

EVOLUTION

OF

LOVE

ILLUSTRATED

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BY

EMIL LUCKA

Translated by Ellie Schleussner

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ILLUSTRATED &
PUBLISHED BY
E-KİTAP PROJESİ & CHEAPEST BOOKS



www.cheapestbooks.com

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Istanbul

ISBN:

978-625-6004-55-9

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--The Individual As an Epitome of the Human Race--	

Preface

The object of this book, which is addressed to all cultured men and women, is to set forth the primitive manifestations of love and to throw light on those strange emotional climaxes which I have called "Metaphysical Eroticism." I have taken no account of historical detail, except where it served the purpose of proving, explaining and illustrating my subject. Nor have I hesitated to intermingle psychological motives and motives arising from the growth and spread of civilisation. The inevitable result of a one-sided glimpse at historical facts would have been a history of love, an undertaking for which I lack both ability and inclination. On the other hand, had I written a merely psychological treatise, disregarding the succession of periods, I should have laid myself open to the just reproach of giving rein to my imagination instead of dealing with reality.

I have availed myself of historical facts to demonstrate that what psychology has shown to be the necessary phases of the evolution of love, have actually existed in historical time and characterised a whole period of civilisation. The history of civilisation is an end in itself only in the chapter entitled "The Birth of Europe."

My work is intended to be first and foremost a monograph on the emotional life of the human race. I am prepared to meet rather with rejection than with approval. Neither the historian nor the psychologist will be pleased. Moreover, I am well aware that my standpoint is hopelessly "old-fashioned." To-day nearly all the world is content to look upon the sexual impulse as the source of all erotic emotion and to regard love as nothing more nor less than its most exquisite radiation.

My book, on the contrary, endeavours to establish its complete independence of sexuality.

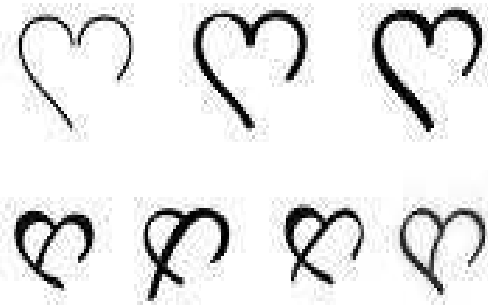
My contention that so powerful an emotion as love should have come into existence in historical, not very remote times, will seem very strange; for, all outward profession of faith in evolution notwithstanding, men are still inclined to take the unchangeableness of human nature for granted.

The facts on which I have based my arguments are well known, but my deductions are new; it is not for me to decide whether they are right or wrong. In the first (introductory) part I have made use of works already in existence, in addition to Plato and the poets, but the second and third parts are founded almost entirely on original research.

E.L.

THE EVOLUTION OF LOVE

The First Stage: The Sexual Instinct



To the generations slowly rising from the dark abyss of time to the twilight of the Middle Ages, the satisfaction of the sexual instinct offered fewer difficulties than the gratification of any other need or desire. With every unpremeditated and cursory indulgence the craving disappeared from consciousness and left the individual free to give his mind to the acquisition of the necessities of life which were far more difficult to obtain. Primitive, prehistoric man lived in the moment.

When there was plenty of food he gorged to repletion, heedless of the starvation which might be his fate to-morrow or the day after. His thought had neither breadth nor continuity. It never occurred to him that there might be a connection between an abrupt and quickly forgotten embrace and the birth of a child by a woman of the tribe after what appeared to be an immeasurable lapse of time. He suspected witchcraft in the phenomena of pregnancy and childbirth (to this day the aborigines of Central and Northern Australia do not realise the connection between generation and birth). As a rule it was remembered that a certain woman had given birth to a certain child by the fact of her having carried it about and fed it at her breast. Occasionally it was forgotten to which mother a child belonged; perhaps the mother had died; perhaps the child had strayed beyond the boundaries of the community and the mother had failed to recognise it on its return. But it was clear beyond all doubt that every child had a "mother." The conception of "father" had not yet been formed. Experience had taught our primitive ancestors two undeniable facts, namely "that women gave birth to children" and "that every child had a mother."

We must assume that sexual intercourse was irregular and haphazard up to the dawn of history. Every woman—within the limits of her own tribe, probably—belonged to every man. Whether this assumption is universally applicable or not, must remain doubtful; later ethnologists, more particularly *von Westermarck*, deny it because it does not apply to every savage tribe of the present day.

