
- Written in 1963, originally in English

Our reading (we're reading only one of the appendices):
- Introduction: on the subjects of a philosophy of life
  - Second Essay: Philosophical Aspects of Darwinism
- Third Essay: Is God a Mathematician? The Meaning of Metabolism
- Fourth Essay: To Move and to Feel: On the Animal Soul
  - Fifth Essay: Cybernetics and Purpose: A Critique
- Sixth Essay: The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of Senses
  - Appendix: Sight and Movement
  - Seventh Essay: Image-Making and the Freedom of Man
- Transition: From the Philosophy of the Organism to the Philosophy of Man
  - Eighth Essay: The Practical Uses of Theory
  - Ninth Essay: Gnosticism, Existentialism, and Nihilism
  - Tenth Essay: Heidegger and Theology
  - Eleventh Essay: Immortality and the Modern Temper
- Epilogue: Nature and Ethics

PREFACE

"Put at its briefest, this volume offers an "existential" interpretation of biological facts." (xxiii)

- Existentialism privileges what in man is organically rooted
  - Anthropocentric
  - idealist
- Scientific biology ignores the dimension of inwardness that belongs to life
  - materialist

Unified account of these biological facts:
- "A new reading of the biological record may recover the inner dimension-that which we know best-for the understanding of things organic and so reclaim for the psychophysical unity of life that place in the theoretical scheme which it had lost through the divorce of the material and mental since Descartes." (xxiii)
  - Recovery
  - Post-Cartesian dualism

Thesis underlying this work:
- The great contradictions which man discovers in himself – freedom and necessity, autonomy and dependence, self and world, relation and isolation, creativity and mortality – have their rudimentary traces in even the most primitive forms of life, each precariously balanced between being and not-being, and each endowed with an internal horizon of "transcendence." (underlining and bold mine, xxiii)
  - Ascending order of organic powers and functions: "a progressive scale of freedom and power"
    - Metabolism freedom and necessity
    - Moving and desiring autonomy and dependence
    - Sensing and perceiving self and world
    - Imagination relation and isolation
    - Art creativity and mortality
    - Mind
  - The human as a creature - "no longer in metaphysical isolation"

- Methods:
ON THE SUBJECTS OF A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

- The subjects
  - Philosophy of the organism (bodily being)
    - Even in its lowest form prefigures mind (1)
      - Genuine potency
      - Purposive dynamics
  - Philosophy of the mind (conscious being)
    - Even on its highest reaches remains organic (1)
- "quarrel of the ancients and moderns"
  - Ancients: pan-vitalism
  - Moderns: pan-materialism
    - Post-dualism
- Ascending scale of living forms
  - Aristotle
    - plant, animal, human
  - Interpretations of this scale: "that for the sake of which?"
    1. distinctness of experience, rising degrees of perception, freest objectification of the sum of being
      - Scheler: ascendancy from mere impulse to intelligence to spirit
    2. progressive freedom of action
- Freedom: "the concept of freedom can indeed guide us like Ariadne's thread through interpretations of Life." (3 bottom)
  - First transition from inorganic to organic, i.e., to life, closed to us
  - "it will be the burden of one part of our discourse to show that it is in the dark stirrings of primeval organic substance that a principle of freedom shines forth for the first time within the vast necessity of the physical universe – a principle foreign to suns, planets, and atoms." (3)
    - An objectively discernible mode of being, i.e., the organic.
- Being and Not-Being
  - "life is essentially relationship, and relation as such implies "transcendence," a going-beyond-itself on the part of that which entertains the relation" (4-5)
  - "Life caries death in itself" (5)
    - continual crisis
    - "in the straining of its temporality always facing the imminent no-more"
- The matters of a philosophy of life
  - Organic facts of life
  - The self-interpretation of life in man

FIRST ESSAY: LIFE, DEATH, AND THE BODY IN THE THEORY OF BEING

- **Section I:** Ancient Thought
  - Pan-vitalism
    - "Being was intelligible only as living" (9)
    - "In such a world-view, the riddle confronting man is death: it is the contradiction to the one intelligible, self-explaining, "natural" condition which is the general life." (9)
  - Collision between a comprehensive view and a particular fact
    - "Negate death by making it a transmutation of life itself" (9)
- **Section II:** Modern Thought (beginning with Renaissance)
  - Pan-materialism
"Death is the natural thing, life the problem." (9)

Lifeless matter
  - "the strict abstention from projecting into its image our own felt aliveness" (10)
  - Knownable par excellence, the only true foundation of reality

"That there is life at all, and how such a thing is possible in a world of mere matter, is now the problem posed to thought." (10)

Collision between a comprehensive view and a particular fact
  - "vitalistic monism is replaced by mechanistic monism" (11)
    - "how, in short, is life reducible to nonlife" (11)

