

The Idea of Man



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**Cover Art: Andre Rublev, 'The Trinity',
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THE IDEA OF MAN

If we look at the origin of man, surely there we will find his essence. And with this essence broken from its hiddenness, the 'point' of man's existence, the reason and logic of his being will surely manifest itself. In the light of that manifestation, we will see man clearly and finally gain an understanding of who, how and why he is. So, this entire labor of thought must not only begin, but remain and dwell at the point of his beginning and only there because there and only there is to be derived a good idea of man. From this good idea, got finally right, 'ideas' about man, his history, politics, science and technique, his world of time, space, language and art, his social, psychological and moral nature will flow in a cascade of understanding that is simple, accessible and nourishing to his soul. So, by all means, let's begin at the beginning.

1 - Significance - The Essence of Man

The evolutionary appearance of man in pre-history did not proceed as a simple and direct development from a single ape-like ancestor. Nor did his development occur in only one particularly hospitable place that could be recognized as his original 'cradle'. Rather, the record of early man shows a complex lineage that is diverse and diffuse in both time and space. And yet, from the pre-historical record we can be certain that man, as man, began to walk the earth approximately 3 million years ago across a vast territory of the present African, European and Asian continents.

"As man"... This redundant qualifier which we felt the need to add in the sentence above could better be phrased as a question. What is the essential quality that defines the presence of 'man' among his pre-hominid and hominid ancestors? By what measure of judgement do anthropologists in their search for first and original man decide that among the bones at one site of excavation there has been found evidence of man, while at another it can be concluded that man was not there? This question is critical. The answer to this question will frame the idea of man by recognizing that original and essential element without which and before which man could not be present.

In this most simple and objective and original sense, what constitutes the 'idea of man' is first and foremost his upright posture - 'uprightness'. The discovery of man's oldest presence on earth to date, 'Lucy', finds only bones that verify an upright posture. And so, with near awe and reverence, she is called 'man'. Archeological sites of a later date will find all sorts of recognizable and familiar traces that verify man's distinctive presence - tools, artifacts, burial sites, primitive structures and art. But these later refinements should not be confused with essence and the very first of man can be recognized 'as man' simply by the physical characteristic of holding himself upright. This uprightness, possessed as the distinguishing essence of the first man is nothing less than the essence and origin of man... that without which man 'as man' is impossible to conceive.

The significance of this cannot be overestimated. This quality of man is essential not only because it is possessed by the first man, but precisely because it is unalterable and inescapable to any conceivable man of any time or place. It has neither to do with what man does nor with anything that he

could possibly make, think, acquire or destroy. Rather, this quality is identical with man. It has only and everything to do with what man IS.

And yet, holding this idea of uprightness as essential, what can we make of the fact that man spends a third of his life in the horizontal oblivion of sleep and dreams, that at least another third or more might be spent in a sitting position, that sickness, injury or disability may 'lay him low' in a thousand different ways, that the expression of sexual love naturally avoids the vertical, that at his best, man is given to a host of dubious moral 'inclinations'? Isn't the life of man predominantly lived literally and figuratively outside the straight and narrow line of vertical rectitude? Isn't uprightness just one among many possibilities of posture that characterize being human? The answer lies plainly in the fact that, while there are an infinite number of postural modes and variations, there can be only one 'true' vertical and it is to that possibility, only One, that man is constantly and essentially, morally and physically attuned. This compelling, unique and singular attunement, even while sleeping, resting, loving, lying in sickness, drunkenness or debauchery, is the very essence and substance of being human.

'Begin at the beginning to reach the end. Begin in the middle and end in a muddle.' In the first and essential quality of 'uprightness' we have discovered the beginning of man, the source of the reason and logic of his being from which a good idea of man can possibly be conceived and further, from which true ideas about man can rightfully flow.

Essential ideas, ideas of 'being', are at once the poorest and richest of ideas. On the one hand, by logic and definition, they contain nothing but what is necessary and inherent to a thing, excluding the rich and confusing array of qualities and variations that find themselves in the world. To say in the present case that 'uprightness' is the essential quality of man is the poorest statement imaginable. The understandable reply is, 'So what'? Like people who live close to necessity, who are simple and poor by choice or circumstance, such ideas are easily overlooked and ignored, their value underestimated. And yet, ideas that contain undiluted essence, that are close to what is necessary and inherent for a thing to be, while poorest in their simple content, are indeed the richest of ideas in their significance, in terms of what they signify, what they 'point to'. To have an idea of a table for example that is essential, that contains only what is necessary to every table, is to have not only the opportunity of understanding what a table IS but

beyond that, the inherent significance of a table, what it 'means' or 'points to'. While the essence of a table might be described in a few simple words perhaps as a 'flat, raised surface', many volumes could be written and works of art performed about the 'meaning' that such an idea has for the world and life of man, for his eating, working, meeting, reading, writing and playing. The essence of a table points to man as he is in all these activities and thus the significance that flows from this essence is profound and extensive. If it is so with tables, mere things in the world that 'point to' man, how much greater a treasure of significance must inhere to the idea of 'uprightness' - the very essence of man himself. With uprightness we recognize man's essence. Now, from this we seek his significance. To what does man point?

Man's evolution toward upright posture draws him in a vertical direction that is unique in the animal kingdom. While vertical space, the heights of trees and the air above, is explored and mastered by a multitude of species, man is the only one for whom verticality itself is a necessity. Whatever evolutionary, bio-mechanical advantages were afforded man by standing erect, the effective freeing of the hands from locomotion for example, verticality soon came to determine man's development in a way that superceded the forces of evolution and biological determinism. Man, 'as man', the upright animal, whether by chance or by design is not important, broke free of the determinism of the natural world. Suddenly on the earth (if 3 million years can be sudden) there is an animal that, rather than adapting its biological self to its environment by a torturous process of generational selection, adapts the environment to its needs. Suddenly, there is a creature for whom the central determinant of evolutionary selection in animals, survival, is not the primary necessity. For this free creature, the primary necessity, first even before biological survival, is 'to stand'. Uprightness is the first and original 'value'. For man, to remain in orientation to the vertical is more necessary than to remain alive. Verticality, uprightness is his essence, his very being and to lose that orientation is to cease to exist 'as man'. This 'counter-evolutionary' logic is further proven by the fact that with time and history, countless men will kill, die and sacrifice their lives for the original value of uprightness and for the ideas that seem to sustain it.

Whatever the evolutionary path that brought man to assume uprightness, standing upright, man finds himself determined by a different logic than the biological one that bore him and 'raised' him. For man, biological necessity, while inescapable to sustain his life and remaining the first of 'urges', is

superceded by the need to BE. Biological determinism is transformed into ontological determination. Upright man is no longer a creature entirely determined by biological and environmental necessity. Man is indeed determined, but determined toward being. He is determined to be. For man, it is first necessary to BE according to the significance and value of his innate essence, uprightness, and only secondarily necessary to be alive. So closely and dearly did even the earliest of man hold the value of Being that he clearly believed that the being of himself and his fellow men and women did not end with biological life. The ritual burial sites that are found where early man is found bear heartrending and wonderful testimony to this belief. Thus man moved from evolution to history. Evolution does not apply to man.

Free from the strict determinism of biological and evolutionary logic, man is free for the logic of being. To understand this logic, we return to the question of the significance of uprightness for the being of man. What does uprightness signify? To what does man, necessarily, 'point'? For the answer, we need only to look at him. Man points 'up'. The essence of man is to be drawn vertically as a radiance from the center of the earth to... the realm of ideas... to Heaven. He is the being whose very being is physically constituted by pointing vertically, 'up'. Simply and solely by standing upright, his essence IS significance and what he signifies is 'on high'.

Before there were tools, before there was art or language, man's distinctive essence was cast in the vertical dimension as a pointing, a reference, a signifying, as an IDEA. Standing upright, man is identical with the primordial idea... the idea of the supreme, the highest, the ideal Being, the idea of Being itself. Simply put, man IS the idea of God. Man points to God. Or it could be written... Man is the idea of God. God points to man. Which is right? Who is 'prior', God or man? It doesn't matter. The question has no significance. Because in either case, there is a necessary and inherent relationship between the ideal Being and the mortal one. God needs man (to be) and man needs God (to be). The only thing of importance, and it is of ultimate importance, is that the alignment of man and God in the vertical dimension is necessary and is necessarily vertical, oriented by gravity from the depth to the height. This relationship in this specifically vertical direction is the condition for the possibility of Being itself, necessary for any thing to be, for the world itself to be. Michelangelo gave near perfect expression to this mutual pointing, but in which God indeed points with more force and purpose. God needs man more than man thinks he needs God. Correctly in

this depiction, man is shown as only 'half awake'. He points but only with half his heart and languid strength.

The idea of God is the first and essential idea of man. God is that ideal to which man, in his essence and in his being, from his first day on earth, simply as standing upright, points. As such, it is an idea that is so much a part of his core, his very being, his soul, that he cannot think it or speak it. He can only believe it. Man thinks the ideas of things that exist in his horizontal space. He is the author of those ideas. He calls them down and articulates them with ease. He names, makes, destroys and remakes tables, chairs, nations, hammers, houses, automobiles, codes of law and works of art. But thinking the idea of Being itself is nearly impossible for him since this idea is inseparable from man himself. Man IS this idea. Man's essence as standing upright IS this significance. And so, man lives his uprightness and his apprehension of the meaning and significance of the vertical dimension in the only way that he can... in the mode of belief... thanking, meditation, prayer, devotion, sacrifice. He lives it in the mute recognition of the value of uprightness that is contained in a moral creed, in a mantra of wisdom or in the life-history of a truly upright man and in the practice of that creed, the repetition of that mantra and the emulation of that man. The beliefs, values, practices and histories of what we call religion are inseparable from man, the sign of his being as the idea of God.

1a - The Priority of Essence to History

'The Essence of man is significance'. Far from being an abstract 'philosophical' formulation, this is the simplest and most concrete of ideas. Man embodies significance, man IS significance simply by drawing a line with his body from the center of the earth vertically... 'up'. In this way, by nature and by physical bearing, man signifies, 'points'. The first, original and fundamental pointing is the vertical one that man does naturally, without thinking, without speaking, without conscious awareness. Then, flowing from this primordial treasure of Being, the significance of every human act, every thought, idea, plan and project, is ultimately measured vertically, according to the purpose of signifying and touching and knowing more adequately that to which man, in his nature and his being, points. Pointing vertically, to the ideal, to the realm of ideas and ultimately to the idea of Being itself, is nothing less than the essential purpose and fundamental value of all human endeavor, thought and action.