Herodotus tells us that promiscuity existed in historical times in countries as far removed from each other as Ethiopia and the borders of the Caspian Sea. There can be no reasonable doubt that sexual intercourse took the form of group-marriage, the exchange or lending of wives, and other similar arrangements.

The relationship between mother and child having been established by Nature herself, the first human family congregated round the mother, acknowledging her as its natural chief. This continued even after the causal connection between generation and birth had ceased to be a mystery. In all countries on the Mediterranean, more especially in Lycia, Crete and Egypt, the predominance of the female element in State and family is well attested; it is reflected in the natural religions of the Eastern races—both Semitic and Aryan—and we find innumerable traces of it in Greek mythology. The merit of discovering this important stage in the relationship of the sexes is due to *Bachofen*. "Based on life-giving motherhood," he says, "gynecocracy was completely dominated by the natural principles and phenomena which rule its inner and outer life; it vividly realised the unity of nature, the harmony of the universe which it had not yet outgrown.... In every respect obedient to the laws of physical existence, its gaze was fixed upon the earth, it worshipped the chthonian powers rather than the gods of light." The children of men who had sprung from their mother as the flowers spring from the soil, raised altars to Gaea, Demeter and Isis, the deities of inexhaustible fertility and abundance.

These early races of men realised themselves only as a part of nature; they had not yet conceived the idea of rising above their condition and setting their intelligence to battle with its blind laws. Incapable of realising their individuality, they bowed in passive submission to nature's undisputed sway. They were members of a tribe, and the fragmentary existence of the single individual was of no importance when it clashed with the welfare of the clan. The family—centred round the mother—and the tribe were the real individuals, in the same way as the swarm of bees, and not the individual bee, makes the whole. They lived in complete harmony with nature; they had no spiritual life, no history, for civilisation and the creation of intellectual values which are the foundation of history depend on the rise of a community above primitive conditions. Differentiation had hardly begun to exert its modifying influence; all men (not unlike the Eastern Asiatics of our day) resembled each other in looks, character and habits.

In the countries on the Mediterranean (as well as in India and Babylonia) the first stage of sexual intercourse, irresponsible and promiscuous, was systematised by religion. The annual spring-festivals in honour of Adonis, Dionysus, Mylitta, Astarte and Aphrodite, celebrated unbridled licentiousness. The whole community greeted the re-awakening vitality of the earth by an unrestrained abandonment to passion. Man aspired to be no more than the flower which scatters its seed to the winds.

The incomprehensible lords of cupidity and rank vegetation did not suffer the individualisation of desire. The complete union of the male and female qualities, as manifested both in nature and man, was solemnised in the Orgies, and not by any means the relationship of an individual man to an individual woman, or sexuality connected with individuals and dominated by them. Nor was this unfettering of instinct a symbolical act; for it to be so, man must have stood over against nature as an intellectual being, mirroring and transforming her acts by his own deeds. He was as yet far from this. His ambition did not reach beyond the desire to fulfil nature in himself. Before the majesty of sex—worshipped in the vague, shadowy mothers of mankind, Rhea, Demeter, Cybele, and their human offspring, the phallic Dionysus and the hundred-breasted goddess of Ephesus—the individual with his piteous limitations shrank into insignificance. Sex was immortal, sex and primary matter, the *υλη* contrasted by Aristotle with the *είσος*, the form. "The female principle is the mother of the body, but the mother of the spirit is the male." The substance of those ancient cults was birth and death, meaningless, purposeless, apparently without rhyme or reason; their sacrament the perpetual union of the sexes. Between the succeeding generations there was but one bond, the natural bond of motherhood. It was the first tie realised by mankind, a tie not felt as a concrete relationship between two individuals, but as a general,

maternal, natural force. The presiding divinities were the "mothers," the eternal, incorporeal deities, enthroned outside time and space, and therefore immortal givers of life and preservers of mankind. Before their silent greatness the desire of man to know his whence and whither, to win shape and individuality, became blasphemy. They had given immortality to sex, but upon the individual they had laid the curse of death.

Thus we have first a stage of fatherless, natural conception, corresponding with the philosophical theories which maintained that all created things had sprung from the elements. Later ages discovered a spiritual principle, a becoming, or an eternal being, and finally a conflict between spirit and matter.

But the general attitude towards sexual intercourse underwent a change as soon as here and there individuals appeared who were conscious of their individuality. Natural selection could not come into play in a community the members of which resembled one another so closely that all personal characteristics were obliterated in a general monotony. One woman was as good as another, although in all probability a healthy, youthful and strong individual would be preferred to a sickly, puny specimen. But apart from this, the wish to choose a partner instead of being content with the first comer, must have coincided historically with the outward, and later on with the inward differentiation of the race. I cannot prove my theory by quoting chapter and verse from ancient writers, but obviously a feeling of preference could not have arisen until individuals had begun to show very noticeable traces of difference.

