

8720ADTE060

Mediation

Transcription by R. Doran of 87200DTE060

Mediation

1 Purposes

To reach a positive account of whole and part, and so to move towards a positive statement of Newman's theorem. [Handwritten: God // to relate th (theory)/CS (common sense) (by) interiority]

To introduce a number of basic terms and analogies in a coherent and systematic fashion,

2 Division

We shall consider:

- (a) The General Notion of Mediation
- (b) Mutual Mediation
- (c) Self-mediation by physical parts (displacement upwards)
- (d) Self-mediation by consciousness (displacement inwards)
- (e) Self-mediation by self-consciousness (deliberate shift of centre)
- (f) Mutual self-mediation
- (g) God as mediated, mediating himself / creation & conserv., redemption, grace of Holy Spirit / worlds of community, theory, interiority

3 The General Notion

(a) H. Niel *De la médiation dans la philosophie de Hegel*, Paris, Aubier, 1945.

(b) Aristotle, *Post. Anal.*, II, 4: '... syllogism proves an attribute of a subject through a middle term ...'

What goes through such and such phases is spherical.
The moon goes through such and such phases.
Therefore, the moon is spherical.

(a') The middle term mediates between subject and attribute.

(b') In the middle term the attribute is non-mediated, immediate.

(c') In the subject the attribute is mediated.

(c) In Hegel an idealist philosophy immediately extends the notion of mediation to everything. Roughly:

Concepts are related by the system, by the dialectic, immediately or mediately; everything reduces to concepts; therefore, everything is related immediately or mediately.

(d) We shall proceed, not on the assumption of an idealism, but by use of a generalization of the notion of mediation.

In logic, necessity, evidence, truth may be immediate or mediated; but immediacy and mediation are found not only in these instances.

In general, any factor, quality, property, feature, aspect, that has a source, origin, ground, basis, and consequences, effects, derivatives, a field of influence, radiation, expansion, an expression, manifestation, revelation, outcome, [page 2] may be said to be *immediate* in the source, origin, ground, basis, and *mediated* in its consequences, effects, derivatives, outcome, in its field of influence, radiation, expansion, in its expression, manifestation, revelation.

(e) Illustrations

(a) mechanical

in a watch, movement is immediate in the mainspring but mediated in the subsequent series of continuous levers (notched wheels)

in a watch, control is immediate in the balance wheel but mediated in the subsequent series of continuous levers.

(b) organic

the supply of fresh oxygen is immediate in the respiratory system, mediated in the rest of the body

the flow of blood is immediate in the heart, mediated in the arteries and veins

nutrition is immediate in the digestive system, mediated in the rest of the body

locomotion is immediate in the muscles, mediated in the rest of the body
control is immediate in the nervous system, mediated in the rest of the body

(c) the psychic level (sensitive soul)

what is immediate in intelligence (or will, or senses, or imagination, or memory, or affectivity, or aggressivity) is mediated throughout the rest of consciousness and in bodily manifestations

anger is immediate in aggressivity (mediaeval, *irascibile*) but mediated in the eyes, look, voice, jutting jaw, raised arm, forward step, violent images, one-track thinking, vigour of will of the angry man

(d) logic

truth, evidence, necessity are immediate in principles, mediated in conclusions.

4 Mutual Mediation: The Functional Whole

A functional whole is constituted by mutually mediating parts.

(a) Mechanics

A watch is both a material and a functional whole. As a material whole, it is the case and what is in the case. As a functional whole, it is what the watch does, keeping time.

To keep time, the watch must be moving, and it must be moving at a constant rate.

The function, job, of movement is immediate in the mainspring and mediated in the rest of the works.

The function of control, of steady movement, of constant rate, is immediate in the balance wheel (S. H. M.) and mediated in the rest of works.

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The two functions mediate each other.

The balance wheel controls itself and the mainspring.

The mainspring moves itself and the balance wheel.

(b) Organism

An organism is (a) a material whole [the skin and what is inside it], (b) a functional whole, and (c) alive.

For the moment we are concerned only with the functional whole.

The whole organism (the sum of its parts, organs) have fresh oxygen from the respiratory system, nutrition from the digestive and vascular system, local motion from the muscles, control from the nervous system.

As a functional whole, each function of the organism is immediate in some organ or set of organs and mediated in the rest of the organs.

If the immediate functions are A, B, C, D, E, ... and the mediated functions are respectively a, b, c, d, e, ...

mutual mediation implies that A is abcde ..., B is abcde ..., C is abcde ..., D is abcde ..., E is abcde ...

(c) Psychic level

We said that anger is immediate in one's aggressivity but mediated in one's voice, look, eyes, jaw, raised arm, step forward, rancorous memories, violent images, one-track thinking, vigour of will.

But the mediation is mutual: what one sees, feels, remembers, imagines, thinks, wills, all feed one's anger.

(d) Level of Mind

In Aristotle's syllogistic theory of science both truth and necessity are immediate in principles.

