

On Being Oneself.

1. Subject is subject of...; a relative term; meaning varies with correlative

Grammatical: function in sentence

Logical: function in proposition

Metaphysical: recipient: matter, form; potency, act; etc.

Psychological: subject of stream of consciousness

2. Consciousness streams in many patterns: dream, biological, aesthetic, intellectual, dramatic, practical, mystical.

Contrast: subject of stream as orientated on knowing, and subject of stream as orientated on choosing.

Of old: speculative and practical reason; now, concrete flow orientated on knowing and orientated on choosing

3. Intellectual pattern is intellectual by its detachment, by non-intervention of alien concerns, by concentration of attention, effort, on observing, understanding, judging

Subject is involved, but as involved he is subordinated to dictates of method, to immanent ~~maxims~~ concretion within himself of principles of logic, of scientific aspiration, of absolute criteria; ~~commitment is to submission to norms~~

Subject is headed towards object, universe; he himself enters into picture only within objective field, as a particular case in a broader totality; the data of his consciousness may be a source of information, but they are relevant not qua his

Subject has a responsibility: his judgment is his, and *personne se plaint de son jugement*; still it is a limited responsibility, for he can frame his conclusions as positive or negative, certain or probable, etc.; in brief he is bound to say what he knows and no more than he knows, re object and re mode, but he is not committed ^{to} reaching definite results

4. The practical pattern of experience demands the intervention of the subject.

He may choose A or B, A or Not-A; or he may consent to drift, permit himself to be other-directed, where however the consenting and permitting are equivalent to choosing, though an inauthentic equivalent

The choice decision drift are determined neither externally, biologically, psychically, nor intellectually

Even when one knows everything about everything, an operable cannot be demonstrated; it admits no more than rhetorical syllogisms. But in fact I do not know everything about everything; I do not know everything that ultimately is relevant to the choices I have to make; and none the less I already am alive, thinking, acting, under a perpetual necessity of drifting or choosing, choosing A or not A, B or not B,...

Hence, choosing is within an atmosphere of incertitude, and so it involves an acceptance of risk

Choosing not only settles ends and objects; it gives rise to dispositions and habits; it makes me what I am to be; it makes it possible to estimate what I probably would do; it gives me a second nature, an essence that is mine in virtue of my choosing; ~~though~~ it does not give me an immutable essence, achievement is always precarious, radical new beginning possible

In choosing I become myself: what settles the issue is not external constraint nor inner determinism nor knowledge but ut quo my will and ut quod myself; in the last analysis the ultimate reason, for my choice being what it is, is myself, if left to mere balancing of motives impulses, then I consent to drift; I consent to being other-directed; I implicitly choose as myself the "On" "Man" -- inauthenticity if not left to mere balancing of motives impulses, then I intervene, I knowingly assume risk and responsibility in either case what ultimately is operative is purely individual, unique

in the drifter what results is another instance of the average man in a given milieu
in the decisive person what results is what he chooses to be

in the drifter, individuality is blurred; his individuality is his consenting to be like everybody else

in the decisive person there comes to light both his individuality and the total-otherness of other individuals; my choice is what it is because that's what I choose; yours is because that's what you choose; even when what is chosen is the same, still the sources are simply different

Finally, there are limiting situations: the drifter can no longer just drift; and the decisive person is powerless to change things by deciding

general: historical period, social milieu of birth, opportunities, male or female, old or young

particular: death, suffering, struggle, guilt confronted with limiting situations, the drifter may try to forget, but ultimately he cannot succeed; he is totally involved, all of him is involved, and he is totally unprepared

on the other hand, the decisive person can be as decisive as he pleases, but the limiting situation is not thereby removed

5. Oneself is the irreducibly individual element whence spring the choices of the decisive person and the drifting forgetting of the indecisive

What springs from that source is free; for it one is responsible

What results from that source is not only the sequence of activities but also the character of the man, the second nature, quasi-essence, by which precariously one is what one is

Nor does choosing wait upon learning, the acquisition of as much knowledge as might be relevant; it involves risk and incertitude

Finally, in choosing is involved everything that concerns me

6. In brief, the intellectual and the practical patterns of experience are incompatible

In one, free decisive intervention despite risk and with total commitment is essential; in the other, it is barred from the movement towards truth to be attained, though total commitment is demanded from the subject by truth as attained.

→ 6 Being oneself is being the subject of free acts. It is ^{essential} essence
In the limit, it sustains an ^{essential} transcendent, absolute

in these moments
of choice for oneself
values; and it is
worthwhile to be
involved in any significant
action.

