



Of Humans and Persons

It is much easier to decry our dehumanization than to reclaim our humanity. "Dehumanization" has become a code word for all the ills of our age. By an easy extension, "humanism" has become a code word for all that is sweet, lovely, and of good repute. It would take a brave man to question it, as Heidegger did.¹⁸

Yet "humanism," precisely as a code word, has become eminently questionable. Its dictionary definition—or at least one of them—as "a way of life centered on human interests" does not exactly inspire confidence. It smacks of the heedless egotism of our species which is at the root of the dehumanization of our lives. Yet it is not an arbitrary

definition. It has its warrant in the dictum of Protagoras so beloved by the Renaissance, that "man [*sic*] is the measure of all things"—no less than in the nineteenth-century *hubris* of a "religion of Man rather than god."

To be sure, humanism can have positive connotations as well. There is a noble tradition of moral humanism, both of the ethical fervor of Unitarianism, which invokes the biblical injunction about "whatsoever ye have done for one of these" as well as the unambiguous assertion that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." To a Czech, the word evokes the moral humanism of T. G. Masaryk which runs through the entire Czech philosophical tradition, from the Hussite reformation and Jan Amos Komenský down to Jan Patočka in our own time.¹⁹ There is nothing facile, nothing superficial about that tradition whose core is an insistence on the ontological and ethical primacy of moral categories. What "humanism" will mean, if anything, will depend very directly on the way we define our *humanitas*. Its meaning will be quite different if we take, as definitive of our humanity, our ability to grasp the eternal moral law in time than if we define ourselves in terms of our *allzu menschlich* pettiness of greed and gratification.

Historically, the conception of *humanitas* has its antecedents in the self-experienced cultural superiority of the Hellenes over the barbarians. The term, *homo humanus*, is Roman: for the ancient Romans, the "humane" person was first of all a person of civility and culture in contrast to the crudity of the rustic and the barbarian alike. Though the term is an anachronism, the *homo humanus* was essentially the human as a moral rather than merely biological, instinctual subject.

To be sure, in its actual content the Roman definition of *humanitas* included a great deal of cultural parochialism as well. The moral traits of the *homo humanus* were not only moral but also emphatically Roman, embodying the mores and prejudices of the well-to-do and well-educated citizens. Yet for all its implicit parochialism, the conception of *humanitas* does contain a fundamental insight—that the human in the fullness of his humanity is not simply a product of "natural" drives and needs, accultured in the course of history to accommodate the demands of a reality principle imposed by social coexistence. That was all that most Romans were willing, whether fairly or not, to allow to the barbarian, whom they regarded less as a specific person than as a type, a being whose being is shaped entirely and directly by a quest for gratification of need and desire, unmodified by any but hedonistic utilitarian considerations. The point of affirming the *humanitas* of humans—or, at this stage, at least of some humans—

was to identify the *homo humanus* as the being not simply driven by stimuli but also capable of responding to ideal motivations.

To be sure, the Romans held the barbarian in disdain as unredeemably crude, and that need not be accurate. A life wholly contained within natural needs and their satisfaction need not be at all crude, as John Stuart Mill pointed out. The conventions of hedonism and of utility can, in fact, be extremely elaborate. Its motives, however, though perhaps wholly free of greed, remain strictly those of need. Goodness remains reducible to utility, rightness to prudence, beauty to aesthetic enjoyment. The point of reference is individual preference, not the generically human vision of a moral sense of life. What is missing is the recognition of intrinsic beauty, rightness, goodness. The barbarian, as the ideal type which that word suggested to the Romans, is a being locked in temporality, marked by the innocent egocentrism of a healthy animal. The mark of *humanitas*, by contrast, is *cultus*, the recognition of the moral sense of life and of the intrinsic value of the other. However parochially the Roman mind may have formulated it, the *homo humanus* is a being who no longer simply asks, "Do I like it?" but "Is it beautiful?," not simply "Is it useful?" but rather "Is it good?," no longer simply "How do I feel about it?" but rather, "Is it right?" The perspective focused on the sole question, "How do I feel about it?" is the essence of barbarism.