But this characterization is the ideal of man. It speaks of the way man is 'meant' to be. This is the man of Eden who knows perfectly what his essence, his place and purpose, is. But man is not ideal and Eden is 'no longer' his home. He is mortal, fallen. He is vulnerable. He is weak of body and weak of will and it takes time - hours, months, centuries, millenia, for him to accomplish things of value. He is distracted and confused. He stumbles and fails and is prone to all sorts of illness of body and mind. He dies. But in no way do man's repeated, lasting and constant failures devalue his essence or disqualify the meaning of his being. Just as constant as his failure is the abiding possibility of his being as he is truly 'meant' to be. 'Meant to be' by the God to whom he points, that points to him. The essence and purpose of man, to point on high, 'to God', is *prior* to his failure. It is temporally prior as possessed of the first man and it is logically prior as the most original and essential quality possessed of any conceivable man.

The biblical authors ingeniously expressed this priority by depicting man's beginning as originally and perfectly in alignment with divine Being. From this original, 'right' relationship with Being, they understood that the being of things would flow naturally to make a world of goodness and plenty, a garden. Understanding his essence and true purpose, man would not be

confused and muddled and the world would be set easily and comfortably in order according to his good will and the clear strength of his mind. Depicting this relationship and this world as original but 'lost' is a way of expressing both the priority of that relationship as it was 'in the beginning' and at the same time its abiding priority as a possibility that is present but 'lost' at each moment and that projects itself with hope toward a heavenly future. The mythical account, with ingenious sensitivity and insight, carefully and truly conceives man's original, evolutionary situation in its essence, when man, as man, standing and pointing 'up', first appeared on the earth.

So, 'Eden' is nowhere to be found in the archeological record. It was not a place on earth but rather it was and IS a possibility for being. It is necessarily *prior* to history because even the first page of the history of failure cannot be written without the possibility of success. Man's living according to his nature, in truth and uprightness, in harmony with Being, with himself, others and the world, is a possibility that is not to be found at any time or place in history. Rather, the presence of this possibility and its constant 'loss' precisely IS history.

We have identified man's 'origin' with the physio-ontological 'pointing' that is constituted by upright posture. Now we seek the significance of this uprightness as it shows itself in history, in the record, laid down in stone, paint, ink, thread, song, wood, silicon and a thousand other means, of his being on earth.

2 - The Significance of 'Pointing'

The first page of that record tells a truly amazing story, the story of the first 'thing' and certainly one of the first 'ideas'... the 'hand-axe'. This simplest of tools, a crudely sharpened triangular-shaped rock, was ubiquitous among widely disparate populations of early man. Like a pre-historic version of the modern 'hand-held device', it seems to have been something that every early man, 'just had to have'. But the really amazing thing about this object was the duration of its 'popularity'. For more than seven hundred thousand years in the Nile Valley for example, the hand-axe was the only object that seems to have been fashioned by man. What a momentous span of time for a single, unaltered idea! Surely there must be more significance to this idea than meets the eye in the form of a crudely shaped rock.

The psychologist is well acquainted with the fact that all things fashioned by man are, on some level and in some way, a 'self-portrait'. Man himself is 'reflected' in all things of significance and especially in those things that he actively and purposefully 'makes'. This is simply to say that all things that man points to, insofar as they have significance, also point to him. How in this crude, flaked and pointed triangle of rock can we find a portrait of its maker? With this question, the methodology that we confess to have followed only 'intuitively' up to now, becomes clear. Our question to this first of human ideas and implements must be the same as the question that we just asked about man himself... What is its essence? (its being) And proceeding from that essence... What is its significance? (what does it signify? To what, to whom does it 'point'?)

As is the case with man himself, whose essence, uprightness, is so simple and obvious that its significance has been largely overlooked in nearly three thousand years of systematic thought, so it is also with the simplicity of man's first tool. Beyond the basics of how the tool was made and used, what can be said of any significance about an implement as simple and crude as this? And so, as with man himself, we quickly pass over the essence that is so apparent (that is to say, 'hidden') there and move on to the more advanced works of early man - tools, art and artifacts that seem more worthy of attention. And even regarding these, our 'scientific' interest is largely occupied with the details of 'how' - how they were made and how they were used. Study in this

vein will normally conclude with only a few speculative, i.e. seemingly 'unverifiable', comments about the far more significant and fascinating question of 'why'. This as if there were not 'verity' to be found in the essence of a thing.

In its essence, the hand-axe is a rock that has been shaped by 'flaking' equal amounts on either of two opposite sides to make a 'point', a sharpened 'edge' at the bottom. The fact that it needs to be held in the hand requires that it be made in a more or less triangular shape with most of its mass at a flattened or rounded top. At first it might have been used as a more efficient striking tool for crushing bones for example to gain access to the nutritious marrow. Later, with the discovery of techniques to achieve a finer, sharper edge, it was no doubt used for its more subtle cutting power, for such jobs as separating the flesh from animal skins and shaping wood.

Far beyond these practical, everyday uses, the hand-axe came to hold a significance for early man that proceeded from its essence, its *idea*, as a massive 'point', as a massive 'edge'. In each of these essential respects, as a 'point' and as an 'edge', we will find profound and extensive significance for the life of early man as well as for historical and modern man. In this significance we will discover the sense in which this simple, original tool is indeed a 'self-portrait' of it's maker. We will consider each of these essential aspects in turn.

The triangular design of the hand-axe, with its greater mass at the top and pointed bottom, naturally imparted a certain 'direction' to its use. As it seems to have been made to fit in the full center of the human hand, it's hard to imagine that it could be used effectively in any but a vertical, downward motion. Grasping it, the hand became empowered with a 'point' that could be directed with force against objects, transforming their hard, resistant surfaces according to man's will - breaking bones for precious marrow, cracking nuts for tender meats, shaping wood, not to mention the 'flaking' of stones to make more hand-axes. Probably very little game would have succumbed to such a clumsy hunting tool, though no doubt on occasion its power was used to kill other men, beginning the human practice of using deliberately pointed objects for this purpose.

We're used to reckoning the pace of the development of ideas in terms of decades and centuries. The modern world is 100 years old. Systematic thought began in Greece less than 3000 years ago. 5000 years is the span of written history. And the entire record of civilized human life is easily

contained in a period of 20,000 years or less. So for us it's even hard to conceive of the length of time that it took man to move from the utilitarian 'thing' to the 'idea' of the hand-axe. Man used only this one pointed tool for HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of years with neither alteration nor innovation before he began to grasp with his mind the essence, the *idea* of the massive 'point' that he grasped with his hand.

After hundreds of millenia of 'practice' with this pointed rock, man suddenly awoke to the idea of what had occupied him for so many ages. Transcending the utilitarian, he suddenly 'knew what he was doing' in fashioning and using the hand-axe. Simply, at this critical moment in human development, man realized the power and the possibilities of 'pointing'. Awakening to the essence of the tool as a 'point', man quickly discovered that pointing in and of itself was powerful. While he pointed vertically downward with the hand-axe for 700 millenia, he now began to find new direction and purpose for his pointing. He fashioned hafts for his age-old tool that gave him the possibility of leverage and of directing its point more effectively and forcefully in a horizontal plane rather than a vertical one. Soon, the horizontal direction of the point predominated first in the form of the spear and then in the arrow. With these developments man became a matchless hunter and warrior. And indeed the perfection of directing pointed objects, lately made of metal, toward horizontal targets continues to modern times.

But this is only to speak of points in stone, wood and metal and the tools and weapons that they made possible. And yet man's apprehension of the idea of 'pointing' was far more profound and extensive than this. Man's awakening to this idea was an awakening to his very essence as 'one who points', as 'one who signifies'. The hand-axe is a self-portrait of man, the being whose essence is pointing, whose essence is significance. In the point of the hand-axe, man could see himself reflected and begin to understand the power that he held not only in his hand but in his very nature and being - the power to point.

It was indeed a long time in coming, but with this first and essential idea held in a nascent 'mind', pointing became for man as natural as breathing and man was set on a course to become the rational animal and lord of the earth. Just as his own body, standing upright, forged a primordial relationship with Being in the vertical dimension, so too did man have to look no further than his own body for the ultimate and perfect 'tool' with which to point horizontally to things in the world - his arm, hand and index-finger. By

pointing with his finger, man forged a relationship of being with 'things' that took on being and derived their significance by virtue of this pointing. The act of pointing is nothing less than the pre-lingual dawn of consciousness, the incipience of the world itself.

We speak here of pointing as forging the being of things. But what, in the mere act of pointing to a thing, is 'forged'? Certainly the material constitution of a thing is not changed merely by man's cognizance of it. The stone or tree that man points to remain materially as they were. The mere act of pointing might seem to be of no consequence whatsoever. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. What is forged by the act of pointing is the IDEA of the thing - a link, a connection, a reference to its essence, its being. In that sense, man imparts being to things by pointing to them in two dimensions... horizontally with his finger (later with his voice and other means) that points to the particular thing before him and vertically to the IDEA that constitutes the essence of the thing - its being. The vertical dimension of pointing is implicit in all horizontal pointing because it is by virtue of the original alignment of man with Being, constituted by his upright posture, that he is able to 'channel' being to things. He does this by thinking their *idea*, by 'understanding'. Standing upright, man understands (stands under) ideas of being. Only in this two dimensional pointing do stones become stones and trees become trees. While the tree must have seen the light of many days to have grown tall and strong as it appears before man, it's not until man points to it, understands (stands under) the *idea* of it, that it sees the light of Being. The question of whether 'things exist' prior to man has no significance. The only thing of importance is that there is a necessary relationship between man and things and that this relationship-of-being is constituted by a two dimensional pointing, the horizontal explicitly and the vertical implicitly. There is no significance that is not derived from pointing. Pointing indeed 'matters' to things, to all things. It forges the very essence of things by 'standing under' their ideas. The relationship-of-being that is forged by the simple act of pointing is a necessary and essential relationship. Things need man as man needs God, to be. And man needs things as God needs man, to be. It's the essence of man, standing upright, to point vertically in reverence to Being. In that sense, upright posture is the original and abiding attitude of prayer. In pointing horizontally, with reference and understanding, this prayer is answered in the form of a world that is rich in things and good ideas.

3 - The Significance of the 'Edge'

Essential to the hand-axe are its 'point' and its 'edge'. In both respects, we expect to find a reflection, a portrait of man. So far, we have shown that as a 'point', it enabled the human hand to strike with concentrated, directed physical force against objects (and with later refinements against animals and men), subduing them. More importantly, the power of its point suggested and initiated the ontological power of pointing with the index finger that imparts being to things by at once drawing reference to them in the horizontal plane and understanding their ideas in the vertical one. Now it remains to lay out the sense in which the hand-axe as an 'edge' portrays man, its maker.