"Dualism is the link that historically mediated between two extremes which so far we have opposed to each other unhistorically: it was indeed the vehicle of the movement which carried the mind of man from the vitalistic monism of early times to the materialistic monism of our own as to its unpremeditated, even paradoxical result." (12)

Section III: The rise of dualism
  - Body – soul: soma – sema
    - Orphic formula: body is tomb of soul
    - Gnostic conception: entirely non-worldly inwardness in man
  - "The splitting of reality into self and world, inner and outer existence, mind and nature, long sanctioned by religious doctrine, prepared the ground for the postdualistic successors." (underlining mine, 14)
    - The inverted monism – metaphysical materialism
      - ontological dominance of death
    - "any postdualistic monism includes a decision which it has made for one or the other side" (underlining mine, 16)
      - Modern materialism
      - Modern idealism
  - "A new, integral, i.e., philosophical monism cannot undo the polarity: it must absorb it into a higher unity of existence from which the opposites issue as faces of its being or phases of its becoming. It must take up the problem which originally gave rise to dualism." (17)

Section IV: Toward an Integral Monism
  - Two standpoints in regard to one another: two ways of knowledge
    - Phenomenology of consciousness
    - Physics of extension
  - Partial abstractions
    - "hidden ground of their unity" (19)

Section V: Post-dualism (search for "the living middle" – 22)
  - Materialism vs. Idealism
    - Materialism
      - "materialism is the more interesting and more serious variant of modern ontology than idealism" (20)
        - "materialism lets itself in earnest also encounter the living body" (20)
        - "the real heir to dualism" (20)
    - Idealism: the secure standpoint of pure consciousness
      - "pure consciousness is as little alive as the pure matter confronting it" (21)
  - Causality problem
    - "life does not bear distillation: it is somewhere between the purified aspects – in their concretion. The abstractions do not live." (22)

Section VI: Proprio-bodily prime experience
  - Concrete bodily life: interplay of its self-feeling powers and the world
    - Ground of the idea of "cause"
      - Living force
"Causality is thus not an a priori basis of experience, but itself a basic experience. That experience has its seat in the effort I must make to overcome the resistance of worldly matter in my acting and to resist the impact of worldly matter upon myself." (23)

- Scheler – belief in the reality of the external world
- Transcendence: "It (causality) is rooted in just the point of actual, live "transcendence" of the self, the point where inwardness actively transcends itself into the outward and continues itself into it with its actions." (23)

• Force is not a datum but an actum humanly present in effort. (25)

**Section VII:** A whole ontology

- "Life mans material life, i.e., living body, i.e., organic being.
- Our ontological tradition is post-dualistic
  - Our problem: to make intelligible "life" in a tradition which give ontological dominance to death

**THIRD ESSAY: IS GOD A MATHEMATICIAN? THE MEANING OF METABOLISM.**

Fifty years ago, when there was much discussion on the problem of communicating with Mars, it was desired to notify the supposedMartians that thinking beings existed on the planet Earth, but the difficulty was to find a language understood by both parties. The suggestion was made that the most suitable language was that of pure mathematics; it was proposed to light chains of bonfires in the Sahara, to form a diagram illustrating the famous theorem of Pythagoras, that the squares of the two smaller sides of a right-angled triangle are together equal to the square on the greatest side. To most of the inhabitants of Mars such signals would convey no meaning, but it was argued that mathematicians on Mars, if such existed, would surely recognize them as the handiwork of mathematicians on earth. In so doing, they would not be open to the reproach that they saw mathematics in everything. And so it is *mutatis mutandis* with the signals from the outer world of reality, which are the shadows on the walls of the cave in which we are imprisoned. *We have already considered with disfavor the possibility of the universe having been planned by biologist or an engineer; from the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician.*

**SECTIONS I – IV:** Preparatory to question, "is God a pure mathematician?" In other words, what does the idea of mathematical nature mean in the modern context? (74)

- **Section I:** the proposition (God is a pure mathematician), its meaning and its truth
  - 1st Question: retrace historical transformation of meaning: mathematics, creation, universe
  - 2nd Question: Intrinsic evidence, i.e., truth of proposition
    - e.g., the amoeba
      - "Thus material life (we are not yet speaking of mind and consciousness) can serve as a touchstone for our interpretations of matter or world-stuff and can rectify a conception of God built on such conceptions." (65)
    - "the whole proposition is brought down ... to our immediate and most intimate experience" (65)
  - Issue of our phenomenological starting point

- **Section II:** which "mathematical" nature? – the order of intelligibility
  - World-view of classical Greece: geometrization of the nature
    - Ontology of substantial forms – contemplation of being
      - Order of Intelligibility: rational whole (forms) provides explanatory framework to understand individual instances
      - Polarity: (72)
        - Form-matter
        - Active soul and passive body
        - Intelligible and sensible
      - World-view of modern physics: algebratization of motion
"For what in the purely mathematical field appeared as the functional consideration supplanting the static one of intuitive entities, amounts in the field of physical description to the dissolving of "substantial forms" of classical ontology into elementary motions and forces by which they can be thought (and in experiment shown to be generated." (68)