To the Enlightenment, which for several generations knew the Romans only as the Romans knew themselves, the Roman perspective appeared quite evidently accurate. As we gradually gain a less biased view of antiquity, the equation of "humane" with "Roman" becomes difficult to sustain. The barbarians, for all the crudity of their life, were not nearly the uncomplicated products of the clash between drive and reality principle which the Romans took them to be. Nor was Roman *humanitas* in practice as noble as the Romans described it. The distinction between the *homo humanus* and the barbarian simply does not coincide with that between the Roman and the Goth or the Celt. Freed from that historic identification, however, the distinction of humane and barbaric remains as a fundamental one between two modes of being human, one locked in the lock-step of need and gratification, the other opening out in *cultus*.

Given our predilection for psychology, we in our turn are likely to give the distinction a psychological rather than a cultural content and read it as a distinction between "immature" and "mature" developmental stages. One writer at least—Lawrence Kohlberg²⁰—has even attempted to superimpose the cultural and developmental projection and to speak of mature and immature societies, much as Hegel's nine-

teenth-century followers were wont to do, whether to justify revolution or colonialism. It seems likely, though, that we shall have to abandon this identification no less than the cultural one. Nor is the equation with "natural" and "artificial" any more persuasive. The distinction between a moral and a barbaric sense of our humanity defies easy equations. Still, it is a real difference, though between two modes of being human rather than between two instances. *Humanitas* is the quality of living at the intersection of time and eternity.

That remains the valid moment in what has often been parochial, the ideal of *homo humanus* and of our *humanitas*—more recently "humanism"—not simply as a natural or a historical fact but as a moral ideal by which the human can orient his life. That, in fact, is the aspect of Roman *humanitas* to which the great Stoic thinkers pointed in less naïve though still inevitably culture-specific terms. In the Stoic metaphor, the distinction between the humane and barbarian modes of being came to coincide with the distinction between reason and emotion. To modern readers of Stoic texts, used to equating reason with reasoning and nature with the physical system described within the framework of the natural sciences, those texts often appear confusing. The Stoics seem to be advocating an "unfeeling intellectualism."²¹ For the Stoics, though, reason was not reasoning. It was the moral order of the cosmos, the *logos* in which humans may participate as bearers of the spark of reason. Nature here was the autonomous rhyme and reason of reality. The privilege and the distinguishing mark of humans is not our reasoning ability but rather our Reason, the divine spark which enables us to break free of the blind tyranny of drives and gratification and to grasp the moral sense of life. Unlike the slave of passion, a wise man is one capable of living in harmony with the moral order of the cosmos.

When we read the Stoics anachronistically, endowing the terms "reason" and "emotion" with their contemporary psychological significance, it is easy to make light of Stoic teachings. If anything, it becomes quite difficult to see how reasonably intelligent humans could have thought that human life can be transformed into such a cold, intellectual abstraction. Then it becomes equally easy to point out that the Stoics could not possibly live up to their own teachings. The driving force of the humanitarianism so prominent in the Roman Stoa—the Stoics, after all, built bridges, staffed hospitals, reformed the courts, and administered an empire—was obviously not reason but the *love of reason*.

Such an obvious criticism, though, misses an important point. The basic contrast which the Stoics sought to express by their opposition

of reason and the passions was not an exercise in faculty psychology as much as a reflection of the experiential difference between a moral and a mundane, temporal sense of life. The categories they chose may have become unfortunate with the shift of meaning of their terms in modern psychology. Or perhaps they were unfortunate from the start. Certainly, it becomes rather awkward when we need to speak of a rational emotion—as the love of justice—and of emotional reason, as in the case of calculating egotism. Any set of categories, though, will become unfortunate if we fail to grasp the central insight which they seek to articulate. Conversely, the failings of any categorical schema become unimportant when we read its terms as pointers, evoking a basic insight. The categories of reason and the emotions, for all their undeniable defects, served remarkably well, both in antiquity and in the Renaissance, to express the fundamental difference between a life conceived as merely temporal and life conceived as having a moral sense.