Upright posture quite literally set man apart. Taking his view now 'from above' yet with his feet planted firmly on the ground, he gained a great advantage over his fellow creatures... prey, predators and adversaries. From this higher vantage point, coupled with bi-polar vision and free, dextrous hands, man found himself at a distance not only from the ground on which he stood but from danger and the immediacy of physical need. This biological development was unique and remarkable in itself and yet, far beyond and above this, the meaning of man's biological 'advantage' was extended and amplified by its ontological significance.

Gaining height, man began to view what had been an 'immediate' environment at a distance, from above. In this dis-stance, the world of things was destined to be created, named and put in order. Ontologically, things obtain the space that is needed for their being precisely in the distance that is created by man's standing apart from them. What we call 'space' is the 'medium' that is created when upright man finds himself apart from things, which take their place in this distance. Standing upright, man is anxiously surrounded by a field of nothingness in which things are. Things are imparted their 'status' of being when and only when man stands up, apart from them, yet vertically under their ideas. Lost from the immediacy of the pre-world, upright man re-unites with things at a distance by understanding their ideas and longing for their Being. Outside of this field of nothingness and the verticality of under-standing there can be neither things nor any possible being nor any possible world. Upright posture and the emptiness that it

creates is necessary for Being. Man, no thing, standing anxiously and precariously apart from and above things, is necessary for Being.

This separation of man from the immediacy of the pre-world and his regaining contact with 'things' in a world of his understanding was a development that occurred over an immense span of time. The first moments of history that interest us here took hundreds of millenia and countless generations to occur. Throughout this unimaginable length of time, the hand-axe was present to man as perhaps the only thing that he purposefully made, kept and used. At least it's all that remains to us. Nevertheless, from its ubiquitous and persistent presence in the archeological record, it's certain that the hand-axe accompanied man at every step of his journey into being. Without doubt, this one tool was intentionally in the hand of man at the dawn of consciousness. So, we take it as the key to understanding the events of this dawn and from this, the essence and significance of the creature to whom this dawning broke.

It's only speculation of course, but it seems reasonable to assume that the hand-axe as a 'pointed' tool was more easily achieved from crude working than the hand-axe which held an 'edge'. Of course the points of hand-axes could be of greater or lesser quality as well, but to achieve an edge to the axe required a qualitative refinement of the point, regardless of how fine or crude it was. Essentially, to create an 'edge' requires that a point be extended in a line. And as with points, edges may be either crude and dull or fine and sharp. But in any case, flaking the rock to a fine edge would extend its capabilities many times beyond what could be accomplished with a simply pointed tip. Our own everyday familiarity with knives and other edged tools makes this easy to understand. Instead of simply breaking hard material, the edge could shave and shape softer materials like flesh, vegetable matter, wood and softer stone to yield a wide range of desirable physical results. And yet, far beyond these, the unintended (i.e. ontological) result of its use over hundreds of millenia was that it shaped it's user and maker into a creature who was able to divide, articulate and order things to make a world.

To understand the further significance of the hand-axe for man's ontological awakening we need to look more closely (literally, as with a magnifying glass) at what first seems to us obvious, familiar and well-understood, i.e., the physical structure of its edge. In essence, the edge of the hand-axe, like that of the machete, kitchen knife or battle sword, is a line in space where 'something' and 'nothing' coincide. This can most easily be

understood by anyone who has labored over an edge in steel to bring it to its finest and sharpest state. The entire process is one of bringing the strong, hard substance systematically 'down to nothing'. At this point (along this line) an edge is formed where matter is as near to nothing as a thing in the perceptible world can be. The exquisite line of matter that constitutes the edge is precise to the extent of its non-existence. The closer the substantial steel has come to not being at that line, the finer and more effective is its edge. It's no accident that the finest edge can be brought to the hardest material - where the contrast is greatest between the obdurate being of the substance and the non-existence that it meets at its edge. For early man, this meant a careful choice of stone for working to find a type that would not only obtain such an edge, but hold it for as long as possible through the work that was being done. Flint-stone was the easiest to work, while the later discovery of obsidian could hold a surgically fine edge for a long period of time. For man throughout the ages to our modern time, the choices of material became progressively wider and more refined to include metals of various types, from copper to bronze, steel and carbide as well as the ultimate 'rock' that is the final choice of the edge-maker, the diamond. And yet all such choices and modes of working the material toward it's edge are made and done under the same principle - to make the thing like man himself, a place where nothing and something coincide. And in exactly this way, as a solid nothingness, does the edge of the hand-axe portray the creature, man, that made, held and used it in the Nile Valley for 700,000 pre-historical years.

This physical, artificial meeting of being and nothingness at the edge of his tool, put a nearly magical thing in the hand of man - a thing the power of which was at once physical and metaphysical, that is to say, distinctly human. To understand this magic, we return again to the commonplace example of the edge being worked in modern steel. Few adults have never sharpened a knife, axe or chisel. Using whatever means, grindstone, hone or rosin-strap, to remove material to the point of 'nothingness', the edge-maker will eventually reach the moment when he is ready to test the work and discover the state of the edge at hand. This is normally done by feel with the thumb stroked gently across (never along) the line of material that forms the edge. A prickly sensation means that he is at least getting there. A smooth and non-threatening feel means there is still much work to be done - the tool is not yet dangerous. Danger is a given that dwells alongside any power. In this case, the essential power of the edge... to cut, to divide, to bring the presence of

nothing to things, is inherently dangerous. The person making and using the edge maintains a constant and vigilant awareness of its power and hence its danger. Simply changing the direction of the stroke of his thumb, *along* the edge rather than *across* it, will instantly bring a cry of pain and the unwelcome sight of blood. His thumb, which had been whole, is now divided. The edge is no 'normal' thing. Sharp tools are never given to children or to those who lack the judgement to use them wisely. The edge, where something and nothing meet, is a dangerous place, as man, whom it reflects, is a dangerous creature. With little more than the power of the edge, and its terror, the Mongol Hordes of Genghis Khan were able to acquire and hold a vast empire for many decades. The stroke of the blade along my finger divides it where it should not be divided. The stroke of a battle-sword divides a man from his limbs or his life. And yet, if this edge were a scalpel, it may also divide a cancer from the body of a man and thus keep him whole.

Its uses in history are utterly innumerable, but essentially, the power of the edge is the power to cut and divide. The physical power that early man found in his hand when he held the hand-axe was the power to divide flesh from skin for clothing or shelter, to divide stalks of grain from their roots in the ground, to divide the branches from a straight shaft of wood or the useful bark from a tree. In these and countless other ways, man used the edge of the hand-axe and its derivatives to shape a world of things that was constituted by the dividing, articulating presence of nothing to mute, seamless immediacy. Originally and essentially set apart from this immediacy by standing upright, surrounded, sometimes anxiously, by the field of nothingness that assumed its place in this dis-stance, man in turn set things in the world apart from each other in an orderly way by dividing, understanding and naming them. Man is less anxious when the world of things becomes his home and dominion. And indeed, with this ontological power 'at his hand' both literally and figuratively, the world became man's domain and all things became subject to his order. The willful, physical routines described above that distinguished man's unique genius among his fellow creatures were constantly in step with the far greater metaphysical power that was bestowed on him by his essence, uprightness, to designate, name and order the world of things - to assign to things their being. It is exactly man's presence in the world as a dangerous 'edge', a creature constantly and anxiously poised 'at the point of nothingness', that brings the possibility of being to things along with

the possibility for this same distant, dangerous, anxious man to take his place and make a home among them.

As a 'point' and as an 'edge', the hand-axe portrays man. Considering this crude triangle of rock in its essence and significance has given us a good start toward understanding the idea of man. But our interest here is not really with hand-axes. We are interested in man. So what interests us now is the fact that man himself, at the point in time of about 40,000 years B.C., finally, finally lost interest in the hand-axe. This tells us what we already know - that it's the nature of man to progress and surpass. In the Nile Valley, hand-axes needed to be left behind for a new world of tools, materials and ideas to develop. And yet, the dual essence of the first tool that we have laid out is not and will never be surpassed. The significance of the tool, of its point and its edge, remains throughout history and will remain through any conceivable future, precisely because it is essential, that is, it points to man and, by way of man, to Being. Essence, Being is prior to history and is not subject to it. And in the same way, knowledge that derives from an understanding of essence obtains the priority that is reserved for it by its relationship, via upright, understanding man, to Being. Methodologically, there is indeed verity to be found in the essence of a thing, primarily and especially, as we have seen, in the essence of man himself. The path that this method marks out is promising and we can be confident that, if we follow it patiently and faithfully, it will lead us to a good idea of man.

We can demonstrate the continuance in history of the essential significance of the hand-axe by considering one historical development that occurred many tens of thousands of years after the little, triangular, stone tool had been left behind, discarded and forgotten. 'Discarded and forgotten' in fact, but not in essence. The new development that will take place will be a likeness of man's first tool (as the tool was a likeness of man), also in stone, but this time pointing, as man does, 'up'.

In the tens of millenia preceeding 3000 BC, man populated the uniquely hospitable and fertile valley of the Nile copiously, mastering agrarian techniques and developing a stable and well-ordered society unique in history even to the present day. The Egypt of the Old Kingdom pharoahs was absolutely exceptional for the prosperity, stability and good social order that it maintained over many centuries. In the context of this remarkable early society, the essence of man, to stand and signify heaven, and the dual essence of man's first tool, to 'point' and to bring nothingness to things at its edge,

found supreme expression in what could be described as history's most monumental and wondrous human achievement, the building of the pyramids at Giza. In the pyramids, the hand-axe in its ontological essence was sanctified.

Construction in stone was a new and exciting way of building for the Egyptians. Indeed, the pharaoh Zoser's 'step' pyramid at Saqqara, built only some years before those at Giza, was the first stone structure in the world. Clearly, this breakthrough of building technique was partly related to advances in making edged tools with sufficient strength and hardness that allowed stone to be divided and formed into manageable blocks. The pointed and edged tools and weapons of this time and place were made not in stone but in copper and the copper tool that most resembled its 'discarded and forgotten' stone predecessor was the hand-held chisel, hammered with a sledge made of wood or stone. It was with thousands upon thousands of these chisels that solid rock was precisely divided and shaped into the millions of ponderous, rectangular blocks that were used to build the pyramids. The edges of these new metal chisels injected the solid bedrock of the Giza plateau with the distinctively human-intentional presence of 'nothing' at the point of their edge - dividing it into countless, precise sections that were methodically ordered and set in place according to the plan of the mammoth structure. The copper edges dulled quickly against the rock and there was an entire army of men responsible for heating, repointing, tempering and honing the tools before they were returned to the quarrymen for another round of relentless pounding. The work was dangerous and exhausting but it was not done by slaves. It was performed by free men with a common idea and purpose.