- Order of intelligibility: "With the whole now to be explained by the parts, intelligibility means reducibility to that which, as elemental, is in the older sense least intelligible, because it involves the least intelligence for its performance." (69)

- Polarity (72)
  - Subject-object
  - Mind-nature
  - Consciousness-spatiality
  - Inwardness-outwardness (as an independent and anterior reality)

- **Section III:** the metaphysical conditions required for the new science; on the soul
  - Historical transition to modern world-view
    - Conceptions of soul
      - Plato: *Timaeus* – "the world as the perfect " animal" or visible god, ensouled and intelligent. (70)
        - Soul qua intelligence as " the cause of rational motion" (70)
          - Cause of motion
          - Cause of order
      - Judaeo-Christian: created world is neither a god nor object of worship
        - "The essential division between God and world is thus repeated or mirrored in the essential division between mind and nature. (underlining mine, 71)
          - "the banished soul"
          - Nature as
            - Mindless
            - Inanimate

- **Section IV:** Descartes' paradox
  - Dualism
    - " nature is entirely and exclusively the latter (res extensa), i.e., external, while the former (res cogitans) is in no sense "nature"
    - Consequence: disintegration into two barren alternatives
      - Idealism
      - materialism
  - Descartes Paradox: "that reason itself has become an irrational entity, intelligence entirely unintelligible within the intellectual scheme of the scientifically knowable; in other words, the knower himself is among his objects, that is, the world, the unknowable par excellence." (73-74)
    - Mind cannot be captured and described in mathematical terms

**SECTIONS V – X – AN APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM AT HAND**

- **Section V:** the divine mathematician's (physicist's) object-view of the "organism"
  - What would God of the physicists see (of the living organism), if he were a pure mathematician
    - Metabolism defined – "Metabolism is more than a method of power generation ... its role is to build up originally and replace continually the very parts of the machine. Metabolism this is the constant becoming of the machine itself – and this becoming is a performance of the machine: but for such performance there is no analogue in the world of machines." (76, n13)
      - The living form – it is never the same materially and yet persists as its same self, by not remain the same matter. (76)
    - Mathematical Explanation of metabolism
      - E.g., the wave, i.e., whole-structures of happening
• Section VI: the ontological vs. the merely phenomenological concept of the individual (organism)
  o "on immediate testimony of our bodies" (79)
    ▪ Ontological vs. phenomenological unity of the organism
      • "in living things, nature springs an ontological surprise ... an entirely new possibility of being: systems of matter that are unities of a manifold, not in virtue of a synthesizing perception whose object they happen to be, not by the mere concurrence of the forces that bind their parts together, but in virtue of themselves, for the sake of themselves, and continually sustained by themselves." (79)
  o The ontological individual or self
    ▪ Needful freedom to matter (80)
      • Dependency on their availability
      • Independent of their sameness as these (i.e., free from)
• Section VII: (internal) identity of the living form and the phenomenological starting point of bodily being
  o Contrast of explanatory schema
    ▪ Purely material identity: merely spatio-temporal identity
      • Unity conferred by an external reference
        o Principia individuationis – space and time
        o Place in totality of physical universe
    ▪ Organic identity
      • "Internal identity of the whole, transcending the collective one of the present and vanishing substratum, must span the shifting succession." (82)
        o Observable only by "having, that is being bodies"
      • Metabolism – an incessant act
        o Polarity of self and world
• Section VIII: the dialectical structure of all life – 4 observations
  1. (most primitive) freedom balanced by a correlative necessity
  2. Self-concern is openness for encounter (environment and/or world)
  3. Felt-selfhood: the primary solicitude of transcendence
  4. Horizon of biological space and time beyond its point-identity
    a. Organic historicity
• Section IX: attempt at a dualistic recasting of original proposition – the teleological structure of the living form
  o "the scientific undertaking itself is an act of life, and the scientist is a living being and thus by original experience of life saved from forgetting that there is "something else" (other than extensa) to it." (underlining mine, 87)
    ▪ phenomena of life invisible to a science which is reductionist in its intent
    ▪ material/mechanistic explanation may satisfy the conditions of reductionist scheme
      • subjectivity explained therefore
        o by a sort of Cartesian dualism
        o epiphenomenalism
  o Dualistic recasting of Jeans' proposition
    ▪ Construction of a phenomenal regionalism (89)
      • Dead world of extended objectivity
      • Multiple host of individualized subjectivity
    ▪ "It is just in the face of the organism that the dualistic construction breaks down." (89)
      • Teleological nature of life
        o "The teleological structure and behavior of organism is not just an alternative choice of description: it is, on the evidence of each one's own organic awareness, the external manifestation of the inwardsness of substance." (91)
• Section X: our phenomenological starting point: living bodily being
• "we have in our self-experience, as it were, peepholes into the inwardness of substance" (91)
  • Evidence
    • Abstractive evidence employed by the pure physicist
      o "What the mathematician creates he knoweth not" (92)
    • Intrinsic evidence of creation:
      o Phenomenological starting point: living being in their full phenomenological concretion
        • "It must be used critically to avoid the pitfalls of anthropomorphism" (91)
  o "The end of our inquiry is only the threshold of much larger tasks, which, I believe, are more than ever imposed on philosophy. They are: a philosophical biology without which there cannot be a philosophy of man on the one hand and a philosophy of nature on the other; and a new examination of causa without which these three [philosophy of man, philosophy of nature, examination of causa] cannot be brought into line." (92)

