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**SOUL TROUBLES
THROUGH A
PSYCHOLOGICAL-SPIRITUAL
APPROACH**

Excerpt from
Problemas anímicos actuales
a través de un enfoque psicológico-espiritual

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FIRST LECTURE

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EXISTENTIAL ANGUISH IN MAN OF OUR TIME PRESENT IN QUEST OF MEANING IN LIFE

ANGUISH: A topic of our time

The so-called existential anguish becomes a typical living experience in man of our time. Many are living this anguish but unable to explain it, others theorize about it, and all of them are disoriented and powerless to find a true solution and the peace they are yearning for.

This anguish is tackled in books, movies and talks of people: in a word, it is a topic in our time, a living experience and feeling in our time.

Secretly, souls in anguish are claiming in quest of some meaning in life and a meeting with themselves. After walking through uncertain roads, some of these souls are tired and asking today “bread of life”. So, you see many beings going from one way to other, from a teacher to other, from a book to other, from an institution to other in quest of something intimate, but only they find disappointment and bewilderment.

Many people are in this quest through religions, philosophies, and social or cultural experiences. We do not deny some of value may be picked up from experiences throughout those ways, but in fact “anyone that has a drink of those waters is thirsty again”.

For a soul in evolution it is a time when it becomes conscious of this: no institution of human culture is able to fill its hidden yearnings. A soul has its own rights: the right to possess the *Truth*, the right to contact the *True Life*, the right to permanency and liberation, and if it lacks all of these things that are “living bread”, the soul suffers from anguish by lack of spiritual food.

How this anguish is manifest before rational understanding?

We’ll try to understand some of the forms whereby this existential anguish is patent when and if such understanding does not mean to enter its intimate root.

1. Difficulty about finding the meaning of life

Reason, whose purpose is to understand and grasp the meaning of things, stops in anguish as soon as is unable to understand the meaning in the very life of man.

2. Consciousness of living together with old culture patterns

Many beings are aware of living in old culture patterns (race, family, religion, social laws), respected by fear or duty, but unfit for meeting intimate spiritual unrest.

But one should not feel it is an exclusive social problem and all might be solved by changing the social framework. A man cannot be reduced to a social formula, because in the world no society, however perfect it may be, will be able to meet the deepest soul aspirations of supra-social kind.

3. Consciousness of living in patterns of someone else

Many beings live together in the framework of family, college, office, business, profession, et cetera, but at the end of years, when they stop and see, then they are aware of having lived in the pattern of someone else, not in their own pattern. They may have had valuable experiences in their work, profession, studies, et cetera, but as long as the soul does not get the experience in its own pattern, its anguish will consist of a lack of contact or reunion with itself.

4. Consciousness of contradictions

One of the sources of anguish in rational man is the recognition of contradictions existing in him, which can be neither accepted as ends by themselves nor transcended. How to reconcile right and wrong? How to reconcile instinctive trends and spiritual aspirations? Many times one's soul is fighting between such opposite aspects but not finding the exact conciliation point.

5. Consciousness before multiplicity

Before so many diverse ideas and opposite religions to contradictory religions, many souls lose their bearings and get bewildered. May be some key or bridge to pass between them? Could be possible to find unity in the midst of multiplicity?

6. Crisis of interpersonal communication

It is the feeling of being alone in the midst of great crowds, and remaining unable to find a true community link with others.

Genetic understanding of existential anguish

After such phenomenal description of anguish, now let's try to understand its genesis.

In my opinion, mainly its inner source is a development crisis that today is disclosed by a deep crisis in society and culture.

The so-called present humanistic culture as a whole is unable to give anything for achieving aspirations to “be full men”, and it becomes powerless for giving solutions: it gives knowledge truths but not salvation truths.

Modern philosophy has progressed indeed in theorizing about the existential point at issue, but it does not invite to a living path toward an integral achievement in order to overcome such anguish.

Likewise in psychology, that has disclosed deep soul “mechanics” but is unable to help men find meaning in life.

Moreover, life such as we are living it does not respond to a true vital quality many men might wish to achieve on earth. What we call life is a “life-for-death”; our life is a life going toward entropy, that is to say, as long as it develops, we are unable to recover it: it escapes from our hands...

In short, what does a man from our time really need?

He needs a live contact with a supra-vital spiritual germ, the only able to provide life with permanent value and permit its own renovation in a creative form that won't run out.