The pyramids were the product of a collective longing for Being that reached near obsessive proportions. The builders were clearly driven by the belief that their pyramid, if done properly and well, if gotten 'right', would offer a chance for man, in the person of the pharaoh but including all his faithful subjects, to unite with Being and that this uniting would initiate a genuine transformation of the earthly world. The process of construction was driven at every step by the profound belief that the world of man and things cannot be the same once a man has truly and perfectly been welcomed to the world of ideas. The pharaoh, already uniquely aligned with the vertical dimension as 'ruler' in a political sense and already a God on earth in a religious one, was simply understood to offer the best chance for success in

this other-worldly, worldly endeavor.... the most likely offering to be welcomed and accepted 'on high'. So the pyramids were not built as 'one man's tomb'. Rather, they were understood as the CHANCE of an entire civilization to achieve world-transforming presence to the divine, in short, to reach heaven.

There is perhaps nothing in history that could match the dynamic grandeur of these gold-tipped monoliths when seen by contemporaries. At the building-site of the pyramids, the Egyptians dared to imagine and project the real possibility that the essential human longing for Being might finally be fulfilled. With this religious idea, the Christian sacrifice was presaged more than two millenia before Christ walked the earth. The effort to construct a building that could ensure the safe delivery of the God-man pharoah vertically to the realm of ideas was an effort to reach the heaven of Being (and thus to transform the world) by sheer leverage, brute force and massive determination. Only in the perspective of the 4500 years of history since then can we see and say that the offering of living flesh and word that constituted Christ's life was more perfect and the results to the world more promising than the stone monument, however magnificent, and the corpse of the pharoah, however well preserved and richly appointed. Only in this sense and from this retrospective view, can we say that the pyramids were a failure in what they clearly attempted to do. Indeed, compared to the Christian tradition, they have no successors. And yet, what a magnificent and awe-inspiring failure they were!

4 - The Significance of Language

The hand-axe and the index-finger are structurally inherent to the milleniae-long, prelingual awakening of man to his essence as a signifier. The limitations of each are obvious. But in no way should these limitations, long surpassed, allow us to underestimate the wealth of significance that inheres to these primitive, original structures. Rather, it's precisely in the quiet simplicity of their profound limitations that they become 'perfect examples' from which equally profound significance can be brought forth.

Unlike the hand-axe in stone that has left a time-line of its appearance, its period of use, and disappearance, there is no way for us to know at what point on this line or in what context or circumstances man began the act of prelingual pointing, that is to say, the point at which the world of things began. But we can 'assume' and we are aided in our assumptions by the fact that the very structure that we seek, along with its function, remains intact. The essential significance of the prelingual pointing with the index-finger that initiated the world is easily accessible because it remains a part of us, a part of the daily experience of nearly every living person. The laboratory for the methodical inquiry into matters of essence is large indeed. The object of study in this case is as close as the hand that writes these words, as near as the memory of pointing today when I was asked for directions on the street or later, in which cupboard I had put the wine. Only, by discipline, we must not allow the sophistication of our thought to overwhelm the simplicity of the subject. Thinking more of its bright self than of its humble object, thought naturally flees from essence. So, at the risk of seeming simple-minded, we briefly though necessarily must take a step back from long-acquired lingual intelligence and imagine the very first, inarticulate efforts at establishing the being of things by pointing to them. This step backwards, though necessary and essential, will be brief. What interests us here is the lingual phenomenon itself and we will refer to its precursor only to provide a background against which the strange genius of human language can stand in contrast.

Pointing with the index finger is the first moment of the world... a world necessarily shared with others for the benefit of whom the thing or the way is pointed out. There is no possibility of a solipsistic world since pointing is essentially an intersubjective act. As the first moment of 'presence' of man to

the world and others, pointing with the finger is the first moment of time. The fact that this first 'moment' had a torturous and halting span of 3 million years, that its details and circumstances will forever be vague to us, should not prejudice us against the possibility of achieving concise and certain knowledge about the beginning and thus the essence of the world in which we currently live. It is, after all, not another world that began at that original moment but this very same one and with the same essential structure. In its essence, the World, like Being itself, MUST be only one. Though we can imagine and construct a world 'before' the present world was initiated or imagine 'another world' of intelligent life on a distant planet, these constructions, however rich and scientifically well-ordered, will mislead us if they forget their own world-constructing essence as a pointing to things 'before' or fantastically 'distant'. There can be neither 'before' nor 'beyond' the acts of pre-lingual and lingual pointing that initiated the world. There can be only one World, initiated by pointing, and this assertion will hold true in its essence even if we learn someday that this one, 'our' world indeed began in another context, on another planet, initiated by different means than a finger and a word. The details are not important. Important is the essence and structural significance of the World that is born in the act of pre-lingual pointing.

By this elemental act, the world of objects was initiated when man, drawn anxiously and precariously upright, found himself at a distance from things with which he had been hitherto in a simple and seamless contiguity. This immediacy and continuity of life we can assume to be the worldless 'experience' of the sentient animal. The animal is simply identical with its environment, both internal and external, because it is completely at home there and has no need to be otherwise. The mouse 'exists' for the cat and vice versa not as a 'thing' in its 'world' but seamlessly, as part of itself. That is to say, it does not exist at all. Bestial consciousness is 100% 'narcissistic', i.e., unable to remove its SELF from the flow of its genetic and sentient predispositions. Because of our close kinship and affection for animals, we easily succumb to the use of the language of Being with respect to animal behavior, as if the two-eyed, walking, grasping, scratching, sniffing, suffering, chewing creature possessed some interiority like our own. But no, this is our compassion. The animal has no need nor any wish to stand apart from things and live in a world of objects and others. It is entirely and naturally content in its wonderful sentient self. The anxious, unnatural

situation in which man stands upright, above and apart from things, in need of a world in which to live, is completely alien and unnecessary to the self-enclosed, self-contented animal.

Mute pointing divides a 'thing' from the pervasive field of sentient experience by drawing a horizontal line precisely between my body and the thing. Pointing is a cutting, dividing. The precise line is like a knife's edge that injects nothing into the field of experience so that the thing is 'carved out' from it. The line of pointing mutely says... "**Not** there and **not** there, but precisely **this, there!**" The thing pointed to, **this** thing, like all things then and now, and like man himself, obtains its being as 'a place where something and nothing meet'. This thing, like all things, derives its being from human being. The power of pointing to make a world of things is the ontological transposition of the power that man discovered in the use of his first tool - the power of nothing that exists at the edge (and in the line) to carve (delineate) things from sentient ubiquity. The precise line of pointing, like the edge of the hand-axe, surrounds the thing with nothing, allowing it to be. By pointing, upright man acts in the horizontal dimension as he exists in the vertical one, as a reference to Being.

Just as the use of the hand-axe is a crude and primitive beginning to the history of man as a tool-maker, so is pre-lingual pointing a poor and primitive mode of signifying. And yet only in such simple beginnings can the eventual genius of man as consummate builder and poet be truly and essentially ascertained. While pointing already requires the distance from immediate experience that sets upright man apart from his animal kin, nevertheless it remains bound by the presence of its object before it. It requires that the object be within sight. The advent of language, the first spoken word, occurs when the object that had been present is lost, is not there, not in sight. In its absence, pointing breaks down and from this disarray, the object is called - called back into being. In this calling, the lost thing receives its name and its being as an 'idea'. Thus, on loss, absence and a more or less desperate calling, is the world of human language strangely founded.

The world-creating sound of this call - language - is the sound of Being. And man, thus calling, becomes a 'per-sonus', a 'sounding through' of Being in the world. The game that is spotted in the bush or on the plain can be adequately referred to by pointing. And if the hunters are skillful and quick, their pointing will turn lethal and everyone will eat. But when the game escapes or cannot be found at all it needs a name to call it. At that moment of

calling, the lost thing is replaced with an idea and the particular specimen that had been present in sight is understood in its 'ideal' essence. Well, while you can't eat ideas, they nevertheless may be sustaining to the animal who lives by the logic of Being - perhaps even more so than a certain successful kill. By calling the elusive animal, naming it, drawing an artistic likeness of it on the wall of a cave, holding it in his mind and thinking its thought, man becomes the master of it in its essence and it becomes an immutable part of the world. In this calling, naming, drawing, understanding, thinking, the thing obtains its being - its unique place in the world and its unique connection, through upright man, to Being itself 'on high'. Upright man's unique, essential and original sense of Being, his physical, postural essence as Being-signified, his profound and constant longing for Being, gives him the power to bestow being on things by naming them and lays the foundation for his decisive mastery of the world.

According to the dynamic of world-creating language, the lost thing, being called, derives its being not from the mute frame of nothing that carves it out from the field of proximate experience, as by pointing, but rather, from not being there at all. The force of its being-held-in-mind as an idea is equivalent to the force and extent of its absence. The urge and the power to utter its name or render it artistically is drawn from the clearing of it, the painful absence of it, the empty space where it once was. The name called fills this emptiness with the worldly presence of the thing now as a potential, a possibility for being which transcends the obdurate or capricious nature of the thing in sentient experience. 'Holding things in mind' by naming them, man was able to create a world that was truly his - a world in which things took on an immutable stability along with indefinite potential and possibility. The world of ideas, of language, art and culture, born of the violent and painful force of non-being, transcendent, frees itself from the limitations of sentient experience for the infinite possibilities of Being. The world of language and ideas, man's world, is a world of possibilities in which things are not simply there, but alive with Being. The world is alive with Being.

Of course, it wasn't long before not only those things lost, but all things were named, held in mind, understood in their ideas and thus made simultaneously both 'virtual' and 'real' as possessing the potentiality of worldly being. Rather strangely, even perversely, the being of a thing in the human world required that it be regarded precisely **as** absent, as dwelling first **above**, in the realm of ideas, and only then, by virtue of understanding, **there**,

here as a thing in the world. Further, as the names of things proliferated, language was required to comprehend the nuances, actions and interactions of things as well as their relatively static, nominal 'being'. Thus developed the need for verbs, adjectival and adverbial expressions and well as nominal ones. With the transcendent genius of language at work to make a human world, more and more things with their events, patterns and structures... ideas, were 'held in mind' by man and so his brain naturally grew to outsize proportions. At the same time, the power of mute pointing receded and, like the hand-axe, it is present to us today as a mere vestige, useful in only the most trivial circumstances of signifying... to point out directions or the location of something close at hand. Although today we live in a world that is thoroughly human, a world of culture, language, science and art that is everywhere alive with being, yet these vestiges remind us of its simple origin and essence.