FOURTH ESSAY. TO MOVE AND TO FEEL\(^2\): ON THE ANIMAL SOUL

• Section I: Main characteristics of animal evolution – the evolution of freedom
  o "emergence of perception and motility opens a major chapter in the history of freedom"
    1. "Irritability is the germ ... of having a world ..." (99)
    2. "A real world-relation emerges only with the development of specific senses, defined motor structures, and a central nervous section." (100)
  o Development of the element of transcendence
    1. Transcendence inherent in metabolizing existence
      • See section VII of Third Essay
    2. Two horizons into which life continually transcends itself
      • "internally that of time as the next impending phase of its own being toward which it moves" (100)
        o Forward facing
      • "externally that of space, as the locus of the co-present "other" on which it depends for this very continuation" (100)
        o Outward facing
    3. Animal evolution characterized by the disclosure of Distance\(^3\)
      • Spatial Distance - "space, the dimension of dependence, is progressively transformed into a dimension of freedom" (100)
        o the disclosure of space comes about by two powers
          1. To move about
          2. To perceive at a distance
        • Temporal Distance - "time"
          o the disclosure of time comes about by evolution of one power
            3. Emotion

  o "We shall try to show the insoluble interconnection of the three animal powers, in particular the linkage between motility and emotion, and interpret its meaning in the greater framework of a general theory of life. (underlining mine, 100-1)

• Section II: the phenomenon of animality: sentience, motility, and emotion
  o Interconnection between three powers
    1. "the interposition of distance between urge (Appetition) and attainment (underlining mine, 101)
      • Long-range sentence is involved (correspondingly, the distantly perceived)

\(^2\) Title should read (in my opinion): "To Move, to Feel, and to Desire: On the Animal Soul." This is confirmed by Jonas, himself. "The cybernetical model reduces animal nature to the two terms of sentience and motility, while in fact it is constituted by the triad of perception, motility, and emotion." (126)

\(^3\) Jonas asserts that animal evolution is characterized by the disclosure of space. Hence this formulation reflects my interpretation of his articulation of the phenomenon.
Sandmeyer Notes - Jonas, Hans. The Phenomenon of Life: towards a philosophical biology

- The object "not here but over there"
- Motility is involved (correspondingly, the distantly perceived as a goal)
  - The object turns into here
- Desire is required (correspondingly, the deferred fulfillment which keeps that goal alive)
  - The not-yet turns into now

2. The Principle of Mediacy
   - "The great secret of animal life lies precisely in the gap which it is able to maintain between immediate concern and mediate satisfaction." (102)
  - Subject-object split – the essential distinction between vegetative existence

- Section III: Organism-Environment relation: plant and animal
  - Modes of metabolism
    1. "The original condition is an environment contiguous with the organism: in this stage environment is nothing but the immediate surroundings with which chemical interchanges of metabolism takes place." (102)
    - No room for desire
      - Environment – self: one context
      - Osmotic absorption of dissolved nutriment by plants
        - Direct synthesis of inorganic matter into organic compounds into roots
          - Contiguity between organs of intake and the external supply
          - "no gap across which need could become felt by itself and activity would have to be performed by itself, under the spur of appetite." (104)
    - Manifests the basic concern of life with its own continuation

2. The more precarious mode of animal metabolism
   - Separation of self and environment
     - Only under this condition does appetite and fear come into play
     - "the animal has to depend on the unassured presence of highly specific and nonpermanent organic bodies" (103)
       - "interposition of an auxiliary, "mechanical" stage (conveying, shredding, etc) before the direct, chemical stage of metabolic appropriation" (103)
     - "We note here that independence as such cannot be the ultimate good of life, since life is just that mode of material existence in which being has exposed itself to dependence (of which metabolism is the prime form) in exchange for a freedom closed to the independence of stable matter." (underlining mine, 103)