Many souls are yearning today for contacting a *Living Truth*: neither intellectually contacting certain truths available to reason nor sentimentally joining some doctrine or dogma, but a truth made life, flesh and blood.

Such clamor belongs to those so-called messianic ages. And at present, many beings have a feeling the coming of a new Divine Incarnation –not as much as an outer historic occurrence but as a reality with spiritual strength that is born and incarnated, and lives in the very being.

In short, present man does not need a new society, a new truth, a new culture or a new Messiah as long as all those things remain outside him; first of all it is important to achieve the value of *Being-Man* because only from such new position one is able to think in terms of a new society or a new culture.

In Greek mythology, the great problem about loss and recovery of life has been symbolically kept through the story of Theseus in Crete labyrinth.

According to such myth, every year one hundred Athenian young men were sacrificed to Minotaur, the monster that inhabited the labyrinth. Nobody could release the city from such tribute because those who entered the labyrinth intending to kill the monster would lose therein their bearings and would not find the exit; at the end, Theseus made use of the clever Ariadne's thread to retrace his path way-back and be able to kill the Minotaur.

Present life is a great collective abyss: like the Crete monster, every day it devours the best of human life and those beings falling into it may have the least possibility of getting back. It is the tribute

that men are to pay for family, job, religion, feelings, desire and multiplicity of ideas; when a being wakes up and wants to be he again, is trapped, and dehumanized on the way of multiplicity.

Here is the dilemma of the present men: surrendering to life or being unable to recover it.

For this purpose, he needs heroic efforts and a new “*Ariadne’s thread*” to retrace our path: to get back to ourselves.

SECOND LECTURE

June 27, 1958

LONELINESS OF MAN IN SOCIAL COMMUNITY ALONE IN THE MIDST OF GREAT MULTITUDES

Loneliness as problem:

As the present man remains mentally lost among the multiplicity of ideas and painstakingly can find the *Unique Idea*, so he is lost in relation to feeling. In the midst of things around, of the universe in which he stays and, above all, in relation to other beings, man experiences a deep loneliness in our times. How many times we hear “I feel alone”, “I have some few friends”. “I am losing my friendships”, “I am alone in my own family”, “I am alone in the mist of a multitude”, “I am alone among my friends”, or “I am alone with myself”!

What kind of mystery is this? What kind of troubles a man in our times may have –when on the other hand has achieved a quite advanced socialization– to feel united with other beings around? How can a man feel alone when day by day he hobnobs by the streets of great cities with so many fellow men and socially lives together in a diversity of institutions or aspects of life?

Grouping of men together cannot solve the communion problem

First and foremost, we should recognize this: a “contact with someone else” or “approach to someone else” is not a sufficient condition for achieving a true communion. It is not enough to meet in clubs, benefit societies, schools and other culture or syndicate associations gathered by certain similar ideals for men *to feel* united. As a proof of it, from little family societies to great social institutions, disagreement and fight of one against someone else occur more often than not.

Quite eloquently, Ricardo Güiraldes refers to such difficult communication among souls despite their proximity:

*“A man has lent me his hand,
“A woman her mouth and sex
“Still we don’t know how to change souls...”*

One thing is natural coexistence among beings, “to stay with others like one stays with things”, and another matter altogether, a real community that is the fruit of true love among men.

Vital need for communion

Communion of souls is not only an accidental need but even substantial and vital. Fundamentally, man needs feeling united with others, and when such feeling of union is absent, the soul in pain.

Paradoxically, despite such vital need, the human condition offers obstacles to a true communion. Why? Because man still is not totally man, still he does not know to love...at least a majority of them. He treats others as he treats things, but he has no experience in treating souls, he did not achieve a true, real love,

Every difficult communion emerges when a being wants to take other being as a thing and, on a higher or lower grade, to appropriate him. When it occurs, and through the possession of one being for other, one denies the individual soul freedom and brings about intimate feelings that at the end break the community feeling one wanted to achieve.

Community feeling is a supra-social reality

We might feel that all these troubles exclusively have been of sociological kind and should not exist in a new type of society.

Many contemporary philosophers –Jaspers, among them– have recognized every social organization are today under the sign of fight, and for beings is hard to live together everywhere and in every social system. The point is not to change society frameworks but to develop in man a non-possessive *new form of love* inspired by renunciation. Only a man that knows how to love will find in any social system the link to join others.

From Plato's "*The Republic*" to our days, sociologists have diversely tried a possible perfect society, but it is difficult to express such "utopias" on earth as long as man as man is not really able to feel united with others by sharing his love.

