Man's Way and Nature's Way

Bernard PHILLIPS

The New School for Social Research, New York City

In whatever area of life man functions as a conscious agent, he is always confronted by something towards which his actions are directed, and whose existence is prior to and apart from his will to mold or manipulate it. A large part of human life is given over to the struggle to impose man's own ideas on situations which do not antecedently accord with them, and which remain in the end only partly submissive to his intentions. As far as human experience goes, there is no situation which is plastic without residue to man's wishes. Ingredient in every transaction are certain brute factors which continue to be impervious to his designs, and which he must needs accept for what they are. These intractably non-conformist elements are in opposition to his plans for them, and eventually, they limit, in ways unforeseen, the transformations which he had originally envisaged.

At times, man is impelled by the hope that these "pockets of resistance" may one by one be made to capitulate, and that he may some day rule over an empire unresistingly compliant to his will. Infused with the spirit of idealism he returns again and again to do battle with the insurgents, certain that reason and right must ultimately prevail. But somehow every campaign undertaken with the idea of a final liquidation of the opposition concludes not in a total victory but in a mixture of victory and defeat. Where one rebel stronghold is finally taken, another, deemed loyal, suddenly hoists the banner of revolution. Or entirely unknown hordes of barbarians over-run the borders and create a new front.

At other times, man wearies of the struggle to impose his will on life. In a more realistic mood he sees that life will not submit to total or permanent conquest, and that he will never be able to transcend the need for some concessions to the *given*. Only particular forms of givenness may be forced to surrender, but their places will at once be occupied by other manifestations of brute factuality; the given as such, *überhaupt*, can not be utterly liquidated, and remains to challenge, in one form or another, man's claim to unlimited mastery over life. Man may not aspire to omnipotence for his operations are not *ex nihilo*; since he functions always within a context of givenness, his mastery of things must be less than total. He is perpetually reminded of his finitude as he encounters, in every phase of life which he undertakes to shape, a mysterious refractoriness whose strength seems to be commensurate with the vigor of his own determination to overcome it.

The world in which man lives and moves and has his being is thus strangely sundered. There is that in it which would somehow proceed of itself, an un-directed and unconscious spontaneity, a primitive innocence or wildness unconstrained by man's formal patterns and opposed to them; and there is that in it which bears the imprint of self-conscious will, of form and idea, of effort and law and contrivance. Whatever is of the former sort has the quality of "naturalness," which is simply *immediacy* as yet unfettered by reflective will. Nature is precisely that dimension or domain of reality which has not felt the human touch and which "*in suo esse perseverare conatur*." The realm of the natural comprises the totality of things whose uncontrived spontaneity has not been subjected to any heteronomous formation, reformation or guidance from the side of human consciousness. Wherever there has been intentional interference, organization, manipulation, planning, a structuring of process towards pre-determined ends—there the immediacy of nature has been transcended, there nature has been harnessed by an idea and her original individuality has been brought under the constraint of form. The more things, processes, or even persons are allowed to remain in the condition of their original givenness, of unformalized individuality, of unself-consciousness, of freedom from externally imposed standards—the more "natural" are they deemed to be. The natural is the domain of the *laissez faire*, of that which has been left to itself and to be itself free of human intervention. The more any context shows the stamp of human design and contrivance, of self-conscious striving, of formal discipline—the more does it lose its "naturalness" and take on the look of an artifact.

What is the ultimate significance of this duality of the natural and the human? Does immediacy exist only to be transcended, or does the immediate as such have a valid title to a place in life? Must nature finally yield to man, or will man merely exhaust himself in the vain endeavor to bring the untameable wildness of things under the rule of law? Is the idealist right in viewing nature as only a temporary and apparent obstacle to the triumphant march of consciousness, and in claiming that there is in ultimate reality no residue of unrationalizable bruteness? Or is human consciousness always matched by a mysteriously ubiquitous and protean antagonist whose indocility and non-conformist individuality will always stand as a barrier to the unrestricted sovereignty of the idea? Is the realm of nature only a deposit of raw material, a matrix of potentiality to be molded by the mind of man? Or is nature rather to be left largely as she is, and is she instead to serve man as a norm for his own life and as a reminder of the perils of over-civilization? Is man to move in the direction of minimal interference with the unconscious rhythms of nature in every area of life, or shall his effort be to maximize the rational control of nature? Shall man live by nature or by art?