In empirical science there is a mutual mediation.

Empirical science has an element of necessity, of intelligibility, of coherence, of system, from its hypotheses.

Empirical science is empirical in virtue of data.

The empirical element is immediate in data, mediated in empirical science.

The scientific, systematic element is immediate in the hypothesis, mediated in empirical science.

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5 Self-mediation: Living

(a) Both machines and organisms are functional wholes; but machines are made; organisms grow.

The growth of an organism is a self-mediation by originating out of itself physical parts.

Such growth is a process of division: from one cell to 2^n cells.

The process of division is governed by finality: Van Driesch's experiments on sea-urchins.

(b) At any stage of its growth, the organism is alive at that stage and preparing later stages.

As alive at that stage the organism is a set of functional parts in a functional whole.

As moving from one stage to another it may exhibit:
transitional developments, useful for a time, to be abandoned later (sucking)
anticipatory developments, not useful yet but essential later (brain).

(c) The comparison of successive stages reveals

a' not only increase in size

b' but a process of specialization, differentiation: what earlier is performed in rudimentary, global fashion by single parts, later is performed in a specialized, highly efficient fashion by different parts

c' the process of specialization and differentiation is not just a matter of greater complexity [Rube Goldberg cartoons]
involving mounting inefficiency (more and more roundabout procedures)
and mounting fragility (more parts to go wrong)

d' the process of specialization involves the creation and exploitation of new possibilities

a displacement upwards in which not only the initial cell is of no account but also the 2^n cells are merely a substratum that may be renewed every seven years

the end, telos, is the self-developing and self-sustaining functional whole that develops through the development and functions through the functioning of its parts.

(d) From the particular living thing one may shift to the larger whole of the concrete universal.

What lives, does not live alone; and what grows, also dies.

The species mediates itself by reproduction.

Within the genus, lower species mediate the emergence and the sustenance of higher species.

Trees do not grow in desert sand but in earth, soil; herbivorous animals presuppose vegetation; and carnivorous animals suppose herbivorous animals.

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6 Self-mediation: Consciousness

(a) The organism mediates itself by developing physical parts and functioning by the functioning of the parts.

The animal mediates itself not only organically but also intentionally.

What the intentional is, we attempt to indicate by considering first the intentional element and then the intentional summation.

(b) The intentional element

The intentional element consists of three parts: the act of intending, the intended object, the intending subject.

The act of intending is any act [or simultaneous set of acts] that occur within consciousness:

it is apprehensive in hearing, smelling, moving, seeing, touching, tasting,

it is integrated over time by memory and anticipative imagination

it is dynamic by affectivity or aggressivity.

The intended object is made present to the subject by the act of intending.

The subject is constituted as present to itself by the act of intending.

Distinguish this presence from presence of an object: it is prior to any reflexive, introspective operation; it is constitutive of the subject as subject.

Were being conscious being looked at, then prior to the look one would be unconscious and, when looked at, one would be perceived as still unconscious. Looking at does not change its object.

(e) The intentional summations

Acts are summated into living, the accumulation of experience, the acquisition of skills, habits, ways of doing things.

Objects are summated into situations; and the summation of situations is the environment, world, horizon.

Subjects are summated into the intersubjectivity of community, into 'we,' into the family, swarm, flock, herd, group.

'We' apprehend together the common situation, act together in the common situation, communicate about the common situation, live a common life and share a common destiny.

(d) The intentional mediation of the whole effects:

a displacement inwards: to the subject of consciousness;
an extension of the outer world: from what acts on the organism to what is perceived by the animal,
the intersubjective community.

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7 Self-mediation: Self-consciousness

(a) Though the animal mediates itself by intentionality, still in the animal intentionality does not become autonomous.

The animal lives by instinct and the instincts translate into consciousness the needs and functions of the animal.

(b) Human development is the mediation of autonomy.

The child wants to do things for himself; the boy wants to decide for himself; the adolescent wants to find out for himself.

Bringing up a child, educating a boy, an adolescent, a young man, is a matter of gradually enlarging the field in which one does things for oneself, decides for oneself, finds out for oneself.

The process reaches its climax, its critical and decisive phase,
when one finds out for oneself what one can make of oneself
when one decides for oneself what one is to be
when one lives in fidelity to one's self-discovery and decision.

It is the existential moment that the drifter never confronts:
he thinks as everybody thinks,
says what everybody says,
does what everybody does,
and so do they.

The mass of unauthentic humanity
that lacks the courage to take the risk of thinking things out for themselves
that lacks the resoluteness that decides and stands faithfully by its decisions.

(c) By existential commitment, one disposes of oneself; and one disposes of oneself in love, in loyalty, in faith – encounter: occasion for mutual self-mediation
in the mutual self-commitment of marriage,
in the overarching commitment to the state,
in the eschatological commitment to the church, the Body of Christ, the New Law which is the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Human community, materially, is an aggregate of human beings but, formally, it is an intentional reality.