Anguish by loneliness

Once the reality of this loneliness of man is recognized in the community in which he lives, we should wonder what attitude to adopt before it.

May be possible to make vibrate that new intimate feeling string enabling us to achieve a feeling of union with the body of mankind?

There are different paths or attitudes advised to face loneliness: some persons say loneliness should be resisted through will efforts. But whereas this intellectualistic voluntarism meets the power yearning, it leaves a terrific void in one's heart and does not grant to man capacity for love.

Or one escapes from loneliness and every one escapes according to his means. Some persons take refuge in the past and others take pleasure in future possibilities; others lose their way in vain talks, entertainments, alcohol, sex... but even there are other subtler escapes that are not available to everybody,

such as frequent travels, chic gatherings, excessive deals or an insatiable load refined knowledge or impressions...

The purpose consists in being *ever busy* and toward a goal in continuous displacement. When they achieve something, at once displace the goal several years ahead to limits beyond the logic life term, but the question is “to live by remote things” as existentialist philosophers might say, which is one form of evading the present and, at certain time, not to take charge of life as a whole.

But ultimately such attitude becomes natural in man because he fears the intimate loneliness. As soon as the soul contacts that negative focus, that is the loneliness, it starts new positive actions because he feels loneliness may be annihilating.

Man is not used to these negative constitutive aspects of the counterpart of his active life; however, to oppose resistance to loneliness is the first step toward true transcendence related to a feeling: so, from loneliness one passes to communion.

This step, this transcendent jump requires something more than steady will: it need *mystique*.

Mystique is a feeling that enables man, recognizing his own weakness, to adopt a reverence attitude in the dark and transcendent focus of his inner world. In his loneliness, the being surrenders to the divine dwelling in him, and between the heart of man and God a communion link is established that breaks such loneliness and transcends it.

Once this new intimate feeling wakes up, man is not alone any more and his relationship with others becomes deep and true.

But one should realize with clarity that, in order to contact the body of mankind, over all, man should contact primary life forces existing within.

Today war need enter the intimate mystery of the heart and be impregnated by the strength of a genuine feeling –the one who possess such loving strength will be able to live together in any type o community.

Man of our time needs a new mystique to be able to acquire the true hierarchy of man, which takes for granted his union with the whole body of mankind.

It is in vain to revolve in little circles of family, race or religion, bleeding to death through endless fights for predominance... We need ennoble our heart through a real contact with the *Divine* and find in this way the *lost word* enabling us to communicate with every being without exception of races or creeds, and to be capable of revolving in the great circle of mankind.

THIRD LECTURE

July 11, 1958

SEX POINT AT ISSUE AT PRESENT REPRESSION AND CHASTITY

1. Diversity of criterion before sex

Sex remains a concern for many persons that are unaware of their position before it, despite the fact that troubles linked to sex have been properly examined at present, over all starting from Freud's researches and his school.

As much by both learned people and profane, one is able to confirm most contradictory opinions about sex. These points, instead of clearing them up, their divulgation often confuses them.

Certain doctrines take sex as an exclusive function for reproduction. According to this conception, sex is at the service of the species, and any other different aspect, such as pleasure, becomes vice or sin.

As we'll see later, practically this criterion has brought advantages and many disadvantages.

Before such idealistic conception just considered, systems we might call naturalistic come up, according which sex is one of so many bodily needs and should be treated like the rest of instinctive aspects; that is to say, any type of restriction might be unnatural.

According to the type of naturalistic conception, sex might have a pleasant function, besides its reproductive function.

In practice and in the existential point at issue about man, both conceptions –the idealistic and the materialistic– come up as extreme attitudes disconnected from both instinctive and spiritual demands.

2. Contributions of Medical Psychology

We should recognize the most important science contributions of the psychoanalytic school.

According to its conceptions, sex becomes energy of a particular kind whose sources are in the body.

This extremely powerful sex energy can be focused not only on genitals but can be expressed even by other somatic channels.

There is some quite important concept to bear in mind: that of “sex constitution”, namely, sex feature or formula that every individual brings at birth. Freud says: “*Every individual at birth brings the seed of sex emotions developed later*”.

Sex power and quality are quite different from one individual to other; thence one cannot establish general laws or rules linked the sex point at issue.

We have been given by science a third concept related to “sex development”; that is to say, sex is not energy suddenly arisen in puberty, but developed in the time, passing through a series of stages or levels properly so far known as normal adult sex.