One can only reply that all in all, man has never been able to permanently commit himself to either alternative. Both have appealed to him, either simultaneously or in alternation, and hence the history of human thought oscillates

endlessly between theories which would favor one alternative and points of view which uphold the other. So there have been partisans of primitivism and defenders of civilization and its values. Man leans at time toward a *laissez-faire* economics, at times towards a controlled economy. He has vacillated between naturalism and formalism in human manners, as well as in gardens, foods, clothing, and architecture; between naturalistic, non-authoritarian, non-disciplinarian schemes of education which would base themselves on the child's "natural" interests, and formal, classical, disciplinarian educational philosophies which would shape the child in accordance with an ideal heritage transcending his immediate interests; and between naturalistic realism in literature which would present life in its untouched immediacy letting the matter take its natural course, and the highly stylized and formal literature of classicism which shapes the material to be the vehicle of a form or an idea.

The way of nature is the way of unconscious immediacy, and stands in contrast to the way of active control and conscious foresight. Man's way involves a transcendence of nature to the extent that he seeks to direct her processes towards his own ends. It is man's intelligence, which impels him to look before and after, which leaves him above the blind and unconscious rhythms of nature, and which leads him to interfere with and to re-channel the energies of nature. The rational intellect has often been singled out as man's distinguishing mark, but it distinguishes him not only in the sense of exalting him above the rest of nature's creatures, but also in the more literal sense of separating him or alienating him from nature. Though man is rooted in nature, his life, so far as it is the product of his intellect, has a problematic quality which is altogether unnatural. Man's dilemma is that he is both *a part of* and *apart from* nature; he is in nature and yet not altogether of her. Neither a purely naturalistic nor an anti-naturalistic construal of the human situation honestly faces the paradox which is at the core of human existence. Though man yearns to be whole, he is strangely split—part nature, part transcending nature, and he alternately seeks salvation in nature and in that which is beyond her.

Man's approach to nature curiously resembles his inconsistent attitude toward woman, compounded as both attitudes are of love as well as hate. At one moment he feels the need to surrender to nature and to embrace her; at the next moment he fears that unless he dominates her he will be overwhelmed by her. For the most part, his effort to come into a satisfactory relationship with nature seems to be summed up in the desperate lines addressed by the Latin poet to his wife: "*Nec tecum nec sine te vivere possum.*" So man has wavered between regarding nature as the source of all good and seeing her as the fount of all evil.

In one mood, he looks upon nature as a cleansing and healing agent which will restore his original vitalities after these have been diminished by his artificial, unnatural and civilized mode of existence. Then for a time, nature in her immediacy becomes the norm for human life, and goodness, truth and

beauty are to be attained through "conformity with nature," or through "letting nature take her course," or by "being natural." Whether in education or in economics, in art or in social life, in manners or in morals, in gardens or in hair-do, in clothing or in food—the partisan of immediacy everywhere preaches the doctrine that the best government is synonymous with the least government, and he calls for a minimum of interference with natural process, even as he extols unaffected simplicity and unspoiled spontaneity. Then every effort to transcend the natural is placed under anathema. Form is felt to be a fetter which chokes life, and informality is prized; style is viewed as a cramping convention and an empty artifice; discipline is deemed a damper on individuality. "Be yourself" means "Be your immediate self," for to seek to bring spontaneous impulse under form is to seek to replace what is natural, and therefore true, with what is artificial, and therefore false. Conformity must result in de-formity.

But sooner or later the pendulum shifts. Man is captured by an opposite mood, and seeks salvation not in submission to nature but in rising above her. Now the "natural" becomes synonymous with the "wild," the "savage," the "brutish" and the "clumsy." The natural man is looked upon as the uncultured and uncultivated man, the unformed and uninformed clod, the raw and uncivilized boor. Virtue in every area of life is now identified with proper form and style; immediacy in all its modes is found to be unrefined. The truly human person is the civilized person who is no longer the passive prey of his natural impulses. The refinement of human nature results not from "doing what comes naturally"; it is the product of discipline and conscious effort. As a garden which has been surrendered to nature will soon go to weeds, so will man's "higher" or "uniquely human" capacities be choked out by his natural impulses unless these be pruned and trimmed. Human nature will flower only when nature has been transcended. Man must not seek to live according to nature, but rather according to human nature, and human stature is not a natural datum but an achievement and the fruit of cultivation. From this perspective, "To thine own self be true" can refer only to man's higher self—not to the natural or immediate self.