- Section IV: the locus of the freedom and risk of animal life
  - "Three aspects of what a "gap" or its absence here means" (104)
    1. Spatial Gap - material contiguity
      - In the case of vegetative existence, there is contiguity between plant and environment nourishing it (full integration)
      - In the case of animals, distance between nourishing elements within an environment
        - Spatial gap: self and world
        - Spanned by sentience and motility
    - Two contexts points to different sense of environment in each
    2. Temporal Gap - continuity or discontinuity between need and satisfaction
      - In the case of vegetative existence, no discontinuity
      - In the case of animals
        - Mediate relation between urge and attainment
3. The phenomenon of interactivity in animals
   - In the case of vegetative existence, internal metabolic process
   - In the case of animals
     o "In the motions of animals, on the other hand, we have activity made possible by the surplus from previous metabolism and directed toward safeguarding its future, but itself a free expenditure dissociated from the continuing vegetative activity, and thus action in a radically new sense." (104)
       - Free disposal of resources of nutritive system
       - Success of this effort not assured
     o "The mediacy of animal existence is at the root of motility, perception, and emotion. It creates the isolated individual pitted against the world. This world is at once inviting and threatening." (105)
       - Want: Lure of the prey (want)
       - Fear: Pang of hunger, strain of flight
     o Appetition — "the form which the basic self-concern of all life assumes under the conditions of animal mediacy" (105-6)
       - "Animal being is thus essentially passionate being." (106)
   - Section V: Increased mediacy – enhanced selfhood (which includes a corresponding increase of precariousness)
     o "Its (animality) mediacy of world-relation is an increase of the mediacy which is already peculiar to organic existence on the first (metabolizing) level, as compared to the immediate self-identity of inorganic matter. This increased mediacy buys greater scope, internal and external, at the price of greater hazard, internal and external. A more pronounced self is set over against a more pronounced world." (107)
       - The rift of subject-object "was never to be closed again" (107)
     o Dread
       - The price of enhanced selfhood: dread of its own annihilation

FIFTH ESSAY. CYBERNETICS AND PURPOSE: A CRITIQUE

- Section I: Origin and intent of cybernetics
  o The Flyball Governor – (James Watt, 1872) – auxiliary device in the steam engine
    - control mechanism
      - Feedback – part of output energy redirected to controlling apparatus
      - Negative feedback – this energy counteracts action of the machine
        - “On Governors” by Clark Maxwell (1868)
        - “Cybernetics” by Norbert Wiener (MIT) 1948
  o “There is a strong and, it seems, almost irresistible tendency in the human mind to interpret human function in terms of the artifacts that take their place, and artifacts in terms of replaced human functions.” (110)
    - Cf. the modern servomechanism
  o Classical mechanist – “machine of the body”
  o Later materialist “epiphenomenalism”
  o Cybernetics: mechanistic model applied to material and mental process at once
    - “an overcoming of the dualism which classical materialism had left in possession by default” (111)
- Section II: Purposeful vs. teleological behavior
  o Analogy between servomechanical and neurological disturbance
    - Mechanistic side: feedback dampening
    - Neurological side: “purpose tremor”
      - Disanology: the patient will the action

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5 Kybernetes (Gr. Helmsman pilot).
6 For Jonas’s trenchant critique of epiphenomenalism, see Appendix “Materialism, Determinism, and the Mind,” pp. 127-134.
“This end, motivating the action from the start, is intrinsic in all the part-motions, providing the reference by which they are in themselves failures and make the whole undertaking a failure.” (112)

\begin{itemize}
\item Goal-orientation
\end{itemize}

Purpose

- Cybernetic concept: sequence of actions remain within terms of external relationships
  - “the term purposeful is meant to denote that the act or behavior may be interpreted as directed to the attainment of a goal – i.e., to a final condition in which the behaving object reaches a definite correlation in time or in space with respect to another object or event” (Jonas quoting Wiener, underline Jonas 112)
  - Entropic end: final condition
    - Death is thus the “goal of the total motion of life”
      - Cf. section V of this chapter!
  - Cybernetic Examples
    - A roulette: Non-purposeful mechanism
    - A clock: designed with a purpose but it, itself, not purposeful
    - Torpedo with target-seeking mechanism: servomechanical tool
      - “we cannot here even make the distinction, since action and reaction are one and the same event.” (116)
      - The torpedo is not attracted but steered toward its object
        - Relation between power (motility) and direction
      - According to Jonas, there is an inherent relation between perception and freedom
    - “Obviously the division, and at the same time connection, between receptor and effector organs is one of the essential conditions of the freedom of animal action.” (116)