With the triumph of Christianity in the Middle Ages, the humanism of ancient Rome receded from prominence. To the moral zealots of the new creed, humanism became symbolic of a self-indulgent egocentrism, much as it seems to have become to Alexander Solzhenitsyn in our time. Then as now, the utter misunderstanding on all sides is as palpable as it is distressing. The Christians, far more than either they themselves or the cultured Romans of their time realized, were in their moral fervor precisely heirs of the classic *humanitas* which, a century or two earlier, carried far more the connotation of selfless service than of self-indulgence. In one of history's great ironies, the Christians regarded the cultured Romans as "barbarian" in the classical sense—as persons whose humanity was no more than a reflection of natural need and greed, conventionalized to fit the constraints of reality but devoid of a transcending moral vision. They remained blind to the radically atemporal, moral vision of humanity in Roman Stoicism. When they encountered it, as in Seneca, they frequently assumed that the author must have been a Christian, as many medievals in fact believed of Seneca. For now it was the Christians who were proclaiming a moral conception of being human.

Verbally, the categories of Christianity appeared radically different from those of old Rome and were to become even more so in time. While old Rome contrasted culture with crudity and the Stoics reason with emotion, the Christians contrasted the sacred with the mundane. Specifically, it was the contrast between the human conceived *kata sarka*, according to the flesh, with the human conceived *kata pneuma*, according to the spirit, terms quite alien to the Roman intellectual

tradition.²² Yet the basic perspective is closely analogous. *Kata sarka*—yes, the human conceived according to the flesh is still the old barbarian, the man of passions whose humanity is no more than a product of greed and gratification, no matter how refined. And *kata pneuma*? It is the human capable of responding to God's challenging and redeeming call, capable of breaking out of the bondage of utility, placing his life in the perspective of the vision of the Good. The terms have changed, but the fundamental humanistic vision persists.

If anything, Christianity augmented rather than denied the humanistic vision in attributing cosmic significance to the human drama. It is through the human, the Christians insisted, that "sin came into the world," that the basic rightness of the creation was disrupted and the human alienated from the ground of his being. In turn, it is through a human, God become man, and through the humans who hear him, that the restoring grace enters in. That is the uniqueness of the human role in the economy of the cosmos: the human is capable of operating not only on a "natural" level of need and gratification but also on a moral level of good and evil, which, through him, enters into the world. In the terms we have been using, humans mediate between temporality and eternity.

That is a Christian vision, but it is no less a humanistic one. What the Christians rejected was a degenerate humanism which attributed a moral significance to a "humanity" conceived in strictly temporal terms, making human need and gratification the measure of all things. What they reaffirmed, though rejecting the term, was the classic humanist vision of the human as a moral subject, capable of knowing truly and acting rightly, in a morally ordered world.

Christian humanism decayed in its turn as the Middle Ages progressed. The radically nontemporal, moral dimension of being human came ever more to be encoded as a substantial "immortal soul," the contrast between the natural and the moral was ever more replaced by a contrast between the natural and the "supernatural." In another one of the ironies of intellectual history, the new Renaissance humanists reaffirmed the moral dimension of being human, including its Stoic rationalist components, under the label of the "natural" against the "supernatural." It is ironic but not surprising. When the moral came to be conceived as "supernatural," it came no less to appear as an irrelevant, pale copy of the richness of concrete moral life—or of "natural" life and "natural" reason.