Therefore with growing differentiation a new factor—modest at first and operating within narrow limits—the factor of choice, had come into the sexual life. The slow development of personality gave birth to the feeling which rebelled against universal sexual intercourse and gynococracy in general. The men desired to shape their own world; they had no share in the immortality of maternal life. As (relatively speaking) single individuals they stood over against the material bond of the generations living in the chain of the mothers. Demigods, the sons of the gods of light and mortal mothers, were credited with the salvation of men from a confused, chaotic existence, and the introduction of new conditions of life, no longer based on the dictates of nature but on the moulding genius of man. "Hercules, Theseus and Perseus overthrew the ancient powers of darkness. They laid the foundations of man's great achievement, civilisation, and were the first to worship the gods of light. They delivered humanity from the gross materialism in which it had hitherto been steeped; they were the awakeners of spiritual life, which is a higher life than the life of the senses; they were as incorruptible as the sun from whence they came, the heroes of a new civilisation distinguished by gentleness, a higher endeavour and a new dispensation." (Bachofen.)

Heinrich Schurtz has proved (though not in connection with matriarchy) that side by side with the family, unions of unmarried men existed in many countries at a very early time. The object of these unions, which had nothing of the rigidity of blood-relationship, was fellowship.

As soon as the boys had outgrown the care of their mother they were compelled to combine for the purpose of playing games and later on for war and hunting; these men's unions therefore were the outcome of the necessary conditions of life. It is obvious that innovations and inventions of all sorts originated in these unions rather than with the temperamentally conservative women, and that we have to look upon them as the hotbed of all spiritual and social evolution. These confederations and leagues not based on a natural or blood-relationship, but on a feeling of brotherhood and friendliness, might well have been an attack upon the natural ties of the family, an expression of a feeling of hostility to and contempt for women, and probably stood in close relationship to a striking characteristic of the past: a widely spread homosexuality.

Whether Schurtz gives us a correct picture of these men's unions or not, there can be no doubt that the struggle against matriarchy originated in them. This struggle led eventually to the victory of the male principle, the acknowledgment of the authority of the father, the institution of male government which deprived women of all legal rights, and the dominion of the spiritual; the victory of the gods of light over the dark lords of fertility. This revolution of principles was perhaps the completest revolution humanity has ever known.

A long road, marked by numerous compromises and limitations, led from casual intercourse to the final establishment of the monogamous system. Free intercourse had been sanctioned by the gods, who suffered no restrictions and modifications, and sacrifices in the shape of a temporary universal unfettering of instinct were required to pacify their anger and reconcile them to the new system. The first and most important of these compromises was the temple-prostitution practised by many nations in Asia Minor, the Greek Archipelago, India and Babylonia. Many a girl gained in this way the marriage portion which enabled her later on to find a husband, to whom she invariably remained strictly loyal. Thus all religious requirements were satisfied. At first this was an annually recurring rite, but gradually it became an isolated ceremony in the life of every female individual. "In the place of the annual surrender," says Priester, "we now have a single act; the hetaerism of the matrons is succeeded by the hetaerism of the maids; instead of being practised during marriage, it is practised in spinsterhood; the blind surrender has given way to a yielding to certain individuals." ...

With the growth of civilisation a few girls, the hierodules, were set apart for the purpose of pacifying the offended deities and their act ransomed the rest of the female citizens.

It was not on erotic grounds, but for political and social reasons that the Greek introduced monogamy. The reason which weighed in the scales more heavily than all others was the necessity for legitimate offspring.

It was natural that a man of property should desire a legitimate heir who would inherit it on his death. The right of succession from father to son, incorporated later on in the Roman Right, originated during this period. But this was not the only advantage connected with the possession of a son: religion taught that after death the body required sacrificial food which could only be provided by the legitimate male descendants of the deceased. (The same belief was held by the Indians and Eastern Asiatics.) In several Greek States marriage was compulsory and bachelors were fined. At the same time the contraction of a marriage did not interfere with the personal freedom of the man; he was at liberty to go to the hetaerae for intellectual stimulation (unless he happened to prefer the friends of his own sex) and to his slaves for the pleasures of the senses. His wife, although she was not free, was respected by him as the guardian of his hearth and children. There was but one legal reason for divorce: sterility, which frustrated the object of matrimony. Conjugal love as we understand it did not exist; it is a feeling which was entirely unknown to the ancients.