6. Within a satisfactory synthesis, there is possible an alternation, a Withdrawal and Return, a mutual complementarity

In the intellectual pattern of experience I am choosing because I choose to submit entirely to the exigences of knowing in order to know; and without that knowing there would be, not merely a residual incertitude and risk to choosing, but a total blindness that makes choice indistinguishable from mere force, instinct, passion.

In the practical pattern of experience, there is an ultimate moment of "being myself," of incertitude and risk, and none the less total commitment; but it is a known ultimate moment, and it is within a context of knowing and with respect to a largely known.

On Being Oneself. Philosophic Significance of the Theme.

1. It provides a ready rationalization for those who do not wish to endure the restraints of knowing. Let's drop philosophy, speculative theology, science.

Love of neighbour, zeal for souls, dialogue, ~~xxx~~ disponibilité, prayer

2. Breaks through positivist science of man. It denies that there is any ready-made essence or nature with predictable properties

L'homme se définit par une exigence.

Eisenhower: "We have to be men." It implies that we might be less than men, that there is an exigence for us to be men, that that exigence is to be met by a decision.

3. Breaks through pragmatist science of man.

One learns from experience about things, about one's own potentialities.

~~But the process of experiencing oneself is already one's becoming oneself; one has only one life; and the problem is not one of sacrificing oneself to the determination of pragmatically validated knowledge of man, since the real issue is not one of knowledge but of deciding~~

But the issue is not one of knowing whether a priori or a posteriori; given all the knowledge possible, all the human experiments desirable, there still remains the whole issue of deciding which even then would involve incertitude and risk

And meanwhile one already is living, and one has only one life. The decision to risk nuclear warfare is not justifiable pragmatically

4. Breaks though the idealist view of man.

The idealist's absolute or transcendental ego is neither Greek nor barbarian, neither male nor female; it neither dies nor suffers nor struggles nor acknowledges guilt

The idealist's world is world that is pure intelligibility, rational throughout; it is not a world of free choices springing from unique individuals that are totally concerned in the once-for-all of the momentous moment.

5. Sets problems ~~of~~ for contemporary scholasticism

What meaning is possible for the fact that I become myself.

Ambiguity that comes to light in metaphysical theory of person, subsistence.

Rests on issue: is metaphysics knowledge of things through their causes or through the decem genera entis

Is the thing just its substance or is the thing a whole that includes both substance and accidents.

H. Miller

b Verum et falsum sunt in mente; bonum et malum sunt in rebus. But in the concrete, there are no abstractions, and so there is no abstract good

If no abstract good, abstract moral precepts do not suffice to reach the good; they can ~~be~~ be no more than pointers to the direction location in which the good lies, or limits indicating where the good does not lie

But there remains for each one to work out concretely what the good really is

There remains an order of the universe, but it is not an order deducible from abstract essences and schematic hierarchies; it is a concrete unfolding in concrete situations; and the concrete situations are the product of individual decisions about the concrete good

There remains the natural law (situations do not change moral precepts) but there arises the significance of kairos, of my situation, my opportunity, my duty; and while these can be illuminated by moralists, by spiritual directors, the ultimate issue is whether or not I am to take a risk and assume a total responsibility and rise to the occasion ~~as~~ I alone see it

There is to the order of the universe the emergence of good from evil, the heightening of evil to a maximum that sets the alternative of conversion or destruction,

where the evil is to be met not by being included as intelligibility within the order but as surd violating the order, as a demand not for justice but for self-sacrifice and charity

The order of the universe is not a mechanistic plan flowing from essences; it may descend to that through sin; but it rises from it inasmuch as the order is a matrix network of personal relations

Situation, surd, kairos, charity

c The need of an ancilla that will supply theology with the categories necessary to assimilate the doctrine of the Bible

The possibility of such an ancilla: can existential questions be handled by the Catholic philosopher; do they not suppose knowledge of theology by their very nature.

d Withdrawal and return: not simply the mutual dependence of willing to know and knowing to will

There is the problem of conversion (reorientation, reorganization of mind and life)

K's spheres: aesthetic, ethical, religious A and B.

Upward change is not in virtue of knowledge on lower plane; it is not in virtue of will following knowledge on lower plane. apparent latent

There has to be the irruption of a power, the possibility of a radical discovery where the discovered has been present all along, the fact of an obnubilation that prevented prior discovery

This sets the radical question in all philosophizing.

It is relevant for scholastics with their innumerable ~~and~~ disputed questions, and no method of solution not only not in sight but not even desired, sought, seriously believed in

In various measures ~~it~~ it is the concern of the thinkers named existentialists;

Proposal: to face our existential question and through ~~it~~ it move towards some understanding of this question for others.