\begin{itemize}
\item Section III: Purposive behavior requires the presence of purpose
  - Purpose vs. blind mechanical necessity
    - “what part of the mechanism embodies the purposiveness” (117)
      - Teleological behavior
    - “the question becomes that of whether the mechanism is a “whole,” having an identity or selfness that can be said to be the bearer of purpose, the subject of action, and the maker of decisions.” (118)
      - The servomechanism as instrument for some larger end
        - The soldier as tool in similar sense, i.e., as a automaton carrying out orders blindly
    - “purposive behavior requires the presence of purpose. This statement is no mere tautology, for cybernetics is an attempt to account for purposive behavior without purpose.” (120)
    - Total context of purposiveness is the ground of every individual effort
  - Total Purposiveness: “an ascending and expanding series of mediate purposes or concerns, and when followed through will end up in a picture of the total purposiveness of man.” (121)
    - “it can become a motivation only on the basis of the concernedness of all life with itself, its performance, its content.” (underlining mine, 121)
\end{itemize}

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\item Section IV: the failure of cybernetics as a instance of split-personality theorizing
  - “The irony that scientist, for so long the very abjurers (sic.) of anthropomorphism as the sin of sins, are now the most liberal in endowing machines with manlike features, is only dimmed by the fact that the real intent of the liberality is to appropriate the donor, man, all the more securely to the realm of the machine.” (122)
  - Cybernetic doctrine of teleological behavior: serving a purpose without having a purpose
    - See also soldier- automaton example above
      - Dissociability of purpose and execution
\end{itemize}

\footnote{“Materialism inherited the estate of dualism without being fully aware that the left-over to which it succeeded carried an obligation which it could never hope to discharge from its own resources: the obligation to support theoretically those phenomena too that had formerly been taken care of by the vanished half of dualism’s estate.” (129)}
SIXTH ESSAY. THE NOBILITY OF SIGHT: A STUDY IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE SENSES

- Theory/praxis (practical knowledge) distinction
  - Sight as metaphor for highest function of the (human) mind, i.e., "the intellectual upperstructure"
  - "It is in fact a very special sense. It is incomplete by itself; it requires complement of other senses and functions for its cognitive offices; its highest virtues are also its essential insufficiencies." (136)

1. The Simultaneity of Image or the Time-Aspect of Seeing

- Simultaneous unity vs. sequential unity
  - "All other senses construct their perceptual "unities of a manifold" out of a temporal sequence of sensations which are in themselves time-bound and non-spatial." (136)
    - Sight is corresponding spatial (extensive) wherein the given is presented at once

- Hearing:
  - Can give only dynamic reality, hence strictly temporal wholes
    - Whole-part relation: a note extending the length of a bar (whole) – the simple or atomic now-moments at any particular time-stamp
      - "the whole is governed by succession" (138)
      - "Gestalt" principle at work within polyphony
    - Temporal Objects: "Extension of object and extension of its perception thus coincide." (137)
      - "a time-object that lasts just as long as the act of its synthesis lasts" (138)

- Analysis of acoustic phenomenon:
  1. Sounds-themselves
  2. Actions indicated by these sounds
o "external object reference" – *semiotic* function of sound
o "precisely because of this looseness of external object reference and thus of representative function, sound is eminently suited to constitute its own, immanent "objectivity" of acoustic values as such – and thus, free from other-representative duty, to represent just itself." (137-38)

3. Experience of hearing (revealing perceptual agent)
   - Sounds are...trespassers by nature
     - Passive subject suffers the experience
       - Activity is confined to perceptual readiness, i.e., attentiveness
         - i.e., contingency aspect of hearing
       - "Thus hearing, bound to succession and not presenting a simultaneous coordinated manifold of objects, falls short of sight in respect of the freedom which it confers upon its possessor." (underlining mine 139)
   - **Touch:**
     - Objects of touch (like object's heard) "have process character and are thus essentially time-entities." (140)
     - *Shape* is thus – as a whole – a construct composed of a synthesis of contact-sensations
     - Touching (unlike hearing) involves bodily activity (kinaesthesia)
       - Touch v. Feeling
         - Touch: confined to impressional moments
         - Feeling: constructed synthetically on the basis of touch
           - "The former may be said to be the atomic element in the more complex totality of the latter, but this totality is more than the mere additive result of such atomic touch-sensations." (141)
           - Higher-order syntheses: spatial characteristics, e.g., surface
     - The hand: "the organ for real shape-feeling" (141)
       - Hand as instrument of tactile perception
       - Hand as "image-Faculty" – which makes use of data of touch in the form-perception of an object
         - "Blind men can "see" by means of their hands, not because they are devoid of eyes, but because they are being endowed with the general faculty of "vision" and only happen to be deprived of the primary organ of sight." (underlining mine 141-142)

