member of the world of persons as against individualism, self-centredness, self-importance, private profit, the will to power, etc.

14. This is what we conclude from general reflection on the nature of man as personal embodied mind.

But the crucial test is objective fact: what has historical reality to say about it? We can reply by asking whether man has ever achieved real growth or progress by any other means than the exercise of this nature and the practice of these principles? If so, when and where? As a matter of objective historical fact has not the whole process of civilization - every lasting achievement of civilization and culture - been the product of this creative energy working in and for 'harmony' through mutual generosity,

sharing, co-operation and enrichment? Has not the whole life and growth of the mind consisted in the building up of science and philosophy and historical understanding by this entering into the history of thought and achievement in science and philosophy and art and law and all man's experiments in social thought and living? All of these are manifestly a co-operative enterprise of the mind enriching itself from all the achieved wealth of thought and experience, and then using it for new creative advance. In short, civilization has been the achievement of co-operative enterprise in living together.

*This* It is the secret of Art.

It is <sup>essentially</sup> the secret of Religion.

15. We are therefore entitled to claim that this conviction about human nature and the laws of its growth is not merely theoretical but is the objective reality of history. So, finally, we assert that in our actual situation to-day, as the present moves into the future, creative advance must now (as always) depend upon the exercise of this same creative energy seeking to achieve wider and deeper 'harmony' in all personal, social and international relationships.

*Thus* The maintenance and progress of culture and civilization must now, as always, be the product of this creative energy. If this energy fails in actual achievement, man must fall back into barbarism. This is more than ever true to-day because man's control of nature through understanding has placed in his hands such vast resources of physical energy that the employment of them by the closed mind for destructive purposes must,



inevitably, result in the self-destruction of civilized man.

But to achieve the open mind and creative advance towards 'harmony' - a new advance in historical development which with our present experience and resources will be nothing less than a new stage in human development, a new kind of man - we must first (as usual) achieve a clear understanding of our nature, of history, and of our present situation. The next task is therefore the full detailed and accurate demonstration of <sup>the truth of this theory of human nature & mind</sup> this in history. (Particularly rewarding will be the study of the great minds who have summed up and contributed most to this understanding since the opening of the modern era at the Renaissance).

16. What understanding we have achieved proves that man is not yet mind. He is an animal struggling to become mind; socially, a primitive savage struggling to become civilized.

#### SUMMARY

THUS THE INCREASING REALIZATION OF THIS 'HARMONY' IN ALL MAN'S NATURE AND ALL MAN'S ACTIVITIES, IS THE CLUE TO HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN HISTORY. I.E. MAN IS PERSONAL EMBODIED MIND, ONLY REAL AS A MEMBER OF THE WORLD OF PERSONS. AS SUCH HE IS A CREATIVE ENERGY WHOSE LIFE IS A PROCESS OF CONTINUAL GROWTH AND THIS GROWTH ACHIEVES ITSELF BY THE LIVING MIND CONTINUALLY GOING OUTSIDE ITSELF TO ENTER INTO AND SHARE THE LIFE OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WORLD OF MIND (PERSONS).

For the final demonstration of the truth of this theory we must look to the interpretation of history; i.e. we must watch man's real nature revealing itself in the actual content and process of history.

CONTINUAL GROWTH AND WHOSE GROWTH IS THE INCREASING REALIZATION OF 'HARMONY'.  
 TO BE A LIVING MIND IS TO LIVE AT THIS POINT OF CREATIVE GROWTH IN ONE'S  
 OWN TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES. THE GREAT MEN OF HISTORY ARE THE MEN WHO HAVE  
 UNDERSTOOD AND EXPRESSED THIS IN ONE SPHERE OR ANOTHER AND EACH IN HIS OWN  
 IDIOM. THIS GROWTH ACHIEVES ITSELF BY THE LIVING MIND CONTINUALLY GOING  
 OUTSIDE ITSELF TO ENTER INTO AND SHARE THE LIFE OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE  
 WORLD OF MIND (PERSONS).

**For** For the final demonstration of the truth of this theory  
 we must look to the interpretation of history; i.e. we must watch man's real  
 nature revealing itself in the actual content and process of history.

