

P R E F A C E

Throughout this volume I have used the definition of dualism that I presented in the Preface to Volume I; I have never found occasion to alter it. This definition runs as follows. There is dualism if we are confronted with two utterly opposed conceptions, systems, principles, groups of people, or even worlds, without any intermediate terms between them. They cannot be reduced to each other; in some cases they are not even dependent on each other. The opposites are of a different quality, so much so that one of them is always seen as being distinctly inferior and hence must be neglected, repudiated, or even destroyed. Reduced to the shortest possible notion, dualism is about unsolvable oppositions.

Time and again, in volume after volume, I have cautioned my readers about two frequently occurring misunderstandings about dualism. The first is that it has an Iranian origin, the second that it is only to be found in the field of religion and perhaps also in that of philosophy. This time I leave the task of combating these two misconceptions to an expert on the subject of Mithraism, Samuel Laeuchli. This scholar says that "the dualistic problem has been confused by two rigid assertions. The first limits dualism to an extreme of an Iranian type of two gods, one good and one evil. The second limits dualism to only the metaphysical, religious, or philosophical aspects of such duality. This narrow conception of dualism prevents the observer from grasping the dualistic problem in the ancient world." (Samuel Laeuchli, *Mithraic Dualism. Mithraism in Ostia*, pp. 61/62. Ed. Samuel Laeuchli (1967)).

There is yet another misunderstanding, namely that the absolute opposite of dualism would be monism, to the point that the decisive choice would be between either monism or dualism. This would have the curious consequence that the opposition monism-dualism would be dualistic itself. But in previous volumes I have argued more than once that monism and dualism both are unsatisfactory explanations of what is. I do not think that I need explain this for dualism once again. By attempting to subsume all existents under one principle, monism does violence to reality. Reality does not suffer to be categorized in this way. There will always be left a residue that remains outside the monistic system. These elements protest, by way of speaking, against being harnessed into a rigid system. Dualism quite easily originates then.

I found a curious presentation of the pair monism-dualism in a bulky work by the German scholar Gustav Portig who 'flourished' about a century ago. He produced several works. The book I have in mind appeared in 1904 in Stuttgart and is titled 'Das Weltgesetz des kleinsten Kraftaufwandes in dem Reiche der Natur'. What we need is Volume II, 'In der Astronomie und Biologie', and more in particular its Part I, 'Die Grundzüge der monistischen und dualistischen Weltanschauung', § 2 Die philosophischen Grundzüge des Monismus und des Dualismus'. We are led to our subject with German 'Gründlichkeit'.

According to Portig then, the very last or most fundamental principle of all thought is that there are 'dualities', no matter whether these are composed of simple elements or form immense groups of complicated factors. Even God can only think of himself as being part of a duality, namely that of God and the world. There are only two basic forms of dualities; all phenomena in the universe can be reduced to one of these two. Turning to metaphysics, we must speak of these dualities as the monistic and the dualistic world-view.

Monism says : All is One, and One is All. Between the One and the All Portig inserts a duality as an intermediate. He admits that there is a contradiction in this, viz. that something conditional is at once the unconditional; obviously the 'unconditional' here is 'the All' und the 'conditional' 'the One'. It is evident that Portig has no need of a 'block monism';

there must be a measure of flexibility in it so that it does not consist of wholly identical elements. Oppositions are possible, but they are always only of a quantitative nature. Dualism says : the unconditional and the conditional must be there together, but as primary forms of reality they are essentially different. The elements are qualitatively different, quality being understood as something that is metaphysically independent. In short : the monistic world-view has its roots in the primary metaphysical principle of quantity, the dualistic one in that of quality.

According to a monistic world-view, the world process consists only in changes in the quantities and the intensities : hotter or colder, longer or shorter, softer or harder, more or less. Monism means unending becoming, perpetual activity. Were this different, it would not be possible to explain why there is multiplicity in the world. Between the initial absolute One and multiplicity comes activity. However, this unending becoming is a form in which Being, which is rigid, presents itself. The normal situation of the world is rest, so that the world process, which is movement, will always return to rest. Action will always be followed by reaction, and the final result is immobility. I would not be surprised if Portig was thinking here of the law of entropy.