With the exception of the gradually weakening hold of religion on the imagination of the people towards the decline of the Roman Empire, no perceptible change occurred in the social life of the old world until the dawn of the Middle Ages. To quote Otto Seeck: "A wife had no other task than to produce legitimate offspring; and yet she gave herself airs and graces, embittered her husband's life with her jealousy and bad temper or, worse even, set all tongues wagging with her evil conduct.

Is it to be wondered at that marriage was merely regarded as a duty to the State, and that a great number of men were not sufficiently patriotic to take such a burden upon their shoulders?"

Thus the victory of the male spiritual principle over universal sexual intercourse ushered in the second stage which checked the sexual impulse and directed it upon certain individuals, a distinction however, which bears no relation to love.

Monogamy had conquered, in principle at least and as an ideal.

The profoundly mystical core of the most powerful Greek tragedy which has come down to our time, the *Orestes* of Aeschylus, represents the victory of the new gods of light over the old maternal powers. Orestes has sinned against the old law, for in order to avenge his father's death, he has slain his mother. The sun-god Apollo and the sinister Erinnys, the upholders of the old maternal right, are waging war over the justifiableness of the deed. To the Erinnys, matricide is the foulest of all crimes, for man is more nearly related to the mother than to the father. But Apollo had commanded the deed, so that the father's murder should not remain unavenged.

Not to the mother is the child indebted

For life; she tends and guards the kindling spark

The father lighted; she but holds his pledge.—

he explains. And the answer is the lament of the Erinnys:

Thus thou destroy'st the gods of ancient times!

Athene, the virgin goddess, the motherless daughter of Zeus, appearing as mediator between the opponents, decides in favour of the new dispensation which places the father's claim above the mother's. Orestes is free of guilt; his deed was justifiable according to the canons of the new law. The tragedy is the symbolical commemoration of the victory of the male principle in Greece. But Athene is the embodiment of the new hermaphroditic ideal of the Greek which stood in close connexion to their homosexuality, and with which I propose to deal later on.

There is a psychological law ordaining that nothing which has ever quickened the soul of man shall be entirely lost. Were it not so, the storehouses of the soul would stand empty. New values are created, but the old verities endure; as a rule they are relegated to a lower sphere, to inferior social layers, but they persist and frequently merge into the new. This law applies without exception to the relationship between the sexes; we shall come upon it again and again. During the second stage, characterised by the spiritual love foreign to the ancients, the purely sexual impulse continued as an unimpaired force, but it had lost its prestige and was not only regarded as ignoble and base, but also stigmatised as sinful and demoniacal.

The hearts of men were stirred by new ideals.

A similar attitude, perhaps not quite so uncompromising because the contrast was less pronounced, existed in classical Greece. The more highly developed, self-conscious Hellenic genius, shrinking from promiscuous intercourse, had systematised the instinct and set up a new ideal in Platonic love. But below the surface raged the unbridled natural force, and in perfect harmony with the Greek spirit—it was not hysterically hidden, but assigned a place in the new system. Wrapped in the obscurity of the Mysteries, concealed from the gaze of the new gods of light, it attempted to assuage its inextinguishable thirst. The Mysteries were the annual tribute paid as a ransom by Apollo-worshipping Hellas to chaotic Asia, so that she might be free to pursue her higher psycho-spiritual aims. The brilliant civilisation of Athens was based on the dark cult of the Mysteries. On the festivals of the hermaphroditic Dionysus and Demeter, which are identical with the cults of Adonis and Mylitta, the impersonal, generative elements were worshipped. Thus, below the surface of the Greek State, founded on masculine values and attempting to restrict intercourse for the benefit of a more systematised progeniture, flourished the orgiastic cult of the ancient Eastern deities, who had vouchsafed to mortals a glimpse of the great secret of life in the ardour of procreation and conception. The women upheld the religion of passion as an end in itself; bacchantes, men in female attire, emasculated priests,

sacrificed to the blindly bountiful gods. We are told that Dionysus conquered even the Amazons and converted them to his worship.