The child sex, that is, the primary unconscious sex is ruled by the *principle of pleasure*: this principle becomes the natural law of the unconscious sex. Here there are no ethical limits of any kind, and generally sex objects are incestuous.

If sex remained fixed on this level, man might be unable to live together in a civilized social order; for this purpose, both instinctive satisfaction and renunciation to child objects of desire possibly might be required.

If such evolutive libido displacement does not occur, quite serious troubles in personality development might take place: fantasy prevails over reality, and dreams over facts, and neurosis settles as a substitute for full happy life.

Nobody can remain focused with impunity on some stage of sex development: in the average man, sex should pass from pleasure principle to *reality principle*, that is to say, to what we might call sex socialization.

From this point of view, we might understand the strictness existing in the laws of all times linked to incest so as to impede man to remain focused on an underdevelopment stage.

A diversity of both endogenous and environmental factors can impede the child sex should reach the adult stage.

Through certain Freud’s paper published in 1939, “*Culture unease*”, he says conflicts experienced by the civilized man because of sex are the exclusive result of a repressive culture distorting the natural instinctive tendency since the first years of life.

Apparently, these points of view are confirmed by Margaret Mead’s psychological researches in Samoa with primitive cultures, whereby one sees in peoples where repression is non-existent, the so-called “puberty crisis” in young persons does not occurs; it is taken as an artifice of modern civilization.

3. Sex repression and sex liberation

If sex repression gives rise to certain pathology quite known; if it is mainly the cause of nervousness in modern man; if in non-repressive cultures man seems to be happier –it might not be difficult to foresee what might be the most immediate solution to the sex problem: sex freedom, free love...

We are aware of a social experience from past centuries in a repressive sex culture and their consequences. But also we are aware of the experience given by a non-repressive culture in which anguish and nervousness of the man have not been reduced despite a higher sex liberality.

4. Sublimation

Despite Freud's emphasis on the importance of the pleasure principle and direct sex pleasure, he has pointed out the transcendence in man of what we might call "cultural instinct derivations" or "libido deviations toward higher purposes": *sublimation*. Freud says:

"Components of sex instinct are exactly typical in this sublimation capacity for changing their sex for other more distant purpose and a higher social value. Probably we owe highest civilization successes to contributions of energies achieved in this way for our soul functions" (Volume II, page 200).

5. Three sex purposes

So, besides both *reproductive and pleasant* functions, we should recognize in sex an *evolutive* function at the service of a higher development of the man for reaching not only a socialization stage but even a spirituality stage.

6. Renunciation appears as general law of sex evolution

We have seen for the conquest of the present evolutive state a necessary (unconscious) renunciation to most animalizing desires. But now we should wonder if evolution can be true through *conscious renunciation* to pleasant sex, now known to us as adult sex.

Freud would say as follows: *"The plasticity of sex components, manifested through its sublimation capacity, can constitute a big temptation to be in pursuit of greater and greater civilizing effects through gradual sublimation ..."* (Volume II, page 201).

7. Genuine human conflict in social order

The man –fundamentally unlike animals– before the consummation of his natural sex desires cannot evade the glance from his conscience demanding certain level of instinctive sublimation according to the evolution grade he has achieved.

In other words, a genuine human conflict linked to sex is an intimate feeling between both the sacred and the profane, between both pressure from natural desires and intimate purity demand more or less accentuated. This purity is something innate in man, and cannot be simply explained by custom demands; if black-colored people from Samoa do not sense it, it is because they did not reach sufficient spiritual development to sense it.

Every man should face with courage and responsibility dual feelings arising in him in order to find, not a general solution, but an intimate solution in agreement with his natural needs and highest ethics.

8. Purity and chastity

Every normal individual, after achieving certain soul development, has certain demands for intimate purity and chastity. Many young persons feel the need for being chaste but because chastity is devaluated in the social environment, they are taken as misfits and neurotics, and as they try to stay at the level of the majority, they are only more and more in pain.

But chastity cannot be achieved simply through technique; it needs higher love. Saint Augustine said: *“Nobody can be pure if he is not given the necessary grace of God”*.