As the Renaissance saw it, that "natural" life was by no means one-dimensional, a lock-step of need and gratification. The Enlightenment, applying the Renaissance insight to praxis much as the Roman Stoics

applied the teachings of the middle Stoa, rediscovered the Stoic conception of reason as the faculty which opens a moral dimension to human existence, not as "supernatural" but as intrinsic to it. The struggles of the Enlightenment with the ecclesiastical authorities of the time, typified by the futile clash of Austria's Joseph II with the Church, again seem a tangle of misunderstanding. Both sides of the dispute were defined in terms which, each in its own way, sought to affirm precisely the moral dimension of being human. Revelation, as the Christians conceived of it, and reason, as the Enlightenment understood it, both pointed to the distinctive dimension of being human which breaks the lock-step of need and gratification with the vision of the good, the true, the beautiful. Perhaps the conflict was doubly inevitable. The term "revelation" had lost the significance of the clear vision of the transcendental dimension of being human and had come to mean, instead, a highly mystified doctrine. Reason, too, was no longer simply Plato's clear rational vision but, with Galileo and Kepler, increasingly meant reasoning. The resulting conflict burdened modern humanism with an antireligious bias, which inevitably led the humanists to stress the "this-worldly," the "natural" character of the *humanitas* they proclaimed. When, however, we understand "natural" in the reduced sense of the merely biological and temporal, devoid of any moral sense, then such "natural" humanity can represent only the pathos of everydayness, not a moral ideal. So conceived and proclaimed as the measure of all things, "humanity" does indeed become a justification of self-indulgent greed. Then a new voice must arise, castigating humanism in the name of its own basic insight, the moral vision of life, only speaking of it in some new terms, perhaps as a moral naturalism. . . .

Yet naturalism has problematic connotations of its own, serious enough to warrant yet another attempt to recover the older term. Perhaps because the starry heaven above is so powerful a presence in a forest clearing, it was Immanuel Kant who, for me, served as a catalyst of that recovery. Kant, to be sure, is a problematic figure. It is also true that, together with Descartes, he helped steer Western thought along the solipsistic lines of the "Copernican" revolution, reducing reality in itself to unknowability and turning the task of knowledge from seeing and listening—clear vision and faithful articulation—to one of designing constructs.²³ His *Theory of the Heavens* would seem far removed from the primordial philosophic vision at dusk. Yet the opening line of the conclusion to his *Critique of Practical Reason*, "the

starry heavens above and the moral law within," is a classic outcry of just that vision. Kant is radically aware of the human as a moral subject. When we reduce his profound vision of moral humanity to a "formalistic theory of ethics," we shall inevitably find it wanting. Max Scheler, in his earnest grappling with Kant, points out with evident justice the shortcomings of Kant's work, most basically Kant's dismissal of all values that present themselves in the order of time as *eo ipso* merely prudential. Kant, as Scheler reads him, saw clearly that a moral "ought" cannot be derived from a prudential "is"—and concluded that reason must supply it from without. He overlooked the moral sense of being, the radical intersection of time with eternity.

For all the justice of Scheler's criticism, though, it is still Kant who offers the challenge, sets the perspective, and provokes the insight of what, with some qualms, we have been calling "humanism." That insight is humanistic in the profound sense of seeing the moral rather than the merely factual or historical dimension of being human as definitive of our *humanitas*. Implicit in it, there is a triple recognition. One, which Scheler and Husserl were to elaborate far more adequately, is present in Kant's *Preface to the Metaphysics of Morals*: the recognition that there is a truth, there to be seen, and that humans are capable of such vision.²⁴ To speak of that vision as a "rational intuition" is misleading, both because of the technical connotations of "reason" in current usage and because of the irrationalistic connotations of "intuition." Husserl's and Scheler's favorite German term, *Wesensschauung*, the ability to perceive the sense of what is, may be more to the point.²⁵ It is the claim which remains speculative in a world of artifacts and constructs, devoid of a sense and a truth of their own, but becomes evident in the radical bracketing of solitude at dusk: there is a sense, there is a *logos*. Humans are not condemned to speculation; they can *see*. It may be the greatness of Kant's three *Critiques* that, contrary to his apparent claim and intent, their final impact is not one of producing speculative assent but of evoking a vision of the true, the good, the beautiful.