Physical nature, too, displays a mysterious ambivalence in her relations with man; she nourishes him even as she opposes him. On the one hand, we see man struggling to tame the desert, cutting down forests, gouging great holes in the earth's crust, and moving mountains—all for the purpose of imposing his own formal patterns on nature. In some measure, nature submits to this imposition. On the other hand, we see the sun pitilessly burning up the crops he has so laboriously planted, the sea relentlessly eating away at the foundations of his continents, and cities once inhabited but now buried beneath the jungle. From nature come all the materials of his life; she is the ultimate source of all the energies he employs. By her, he is supported and sustained, and yet she is also his implacable enemy. She has created both the malarial mosquito and the bark of the quinine tree. Out of her inexhaustible resources

she invents endlessly new guiles to checkmate man's unremitting efforts to bring her under his rational control. No sooner has he finished congratulating himself on having finally disposed of the insect menace by his discovery of DDT than he is stung by a new race of mosquitoes which have learned immunity to the poisons by which he would destroy them. Every victory over nature is only an apparent and a temporary one; in the end nature exacts commensurate payment for any concessions which she has made to man.

Man errs whenever he thinks he can wholly subdue nature. She has a soul of her own, and is not completely malleable. He errs just as surely whenever he decides he had better surrender to her unconditionally for this aim is no more capable of realization than its opposite. Man's inner needs will not finally be met either through conquest or surrender. In his heart, the feeling of kinship with nature is ultimately as strong as the urge to transcend nature by conquest. This is the paradox of human existence.

It is this inner schism which is responsible for his uncertainty. Shall nature be bent to fit man, or shall man be bent to fit nature? Man's mysterious fate is to be responsive to both urges equally. He feels on the one side, the urge toward civilization from which emerges the ideal dimension of life. Without civilization, life is devoid of human significance and sinks back to nature to become a purely biological affair of feeding, fighting, begetting and dying. It is the need for meaning—intrinsic to man's constitution—which prompts him to the effort to impose man's way on nature's way. It is just the fear of being engulfed by the impersonality of nature which leads him to build up a conscious world of ideals and meanings. It is the frustration of his need for meaning felt in the face of nature's vast incomprehensibility which drives him to the effort to transcend nature, to penetrate her with his reason, to dominate her and subject her to his control, and to impose his rational patterns on her. At times the urge towards civilization and the desire to dominate nature attain the tempo of demonic fury—and man is then converted into a maniacal Captain Ahab bent on the conquest quest of the White Whale. Modern man in particular has become increasingly obsessed with the desire for power over nature, and in his increasing fearfulness of every unprocessed and unmediated contact with nature, he has gone on to create the most unnatural and artificial environment which has ever been seen on the face of the earth.

Civilization, as the product of man's mind, is deeply antithetical to nature. Civilization is living by principle and human law, by man's logic and the blueprints it designs; it involves a setting aside of the natural rhythms, a processing of natural life, and a subjection of nature to form. The more purely civilized life becomes, the more is it alienated from its natural matrix, the more artificial, formal and conventional it is bound to become, the more depleted of natural vitality, the more "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

Then, sooner or later, the opposing urge in man's soul will begin to assert itself, for man is apparently not able to the simply and solely civilized. He

will begin to hear the call of the wild, and to feel the desire "to get away from it all." The artificialities of civilization will seem hollow along side the unspoiled harmonies of nature. And as his aversion for the cold pavements of the city mounts, he will begin to dream of Tahiti or at least of a cottage in the suburbs. Behind these romantic dreams there is the real need which engenders them—the need to be recharged through contact with the non-human, with unprocessed reality, with things in their immediacy. As food which is overly processed loses its original, natural, nutritive power, so in every area of life, the progressive transcendence of the natural is at the same time a progressive de-vitalization. Man's supposed victory over nature is in the end nature's victory over man, for nature is the spring of all vitality, and as he advances in the struggle to subdue her, he loses his natural strengths and immunities, and is lead into an ever greater dependence on nostrums of his own making which further devitalize him and create the need for still more nostrums. So modern man seeking to secure himself vis-a-vis nature becomes weaker in body and ever more psychologically insecure as he struggles to control the fantastically complicated apparatus which he has devised and which daily increases in complexity. Must he not finally come to that state of madness which overtakes the character in Kafka's parable *The Burrow*, as he unceasingly proliferates his maze of tunnels so that he may be perfectly secure against his enemy?