Inherent to the structure of the simple act of pointing and the world of language that proceeded from it are the most essential elements of the world of human experience that are familiar to us. The advent of language initiates time and the dynamic of subjectivity and objectivity that becomes the world of knowledge and action. It creates the possibility of interiority that forms the mind and eventual psyche of man. And it requires intersubjectivity, the presence of others, male and female. Chronos, Episteme, Psyche and Eros are born at once in this primordial, world-creating act. Little wonder that it took 3 million years to accomplish it.

The world begins with the calling, naming of things which imparts to them their being, their place and purpose. The purpose of a thing is to represent an idea which it signifies, glorifies, longs to be but cannot be, except in an imperfect, temporary, small and worldly way. And yet there is a calling and a naming that precedes this world-creating one... the calling and naming of others. It's even easy to imagine the first occasion when a name was bestowed upon a person, not solemnly at birth as soon became the custom that holds today, but in desperation, when a member of the group had gone missing. Just as objects are called from their absence, the one missing needed a name, unique to him or her, with which to be called back into the safety and well-being of the fold. In such original situations, and out of such need, humans were first called by name and given names. The world began in a social context and the distinct calling of others was the first rite of social inclusion.

Paradoxically, calling the other by name imparts identity and uniqueness to the person, precisely sets him or her apart from the group, while purposefully and dearly including them. Likewise, it allowed for the horrible, punishing possibilities of exclusion. The identifying character of this distinct naming is akin to that which imparts being to a thing by pointing or linguistic naming and yet it is entirely different as its 'object', no thing, is different. Other human beings are not things, not objects at all and are named out of respect, care, admiration and love. Unlike the naming of things, to name another implies and imparts no mastery over him or her. Like me, like us, others hold the world-creating power of pointing, naming, calling things into being and the power to name and call, include or disclude me, us. Others, like me, like us, also upright and thus signifying Being, are the very presence of Being in the world. To stand in the presence of others is to understand Being, or at least to have this possibility. Thus this presence is sacred and rightfully deserves to be held in unfailing respect. And yet we are all familiar with and sometimes guilty of the vindictive and disrespectful perversion of the power of language when it takes the form of 'name-calling' and 'pointing the finger' at others to define them as mere things. Man is fundamentally a moral creature who creates the world in a social context and such perversion of the purpose and significance of language is a shame upon his essence and anathema to Being.

5 - The Birth of the Person

The fact that the biblical authors conceived of man as having been fashioned from earth bears testimony first of all to the fact that these authors were, by gender, men. Loathe they are, the proud male of the species, to admit that they have been born into the world from female patience, care and suffering, from the warm fluid of the mother's body. The process of evolution itself is a long, moist and infinitely patient one that more closely adheres to the female principle than the male one. If indeed it's true to say that man was fashioned from earth, it must be with Mother Earth that God the Father made him. To leave 'her' out of the story in her original maternal role while including her as an afterthought, taken, with no sense of irony, from man's body and assigned the subservient role of companion and helper, betrays a prejudice toward the clear linearity of the male and a certain discomfort with the circumspective, nuanced curvilinearity of the female. Of course, this prejudice is well corrected in the New Testament story of Christ's conception and birth and in the honor of supreme sainthood that's paid to Mary, His mother, in the Christian tradition. Nevertheless, the discomfort of the authors of Genesis with the originating, creative power of the feminine echoes through history and exerts a distorting and problematic force, not only in the Christian tradition, but in nearly every human culture.

Constrained by language, we have used the inadequate, singular, gender-specific term 'Man' to refer to the human species as we thusfar have followed the logic of its transition from evolution to history. The inadequacy of the term is obvious in that it would seem to exclude or at best include only by implication, the female half of the human race. Apart from this glaring lack, by what virtue does this simple, 3-letter word apply to its object in a way that the more gentle, complex and inclusive formulations, like the species-specific 'humankind', the abstract 'humanity' or the plural 'men and women', would not? Accepting and even apologizing for its evident lacks, the clear, resonant virtue of this term is its simple singularity, its name-like quality. 'Man' in his essence, like the world which he calls into being, like Being itself, is One and should best be called by one, singular, resonant, concrete name. And so 'Man' is not said here as an abstract, descriptive term, but as the name by which the human, the complex plurality of womankind and mankind, can be addressed.

What we seek in saying it is not conceptual, terminological specificity as much as the sound, the name by which human being is called.

Imperfect though our language is, what's essential to understand is that man is born and raised into a world of others - a family, clan, tribe, nation - that is comprised more or less equally of male and female members. The human world is essentially both sexual and sexually-charged as males and females respond to the compelling, procreative need to find one another, unite and make a home and family for the continuance of the species.

Men and women of humankind, fathered by men and born of woman, obtain their identities as unique individuals, their names, in the social context of parents, family, friends and community. Each man and each woman, since the first, ancestral calling of the world into being, begins life with a distinctive name by which he or she can be called. A nameless human being is inconceivable. If one is found, a feral child for example, a name will be decided, bestowed and certified with all due haste so that that person, with the rest of us, can be called. Beginning with the hallowed rite of naming, the human person is born and at the same time called into the world. This first, distinctive and yet inclusive calling is essential to the person, the first, greatest and simplest gift that a parent, in the context of the greater community, will bestow. And of course, this gift of naming is not complete with the issuance of a birth-certificate or whatever record or recognition of the name is culturally accepted. Answering the call of one's given name is life-long. The young child will feel cherished and respected as it gradually learns to recognize and respond to the unique sound of this call. The teenager will tremble and flush at the sound of his name when it's read from a list of those who were caught cheating. The young adult ardently strives to make a respected name for himself in his chosen field of work. And the older person grows acutely aware of the sum of his life's account as if it were written in the most precise yet merciful terms somewhere next to his name in a heavenly ledger.

The paradoxically inclusive yet exclusive parental-societal act of naming lays the foundation for the person by conferring upon him or her the inviolable, inalienable **right** of personhood. Upon this foundation, he or she will claim and take a place in the world that is theirs alone, upon which a unique identity can be built. The name grants the person the right to their own domain, an 'inner world' of mind and psyche over which he or she must be the sole and absolute ruler. Naming grants a right like a deed to a piece of

ontological real estate that will be the unique 'standpoint' of the person throughout life. However successful or unsuccessful they may prove themselves to be by horizontal, worldly measures, whatever their relative ability to command others, to trade, work, own, love and prosper in the world, yet the original and essential value of this rightful bequest can only be measured vertically, that is to say, not measured in worldly terms at all. First and finally, in the vertical dimension, it is understood that the right granted by naming to the unborn peasant and the unborn Czar are the same. Their names are their sacred claim to human being, to the power of speech, to the power of under-standing Being that is the right and wealth of each man.

The all important word 'right', which in its most fundamental sense refers simply to 'true vertical', nonetheless contains a dual meaning from which we can elucidate the physio-ontological circumstances of the person who finds himself born and living in a world of both vertical and horizontal dimensions. This word is incomparably rich in meaning because it pertains exactly to the very essence of man, uprightness, while also, in its secondary, derivative meanings, referring to much of what comes to form the 'inner world' and psyche, the personality of the person in the horizontal, historical world. Let's begin with the vertical since that is the dimension that man 'as man', the signifier of Being, primarily and essentially inhabits.

What is 'right' points, like man himself, to Being, to ideas of being, rightly under-stood. What is right is correct, just, well-balanced, like man himself, neither biased one way nor the other, but just right. Rightness comes as naturally to man as breathing. Man constantly seeks the 'right' in all things. To get a graphic feel for the original, compelling sense of the term, simply stand up. Naturally, you know what is right. It's not easy to do it, but try to incline yourself just a few degrees in any direction and immediately you know that something is wrong and you naturally return to the exact and precise verticality of uprightness. If you stray too far from the true vertical, you will need to take a step to catch yourself or else you will fall. Only right is comfortable for man, physically as ontologically. It's an amazing, implausible physical power that we possess, to stand as we humans do. It almost seems as if we float, defying the forces of gravity. It seems that there must be some vertical force as well holding this 180 lbs. of matter in alignment, drawn out as it is over nearly 2 meters, precariously poised on just a few square centimeters of skin and bone at the sole of the foot; moving

even... fluidly, rapidly, walking, running, dancing, but never losing its innate discernment of right.

Then, from this intrinsic and singular, vertical sense of Right, derive the many meanings of the term as they are applied to human affairs in history, in the horizontal, worldly dimension. In the worldly way, the 'rights' of the peasant and the Czar will indeed be vastly different. The deed in my hand gives me the right to my land and house, the duly-signed title, the right to my car. I have a right to my possessions unless I am a slave or serf in which case someone else can claim to hold the right to me. The ever-changing legal codes of every community, state and nation meticulously define and parse the rights of their citizens. The registrars, bureaucracies and courts of the world are filled with papers that seek to declare, ascertain and sort the rights of human beings. And so also each person has the right to privacy and to their personal time and space. Unless they are a prisoner who has been forced to give up most rights and always within the limits of necessary work and duty, a person can decide how and with whom and in what places and circumstances to spend their time.

The rights of the person to privacy, possessions, personal time and space are 'inherent' to him since, as the word suggests, they pertain to uprightness, his very essence. That is to say, they comprise those things in the vast world that are not only close at hand but that 'inhere' to his very being. And it's the sum of these simple, everyday things that constitute in large part what we call the 'inner world' of the person. 'Inner' because they inhere... not because they exist spatially 'inside' him somehow, but because they belong to him **by right**. The 'inner world' of the person is indeed a part of the One world, shared by all. It is simply that part which is inherently, by right, his own.

How easy it is amidst the clamor of dispute and the imponderable weight of law to forget the simple essence and origin of human rights. But simply, ontologically, this vast array of 'rights' of the person, whether legally defined or simply understood in the common sense, are predicated upon his being originally and essentially **Right** as a named human being, as an upright signifier of Being. The act of naming identifies the person not nominatively as a thing in the world, but verbally as alive with Being - signifying, saying, sounding, singing Being. The power and presence of Being will be heard in the ringing coherence of his speech and recognized in the distant penetration of his gaze. The presence of man to Being and of Being to the world through man forms the very core of the person and so also the core of 'personality',

the inner world or psyche. This original and essential presence, this 'sounding through' of Being in the world occurs by virtue and in terms of physio-ontological Rightness. Rightness is the call of Being that each person hears in the sound of his name, a call that is uniquely answered in true words and just deeds as well as in dissolution, confusion and failure. Rightness is the very essence of the person, the condition for the possibility of speech and action, that to which every word ultimately refers and every deed aspires. Rightness is the hallowed center of personal life, the soul. As thus central and essential, Rightness with Being inheres so forcefully to the person that his closely guarded personal possessions and 'rights' seem extraneous and unnecessary in comparison. While rights and possessions will be acquired and lost in the play of life, the named person's Rightness with Being is originally, essentially, constantly and only his own.