Euripides described in the *Bacchantes*—the subject of which is the war between the uncontrolled sexual impulse and the new order of things—how Dionysus traversed all Asia and finally arrived in Hellas accompanied by a crowd of abandoned women. But his religion was more than a cult of wine and sensual pleasure, it embraced a gentle worship of nature, throwing down the barrier between man and beast—impassable by the spirit of civilisation—and lovingly including every living creature. We read in the *Bacchantes* that the women who had fled from the town to follow the irresistible stranger, Dionysus, dwelled in the mountains, binding their hair with tame adders, carrying in their arms the cubs of wolves and the young deer, and feeding them with the milk of their breasts; that milk and wine welled up when they struck the earth with the thyrsus; and so on. Dionysus implores Pentheus, the representative of the Hellenic masculine system, not to venture undisguised among the maenads: "They'll murder you if they divine your sex," and, knowing the secret of the male and female temper:

..... First let

His mind be clouded by a slight disorder

For, conscious of his manhood he will never

Wear women's garb; insane, he's sure to wear it.

Pentheus, recognising in Dionysus the foe of a more spiritual conception of the law, the *effeminate stranger* who had driven the women to madness, is torn to pieces by the frenzied bacchantes who fall upon him, led by Agave, his mother, and sacrificed to the *bull-god* Dionysus. At the conclusion of this strange and profound epos, Agave recovers her senses and curses the acts which she has committed in her madness ... women submit to the new spiritual dispensation. We realise now why Hera, the tutelary goddess of the newly introduced monogamous system, hated Dionysus and attempted to kill him before he was born.

The subject treated in the beautiful myth of Orpheus is the relationship between the primitive sexual impulse and its individualisation on a single personality. For seven months Orpheus bewails the death of Eurydice and regards all other living creatures with indifference. This loyalty offends and infuriates the women of Thracia, who divine in it a spirit inimical to a life in harmony with nature. One night, during the celebration of the Dionysian rites, they attack the poet—the representative of the higher Hellenic poetical ideals—and rend him limb from limb. But as the head of the murdered singer floats down the river, the pale lips still frame the beloved name: Eurydice! It is certain that in those remote legendary days such love did not exist. But the prophetic Greek spirit contrasted promiscuous intercourse with love for a single woman.

So far we have encountered only a general, not an individualised, sexual instinct and, in a limited measure at least, a struggling tendency towards individualisation. But even so it was merely a question of instinct, and did not bear the least resemblance to love as we understand it to-day. *Love* did not exist in the old world. I admit that in the legend of Orpheus we are face to face with a sentiment which is not unlike modern love, but, as far as I am aware, this is an isolated case in Greek history, and may be regarded as a divination of something new, just as we find unmistakable anticipations of Christianity in Plato's writings. Such phenomena—the occasional occurrence of which I do not altogether deny, although I regard them as on the whole improbable as far as the sphere of my research is concerned—are not infrequently met with in history, but their effect upon civilisation was nil; they were presentiments, incomprehensible in their day, and for this very reason probably preserved as curiosities.

In spite of the fact, however, that in those far-off days spiritual love of a man for a woman was unknown, we find Plato contrasting "a base and degraded Eros with a divine Eros." Pausanias says in the "Symposium":

"The man who loves with his senses only, loves women and boys equally well. He loves the body more than the soul.... His only striving is to obtain the object of his desire, and he cares not whether it be worthy or unworthy.

The Eros he worships is the ally of that younger goddess in whom male and female attributes are blended. But the other Eros is the companion of Aphrodite, Urania, the divine; unbegotten by a father, unconceived by a mother, she is the offspring of the male element, the elder one, unstained by passion.... The sensualist who loves the body more than the soul is base. His love passes away like the object of his passion. But the companion of the Olympic goddess is the Eros who fills the hearts of the lovers with the longing for virtue. The other Eros is the confederate of the debased Aphrodite." And Aristophanes, another of the participators in the feast, says: "The yearning does not seem to be a desire for the pleasures of the senses, the one taking delight in his intercourse with the other; far from it, it is obvious that each soul is craving for something which it cannot express in words, but can only divine and conjecture." And the mysterious Diotima revealed to Socrates an entirely novel principle in erotic life; the principle which guides man beyond the pleasures of the senses and—through love—leads him to the divine. "The slave of his senses runs after women; but he who loves with his soul and strives to win immortality through virtue and wisdom, seeks a great and beautiful soul that he may surrender himself to it completely." But in the opinion of the classical ages, a beautiful soul was only to be found in the body of a man; woman belonged to the lower, animal spheres; she was destined for the pleasure of the

senses and the propagation of the race. Plato's theory of ideas is the philosophical victory of the male-spiritual principle over nature, matter and their warden: woman. (Perhaps it is even the revenge of the Greek genius for man's original enslavement.) "Love between men," continues the seer, "forms a stronger tie, a closer friendship, than love between parents and children; it has a mutual share in children which are immortal and far more beautiful than the children of men." She teaches Socrates that this noble love is at the root of all the magnificent creations of the spirit, as carnal love is the origin of human life. "Until he becomes aware that the beauty of all bodies is closely related, a man must love an individual with all his heart. If a man will follow after beauty, he is foolish not to conceive the beauty of all bodies as one and the same. As soon as he has learned this, he will become a lover of all beautiful forms; his fervent passion for one will diminish, he will scorn the individual and hold it cheap."