Linked with that is the second recognition, which I think definitive of humanism, that nature and history alike are relative to the eternal, the Idea of the Good which Kant, with indifferent success, sought to formulate as the moral law. His specific formulations have been subjected to innumerable critical examinations and, invariably, found wanting. With reason. Words do not contain the truth, they point to it and evoke it. Even the oft-noted fact that Kant's various formulations of the moral law are not convertible with each other should alert us that their unity is of a different order. Each in its way seeks to evoke a

vision of the moral law. To be sure, even the term "law" has become misleading in its formal, legalistic connotations. Terms like moral structure, moral order, or, in our usage, moral sense of being, its essential rightness, may serve better. But it is the reality which is the point and to which Kant's formulations point—that there is a rightness and that humans are capable of perceiving it with the same evident clarity as they perceive the starry heavens above.

There is a third aspect to the essential humanistic recognition which again we owe to Kant: the harmony of the order of the starry heavens above and the moral law within. We might, again, quibble over terms: the moral law is really not "within." The fundamental reality to be seen, however, is that there is no essential conflict between the moral sense of being human and the sense of the cosmos. It is not because humans are as impersonal as objects are reputed to be. Rather, it is because the cosmos, the starry heaven, is far more personal, essentially continuous with the moral order of being human.

That triple recognition, of the human as capable of grasping his moral place within the order of the cosmos, represents the core of the "humanistic" conception of being human. Though it is not Kant's explicit formulation, still in a very real sense we owe it to him and should bear that indebtedness in mind when, as in Rádl's case, we take Kant to task for his part in working the Copernican revolution in philosophy. Precisely by his clear, uncompromising recognition that moral judgments are radically "nonfactual," nontemporal, reflecting not the vicissitudes of the temporal process but a vision of the moral law alone, Kant stands as witness that the unique place of humans and their task in the cosmos need not entail a dehumanization of nature and an explosion of the arrogant human will to power—in spite of his own demeaning view of nonhuman nature.

That, to be sure, remains a perennial danger—and the fortunes of positivistic humanism in the nineteenth century testify no less to that. In fairness to positivism, we should recognize that its impulse, wholly forgotten in our time, was fundamentally and quite explicitly moral. The utilitarians were almost compulsive reformers and general benefactors of humanity. Though it would be difficult to derive Bentham's or Mill's reforming fervor from the overt contents of their doctrines, it is still impossible to overlook it. Similarly, Auguste Comte's "cult of humanity," no matter how flawed and quaint in retrospect, had a clear moral thrust. Perhaps no one formulated that thrust as clearly and explicitly as the grand old man of ethical naturalism, John Dewey. His *Experience and Nature* stands as a grand monument to the attempt

to combine a positivistic sense of nature with a moral sense of experience.²⁶

It is not the failings but the greatness of Mill, Comte, or Dewey that shows most clearly the limitations of their approach. Theirs is a humanism wholly contained in temporality. What is absent from it is precisely the recognition of the transtemporal reference which anchors utility in a vision of the Good. Dewey comes closest to that recognition. His conception of joy, of enjoyment as true fulfillment, making being whole, is really nonutilitarian. It is the intrinsic joy of being that it invokes. In Dewey's work, to be sure, it remains marginal. The operative value concept here is "growth," reflecting the vitalist and historicist attempt to find the eternal in time, value in the process itself. For all the noble attempts, a humanism which sees in our *humanitas* no more than the factual and temporal reality of our lives stands in a perennial danger of slipping into a narcissism of our species which perceives our humanity no longer as a moral obligation but simply as a rationalization of our rapacity or an excuse for our flabbiness. Humanism becomes tenable only when it recognizes that the human is *not* the measure of all things, his moral *humanitas* is. Humanism becomes defensible when what we take as definitive of our humanity is the ability to transcend the narcissism of our species and to see ourselves and our place in the cosmos in the mirror of the moral law.

