

## VIII—NOTES.

### DR. LUTOSLAWSKI'S "THEORY OF PERSONALITY".

2 VIA CROCIFISSALTO,  
SANTIGNANO-FIRENZE, 22nd January, 1922.

SIR,

Dr. Lutoslawski in "A Theory of Personality" tells that in his experience, as in the spiritual experience of many others, the conviction of immortality had been a sudden revelation coming after years of mere thinking on this matter, and of believing the testimony of others. The views of others had not seemed definitively convincing but then came the revelation which gave immediate intuitive certainty. I myself once had an experience of this sort though not concerned with immortality, and an account of what then and subsequently happened may be of interest to philosophers.

I was at that moment, in consequence of some psychological observation, led to think a great deal about the antinomy of rest and motion, and I was trying to work out a theory concerning this. My occupation with this had become so intense that for a week I had not gone to bed at all, but in the intervals of speculation I used to nap for short periods before the fire. At last there came the moment when the antinomy resolved itself completely, not as a theory but as a revelation. The universe was there about me as a coherent consistent whole. My own harmony and identification with it was as complete as its own inner coherence. I was whatever I thought on and my thoughts went everywhere. I was mountain hill or stream, bird beast or fish, ravening shark or sea-shouldering whale, all things and everything.

I do not know how long this state lasted. When the vision, the feeling of that which absolutely and completely was, had gone, I tried to measure the value of that which was left over. Not at once, of course. For the moment the vision splendid, and the void its disappearance caused, were all my concern. But afterwards I found that its results were solid gain. Of course I was not left with a satisfactory theory. My revelation had transcended theory and could not be translated back into the lesser medium. I had no theory but I had knowledge which was gold beside the theory's silver.

So it continued for some time, a year or more, but one day as I was meditating upon this, I came to have suspicions of a weak link in the chain of process which had given me my greater truth. It seemed to me that what I had done was exactly what the artist does when he creates, and that the validity of my creation was akin to the validity of poem or picture. The artist, as I then expressed it, comes to an equilibrium in the face of a particular situation, while the mystic comes to an equilibrium in the face of a total situation. In both cases the preliminary work of gathering and meditating is checked by the inadequacy of the material so

taken, to satisfy the worker's needs. He cannot so bring the process to a satisfactory conclusion. The "will" to form the stuff is there, and if the stuff is malleable the form is given. The thing as thus reformed is then *found*, and seems then like an absolute discovery. It is as though one were expanding a balloon with the breath of one's lungs and failing in the effort, at least in appearance, but that at last, when one has either in despair abandoned it, or in final effort lost consciousness of it, the balloon ascends, and we discover it, revealed to us in the heavens. It looks like a balloon, it's located like a balloon, it certainly is a balloon, and as it was previously shown that we could not blow up a balloon, it cannot be the balloon that we were at work upon. None the less I think it is. In this way was faith in my revelation weakened, and my faith in all other revelations as well. Since then I think that verification is necessary to make convincing my own revelations, and I am not inclined to value the unsupported ones of other people at a higher rate.

The essential mechanism of revelation is, I believe, that of all imagery formation. Imagery is the correlative of emotion. I believe that imagery is related to emotion somewhat as "sensation" is to "feeling". I find that "sensations," when so taken together that the value is of a togetherness and not of the particular "sensation," constitute "feeling". This feeling may exist independently of any definite sensation or sensory object, or subordinate to such an one. In like wise I find that when there is a stimulus to action, whether the action of thinking or some other, which cannot unfold itself so rapidly as the stimuli accumulate, then there follows the formation of images and emotions, images in so far as the substitute for action finds a focal point, and emotion in so far as it does not. Here again there may be merely diffused emotion, or the emotion may be subordinate to imagery. A "revelation" is such a focus when it is comprehensive enough, what I called above a total situation. It is singularly convincing because the interest in it is so great, and because its comprehensiveness makes it difficult to circumvent. It persists if it is the kind of thing that we continue to want.

It is furthermore "true" in the sense in which "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," that is, the situation has the quality of a felt coherence. If it were possible to have a proposition durably as comprehensive as this situation, that proposition would also be "true". But even the mystics admit that no such proposition is possible. Their ultimate truth is being, not affirmation. Any proposition gains its truth value from the felt situation, and when the felt situation is more comprehensive than the proposition, the proposition is not really equivalent to it and may be false. It can have then the value of hypothesis, and it can have nothing more.

P.S.—This relation of emotion and image explains the Aristotelian catharsis. The diffused emotions of fear and pity are replaced by the tragic imagery. The purgation is the more complete because of the effective canalisation afforded by the tragic evolution from beginning through middle to end.

The tragic purgation when really effective, has the character of a temporary conversion. Revelations, on the other hand, dealing with situations more or less total, often produce a permanent catharsis. This is excellently put in words by Dante when Beatrice says :

"Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,  
Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,  
Ne fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I am made such by God, in his grace, that your misery does not touch me; nor the flame of this burning assail me."—(Carlyle.)

Both fear and pity have been purged away and love purified remains the only motive.

It is hardly necessary to add that what is true of tragedy and the emotions of fear and pity is equally true for other qualities of art expression, and other interests in revelation and conversion.

LEO STEIN.

#### A CORRECTION.

MR. W. E. JOHNSON has pointed out to me that on page 7 of my Hertz Lecture on "Universals and Propositions," I have misrepresented him and even reversed his meaning. He says that he gave a flash of lightning not as an instance of a substance but of what is not a substance. I am glad to find that it is so and I regret the misunderstanding. There now remains no point of importance in which I disagree with Mr. Johnson's book except his account of what constitutes generality. Perhaps the difference even here may turn out to be less fundamental than it seems.

G. F. STOUT.

#### SCHULE DER GEISTESKUNDE.

HERB STAAB of Bernitt, near Bützow (Mecklenburg) writes to the University of Manchester expressing his desire to enlist the co-operation of English scholars in establishing a 'Schule der Geisteskunde,' concerned especially with higher mental development. He published at the beginning of last year a chapter of his investigations, called 'Aufbau der höheren geistigen Entwicklung,' and he offers to place ten gratuitous copies at the disposal of scholars in this country, who are interested in the project.

#### MIND ASSOCIATION.

THE Annual Meeting of the Mind Association will be held this year in Manchester, at the University Arts Building, at 5 p.m. on Friday, 14th July.

A Joint Session of the Association with the Aristotelian Society and the British Psychological Society has been arranged to take place in Manchester from 14th to 17th July. Most of the papers read at this Session will, in accordance with a resolution passed at the last annual meeting, be published in the October number of MIND. Any member of the Association may attend the Meetings and, on paying a fee of 5s., will be supplied in advance with off-prints of the papers. Accommodation will be provided for men at Hulme Hall, and for women at Ashburne Hall. The charge for this from Friday dinner to Monday breakfast (inclusive) will be 27s. For partial attendance the charges will be: Bedroom and Breakfast, 6s. 6d. per day; Lunch, 1s. 6d.; Tea, 6d.; Dinner, 3s. 6d. All meals will be at Hulme Hall, except that breakfast will be at Ashburne Hall for those staying there.

Members who wish to take part in the Session are requested to apply as early as possible to

Prof. S. Alexander,  
24 Brunswick Road,  
Withington, Manchester,

enclosing, with their application, the fee of 5s., if they wish to have off-prints, and stating what accommodation (if any) they require in Hulme