With the Hellenic homosexuality an element foreign and even hostile to the original and natural bi-sexual sensuality crept into the erotic life of the human race; it found its classical representation in the Platonic dialogues "Symposium" and "Phaedros." In conscious opposition to all sexuality Platonic love (what is usually called Platonic love is based on an obstinate misunderstanding) turns to the purely spiritual, that is to say, the conceptions of truth, beauty and goodness; it is a yearning for the supernatural, and it knows itself as the path to it. In the mutual love of all noble souls lies the germ of all higher things; it is the way to the gods of light which, in this connection,

are conceived philosophically as ideas, though in the true Hellenic spirit as objective ideas, the prototypes and culminations of everything human. To grasp the meaning of Platonic love it is essential to realise that—unlike the spiritual woman-worship peculiar to the Middle Ages—it is not a personal feeling of one individual for another; platonically speaking, the love for an individual is only a first stage; the path which leads to the love of beauty and the eternal ideas. The characteristic of this metaphysical love which Plato was the first to conceive, was therefore love for the universal, and not love for an individual. The latter, as we shall find later on, is the characteristic of the true or, more modestly speaking, specifically European conception of love. Platonic love, finally, was the perception of perfection, the Socratic knowledge; its alpha and omega was not, as the mystic and true erotic would have it, its ardour and passion, the fulness of its own being. It had an alien purpose: the knowledge of things divine, by a later period Christianised and understood as the divine mysteries. To Plato, the essence and climax of antique, ante-Christian culture, every individual, even the beloved mistress, was but a preliminary, a finger-post, pointing the way to the perception of perfect beauty. True virtue is the outcome of profound knowledge; it transforms men into gods. The purely spiritual woman-worship of the Middle Ages was only another aspect of this yearning to attain to virtue and perfection through the love of

an individual. We must not lose sight of the fact that it was already strongly emphasised and upheld in the Platonic ideal of love.

In the dark excesses of the Mysteries the beauty of the human form counted for nothing; voluptuousness and intoxication ruled. In the Asiatic cult of the sexes there was no room for beauty, no time for selection. The Greeks were the discoverers of the beauty of the human form. Beauty kindled the flame of love in their souls, beauty was the gauge which determined their erotic values. Their ideal was a *kalokagathos*, a youth beautiful in body and soul.

In "Phaedros" Plato contrasts with far greater force than in the "Symposium" him "who craves for sensual pleasure like the beasts in the fields" with him "who strives after beauty and perfection." To the latter "the face of the beloved is the reflection of the sublimely beautiful." He would like to sacrifice to her, as to the immortal gods. All beautiful bodies represent to him in an increasing measure the idea of the beauty of form, which again is subordinate to the beauty of the soul. It points the way to metaphysical beauty, the eternal and imperishable idea of mankind. Socrates could scorn the beauty of the individual because he saw in it merely an imperfect reflection of perfect beauty. In its truest sense Platonic love is, therefore, impersonal; it is not spiritual love for a human being, but a peculiar characteristic of the Greek cult of beauty. We shall again meet this principle of beauty-worship in metaphysical love, the adoration of woman; thanks to Plato, it has for all time become the inalienable property of the human mind. The striving to rise above all individualism was another ideal which a later period revived.

But the pivot round which the emotions revolved was the love for a beloved individual, the modern, European, fundamental motive, as opposed to the antique Platonic cult of ideas. Thus Plato, too, was a citizen of the old world, at whose threshold stood universal sexual intercourse, tolerating nothing personal, knowing of no individuals, acknowledging only unchecked, uncontrollable instinct, and whose decline was again characterised by the extreme impersonality of ideas. It had traversed the path of human existence in a huge cycle. Starting from an unconscious existence in complete harmony with nature, it had passed through individualised man to the loftiest spiritual conceptions in the impersonal world of ideas.

The Hellenic ideal of beauty was almost invariably realised in the male form. The Greeks of the classical period disdained woman; she was for them inseparably connected with base sensuality, but their contempt had its source partly in a feeling of horror. The days when matriarchy was the form of government were not very remote; it survived in a great number of myths and also, subconsciously perhaps, in the soul of man. To the Greek mind woman was the embodiment of the dark side of love, and it was merely the logical conclusion of this conception when, at a later period, she was regarded as the devil's tool. It is certain that the origin of the idea must be sought in Plato's time.