RR



THE SOCIAL NATURE OF MAN: SOME IMPLICATIONS

Man as a social being can no more live without embodying his social nature in institutions than man as an individual can live except as embodied mind. The recognition and acceptance of these two facts and their implications are the only possible condition of any real freedom and any achievement of the good life.

1. To be an embodied mind involves certain definite and inescapable limitations which must be accepted on pain of living in a world of illusion and therefore, sooner or later, suffering shipwreck on reality. ~~etc.~~ Being a body means the fact that "To every man upon this earth  
Death cometh soon or late".
2. Some of these limitations are 'necessary', and we cannot do anything about them. e.g. I can't help being an embodied mind and therefore being an organism with a limited span of life, needing to be fed at certain intervals, located at a particular point in space and time, being ~~as~~ a sensual and sexual creature, born of certain parents, etc. In short, we cannot escape the consequences imposed on us by being not merely a physical organism, but this embodied person existing at this place and this time. These are necessary limitations of human nature; we do not choose them and we cannot 'contract out of' or evade them. They have simply to be understood and accepted.
3. Nevertheless, there are many matters in which we have a real though limited means of choice. e.g. Shall I marry this woman? Shall we send this child to this school? Shall we live at X or Y? Shall I give X a black eye? etc.
4. On the other hand, every such decision is an act of self-limitation. Once I have made my decision I have imposed on myself conditions and consequences which are just as precise and inevitable as any of the original limitations imposed on me by objective reality. If I choose to have a child, I have done it; I cannot any longer be and do what I would have, been and done if I had not had a child. If I choose to join a trade union or vote for a Labour Government into power, I ~~xxx~~ have done it and must 'suffer the consequences'. And so on.
5. 'Growing up' means two things: (1) it means seeing what the con-

sequences and limitations of our nature and behaviour are; (ii) it means 'accepting' them in the sense of neither trying to pretend they aren't there nor trying to evade them.

6. All this is as true of man as a social being as it is true of him as an individual.

(i) There are certain limiting conditions imposed upon us as members of society which are as inevitable, and about which we have as little choice as we have e.g. about the fact that X and Y were our parents; or that our skins are pink, black or khaki; or that if we have our appendix removed we can't still have it.

Perhaps the most important of these social 'conditioning realities' is the fact that society can no more avoid 'embodiment' than the mind. The individual mind is necessarily embodied in a physical organism; ~~society~~ society is necessarily 'embodied' in institutions. This is a consequence of man's social nature and therefore inevitable. The mature mind will therefore accept it as natural and not accordingly. (The anarchist tries to pretend that human nature is not like that; which only means that he is still in the nursery).

(ii) Here too there are certain open possibilities in which decision is possible. But here too the range of possible choice has definite and specific limitations and definite specific consequences. If Hitler is fuhrer of Germany we can decide on isolation or appeasement or support or opposition. But the fact of his existence conditions every possible form of behaviour. And once we make our decision, the consequences follow inevitably. This means that in making a decision, we are choosing its consequences, whether we like it or not. e.g. <sup>Man's ~~self~~ <sup>is</sup> to be in the place of</sup> (If I am) Lenin I can decide to promote a Russian Revolution, or I can decide not to. If I decide on a revolution I am deciding on a bloody struggle to seize and maintain power on behalf of the Revolution. If I decide against a Revolution I am deciding to maintain the status quo and all its consequences. In short:

(a) We have a certain freedom of choice: we can decide to have a revolution or not to have it.

(b) But the choice is strictly limited: in this case to an alternative - for or against a revolution.

(c) We must choose one or the other: for to refrain from making any decision is to choose the status quo.



(d) A revolution means all that is involved in making it and maintaining it. The status quo means all that is involved in the status quo. My choice is therefore between all the consequences of one or all the consequences of the other.

It is therefore idealistic nonsense (sentimentalism) to suppose either that we can choose to do 'whatever we like' or that we needn't choose at all. Thus, we can't say: "We'll just decide on a nice new Russia and shut our eyes and wake up in Utopia". Nor can we say: "We don't approve of this nasty oppressive Czarism, so we won't have it any longer; nor do we approve of the messy bloodshed of a Red Revolution; so we won't have either". We can choose one or the other and take the consequences; but we can't choose neither, because that is to choose the status quo and its consequences.