9. Fundamental attitudes before sex

Summing up what we said so far, we can point out three fundamental attitudes in the theoretical and practical approach to sex.

a) Idealistic conception: It takes body as an obstacle to spiritual development, and only grants to the sex instinct a reproductive function.

b) Naturalistic conception: in its view, sex is one of so many bodily needs: it fulfills a reproductive and pleasant function; from this viewpoint, no sex restriction is justified.

c) Integral conception: besides both reproductive and pleasant functions, it admits a third evolutive function, where by the sex energy is at the service of the spiritual development of man. It is summed up by Gandhi’s expression: “Every individual yearning for certain spiritual development should restrict his instinctive energies for entering the spiritual kingdom”-

But this restriction inspired by an intimate purity feeling has nothing to do with a voluntary offering made by man, based on fear, to the Divine that he bears in himself for the achievement of his true condition of man.

FOURTH LECTURE

July 18, 1958

FALL OR ELEVATION: EXISTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE

FALL ON A PLANE OF SUB-MANKIND

AS EXISTENTIAL PROBLEM IN OUR TIME

The subject about the “fall” though is not as familiar as those matters we have previously tackled, is of remarkable significance today and can be approached from different points of view.

The Bible says about man:

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim’s and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3: 23-24).

Despite every breakthrough in modern science and modern rational mind theories, the symbolic content of this passage remains enigmatic to the eyes of men.

Also the subject about the fall has been preserved by the Early Tradition, that is to say, by that great *Source* in which great mysteries of life have been kept as symbols and legends. So, in Greek mythology we have the *Prometheus’ myth*, a Titan that, after stealing fire from Apollo’s carriage, is hurled into earth and chained, and his entrails devoured by a vulture.

In his writings, Plato kept a part of ancient wisdom and relates:

“Before living in this world and staying every human soul in a body of man, dwelled on a heavenly place - “Topos Ouranos”- on perpetual contemplation of ideas, with no effort. As these souls come to life, they forget ideas, but having previously stayed in topos ouranos, some few question properly expressed will be enough for remembering”.

On their part, Eastern religions relate birth like a fall of the soul into the manifestation place of concrete life and, in certain cases, the said fall becomes even deeper when a soul incarnates in the body of any animal (metempsychosis).

In materialistic conceptions of man, this fall mentioned by holy writings, Tradition and Mythology are meaningless and just become a naïve story. In fact, if man is conceived as the result of natural physical-chemical forces, it is meaningless to speak of fall: wherefrom could have fallen?

As a matter of fact, when ancient rites speak of fall, they refer to a human condition almost unknown: man-in-relation-to-God. What today we call man or mankind is a disintegrated aspect of that unity, a partial aspect disconnected from its original source; in this sense, we can speak of man as a fallen-being.

Why man did lose contact with his original divine source? Here is a problem before which human reason is powerless by itself to solve, unless reason is illuminated by *Revelation*.

But as *Revelation* has no demonstrative power for others, we won't lean on it in considering the subject about fall, but we'll try to approach it from other points of view.

Starting from our own existence and through anguish of living separated from the whole, we can realize the meaning of our life disconnected from the universe, from body of mankind and even from ourselves, that is to say, from the essential divine root whose feeling we have in the very intimacy of our heart.

Through an emotional intuition of this type, modern existentialist philosophers succeeded in presenting again the eternal subject about fall though with more rational terms than those known to us through holy writings or early tradition.

Starting from the existence of existence, they are forced to refer to diverse categories of existence, ones higher than others, and they admit as much the possible transcendence of man from a lower existence to other higher existence, as to consider certain form of degraded existence.

For example, Kierkegaard speaks of spheres of aesthetic, ethical and religious existence: through an "existential jump", an aesthetic being is able to pass to the ethical sphere or religious sphere and at a time he is able to descend from a higher sphere to a lower sphere through loss of conscience and responsibility.

On his part, Heidegger speaks of both non-authentic existence and authentic existence. Non-authentic life (efforts to get lost, to remain reduced to the condition of a thing) is an existence made of abdications; it is to escape from oneself, to refuse to know oneself and assume one's condition of man; instead of an ego it is "oneself"; one identifies with his social position, and his behavior is dictated by the anonymous mass power.

To fall from a sphere of authentic life over non-authentic life is degradation of life itself, as if man could lose his true condition of man and fall over a sub-mankind plane.

Also modern psychologist have dealt with fall of man: they speak of unconscious as an abyss ruled by its own laws, whose underground power, under certain circumstances, can absorb the ego and make sink it in its stormy waters.

Neither people of letters have neglected this subject. Faustus' fall and Dorian Gray's fall are masterfully described by Goethe and Wilde.