In intercourse with women man dimly felt the vague elementary condition from which he had struggled hard to emerge, and fled to the more familiar companions of his own sex. Would not love between man and man deliver him from the basely sensual, strengthen his spirituality and lead him to the gods? In this connection Zeus is called in "Phaedros" φίλος, the maker of friendships. Plato, in propounding this doctrine, drew thereby the most radical conclusion of the new, apparently male, but at heart hermaphroditic ideal of civilisation, conceived in the heroic epoch and elaborated and brought to perfection by the Greek of classical times. This ideal was the victory of the spiritual principle over promiscuous sexuality and irresponsible propagation and, quite in the true Hellenic spirit, it was again interpreted materially.

Because individualised love was an unknown quantity to the ancients, they ornamented their sarcophagi with symbols of ecstatic life, with dancing and embracing fauns and maenads. Generations passed away, but new ones arose, embracing and begetting life—for life was eternal. Death was vanquished in the ecstasy of the nameless millions, for the true meaning of life lay in the preservation of the species. The death of the individual did not have a deep and poignant meaning until the soul had become the centre and climax of life. An individual had passed away for ever—nothing could recall him.

Death had become the final issue, the terror, because it destroyed the greatest of all things: self-conscious man. But love, too, had changed; it was no longer sexual impulse, depending on the body and perishing with it, but a craving of the soul, conscious of itself and stretching out feelers far beyond the earth. A new pang had come into the world, but also a new reconciliation.

The Second Stage: Love

Chapter I: The Birth of Europe



The building up of this new civilisation had absorbed the intellectual force of a thousand years; it had monopolised thought and every form of energy. The reward was great. For the first time in the annals of the world the questionings of brooding intelligence were fully answered, the anguish of the tortured soul was stilled. The purpose of the universe, the destiny of man, were comprehended and interpreted, good and evil being finally known.

At the close of the first Christian millenary, all moral and intellectual values were grouped round and dominated by one supreme ideal; the loftiest value in this world and the next, side by side with the greatest secular power, were in the hands of the Church; together with the imperium she had succeeded to the spiritual and ethical inheritance of the dead civilisations. Without her uncouth barbarism reigned, and it was her task, while elaborating the system of the universe for which she stood, to teach and convert the new nations, to spread a uniform Christian civilisation.

On the mere face of it it must seem strange that a religion which had grown on foreign soil, out of foreign spiritual assumptions, should have been accepted so readily and quickly by nations to whom it must have been alien and unintelligible. The love of war and valour of the Teutonic tribes and Christian asceticism were diametrically opposed ideals, and very often their relationship was one of direct hostility. I need only remind the reader of the contempt expressed for the chaplain by Hagen (in the "Song of the Niebelungen"). On the other hand, the ancient Celtic and Teutonic races shared one profound characteristic with the Christian world, the consequences of which were sufficiently far-reaching to raise the religion of Christ to the religion of Europe. The characteristic common to the still uncultivated European spirit and Christianity, and meaningless alike to the Asiatic barbarians, the Jews of the Old Testament and the Greeks, was the importance which both attached to the individual soul.

Through the Christian religion this new intuition which saw in the soul of man the highest of values, became the centre and pivot of life and faith—a position to which even Plato, to whom the objective, metaphysical idea was the essential, never attained. It had been the most personal experience of Christ, and centuries after his death the nations rediscovered it as their highest value. It entitled Christianity to become the natural religion of Europe, and the soul of its new system of civilisation. It formed the most complete contrast to all Asiatic cults, Brahminism and Buddhism, a fact which, since Schopenhauer, one is inclined to overlook. To the Indian, the soul of man is not an entity; his consciousness is a republic, as it were, composed of diverse spiritual principles and metaphysical forces which are not centralised into an "I-centre," but exist impersonally, side by side. This may be a great conception, but it is foreign to the feeling of the citizen of Europe. To the latter the I, the soul, the personality, is the pivot round which life turns. The evolution of the European world-feeling is in the direction of the independent development of all psychical forces and their fusion into a unity of ever-increasing intimacy. New values will be created, but the fusing power of the soul will strive with growing intensity to co-ordinate and unify the internal and external life; personality will recreate the world in conformity with its own purposes, that is to say, it will found the system of objective civilisation. The

incapacity of the Indian to produce a civilisation perfect in every direction is explained by his one-sided, morally-speculative thought. The world is to him nothing but a moral phenomenon, he admits no other explanation; he seeks its true meaning and the possibility of its salvation in the realisation of the vanity of life, not in the liberating deed, and not in the inward change.