While Rightness is the most inherent possibility to the person and therefore forms the living core of his unique self, his soul, we have also identified those things that inhere to him 'by right' as constituting in large part the everyday human experience of self - self-consciousness. To understand things in the world as 'mine' is a strong pillar of the strength of 'mind'. My things, my rights, declared and undeclared, my people, family and friends, inhere to me uniquely and thus contribute to the formation of my inner sense of self, my psyche or personality. A person feels 'most himself' at home, surrounded by those things and others that inhere most closely to him. In familiar surroundings a person can rest, free of the challenges and claims that natural forces and other people inevitably make upon his time, space and possessions. Although there are innumerable variations on the theme, from grand estates to desert yurts, from high-rise flats to caves to cardboard boxes, and including even the possibility of life 'on the road' living on the good graces of strangers-come-friends, a person needs a sense, at least a short list, of 'mine'.

Inherent also to the person is that which inheres by virtue of **identification**. What we speak of as 'personal identity' is constituted by the array of worldly things, qualities and states of being that the person accepts, whether by choice, assignment or force of nature, as his **own**. This field of inferences is made up of those assertive, objective terms which, in everyday speech, follow the subjectival phrase, "I am...". In this way, my identity is constituted by the 'things' that I am... 'a carpenter', 'a Catholic', 'a homeowner', 'a teacher', 'a criminal', 'a philanthropist', 'an amateur

photographer', 'a boy scout', 'a hockey fan', 'a doctor', 'a bum'. Although such modes and expressions of self-understanding and understanding others are ubiquitous in everyday thought and speech, we'll try to show at the conclusion of this section that there could indeed be no poorer use of the verb 'to be' than this way of asserting the being of the person as a thing.

The psyche or 'inner world' of the person is made of all that which inheres to the core of his being, his Rightness with Being. Beginning with his name, this includes those things that inhere by right of birth or by right acquired as well as by the status that is afforded through identification. But not only 'by right' and in terms of 'identity' is the inner world of the person constituted. Inhering also to the person are his or her own body with its sensate conditions of pleasure, pain, fear and hunger, its sexual, genetic and instinctual determinations. As well must be included the conscious and subconscious memories of emotive experiences that have not been fully forgotten, the patterns of behavior that result from those forces of sensation, instinct, memory and emotion and the body of knowledge and patterns of thought that have been acquired by the person's education and experience in life. With this brief inventory of human experience we've nearly spanned the subject matter of the science of psychology which understands itself as the science of the person, of those developmental forces, cognitive capacities, emotional states and behavioral patterns that form the personalities of men and women. Fear, pain, hunger, sexual desire, joy, guilt, anxiety, despair, conscious cognition and the subconscious awareness of dreams... all these states and qualities of experience inhere strongly to the embodied human being and thus inescapably inhering, come to form a large measure of what we refer to as the person's 'mind'. In this case, 'mine' not by right or status but because, being this named person and no other, I have no choice. With these states of mind and body I am largely 'stuck' and so strongly that they not only ad-here but 'in-here' to me and so come to form my self-awareness as precisely **here**, as an 'interiority' that is separate from the world 'outside' the boundaries of me. But in its essence, the perceived interiority of the person does not make as much a spatial designation as an ontological one. And this pure, ontological self-certainty with which Descartes famously awoke, the unqualified, subjective, 'I am!', depends not only on the cognitive self-awareness that he prized, 'I think...', but on all the senses of the body. Ontological awareness is available equally to all persons, not just those particularly thoughtful ones.

We learn in school that the human, like all land-dwelling mammals, possesses the 5 senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell that carry information about the world around, including internal bodily states, to the brain for processing. From this information, the creature is able to react or respond to its environment in an adaptive and beneficial way. While humans, with their outsized cerebrums, may have become a bit abstracted and distracted from these elemental processes, 'lost in thought' so to speak, other members of the animal kingdom remain absolute geniuses when it comes to interpreting the cues and clues of temperature, light, sound, taste and scent for the purpose of keeping themselves alive or just making themselves comfortable. And yet there is one physical sense, not even normally included on the list, to which the human species has evolved to become utterly sensitive and in response to which he is the outright master - the sense of balance.

With only two relatively small 'soles' in contact with the ground, the human physique would be absurdly top-heavy were it not by virtue of the sense of balance with its ability to maintain the full, straight length of the body within a few degrees of perfect vertical. As well the human body retains a precise sense of the vertical even as it assumes a sitting, reclining or somersaulting spatial posture. Balance delivers verticality, defines the center of the body and thus becomes the 'rule' by which all physical movements derive their spatial, gravitational orientation. By virtue of the sense of balance, the vertical is kept constantly and firmly in mind and in this way, though it is vital in some form to all members of the animal kingdom, it is the essentially and perfectly human sense.

The sense of balance, the essentially human sense of Right, is the condition for the possibility of uprightness, the essence of man, and hence is the key that can unlock a good understanding of the person and the idea of man. The sense of balance is the physiological basis of the human sense of Being from which naturally flows the world of the person... the world of language and the world of things. All things, all that is in the world and all that is human, derive their sense, their meaning and purpose in terms of balance. Balance, in its most accessible, simple, common sense, is the single, exquisite term in which the logical undertakings of physiology, jurisprudence, psychology and ontology are indistinguishable. All questions regarding man must root themselves first and finally in terms of balance, the sense of Right. In fact, all logic, regardless of its object, requires and aspires

to this essential, primordial term. Since its one and only purpose is Being, it must be the one, primary, logical term of any inquiry or proposition. What conceivable logic does not aspire to Rightness. The physical sense of balance is the soul of the person and the sense of the world.

In this section, we have described the formation of the person beginning with the rite of naming which establishes him or her in soulful Rightness with Being. By his or her name the person is called into being, initiated and welcomed into the world of language, others, things and ideas. Then, from this primary and ownmost position, from this original Rightness, from this soulful core, the person develops a worldly 'mind' which is constituted by all that which, in its worldly account, 'inheres' to the soul, whether by legal or other right, by identification or simply in terms of the givens of destiny, the inescapabilities of body, mood, instinct, experience, memory and character. From these inherences by **right**, **identification** and **destiny** the everyday human experience of ego, the mind of the person, is formed.

Not surprisingly, given the fact that thought generally flees from essence, our prevailing 'scientific' ideas of the person are tenuously founded on variations in the vast field of extraneous inherences that constitute the 'mind' rather than on the soulful Rightness with Being, the power of speech, that lies at the core of being human. In this mode of inquiry, what is Right with the person is considered simply to be 'allright' and, thus taken for granted, does not attract particular scientific interest, concern or study. These ideas, conceived in flight from their object, generally become so voluminous and convoluted that the phenomenon of the person tends to be caste in a shade of complex, unknowable, 'psychological' obscurity that is far removed from anything essential. In the same way that western medical science is more comfortable describing the infinite complexities of disease than the simple wholeness of health, the sciences of man, eschewing essence, proceed on the premise that the person is solely constituted by the sum of those forces that inhere to him and bear on him. Thus, the human sciences have developed a vast catalogue of ideas of personal illness which, while oblivious to the essence of man, nevertheless provide necessary and useful guideposts on the path of healing when things 'go seriously wrong' with the person. In fact, these complex renderings of human personality may indeed faithfully reflect the normal, worldly condition of man as he lives for the most part in what we are calling the horizontal, worldly dimension. In this dimension, the paths of life can indeed become easily twisted upon themselves in vicious circles such

that the person becomes lost to himself and in conflict with others. In this condition of loss and strife, the everyday, ontological sense of balance, 'allrightness', drifts away and the person finds himself in confusion as to Rightness, lost on twisted, conflicting, worldly paths, perhaps overladen with rights and possessions that he must hold and defend, obsessively pursuing a career as a banner of identity or troubled with inferences of mind - desires, fears, memories - that cannot be reconciled or forgotten. In this wrongful condition, the person needs help to restore the vertical sense of balance that imparts the ordinary possibility of Rightness with Being - allrightness. While it's to the legal profession that we turn for help in sorting the inherent rights of a person, to find agreement, reduce conflict and restore rightness to a given situation, the psychologist is there to help us identify, understand and manage these even more closely inherent and troublesome complexities and imbalances of personality that arise from constitutional deficiencies, traumatic experiences, developmental crises, difficult relationships, addiction and a host of other causes and influences.

Adopting as it does the logic of natural science, the science of psychology tends to reckon both the problems and the cures of the person in terms of things and the forces that move them in patterns of action and reaction. Surely, this kind of logic, when carefully conceived and skillfully applied, may be useful in unravelling the tangle of worldly inferences that can confuse, afflict and burden a person. And yet, to the extent that there can be a cure of personal illness in the context of the therapeutic application of this psycho-logic, this cure is constituted precisely by an abandonment and divestiture of these very 'things' that inhere with such tenacity and seeming importance to the soul. In the healthful context of psychotherapy, memories are forgotten, obsessions are abandoned, guilt is dissolved, compulsions are given up, addictions are broken, crimes are forgiven, status is devalued and the assertion of rights is relaxed. The process of therapeutic cure is a 'mystery' to scientific psychology, meaning simply, in scientific terms, that it is a phenomenon requiring more study, compiling of evidence and refinement of theory. And yet, these very terms are hopelessly misapplied to the 'object', no object at all, that they would seek to comprehend, the human person. Insofar as the work of therapy is conceived in these terms, the advance of the distressed person, with the help of the therapist, to healthful 'allrightness' may be accomplished more 'in spite' of the therapist's core scientific ideas than because of them. Hence the 'mystery', at least to the scientific mind, of the

cure. In a new state of health, the person will declare, "How could these things, these wrong ideas, have held me so tightly in their grip? How could I have believed them? They may be mine, but I am none of them." And we would ask here, how can a logic that recognizes only the push and pull of things in the world and insists on mere evidence as a basis for its ideas possibly understand the person, precisely No-thing, standing as he does in Rightness with Being... as the edge, the action and the sound of Being in the world, the condition for the possibility of there being things in the world at all? Such logic, that would pertain itself only to the thing-like inferences of personality while ignoring the essence, the core of Rightness to which these 'things' and 'states' and 'rights' inhere, however well-intended and marginally effective in its therapeutic application, is doomed to muddled inadequacy.