At present many beings realize they are able to gain or lose their condition of men, and to achieve full mankind or fall over sub-mankind level.

Man bears in himself instinctive forces of the animal world and germs of divine aspirations: many times, an existential alternative is posed between being absorbed by the former or exalted by the latter.

Notwithstanding the development of the rational mind, a considerable part of spirituality in man still remains asleep, and Frankl is right when he speaks of spiritual unconscious as a power sleeping at the bottom of the soul. To awaken to spiritual life does not mean to stop being man and become pure spirit, pure idea or angel but to bear witness of spiritual light in life and along with other men.

As aspects instinctive-rational prevail in present man, so one has the feeling that future man should have harmony between both human and divine values, and should achieve the full right to autonomy of thought and feeling.

Two human types are outlined now in mankind of our time and one can speak of both new men and old men.

A study about features of these two types here just outlined might be a quite interesting subject for a human typology of the future.

As one speaks of the *Neanderthal* man and of the *Cro-Magnon* man as types of the past left behind, so we can speak about the disintegrated, personalistic and centrifugal type of the present and about the integrated, individualistic and centripetal-centrifugal type of the future.

The former has a thinking on straight line and his creed is possession; the latter has a thinking on curved line and his creed is renunciation; the former tries to constitute himself in the universe as a personal independent power, while the latter does not hesitate to achieve his own failure so that a more uniform way of thinking and feeling in mankind should triumph. The former thinks or feels in antagonistic way; in the latter there is a thinking-feeling integrated by a consequent action.

While the former fuses on a more or less darkened anonymous mass, the latter is trying to acquire harmony between both rational aspects and supra-rational aspects in his nature.

At present, the true man is a being conscious not only of both his instinctive and rational world but also of his transcendent world: the true human condition is given by that conjunction of the natural and supra-natural, and this takes for granted an awakening. Before these human gems on the way to wake up, how many beings are in state of sub-mankind?

How many beings have their minds today? How many men think by themselves? Instead there is a multitude of beings making no other thing than to repeat like an echo what others have thought.

Now, may a man without his mind be truly called man? Human condition takes for granted its own mind, that is to say, a man fit for grasping the truth by itself.

But in the present world not only mind but also heart is quite dehumanized. At present, many men are aware of loving in a possessive way and appropriate what they love.

In connection with interpersonal relationships, when a being wants to appropriate other being and use it like a thing, we say the said relationship is dehumanized.

Likewise in sex relationship: if instinct is only led to a human object for its possession and later is discarded, it is a dehumanized sex, while human sex itself neither degrades the loved person nor reduces him to the condition of a thing.

Even in connection with ideals and “principles”, if we give them our life as a whole, we make idolatry and on higher or smaller scale we fall over the plane of dehumanization.

Here where dehumanization is? “*You will have no other gods before me*” is a statement deeper than we admit, and it takes for granted there is in man an intimacy that only belongs to God.

When we grant such noblest part to other beings and ideas to politics, we are surrendering ourselves, losing our souls, or rather, losing our condition of men.

To be-man does not mean just to keep a relationship with the outer world, but even to keep a relationship with the spirit living in us; therefore we need a reserve of inner energy. An exclusive outer life bleeds the individual, annihilates and destroys him in his most essential part; surrender of both mind and heart to human society, ideas and creeds dehumanizes man and deprives him of soul relationship with the Divine hidden in his own being, and of the conquest of a spiritual value —the only that can redeem nature and give him full mankind.

FIFTH LECTURE

July 25, 1958

VITAL DISORIENTATION

In his book “*El tema de nuestro tiempo*” (“*The theme of our time*”), first publication in 1923, Ortega y Gasset pointed out fundamental features of the time we live, and textually he says as follows:

“Little by little, a strange phenomenon that might be called ‘vital disorientation’ spreads more and more through European society”, and he adds later on: “Man in the West suffers from a radical disorientation because he does not know toward what stars he may live”.

The last 35 years, this strange phenomenon according to Ortega’s words, is alarmingly bigger and bigger and spreads to diverse modern society layers, in such a way that today it constitutes intimate fundamental problems distressing the men of our time.

On the other hand, contemporary culture in which our hopes are placed really offers today a distressing show; we are witnessing the failure of an old culture and one is unable to see with clarity the horizon of a new culture. In every aspect, we can notice decadence and confusion among most opposite ideas.

In the religious field, there is decadence and materialization of traditional institutions and, at the same time, new doctrines and prophets announcing new messages and revelations appear.

