RATIONALITY AND BEYOND

Die Welt ist Meine Empfindung
A. Schopenhauer

I. WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM THE HISTORY OF IDEOLOGY?

Man, possibly right, claimed himself to be the crown of all creatures. An impostor, however, has to pretend to be an anointed man. Status quo will not be sufficient. Then belief in man’s distinguished position ought to be proved strongly. This necessity opens a large field for intellectuals, who may qualify to show that indeed Caesar is the best and the most honourable among the all possible emperors, either because of the thumb of the Lord, or his genealogy, his faculties, his beautiful voice, etc. Except the flatterers there are critics as well. Fine critique makes flattery more credible. Both, the flatterer and the critic, know well that upon success of one of these different methods, depends prosperity of their camarilas and themselves. A recipe for success must be obviously founded on a well-done classification. Every classification is based upon a suitable principle. If one of them is finely tuned we may have a temptation to find ourselves in the situation described by Quine in his famous anecdote about the cyclopedic. Let, the principle of our classification be claimed as a priori, necessary and objective metaphysical reason. The consequences must be imminent.

Homo Sapiens, as we have entitled ourselves, has been firmly impressed by his distinguished position – really distinguished, without any irony.

We are the unique creatures, for whom the World is by no means a pure natural fact, but rather a sui generis problematic situation. I have used Popper’s term here, but I understand it in quite different sense. Let us notice the deceitfulness of the analogy of the path to watering-place. A river paving its way does not find itself in a problematic situation. The choice is made by the shape of the terrain, by physical laws, and finally by an accident too. The optimal solution is correlated neither to emotion, nor to values.

On the contrary, for the human being, the World is not given directly, as pure data. To acknowledge a certain vision of the world we must first get to
believe in it. What we receive is only a matter that we have to form. How we have to form this matter strongly depends upon our feeling of the form, and our belief in the form of the very form. Here is, for me, the meaning of the problematic situation. A problem is something what engages me totally. Reasoning can help me recognise or solve it, but the problem also, or even first of all, affects an emotion, a passion, a desire; moreover will initiate every action.

In 1907–1908 there was no empirical need for a great intellectual effort to rebuild the very foundations of the physical image of the World. General Relativity did not replace the older theory because of any pragmatic aim. Newtonian mechanics was still proving itself in many theoretical, and practical applications as well. Only the vision of the unity of physical world, describable on the background of a unique fundamental theory, and covered by a unified set of principles, was damaged in that period. Neither Newtonian mechanics, nor Maxwell’s Theory of electro-magnetism could pretend to play a role of the unique fundament of physics. This situation was great dissatisfactory for most physicists. The dream about the simple theoretical order was removed far beyond the horizon. If the World does not agree with our feelings, a problem arises.

Every problem is a resentment against our distinguished position. Hence we desire a revenge, and we wish to confirm our unquestionable anointment. However, we are not ultimately certain of our position. We are afraid that the World could play us a trick and that at some moment we shall face a problem that can destroy our comfortable situation, so hardly achieved. We can create passionately and disinterestedly, remembering in our minds that we are also capable of a quite disinterested destruction. All efforts to create harmony involve a germ of its self-destruction, as if a premonition of an anarchic decay.

Therefore from ages we search for certainty, for guaranty, and for the recipe. The certainty, that our feeling of the Universe is better, more right, and more objective. The recipe, which permits us to act safely, but according to our wishes, born from our vision of reality. Finally, the guaranty, that the path on which we step will not to be a back-street.

The antinomy between the sense of our dignity and authority, and the fear that the ‘problem of the World’ could overwhelm us is the source of differences between philosophical and ideological views. We may perform many subtle analyses, but we know a vista that philosophy can guarantee us neither certainty, nor recipe. Philosophy can only propose, but potentiality of this proposition must be actualised. The World is such, as we would believe it to be. Ideology is philosophy, which we confess. The belief causes that the system of ideas and values gives us the feeling of certainty, guaranty and justice. We