- **Comparison with Sight:**
  - Presentations
    1. Hearing-Presentation of a sequence through sequence
    2. Touch-Presentation of simultaneity through sequence
      a. "the result of the synthesis <of "atomic" sensations "generated" into whole perceptions for experience temporally> itself, in the case of surface- and shape-perception, represents a spatial and not a temporal entity, and we have here presentation of simultaneity through successiveness." (142)
      b. "completeness is the product of an elaborate synthesis of many single perception.... the time sequence of its building is forgotten." (143)
  3. Sight presentation of simultaneity through simultaneity

- **Seeing and Time:**
  - "in sight selection by focusing proceeds noncommittally within the field which the total vision presents" (143)
    - "Only simultaneity of image allows beholder to compare and interrelate" (143)
  - "The present, instead of being a pointlike experience, becomes a dimension within which thins can be beheld at once." (underlining mine 144)
• "allows the distinction between change and the unchanging and therefore between becoming and being" (145)
  o Organic root of the idea of "the eternal"
• "In the simultaneous field of vision a coordinated manifold, as yet outside active communication with me, offers itself to my selection for possible action. In this connection simultaneity means selectivity, and is thus a major factor in the higher freedom of the self-moving animal." (underlining mine 145)
  • "Freedom of choice"

2. Dynamic Neutralization
  • Organic Root of Distinction between Theory and Practice
    • "It (the seen) lets me be as I let it be." (145)
    • "I see without doing and without the object's doing anything." (146)
    • I am "bound in a dynamical situation" when either hearing and touching/feeling
    • "The complete neutralization of dynamic content in the visual object, the expurgation of all traces of causal activity from its presentation, is one of the major accomplishments of what we call the image-function of sight, and it results in a subtle balance of gain and loss in the cognitive economy of man, the pre-eminently seeing creature." (146-147)
      o Gain: concept of objectivity
      o Loss: causal detachment
        ▪ "touch is the sense in which the original encounter with reality as reality takes place" (148)
        ▪ "in feeling my own reality by some sort of effort I make, I feel the reality of the world. And I make an effort in the encounter with something other than myself." (148)
          • Subject-Object (I-World)
    • Effortlessness of sight
      • "vision secures that standing back from the aggressiveness of the world which frees for observation and opens a horizon for elective attention. But it does so at a price of offering a becalmed abstract of reality denuded of its raw power." (148)
        o Organic root of theory: where essence becomes separable from existence
          ▪ "basic freedom of vision"
      • "Vision is not the primary but most sublime case of sense perception and rests on the understory of more elementary function in which the commerce with the world is maintained on far more elementary terms" (149)

3. Spatial Distance
  • Sight, Distance, and Freedom
    ▪ "in sight the object faces men across the intervening distance, which in all its potential "steps" is included in the perception"
    • This distance presents itself "as something I am free to traverse" (underlining mine 150)
    • Organic root of the idea of infinity: the indefinite "and so on"
      o Blending of actual (focused area) and potential content (halo of space within which the focusing occurs)
  • Review
    ▪ 2 aspects of the freedom of sight
      • "an immediate increase in freedom by the mere increase which remoteness allows in the time-margin for action" (151)
        o A kind of "foreknowledge"
      • "increase of freedom by the opportunity of choice it offers in the presented manifold" (151)
  • Mental Distance
    • Objectivity qua the neutralization of dynamic situation, i.e., causal neutrality
4. Appendix: Sight and Movement

- Kinaesthesis (motility of the body) – "a factor in the very constitution of seeing and the seen world themselves" (152)
  - Cognitive organization of sensory content (percepts): Kant, Hegel, Pragmatism, Berkeley
  - Classical conception of "visual space": George Berkeley, Essay towards a New Theory of Vision
  - See again distinction between touching and feeling above
- Theory vs. Practice distinction: founded on the "aloofness" of the faculty of sight
  - (However) "Without this background of nonvisual, corporeal feeling and the accumulated experience of performed motion, the eyes alone would not supply the knowledge of space, notwithstanding the immanent extension of the visual field." (154)
  - Dependence of optical perspective on locomotion
    - Movement qua performance: "The proprioception\(^8\) of motor activity becomes a guide for the organism in the successive construction of spatial distance and direction out of the phases of the motion it actually performs." (155)
    - The static view of contemplation presupposes the construction of space, which is possible only by an motile bodily being in and amidst things

SEVENTH ESSAY: IMAGE-MAKING AND THE FREEDOM OF MAN

- A philosophical anthropology: determining man's "specific difference" in the animal kingdom
  - Heuristic: explorers on another planet
  - Choice of image-making as opposed to speech
    - "the latter, though it is even more central to the nature of man ... is also much more complex ... its evidence accordingly is more difficult to assess" (258)
  - "Our explorers enter a cave, and on its wall discern lines or other configurations .. a likeness to one or another of the living forms encountered outside. The cry goes up: 'Here is evidence of man!'" (158)
    - "what faculties and attitudes are involved in image-making?"(158)
    - "An image-making creature , therefore is one that indulges in the making of useless objects, or has ends in addition to biological ones, or can serve the latter in ways remote from the direct usefulness of instrumental things." (158)
      - "the very fact that the interest in it can shift to its eidos signifies a new object relation." (underlining mine, 159)
        - Cf. Scheler on "spirit"
- Sections I: What is an image?
  1. A likeness
  2. Produced with intent
    - Not a natural resemblance
  3. Not a complete likeness
    - "This confinement of the representative intention to the appearance suface is themost basic sense in which all image-likeness is incomplete, for it is constitutive of the genus "image" as such." (160)
      - Ontological incompleteness
  4. Incompleteness assumes degrees of freedom
    - Omission implies selection