The dominating concept of monism is that of infinite possibilities. But if this is correct, then reality is not truly real, but only apparently so. Everything that is real ends in being a possibility, open to becoming something else. There is no difference between possibility and reality. It will be evident that Portig has no sympathy for monism, since it cannot bring forth a world. It is not creative. But in dualism we find the principle of creativity. There are subjects which cannot be reduced to each other because they are existentially different. Between them there is interaction. Consequently, they possess the power to change a possibility into a new reality (which reality does not finally become a possibility once again). The two primal substances are spirit and matter, and from their fruitful opposition all things result.

I am ready to go along with Portig a long way, but I differ from him with regard to one essential point. He should not have used the term 'dualism' in

the manner he does. It leads to confusion. People often subsume all kinds of oppositions under the generic concept of 'dualism'. They would do better to refer to 'dualities'. In a discussion with a Dutch professor of ancient history, she was consequent enough to deny that such a thing as 'dualism' existed. Oppositions, yes, but not dualistic, that is, unsolvable oppositions. Stating that all dualities, all oppositions are dualistic, what Portig does, and holding that there is no dualism means the same thing : that there are no insolvable oppositions. And this is denying an important part of reality.

Although Portig frequently uses the term, he has in fact no room for dualism. His monism does not admit to oppositions; it is one great undifferentiated mass from which things come forth and into which they dissolve again. His dualism is fundamentally creative; it can only produce. But there is no room in it for what does not fit, for what leads to nothing. Let me state categorically that dualism is not creative, that it does not bear fruit. It is negative and destructive. All the twelve volumes of this series have amply born this out, and this thirteenth volume will be no exception to this.

My deceased corrector and friend John R. Dove has corrected the Chapters I-V of this volume. He did this in his usual precise and courteous way, but he had to give up when he had done a few pages of Ch. VI. I have expressed my deeply felt and lasting gratitude to this good man by dedicating this volume to his memory. It would perhaps have been more appropriate to dedicate Volume XII to him, but when he died, that volume was in production already. I praise myself happy for having found, soon after John's stepping back, an excellent new corrector. She is a young woman, Ms Jo Swabe, a native English speaker with a good command of the Dutch language; she is a sociologist who lives in Amsterdam. When this volume was in its last stages of preparation, she received her doctorate on December 5th, 1997. The theme of her doctoral dissertation bears some unintended resemblance to that of the present series : 'The Burden of Beasts. A Historical Sociological Study of Changing Human-Animal Relations and the Rise of the Veterinary Regime'. After we had come to an agreement, she corrected the Chapters VI-VIII, the

Epilogue, and the Preface. Her style of correcting is not essentially different from that of Dr. Dove : accurate, courteous, and leaving my text intact.

Somewhere in the margins of her existence my oldest daughter, Dr. Th.A.M. Smidt van Gelder-Fontaine, a philosopher, found the time to read by far the greater part of the text, chapter by chapter in typescript, and to comment on its contents; that she could this time not do all of it was due to very heavy pressure of work. Then my dear wife Anneke came into action; she corrected the one-but-final version of each chapter on typing errors. I must state, however, that everything in this work is my own responsibility, the scholarly contents, the lay-out, and the typing. Finally, Mr. J.C. Gieben, the publisher, stood ready to accept my brain-child and make into a book.

To this volume I add, just as to Vol. XII, a Manual, destined for those readers who are not acquainted with the foregoing volumes; it can help them to find the subjects they are interested in with the help of this thematic catalogue. At the end of this Volume one will find a number of schemes that may assist readers to find their way in the labyrinth of theological opinions.

Vol. XIV will be about 'the enemies of the Roman order'.

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