The community ought to be what one ought to mean and it is what is meant de facto by the family, the state, the church.

Change the actual meaning and you change the reality; change the normative meaning and you change the possible attainment of community.

(d) The community mediates itself by its history.

The community is constituted by its common sense, its common meaning, its common commitment.

It reveals itself to itself by its living, by its meeting its problems, by its revisions of its common sense, its common meaning, its common commitment, by the way things work out in development and break-down, by its growth and disintegration.

By their fruits you shall know them. The history that is written about is the mediation (revelation) of the common sense of the community; the history that is written is the fully reflective product of that self-manifestation.

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(e) As the community mediates itself by its history, so the individual mediates himself (manifests himself objectively to others and to himself) by his living.

In one's living one brings to light one's possibilities and one realizes them in one's self-commitment; one discovers the inadequacies of one's self-discovery and the reservations that cripple one's self-commitment; one is true to oneself, or falls short of one's ideals, and recovers oneself in one's repentance and fresh beginnings.

The person is autonomous: he is what he has made of himself.

But present resolutions cannot predetermine future decisions; one is always, until death, a piece of unfinished business.

(f) The autonomy of the individual is not the whole story.

From the community he has his existence, his concrete possibilities, the constraints that hem him in, the opportunities he can seize and make the most of, the psychological, social, historical achievements and aberrations that constitute his situation.

Destiny is, perhaps, the working out of individual autonomy within community; so that the summation of destinies in a community is the history of the community.

8 Mutual self-mediation

We have spoken of simple mediation, mutual mediation, and self-mediation.

Simple mediation is from the immediate and to the mediated. The immediate is any principle, origin, source, ground, basis; the mediated is any effect, consequence, result, outcome, any expression, manifestation, revelation, objectification, any sphere of influence, radiation, expansion.

Mutual mediation constitutes the functional whole: there are at least two principles and each mediates the other or others.

Self-mediation means that a whole has consequences that transform the whole itself: the displacement upwards of organic growth, the displacement

inwards of animal consciousness, the deliberate shift of centre of existential commitment.

But we also mentioned mutual self-mediation. Its occasion is the encounter in all its forms (meeting, regular meeting, living together).

Existential self-commitment occurs in community; in love, in loyalty, in faith.

One's self-discovery and self-commitment is one's secret; it is not a natural property but an idea conceived, gestated, born within one; it is known by others when one chooses to reveal it, and revealing it is an act of confidence, of intimacy, of letting down one's defenses, of entrusting oneself to another.

In the process from extroversion, from being poured out on objects, to existential self-commitment, to fidelity, to destiny, we are not Leibnizian monads with neither doors nor windows; we are open to the influence of others; and others are open to influence from us.

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Mutual self-mediation occurs in a variety of contexts and to a greater or less extent.

Meeting, falling in love, getting married; the father as the head, the mother as the heart, of the family; the infant, the child, the boy or girl, the adolescent, the young man or woman; mother and child, father and son, brothers and sisters.

Teacher, pupil; teacher, class, classmates; professor, professor and student, professor and staff, fellow students.

The matrices of personal relations in the neighbourhood, in industry and commerce, in the professions, in politics local, national, international.

The mutual self-mediation of equals: lovers, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, friends, fellows.

The mutual self-mediation of superiors and inferiors; parents and children; teachers and pupils; its necessary coming to an end.

The reversal of roles: Hegel's master and slave; Gaston Fessard's Jew and Greek.

The inexhaustible theme of dramatists and novelists.

It is an imponderable in education: it won't show up in charts and statistics; it lies in the immediate interpersonal situation that vanishes when communication becomes indirect through books, television programs, teaching by mail.

9 God is mediating himself through creation, redemption, grace of the Holy Spirit mediated by world of community, theory, interiority.

Our consideration of mediation has yielded a number of terms and analogies.

We generalized Aristotle's mediation of truth, evidence, necessity, to any kind of consequence, result, manifestation.

We went on to mutual mediation on the level of mechanics, the organism, consciousness, mind.

We conceived three levels of self-mediation: of the whole having consequences that transform the whole.

We had occasion to speak of growth, of consciousness, of autonomy; of displacement inwards upwards, inwards, and the consequent deliberate shift of centre; of evolution, encounter, community, history, destiny; of mutual self-mediation.

We have spoken of such different instances that we may have produced mere bewilderment.

This arises because mediation is an even less determinate notion than causality; hence to say that A mediates B may mean any of a vast variety of things, and to know any of them is entirely a matter of studying them; the word 'mediation' does not teach anything whatever about mechanics, biology, sensitive consciousness, rational autonomy.

Still mediation is not without significance. From simple mediation one passes to mutual mediation, an understanding of automatic devices, of organic functions, of functions within consciousness, of the difference between Aristotelian syllogistic and the method of empirical science. From mutual mediation one passes to three types of self-mediation, of the self-transforming whole. Finally, mutual mediation and self-mediation combine in mutual self-mediation.