\(^8\) proprioception, n. The activity of proprioceptors; the perception of the position and movements of the body, esp. as derived from proprioceptors. (proprioceptor, n. A sensory receptor which responds to stimuli arising within the body, esp. from muscle or nerve tissue; spec. one located within a muscle, tendon, or joint capsule that responds to position or movement of a part of the body. Cf. EXTEROCEPTOR n., INTEROCEPTOR n.) [Oxford English Dictionary]
5. Symbolic similitude
   • "the representational function may rest progressively less in real similitude than in the mere recognizability of the intention" (162)
   • Freedom expressed in abstraction and stylization (of the image in relation to imaged reality)
6. Visual shape (eidos)
   • Image is an expression of an identifiable unitary form underlying variations of sense
     • "vision itself suggests the idea of representation and, as its means, an idea of "form" whose identity rests entirely in the proportion of its parts" (162)
     • "Sight is the main perceptual medium of representation because it is not only the chief object-sense but also the ground of abstraction" (162)
7. Dynamic neutralization
   • "What is represented in the mode of image is, in the image, removed from the causal commerce of things and transposed to a nondynamic existence that is the image existence proper – a mode of existence to be confounded neither with that of the imaging thing nor with that of the imaged reality." (163)
8. Three-fold stratification of an image phenomenon
   • Substratum (i.e., material substrate of the image, "its physical carrier")
   • Image
   • Object of the image

Section II: Properties required in the image-making subject
   o Making and Beholding – the ability to perceive in a certain way, i.e., the ability to perceive similitude
     • Similitude – "a distinction that is nonperceptual"
       • "That distinction, as we have found, is twofold: the image must be distinguished from its physical carrier; and the imaged object must be distinguished from both. (167)
         o Likeness as intermediary
           • Physical carrier
           • Likeness
           • Imaged object
         o Bespeaks a fundamental faculty distinct from perception:
           • "separating eidos from concrete reality, or form from matter" (167)

Section III: The self-giving presence (i.e., the imaged object)
   o The paradox of sense perception, i.e., the "double feat of abstraction"
     • Abstraction from the state of sensory stimulation itself
       • "neutral freedom for letting the "other" appear for itself" (168)
     • "perception continuously "abstracts" from the immediate sensory content of affection in allowing the object its identity beyond the change of its views" (168)
       • "each view alike represents the object 'symbolically'" (169)
     o "Thus it turns out that abstraction, representation, symbolism – something of the image function – already inheres in the performance of seeing, as the most integrative of all the senses" (170)

Section IV: The freedom of man
   o Animal recollection vs. human reproductive faculty of imagination
     • Animal recollection: "joined to actual sensation" (170)
     • Human memory: joined to actual sensation or reproductive imagination
       • "That it (human memory) can alter them (the images of things at its call) follows almost necessarily from having them in detachment from the actuality of sensation and thereby from the stubborn factuality of the object’s own being." (171)
         o Freedom to separate remembered eidos from occurrence of individual encounter
   o Remaker – Maker
"What we here have is a trans-animal, uniquely human fact: eidetic control of motility, that is, muscular action governed not be set stimulus-response pattern but freely chosen, internally represented and purposely projected form. The eidetic control of motility, with its freedom of external execution, complements the eidetic control of imagination, with its freedom of internal drafting. Without the latter, there would be no rational faculty, but without the former, its possession would be futile. Both together make the freedom of man. (underlining mine, 172-173)

- *Homo pictor*
  - Naming
    - "the symbolic duplication of nature by names is at the same time an ordering of nature" (173)
    - Name = identification of eidos (species) common to all individuals
    - "Image-making each time re-enacts the creative act that is hidden in the residual name: the symbolic making-over-again of the world. It exhibits what the use of names takes for granted: the availability of the eidos as an identity over and above the particulars for human apprehension, imagination, and discourse." (173)

- Section V: Evidence of trans-animal freedom
  - Essential difference (not one of degree)
    - "The level of man is the level of the possibilities that are indicated (not defined, and certainly not assured) by the pictorial faculty: the level of a nonanimal mediacy in relation to objects, and of a distance from reality entertained and bridged by that mediacy at the same time." (174)