Or so I thought, through evenings of reflection. Not long before, I had received a new Czech translation of Vergil's *Bucolica*, in resplendent hexameters. I memorized it, and the mood was on me.

O Tityre, rozvalený tam kde stín, kde vánek a tráva,
píšťalou rákosovou pěstíš si náklonnost můz.²⁷

Had it not been for the cellar holes, I might well have rested content with some such modified religious humanism. It is intellectually satisfying and most respectable, with its two millennia of philosophical tradition. It can provide an adequate accounting of the place of humans in the cosmos, and can even generate categories capable of subsuming our ordinary dealings with our fellow humans, in the street, the store, the office, giving it a touch of class.

It cannot, though, subsume the cellar holes, still and vine-covered in the noontime sun, where humans had once lived, loved, labored. The presence of my predecessors on this land, gone long before my time, is of a different order. It is so ethereal and yet so utterly tangible

in the small traces of their works. Now there is only the forest, yet human hands once planted those vines and cared for the apple trees, human hands had raised the boulders of the old dam and wedged them with small stones. I can subsume the people passing me in the street or the people whose doings the newspapers report within humanist categories. My predecessors on this land defy those categories: they are so eternal and yet so concrete in their presence.

There have been others who dwelled on this land. As I go about my tasks, I come upon the fading traces of their presence. Amid the wild growth by the low stone wall, some currant bushes have gone wild, both red and white. Once upon a time, a woman raised a garden there. When I first came to the land, I decided to dig a ditch to drain a swampy patch. Sighting along the lie of the land, I chose the likeliest route and set to digging. After a few yards, I realized that I was clearing a long-forgotten drainage ditch, filled over the years with twigs, leaves, and branches. That land, though, had been under water while the dam stood, and no one lived there after the dam gave way. It must have been one of the earliest settlers, living there before the dam flooded the land, who, as I did, sighted along the lie of the land and, choosing the likeliest route, set to digging. I came as a stranger to a wilderness and yet even here the verse of Scripture spoke to me—"we shall dig again the wells of our fathers."

I have not literally dug those wells again. When the dam burst, the groundwater level receded some three fathoms. To follow it down would take long and dangerous labor in cramped quarters. There are springs nearby, close to the surface. But I have found three wells. The land on which I live, today a part of a forest extending for miles around, once sustained enough families to fill a schoolhouse with some two dozen children each year. Families were larger then, but each child attended school for only four years. It would have taken some twenty to thirty families to keep the school filled. For such a concentration, there would need to be jobs. There were, in fact, two mills, the sawmill and cooperage on my land, boasting the four-foot circular saw which gave it its name, and a gristmill downstream, each employing several men. Their presence slowly emerges from the silent forest. Each winter's frost brings up a horseshoe or some farm implement. This spring I found a drop-forged ax-head which had lost none of its temper over the years. The old-timers believe that a man's strength—his *virtu*, though they would not use that word—is vested in his ax. When I found this one, I sensed it as a gift from the generations of my predecessors, their acceptance of me among the cellar holes that mark the dwelling sites of a century ago.

There is a well-preserved, carefully built cellar across the road. The house that once stood there had two chimneys and two stories, covered with yellow clapboards. Doctor Ryan lived there, early in the nineteenth century, and his son, Colonel Ryan, after him. The fragments of their lives preserved by the Historical Society include samplers and paper dolls made by Colonel Ryan's daughter: once they had been cherished. Then there was John Preston, whose descendants still live on the other side of the mountain. He had bought the mill from Colonel Ryan and operated it with his partner, the enterprising Derastus P. Emory, who was born a laborer's son and died a millionaire at a time when a dollar was a day's wage. There were, I have heard, also the Smiths, humble folk who left no record, but whom the oldest inhabitants of the town remember living here in a large rambling farmhouse at the time when the mill burned down when a new owner sought to dispose by fire of a pile of tailings on a day not quite rainy enough for the job.