(The 'pacifist' thinks you can get what you want without choosing either alternative. The 'idealist' thinks you can have your choice without the necessary consequences. Both belong with the anarchist in the nursery world of make-believe.)

Similarly, if a trades-union decides on a general rise in wages for workers, it is voting for a rise in prices. Etc.

(P.S. This is the significance of all tragic drama, in which 'character is destiny'. Circumstances push the hero to the cross-roads where he has to choose this way or that. Brutus has to join the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar, or not; the fact that he doesn't want to do either, makes no difference whatever; he is compelled to choose, and once he has chosen the consequences are inexorable inescapable. So with Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello and the rest. 'Tragic irony' consists in this fact. The appeal of tragedy lies in its profound insight into this 'human situation').

7. We can no more get outside our own minds or our own social environment than we can get outside our own skins. If we make certain assumptions, or entertain certain beliefs or ideas, or have certain convictions, we can no more escape the consequences of being 'this' mind than we can escape the consequences of being 'this' body. And because man is a thoroughly social being, what I am is conditioned by the society of which I am a member. If I believe in evil spirits and die of fright at 'seeing' one, the consequence of my belief (death from fright) is not affected by the fact that the belief is untrue. If we think Germany (or Russia) is being 'encircled' by enemy

states, or that British imperialism is the carrot in front of the erring American donkey's nose, our behaviour will be determined by that belief, whether it is true or not. It is therefore as stupid to ignore 'our state of mind' or 'the nature of society' as to ignore 'our physical conditions'.

8. A civilization is the outcome of the whole process of mankind's social development. It is therefore both a realization of man's nature and the chief limiting condition of his nature. The two distinguishing characteristics of our modern civilization are the national state and the industrial structure of society. These constitute a new stage in man's realization of his social nature, and of the extraordinarily complicated and intimate system of relations in which that nature expresses itself; that is to say, they have been woven into the very fabric of his destiny. Man must therefore understand this structure of society and accept the destiny it imposes on him, just as he must realize the nature of his physical organism and accept the destiny it imposes on him (the cycle of life and death).

9. But though the facts of man's social nature and his social decisions form precise and inevitable limitations, and produce specific and unavoidable consequences, there is here too a measure of elasticity and range of choice which we call freedom. And it is as disastrous and foolish to say "These social conditions are inevitable and I can't do anything about them" when I can, as it is to turn a blind eye on or rebel against real social 'necessity'. If the mind is both a creative energy and a truth-seeking activity which pursues and can achieve knowledge of objective facts, it must be our real business to accept what is necessary, but to accept it not with resignation but as the condition of creative advance. e.g. In the present stage of industrial society it is equally futile to cling to the vanishing freedoms created by economic liberalism for a privileged minority with the passionate regard of Mr. Dixon Hayek; or with the economic determinist, to accept the extinguishing of all human freedoms by the totalitarian Leviathan of a Planned Society with tears of pious resignation as an inevitable penalty. This means that the creative energies of the mind must see to it that the 'planning' of industrial society, and its institutions, give birth to new possibilities of freedom and enrichment for mankind.

10. This involves what Keats called an act of "dying into life". But every new affirmation of life and freedom is, in some respect or other, such an act



of dying. Every acceptance of objective truth is, at least from one point of view, a limitation of the freedom of the mind, a submission to necessity (<sup>logic</sup> 'hard facts', etc.) Every decision is a choice that ends a freedom to choose, and a submission to the necessary consequences of the choice. Above all, the major issues of history impose on us a recognition and acceptance of 'the actual situation' - which is never 'what we would like' it to be; <sup>always</sup> a choice between alternatives - neither of which are 'what we would like to choose'; and <sup>(2)</sup> consequences which involve hard sacrifices which we do not want to make and effects some of which we do not desire at all.

11. In short, the only real freedom possible to man is the freedom which accepts 'necessity' and makes it into the means to 'the good life' by the power of the mind (the 'creative energy whose aim is harmony').

*cc. creative advance.*

*039*