6 - The Possibility of Knowing

Asserting that the person can neither be adequately understood nor therapeutically healed strictly in terms of psycho-logics that follow the 'objective' methods of the natural sciences challenges us to layout more clearly the alternative. If not by the scientific method, what sort of logic is it that is required to gain a good understanding of the human person and that has some hope of imparting in a therapeutic setting, the healing balm of self-understanding to the troubled, confused and overladen person? To pose this question in a broader, epistemological context - What kind of reliable certainty can be ascribed to any proposition that cannot be objectively verified through rigorous, controlled methods of testing? Among the various hypotheses that might be proposed to account for a given phenomenon, isn't it always necessary to compile and compare evidential data to determine which is the 'right' one? And isn't the mathematics that underpins all of these conceptual operations, laying out the relationships that determine the essential structure of things, from simple carpentry to the proverbial rocket science - isn't that mathematics, as the guarantor of such rightness, the true and purest language of logic? To the extent that anything in the world remains in question, outside of such knowledge, isn't that only because it is waiting its turn to be added to the ever-expanding compendium?

All these 'leading questions' can be resolved into one that is so often put in a contest of thought between 'science' and 'religion' that it has come to sound trite. But it's that contest that is trite, not the question itself. We ask it here toward a profound understanding of the method and the logic that we employ in this work which seeks a good and hence a true and certain idea of man that is far from the certainty of mathematics. The question is this - Is there anything in the world of things that science cannot comprehend - that is unknowable not due to the insurmountable difficulties that supremely complex systems might present, but inherently and essentially impenetrable to any conceivable mathematical analysis? We'll have our answer by looking at the logic of mathematics itself.

The genius of mathematics is its power to clearly and precisely set forth the relations of things in time and space - the angles and forces that unite and order separate things. And the inherent limit of this logic is its need for

multiplicity to apply itself. There can be no mathematical understanding of a singularity. ONE is anathema to quantitative logic and this logic must fall speechless in the face of it. Mathematics points to the structure, action and interaction of things, but never to the things themselves, that is to say, as they are named, in the singularity of their being. Mathematical logic, the logic of science and engineering, as powerful, useful and effective a tool of thought as it is, nevertheless flees from the things themselves because it cannot reckon with the identity, simplicity and individuality of ONE. Thus it is a relational logic rather than an essential one and thus as well, it yields a relational understanding of things while it cannot, by definition, formulate an essential one.

Mathematics needs at least two to get started. In the face of one, it has not the slightest idea. Let's take an example to show the difference between the certainty of the relational knowledge that is afforded by natural science and the certainty of knowledge that characterizes the understanding of the human person and the essence of things in the world.

The key-wound clock that ticks the time on the wall above my head is a complex array of gears, springs, 'escapes', spindles, hammers and chimes arranged in a marvelous, mathematical precision so that the hands on its face will accurately tell the time of a 24-hour day in two 12-hour cycles. Each of the dozens of gears that it takes to accomplish the precise rate of turning of the two hands must be cut to the exact diameter and with the correct number of teeth to turn at its prescribed rate in relation to its mating gears of different sizes. The minute motive force required to set the gears turning is provided by my hand via the spring-winding and regulated by the pendulum connected to the delicate 'escape' mechanism. All the ratios of the gears and the means of delivery of force that are necessary to produce the desired result of 'time-telling' must be mathematically formulated before the clock can come into existence, that is, before it can be called a clock. A similar, failed effort by the clock-maker who has not applied his mathematics correctly will be called a piece of junk. So there certainly is a sense in which the mathematics of a thing, the orderly relations of its parts, is essential to it, necessary for its being called, that is, for its being. It's the genius of science and its mathematical logic to clearly set forth the static and dynamic relationships by which 'parts' form and create 'wholes' that are imbued with the dignity of 'things', that is, that are worthy to be called - 'clocks', 'automobiles', 'diamonds', 'street-lights', 'protons', 'cabinets', 'solar-flares', 'spleens', 'shoes',

'zinc', 'Jupiter', 'birch-trees', ... 'junk'. All the material things in the wide world, including the organs and systems of the human body, can be understood in terms of this most useful and effective paradigm of thought as it proceeds either constructively or destructively toward its understanding of things. Constructively, it determines what is required to bring a certain idea, design or effect into being as in the above example of the clock. On the other hand, its approach to given, naturally occurring things, for example, birch-trees, Jupiter or the human body, is in the manner of an intelligent and careful *destruction* of the thing into its component parts and systems.

Strictly according to this paradigm, the clock in the example above exists not as one thing but many, even an infinite number of things, if the metal of the gears were to be assayed to its metallurgical elements with certain molecular properties, atomic and sub-atomic structures. In this paradigm, nothing in the world escapes this division and reduction. Nor can it escape the multiplication that regards any thing as one to be compared among the many as in a statistical analysis, for example. Strictly according to this paradigm, nothing in the world is granted a right to exist as its one, whole and unique self, the ideational identity that naming originally conferred upon it... 'clock', since all things, according to this logic, **MUST** be divided and multiplied. Things, so conceived, tend to be deprived of peace and place and the dignity of being themselves. Is it any wonder that the world which progresses under the predominance of this way of thinking becomes progressively a world of junk... a whirl of parts seeking and finding a brief moment of useful cohesion on their way to the landfill.

As a critique of the methods of knowing things that natural science offers us, we simply want to show the inherent limits of this method and the knowledge that it affords us. Crossing a shuddering suspension bridge on a very windy day, of course we want to believe that the designing engineers spent more time working out the mathematics of the stresses that wind might place upon the span than reflecting on the idea of a 'bridge' as it might occur to intelligent, social, far-seeing, land-dwelling mammals living on opposite sides of a waterway. For the bridge to be worthy of the name, it needs to have been properly, mathematically conceived, but for it to exist at all, it needs to have derived its being from a naming, an idea that is substantially prior to any effort of design or construction. In that one, substantive, certain idea, is the significance and the being of any possible bridge and the one key to a good understanding of what a 'bridge', essentially, is.

Bridges, clocks and birch-trees will be known in their essence not by taking them apart but by understanding their significance, that is, by looking to that to which they point, the idea that confers upon them the dignity of being. It's not by the scientific method that such knowledge is possible since the idea of a clock, that which gives sense and meaning to any possible clock, its being, tends toward identity and singularity and the impenetrability of absence. Absence? As we recall, ideas, the calling and naming of things, are born in the absence of things. Thus born, ideas are absent from things, 'on high', and therefore confoundingly inaccessible to science and its demand for evidence of the sort that it can put its hands or eyes on.

And it's not only the scientific mind that is confounded by the absence of ideas to things. Generally and constantly does the idea of a thing, its being, hold itself away and out of reach of knowledge. Occasionally, the rare genius of the artist or poet will evoke the idea of a thing with an adequate though relatively opaque understanding of its being, its true and original essence. But for the most part, things are poorly and vaguely understood - either taken for granted in their obvious utility or multiplied and divided in the comparative and analytic terms of science.

7 - *Thinking and Knowing*

By what method, then, is there the hope of achieving true and certain understanding of the essence of a thing, true knowledge of its singular idea, the reason of its being? The method can best be called thinking. 'Thinking'. Is this the same 'thinking' that we've said naturally flees from essence, having neither time nor interest in the simple singularity of things, ever busy, ever ready to multiply and divide things, ever in search of new things and new ideas to think? Certainly, for the most part, thinking, even the serious thinking of the academic disciplines, is indeed conducted in a more or less busy, 'unthinking' way. Even though the activity of thinking defines man as *Homo sapiens*, the method of thinking is rarely followed. A good understanding of the idea of man, *Homo sapiens*, requires a good understanding of thinking. In this unique case, the method and the object of knowledge are one and the same. So, with the dual purpose of laying out the method of thinking, our method, and discovering its essence, let's take the path of thinking to find out what thinking is.

The path of knowing called thinking leads first of all *back* to the origin of the thing, the phenomenon of interest, at the first moment of its appearance, when it first came into being. So, with the goal in mind of understanding the essence of thinking, we need to find thinking at its original moment, that is, we need to re-call the original instance of thinking. So, already - What is thinking? Thinking is first of all a re-calling, a re-spectful, re-flective return to the idea of the thing as it was originally called into being. Where language and art are a calling of the absent thing into being as an idea, thinking *re-calls* the idea of the thing for the purpose of understanding and articulating the rightful reason of its being. The essence of thinking is to understand the essence of things as they are originally called and conceived into being - their idea. In short, thinking thinks profoundly, to their origin and essence, the ideas that we call 'things'.

Due to this initial 'backward' motion that characterizes the direction of thinking, the activity of thinking is generally associated with solitary, sedentary idleness, an activity hardly worthy of the name compared to the progress of knowledge that is possible when thought proceeds in a relatively 'unthinking' scientific, progressive and productive way. Why waste time with

thinking when there are so many pressing matters and questions that, in the same time, could be conclusively resolved? As opposed to thinking, it is generally understood that progress is only to be achieved in terms of the relational logics that are employed in the natural sciences, in engineering, in the political and legal parsing of human rights and territories, in the constructions of predictive economic and historical models, in the conduct of biological and psychological research. All such efforts of thought together constitute the engine of human order, of human progress, the extension and consolidation by the use of reason of man's dominance over all parts and aspects of the world. Progressively in terms of this order, progressively thinking in this unthinking way, modern man, the man of science, makes himself at home as master of the world. Thoughtlessly taking for granted the unique origin and purpose, the *idea* that language solemnly confers upon things in naming them, this distorted view forces all things to yield the singularity, integrity and dignity of their Being, their essence, to the logic of numbers. To the blind eyes of science it is not the destiny of a thing **to be-** to aspire to the idea, the name and the reason by which it is called into being, but 'to be' comparatively more or less, 'to be' disassembled, reduced and analyzed, 'to be' ordered, counted, mastered and controlled. Toward an understanding of what thinking is, it helps to understand that the logic of science, for all its undisputed power and efficacy, is NOT thinking.

Thinking returns to the origin of the thing the way a man seeking to live in a dry land follows a trace of moisture to the head of a tiny spring in the hope that removing some difficult, obstructing rock or clay might open the source and yield a copious, life-giving, life-changing, fertilizing, town-building flow. Progress indeed - the very pre-condition of it. Thinking seeks the Being that things, albeit in trace amounts, reveal. Simply, thinking longs to understand *Being*, that ONE thing which must be inherent to ALL things, the heart and soul of things. How even simple-minded it sounds to say that all things must possess Being, that a thing without the 'given' of its being is impossible to conceive. Where in the world can be found that thing which has no being, which does not exist? Thinking simply wants to do what comes as naturally to upright man as breathing comes to any animal, to understand Being by under-standing, calling and re-calling, the ideas that reflect and reveal Being as ONE, ever- and omni-present in the being of things.