In the political field, ideas wave between left-wings and right-wings; but over all, between divisionism among parties more united by tradition and certain conviction that politics known to us is powerless to solve great problems in social human life. Ortega y Gasset went ahead many years in connection with what today many people think and admit about politicians:

“They rather serve faded flags with no faith than make the painstaking effort to reviewing principles they received and reconciling them with their intimate feeling. It is the same if they are reactionary or liberal; in both cases they are lagging behind. Our generation is destined not to be liberal or reactionary but precisely not to be concerned about such old-fashioned problem”.

In the economy field, doctrines fight between capitalism and communism, between liberalism and protectionism, and so many other “isms” trying to solve the economic problem of man by means of numeral equations and partial formulas, not recognizing total, material and spiritual needs of man himself. When one seeks so-called “economy solutions”, we just attend the material bread not recognizing the value that work and economy can achieve for man.

In social fields, ideas range between individualism and collectivism, and the two become insufficient to settle in man the point at issue as a whole and leave the field ever open to new “social utopias”.

In the science field, hopes of Auguste Comte and rationalists about changing old religious forms for life conceptions founded in science did not succeed.

When science tries to set itself as ruler of behavior, it discloses its insufficiency because it is unable to solve ultimate problems.

Attempted replacements of old moral dogmatism by rational ethics with no dogmas, or religious conception by psychological science on human behavior, have heuristic value but at the end they lead to disorientation because every one tries to orientate his life according to his own tendencies. Even Freud, as a psychologist deeply aware of human nature stops about giving orientations before life:

“I lack courage to set myself as a prophet before my fellow men because I am unaware of giving them any consolation; that consolation demanded by all, from the most savage revolutionary to the bravest believer”.

And what can we say about philosophy? If science just tackles immediate causes, we might think philosophy, whose formal object refers to first causes, might give that answer demanded by the vital point at issue in man. But also here doctrines fluctuate between essentialism and existentialism, and between idealism and realism, et cetera.

Intuition in present philosophers more in contact with life reached splendid conclusions –but always partial conclusions because there is no philosophy that may constitute itself as salvation science.

How to get one’s bearings among all these contradictory values in present culture? What is the highest value and what the lowest value? Where is the North and where is the South in the compass to be ourselves able to assess values of life?

First and foremost, we must be aware of living a time with great transformations, in which apparently one just notices a whisper of destruction.

In connection with present situation Tolstoy says as follows: *"I felt I have broken what I have leaned against and I had under my feet. All those things upon which I have lived did not exist any more and nothing remained for me to live"* (Ayhmer Maud", Tolstoy's Life).

In the midst of this great transformation crisis in human society there are beings getting lost and others being able to form mankind of future. Those who are less gifted suffer from a series of unbalances, but spiritually speaking, such crisis in one's present culture offers to the strongest an excellent opportunity to jump and place themselves on the ranks of the men of tomorrow. This is why Simone Weil said with clarity: *"You could not be born in a better time than this, in which everything got lost"*.

Let us see some of these positive aspects in culture devastation:

In the religious field, atheism is only sweeping fake religious values but leaving the intimate moral intact.

Costume materialism destroys patterns of artificial ethics based of fear and repression in order to open the way to more spontaneous ways of living.

The political crisis discloses for many beings that those Utopian paradises promised by sociologists do not come as a grace but we should conquer them by conscious efforts of all.

The economy crisis discloses insufficiency in partial doctrines and enables to glimpse an economy with participation freely chosen.

Finally, the crisis of reason, in discovering its limits, prepares many men to jump from the rational to the supra-rational.

SIXTH LECTURE

August 8, 1958

FALL AND REDEMPTION

Now, at the end of this Course, we'll give a brief resume of concepts expressed through prior lectures.

In our first lecture about *existential anguish*, we have emphasized the condition of present man as a being in anguish, claiming for the "only idea" in the midst of multiplicity of ideas, and rather claiming for salvation verities than for knowledge verities.

In our second lecture, we have tackled the problem about *loneliness of man in social community*, and we said the feeling of being alone can be filled not by any collective organization but by mystique, that is to say, by a higher love enabling man to establish an essential community with others.

In our third lecture, we have tackled the *sex point at issue*, and we emphasized, along with both reproductive and pleasant sex functions, a third evolutive function in which sex energy could be at the service of a conscious development in man.