The kernel of matured and spiritualised Christianity, which reached its apex in the German mystics, lies in the soul of man, eager to shed everything which is subjective and accidental, and become spirit, profound, divine reality. Eckhart, the great perfecter of this European religion, deliberately and in direct contradiction to the dogma of his time, placed man above the "highest angels," whom he considered subject to limitations; "man," he argues, "thanks to his freedom, is able to reach a goal to which no angel could aspire. For he is always new, infinitely exalted above the limitations of the angels and all finite reason." Of the relationship between the soul and God he says; "The soul of the righteous man shall be with God, his equal and compeer, no more and no less." The Upanishads, on the other hand, maintain that the core of the world is not to be found in the soul of the individual but in Brahma, the universal soul, outside whom there is no reality. "The individual soul is but a phantasm of the universal soul, as the reflection of the sun in the water is but a phantasm of the sun." The sole purpose of the world is the extinction of individual consciousness, its absorption in Brahma, the end of all suffering: "When feeling has ceased, pain must cease, too, and the world be delivered." The Indian lacks the central conception of love, for which he substitutes knowledge.

Primitive Christianity conceived the connection between body and soul, the encumbering of the soul by the body, as it were, as a temptation or a punishment; according to the Vedas, it is merely a delusion to which the sage is not subject. Before his keen vision, the deception falls to the ground, and by this very fact he is delivered. To the feeling of Europe and Christianity, however, life and the universe are genuine, deep realities, the touchstone of the soul. Love is the soul's greatest treasure and the only true path to God; knowledge can never take its place. "The divine stream of love flowing through the soul," says Eckhart, "carries the soul along with it to its origin, to the bourne of all knowledge, to God."

The very general identification of the Christian and Indian mystics—a fact which is accounted for by their common metaphysical tendency—is based on an error; Indian mysticism and Christian mysticism originated in different concepts; here the centre of all being is laid in love and in the soul of man, there it is contained in knowledge and in Brahma. But ultimately, at the termination of the world-process, they will meet, although coming from different directions. "While the soul worships a God, realises a God and knows of a God," says Eckhart, "it is separated from God. This is God's purpose, to annihilate Himself in the soul, so that the soul, too, shall lose itself. For God has been called God by the creatures." The words "The soul creates God from within, is connected with the divine and becomes divine itself," are highly significant. To the Vedantist the soul of man is an emanation from the world-soul:

"Although God differs from the individual soul, the individual soul does not differ from God." At this point it is no longer an easy matter to distinguish the feeling of the Christian mystic from the feeling of the Brahmin; though their valuations of man, life and the world differ, nay, are even opposed to each other, they finally meet in God. We read in the Vedanta: "The force which created and maintains the universe, the eternal principle of all being, dwells entirely and undividedly in every one of us. Our self is identical with the supreme deity and only apparently differentiated from it. Whosoever has mastered this truth has become at one with all creation; whosoever has not mastered it, is a stranger and a foe to all creatures."

I do not intend to depreciate Indian wisdom; I merely desire to point out its inherent dissimilarity to Western thought; my task of laying hold of the spirit of Europe in its crises and watching its growth is bound to be advanced by this division.

The religious experience of Christ, based on the realisation of the divine nature of the soul, and the road of the soul to God, has established the fundamental Western principle. A world-system was built up which emanated from the innermost depth of the individual soul and, very consistently, related all existing things, heaven and earth, the creation and the destruction of the world, salvation and perdition, to the soul of man.

This was achieved with the aid of a naïve metaphysic, created by the Greek genius and externalised by the crude intellect of barbarians; this metaphysic drew its whole content from a unique revelation, and the essential was frequently hidden by dialectic and speculation. One may safely say that the first millenary strove, if not exactly to set aside the original principle of Christianity, yet to bind it by dogma in such a way that it often became completely obscured. A long training was necessary before the immature nations of barbarians were fit to become citizens of the spiritual world, before they could fully assimilate the new traditions and grasp their innermost meaning, which by this very fact became altered and modified. This process of education came to a temporary conclusion about the year 1100. At last the European nations had outgrown the guardianship of the Church with its antiquated methods; a new, a creative epoch was dawning; the civilisation of Europe, opposed to all barbarism and orientalism, rose like a brilliant star on the horizon of the world. Spontaneous feeling for the race, for nature and for the divine verities had again become possible.