The cellar hole of the Smiths' farmhouse brought home to me most clearly the reality of the others on the land. One of its buckling walls gave way under me as I was clearing what once had been an orchard. As the stones shifted, they revealed a flat file in what had been a crack between the threshstone and the cellar wall. I held it in my hand for a long time, imagining its long-gone user who must have searched for it, so certain that he had it in his hand just the other day, so certain it must be here somewhere, turning to his wife, as men will. . . . Suddenly, holding that lost and found file in my hand, I found myself wishing desperately that he may not have grown angry and shouted at his wife about that lost file. Humans grow angry so easily, so heedlessly venting their anger at those nearest and most vulnerable, needlessly, wantonly injuring what is most precious and most fragile. That, too, was ever so, through the millennia. Holding the file, I realized with all the powerful immediacy of direct insight how superficial are the spectacular changes in constructs and artifacts which fascinate us so. What is most real is also what is most perennial, the basic counterpoint of good and evil, of love and hurt, of labor and devotion, of hope and sorrow. I thought of Helen's spinning basket with its cunning casters, as Homer describes it. The woman of this house might well have had a sewing basket just like it and taken the same gentle, familiar pleasure in it. I hoped intesely that the farmer did not grow angry and hurt his wife in the small tenderness of daily life because of the lost file I had found. At the same time I realized what is wanting about philosophical humanism, even a moral humanism. Humans are not only humans, moral subjects and vital organisms.

They are also *Persons*, capable of fusing eternity and time in the precious, anguished reality of a love that would be eternal amid the concreteness of time.

A person is a being through whom eternity enters time. Perhaps the man whose file I found amid the crumbling foundations of his house once said to his wife, "I will love you for ever." That is an incredibly audacious statement for a being who dwells in ever-flowing time. Yet he said it. It was an intensely personal statement. A person is a being who can cherish—and bear the pain of losing.

A person is a being whose being has an integrity of its own. It encloses a past within itself, as the oak encloses the sapling, and opens up a future within, as the mother porcupine bearing her young within her. A person is a being who is not just an aggregate but an integral whole, as tangible as the currants planted by a woman long ago, yet transcending time as her memory.

A person is a being who meets you as a Thou, not just a "you," opening himself to you, both offering and claiming respect. In the encounter of persons, categories of respect—*moral* categories—are in order. Not simply categories of purpose: purpose can also be mechanical and pointless. Nor categories of causality. Rather, it is the categories of respect, of good and evil, of right and wrong, that govern the encounters of persons.

Humans are beings capable of being persons. The category of Person, though, is both higher and deeper—and broader. My predecessors, whose presence I feel so keenly on this land, are no longer humans, yet they remain persons, their presence personal—and I know I owe them the respect due persons. God, too, though once he was also a man, cannot be said to be "human." Yet he can be said to be Person, most eminently so, a personal, not an impersonal presence. His creatures, too: they are not humans, yet neither are they impersonal, biomechanisms. Their life has an integrity, they command respect as bearers of value in time. They, too, are persons, each after its own kind. Nor could we speak of the universe as human: in defining ourselves as distinctively human, we stress our isolation within it. Yet it is not inappropriate to speak of the *kosmos* as personal, the locus of eternal value embodied in time, marked by an integrity that demands respect. As humans, we may feel strangers within it, yet as Persons, we are radically kin.

I would not apologize for my distinctiveness: I cherish the millennia of *humanitas* whose heir I am. There are, though, the cellar holes;

there are the raccoons and the birches, there is the moon and the spirit of God, ever present amid the hum of the sun-warm forest and the ageless boulders. A philosophy of humanism, for all its value, must remain a special case theory. More is needed—a philosophy of personalism.