Later we have tackled the theme of the "*fall*" and pointed out the critical existential alternative: gaining or losing our own condition of man, and in his ultimate case, falling over a sub-mankind plane.

In our fifth lecture, we tackled the theme of *vital disorientation* affecting many beings in contemporary society, and we said the present culture through its dehumanization crisis is not in the position of offering to man a North toward which he should lead his efforts.

Once we have examined these points as a whole, in this final lecture we wonder: "May this being disintegrated in anguish find that Ariadne's string enabling him to get out the labyrinth of multiplicity ideas in which he stays?"; "May man separate from the body of mankind find the lost word enabling him to achieve true communication with other men?"; "And in the midst of a storm sweeping present culture values, can a man be saved and find that new stability point or that new compass by which he may reconstruct a new life?" In one word: "May the present man meet again himself?"

This question admits two categories we are able to qualify as immanence answers and transcendence answers.

Immanence answers (humanism).

In them, liberation is achieved by efforts of the man by his own means. Let us see some of these means posed as liberating:

a) **Liberation by culture**, by constant progress of man. We know well the progress has contributed to some happiness means but cannot free the man of his own bondage. During the last times, the idea about progress has lost prestige and does not have the magical value give in the past century. In this connection, Gurdjieff says:

“Problems posed to contemporary intelligence in multiple areas in which it is exerted – or sociology or nuclear physics, for example– are not problems about progress; some years ago, the idea about progress is dead in the West: problems deal with radical change, transmutation”.

b) **Liberation by self-knowledge**. Natural intelligence light, instead of leading outside in order to know the outer world, is leading within. But this does not impede to be natural light and therefore to have limited ranges.

c) **Liberation by psychoanalysis** or other similar techniques. It can give release of energy retained in the subconscious, but it is very far to be a means for integral liberation of man and of real self-knowledge.

d) **Liberation by anguish** (existential thesis). It is a splendid conception by it remains just descriptive of what happens: that is to say, it deals with a rational understanding of a process whose determinism is affected by factors that cannot be reduced to terms of reason.

It assumes a jump from some sphere of existence to other under certain conditions preparing for such jump (which might take place or not). Such conditions produced on a lower sphere: nausea, failure or irony, determine a resonance at the higher correlative sphere in such a way that “a new beam from above” impacts the lower sphere a providing necessary energy for such jump.

This is a very interesting conception, an attempt of systematic rationalization, but one should be careful not to fall in an illusory mechanism working automatically. In his lessons about existentialism, Verneaux says as follows:

“To lean against unrest and anguish in order to rise toward God is an “immanence method” in forerunners as Saint Augustine, Pascal, Blodell... but is it enough?: it assumes men of good will and really in quest”.

As a rule, the anguished man stops in his anguish which per se lacks redeeming strength; or stops in nausea or in duty...

In short, immanence answers stumble against many troubles for explaining liberation of man by his own means though rationally they enjoy the favor of many people, particularly intellectual atheists. The following reasoning seems to be quite logical: "If man has fallen by weak will (sin), he is able to stand up by application of the same will toward good" (from a theological point of view, this assumes the elimination of the Christian Redemption). Linked to this thesis, Simone Weil says: "*If I tried this liberation by my own energy, it would be like a cow that pulls from its hobble and falls kneeling*".

Transcendence answers

Self-transcendences. They recognize the existence of a transcendent divinity but assume any man, by himself, and not needing Church or any Master, is able to contact that divine transcendent source. It is the case of Huxley and mescaline, and generally speaking, of spiritualistic techniques that by holding a secret technique one may achieve the awakening of enlightenment. A technique, however perfect may be, is not sufficient as a means per se so as to achieve liberation and to this purpose one should remember the Chinese adage: "If right means are used by an improper man, right means work improperly".

Answers based on human efforts and divine condescendence

Mystery of Redemption. Any answer based on exclusive human efforts (doctrines about immanence and self-transcendence) as an exclusive right of man to contact God in a direct way, become insufficient for the achievement of the Divine and, at most, it prepares for a higher mystery. Though man may gather every condition, he is unable to determine by himself his union with God. Even Krishnamurti, a modern champion of the self-realization, usually concludes his talks as follows: "*If you did all this, then **perhaps** you'll do That*", leaving always a quantum or X to what theologically is called **Redemption**.

As much in Christ as in Buddha, even admitting the value of human efforts, the Divine Grace ever remains intact and poured on the disciple at the timely moment and brings about the real transformation of human values into divine values.