Precisely by virtue of the *oneness* that it imparts to things, Being, the very essence of things, is off-limits to scientific thinking, even as it must be the

central property of any possible object of scientific investigation. *One* is an impossible number for science and at core, this is the limit of the functional reasoning that science brings to the world of things, the inherent limit of its mastery and dominance. The 'objective' logic of science has proven itself to be a marvelously useful and productive tool of thinking. But, contrary to common belief, because of its unique and obstinate blindness to Being, the future does not belong to science. What is only a tool of thinking, however useful, must be superceded by thinking itself. For all its bright efficacy and power, for all the strength of its unquestionable proofs, for all its impressive mastery of the world, or more likely precisely *because* of these positive qualities, the obdurate, proud logic of science progressively accretes like rock and clay at the springhead of Being, closing off the flow of meaning and reason that the rational animal needs to thrive.

The mute simplicity of Being, the 'given' of things, is simply 'taken for granted' by science as it is in the predominant, objective modes of thought that characterize the busy, everyday life of Homo sapiens. And especially modern man, believing as he does unequivocally in the good of science, has no time for thinking the idea of Being. Even the universities that once fostered the value of reflective thought are progressively giving over their facilities and curricula to science, quietly acceding to the popular idea that a degree in philosophy for example is a fast-track to a career in retail or bartending. Better to be prudent and devote one's life-energy to areas of endeavor where greater 'contributions' (as well as to future alumni campaigns) can be made. No, thinking the logic of Being is not today, nor has it ever been, 'where the money is'. Thinking reckons value differently. Taking Being, so generously and bountifully 'given' in things, truly as a gift, thinking, grateful, thanking, has no compelling need to 'own' things and is gladly destined to live and be clothed in ostensible poverty and simplicity.

Just as the world can only be One, united as it is by the calling-to-Being that originates and substantiates all possible things, so also there can be only one Logic or means of re-calling the Being that lives in things, one Reason. We've spoken here of the 'logic of science' as if it were a different beast, a completely different path of knowledge than the path that thinking, *as* thinking, takes. But no, there can be only one path to knowledge of things, one logic of their reckoning and this path and this logic is thinking, the thing that human beings do, the thing that even scientists, in the end, must do. What causes us to initially consider the methods of scientific thought as if

they were somehow separate from thinking itself is the fact that they have asserted themselves so forcefully and successfully upon the world of things and in the minds of people. "Sure," it might be said, "thinking is what all human beings do, but science does thinking better. If you don't believe it, go ahead and disconnect your electrical service, throw away your car keys and cell phone and see how long it takes for you to be convinced." Precisely by virtue of its phenomenal success as it has been applied in the modern world, the method of science, with its countless life-enhancing consequences and guarantees of evidential proof and mathematical certainty, progressively takes upon itself a cloak of dogma, opposing its disciplined regime of thinking to the specious, 'speculative' ideas that may result when thinking does not tie its questions and conclusions to the thing as measured, counted, compared, controlled, multiplied and divided. According to science, any idea worthy of the name needs to be, at least to the greatest possible extent, mathematically proven 'right'. Otherwise, the achievement of knowledge is vulnerable to the deceits of sloppy or wishful thinking, fancy, imagination, mere conjecture and stubborn conviction.

Now, to critique this assumption, following the path of thinking toward a true understanding of what thinking is, and in light of our knowledge of thinking so far achieved, we can in fact easily show, and even in its own mathematical terms, that the scientific method of thinking is especially vulnerable itself to these very deceits. How sloppy and wishful it is for science to imagine itself capable of achieving true and comprehensive knowledge of a thing when it methodically disregards, even disrespects the dignity and necessity of its Being - its idea, its essence, the name by which it is called, the indissoluble, indivisible, ontological real estate that it rightfully occupies in the world. The Being that is conferred upon a thing at its naming, the absent idea that thinking respectfully and imploringly re-calls, is One and cannot be adequately understood by subjecting one or many 'instances' of the thing to dissection, division and analysis. The short story of the limitation of scientific thinking goes like this: Being must be One because a thing without Being cannot be conceived. All things must be and so all things must possess this individuality, this Oneness simply in their Being, as called-into-being. In its necessary Oneness, Being confounds the mathematical comprehension that science requires for its method to proceed at all. In terms of any possible logic, Being, as the One that is present to All, cannot be measured, cannot be divided, cannot be compared, cannot be counted. Thus, it's a pure fantasy to

imagine that the scientific method can comprehend things in their essence, that it can penetrate or dissolve the individual dignity and identity, the oneness of meaning and reason that things are *granted* by Being. And this is to speak only of the knowledge of things. How much sloppier and more fanciful is this strict but thoughtless method of thinking bound to be when the 'object' of its investigation is the human being, the sound of being, the very agent and presence of Being and Reason in the world. To repeat the thought with which we began this section, such logic, such thinking, such reasoning, when applied as adequate unto itself, and especially when applied to Man, is 'doomed to muddled inadequacy'.

The scientific method is drawn tight as a drum and exactly in the rigidity of its terms, in the hardness of its logic, is its unique usefulness and power to ascertain, solve and build. The intention here is not to detract from the usefulness of science as a tool of thought, but only to put it in perspective against the pervasive and destructive delusion that this tool can be equated with thinking itself. Only thinking in its fullest sense could possibly hold a hope of understanding the thinker. Our object is thinking. Science is a marvelously effective means of thinking, but once again, it is NOT thinking.

Thinking has one object and that object is Being. It finds Being everywhere in the being of things. And yet, the work of thinking is the most difficult because, as we have said, the being of a thing is the idea that is conceived to replace it in its absence and that, thus absent from the thing as we commonly find it, must be called and re-called to be understood. So the paradox of Being is that, while it is everywhere, it is not easily found or revealed. The work of thinking thinks to discover the Being in things, to recall, make present, understand, clarify and articulate the absent idea of the thing as a way to know and show it truly, what it really *is* in its essence and its being.

How does thinking go about this work? First, it must put itself in an attitude toward things that is very different from the thoughtless regard that characterizes everyday life and scientific investigation, where the being of things is largely 'taken for granted'. The word 'thoughtless' is not meant here in a perjorative way. It only means to describe the everyday mode of regarding things as 'given'. Just as, thank God, we don't need to think about breathing, neither do things, for the most part, require our attention to their being in order for us to encounter them, see their outline, call them by name and make use of them. Indeed they are 'given', given to us and in that

givenness they are ours and that's all we need to know. Normally in everyday life and certainly in science, our interest in the thing begins only after and beyond encountering it in its givenness, after noting the simple fact that it is 'What it is'. The incipience of the thing, its being-called 'What it is', is what is taken for granted. Then, in thoughtless thinking, the thinking of science and everyday life, interest in a thing begins and ends, if it begins at all, with the question, 'How it is'. But thinking thinks differently. Leaving the question, 'How it is' up to science since there is hardly a shortage of interest there, thinking takes the less trodden path to the origin of the thing to discover the Being that it possesses as its 'given', that without which it would not be. And from its original 'given', that it is 'What it is', thinking believes that in the same act of thinking might possibly be revealed its 'giving', its purpose, meaning and reason... 'Why it is'. 'What', 'How' and 'Why' a thing is, are the three ontological dimensions of thinking about things, one of which is interesting to science.

The basis on which thinking is able to proceed toward a good understanding of a thing in all three dimensions of its being is its attitude of kinship with things. Thinking first of all understands that it shares with the thing that which is most essential and necessary - Being, the very possibility of identity, the common thread of significance, the ontological property that unites and includes all things in their infinite diversity. This inherent familiarity with a thing is a good start toward a good idea of what it is, how it is and even, possibly, why it is - a good idea of the thing itself.

Making itself first of all at home in the world of things as a being among beings, thinking does its best to remove the rigid distinction of 'subject' and 'object' which forms the theoretical basis upon which the pursuit of scientific knowledge generally proceeds. In order for a thing to be known 'objectively' in the view of science, it must be strictly set apart from the 'subjective' realm which is understood to be the exclusive domain of the knower. After all, if a thing is not a mere object, but rather possesses the right of its own idea, its own essence, its being what it is, then it could possibly deceive or withhold itself from the knowing subject, from being subjected to the mastery of objective knowledge. So in theory, no sense of 'subjectivity', of identity, of being, can be allowed to the object of scientific study. Or wait, maybe it's the other way around... In setting up the strict dichotomy of subject and object, the scientist, master of objective certainty, also casts himself in the role of a fool. According to the theory of its method, the subjectivity also of the

scientist must be carefully excluded from the object of study, so as not to taint the objectivity of the knowledge obtained about it with any possible 'bias'. In this way of thinking, the object must be strenuously protected in its objectivity from the masterful subject whose own preconceptions, deceits and fancies, without careful control, might contaminate the pure certainty of the resulting scientific idea. The stern emphasis on objectivity that characterizes the scientific method would all but eliminate the existence of the subject entirely from its formula. With its focus bent and biased entirely to the question of *How* the thing is, neither the knower nor the known is allowed subjectivity - the right to be *What* it is for its own *Reasons*.

Thinking thinks differently. Thinking begins where man himself begins - with understanding - *standing*, literally, physiologically, posturally *under* the idea of Being, within the awe and fear and mor(t)al consequence that this idea inspires. Thinking thinks to understand and restore the forgotten dimension of Being that is necessary to things, that bestows upon them their right to be, the rightful 'subjectivity' (to Being) that puts them wondrously, dangerously out of human control. The forgotten dimension of Being, like the dimension of thinking, like the dimension of man himself, is primarily and principally, physically and physiologically, the *vertical* dimension, the dimension of *Rightness*. Resolutely, fervently and constantly insisting the right understanding of ideas, man subjects himself to the idea of Being by thinking, discovering and rightly reasoning the Being of things. Even the thoughtless and busy thinking of science and everyday life, forgetful as it is of Being and of the reason of its reasoning, is constantly striving to 'get things right' and 'make things right'. Rightness is simply the defining, intentional core of all human thought, action and endeavor (including that which is 'wrong') since the reasoning, thinking creature, man, is that one whose 'given', whose essence, *is* up-Rightness. Once again it becomes apparent that the essence of thinking man, of human being, of Homo sapiens, reveals itself in an idea that is so simple as to be the most difficult to conceive, so familiar, obvious and ubiquitous as to be the most confoundingly obscure. Standing upright, requiring balance in all things to remain so, thinking and speaking rightly, is not what man does. It is what man IS.

End of Sample at page 50
Further chapters to page 123 are these...

[7a - Thinking - 'What' Things Are](#)

[7b - Thinking - 'How' Things Are](#)

[7c - Thinking - 'Why' Things Are](#)

[8 - Thinking and the World of Things](#)

[8a - The Possibility of Understanding](#)

[8b - Time and the Stillness of Things](#)

[8b\(1\) - Time and the Passing of Things](#)

[8b\(2\) - The Ontological Basis of Time](#)

[8b\(3\) - Time, Eternity and the Significance of](#)

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