Man cannot conquer nature and retain mental and physical health. For health is wholeness, and life in its integrity is more than conscious contrivance. Life requires some amount of animal faith, some trust in nature's workings, some degree of acquiescence in her ways, some contact with her immediacy. Somehow a place must be left in every phase of life for unformed wildness, for uncultivated spontaneity, for the unconscious, the unplanned, the individual and the irrational, in short, for that immediacy which is nature. Excessive transcendence is deadening and finally deadly. Reality is not just cosmos; it is chaos and cosmos, wildness and order, immediacy and transcendence. A society which forgets this, which cherishes only form and civilization and fears nature, is pre-destined to death. Sooner or later, it will face the onslaught of less refined but more vital men, and it will eventually be over-run by the barbarian attacking from without, or by a horde arising from its own lower depths and in revolt against its effete forms. In the design of gardens as in the ordering of the economy, in the rearing of children and in the writing of poetry, that which is planned and that which is natural or *laissez faire* must both be granted a place.

No ultimate peace of soul can come to one who has not incorporated in his philosophy this element of permanent wisdom which is to be found in naturalism. To be a true naturalist or a true lover of nature is not alone to sentimentalize before sunsets and waterfalls. It is fundamentally to have acknowledged the rights of the immediately given in all its modes to a substantial place in life. It is to have deeply accepted the brute aspect of reality, and to value the un-

tameable vitality of nature and the resistance of individuality to formality. Though he must take steps to shield himself from the extremes of nature's fury, and though the exigencies of social life require some containment of the expansive energies of individuality, the true naturalist will want to allow as much scope as is feasible to individual initiative and to retain as much contact as is possible with the living immediacy of nature, for he knows that only in this way does life continue to be charged with vitality. He will not resent the resistance which all human plans must encounter from the side of the given realities, and he will not be under compulsion to eliminate every shred of opposition which nature and individuality put up to his wishes. To be a naturalist is to cherish immediacy in all its guises, and not to look upon nature, matter, individuality, and spontaneity, as merely raw potencies to be molded any which way man's ideas demand.

But naturalism is not the whole truth, and if immediacy is not to be falsely absolutized, then in the same breath the opposite thesis must also be asserted. Nature in the raw will no more serve the needs of life than nature wholly subdued. The sun is too hot, the winter is too cold, the jungle is too hostile. The soil must be cultivated, dams and dykes must be built against the ravages of wind and rain and tide, the weeds must not be allowed to choke the crops, food must be prepared to be palatable, shelter and clothing must be provided. Man, after all, is not just an animal, and he cannot live in wholly unmediated contact with nature. And beyond the question of bare physical survival, there is the necessity, if he is to remain human, to create patterns of meaning. Nature's unconscious immediacy, while deeply satisfying in one way, is in another way deeply unsatisfying. For while there is a sublimity about mountain peaks, and a majesty about the depths and the expanse of the oceans, and while it is true that "I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree," at the same time it is no less true that man has need of a beauty which has been fashioned by his own hand. The murmur of the forest, the song of birds, the "melancholy long receding roar" of the tides all feed and sustain him, but the epic, the symphony and the dance are equally necessary forms of nourishment. Unless he be continually fed by the creations of his own mind, man's inwardness atrophies as surely as his body wastes away in the absence of physical nourishment.

The mystery of human life is that both Socrates and Wordsworth are right; Wordsworth, when he says that

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Then all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings:
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—

We murder to dissect.

And Socrates, when he explains to Phaedrus that the reason he rarely leaves the city is that "the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees or the country." Is there any way of reconciling these opposite truths, and of preserving the values of both primitivism and civilization? For this is what life seems to call for. Nature alone runs to wildness without meaning; as man leaves nature behind and shifts towards an ever more civilized manner of existence, his life moves towards artifice and artificiality and undergoes a diminution of vitality. Neither conquest nor surrender defines the proper pattern of man's approach to nature. A holistic life is not to be achieved solely within the immediacy of nature, nor will it result from the transcendence of nature alone.

There is a famous sentence in the *Critique of Pure Reason* which epitomizes the entire argument of that lengthy work, namely, "*Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer, Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind.*" Do not the relations of nature and art lend themselves to a parallel formulation? *Die Kunst ohne die Natur ist leer, die Natur ohne die Kunst ist blind.* Every mode of man's transcendence of immediacy moves towards emptiness—that is towards abstraction, lifelessness, coldness, artificiality, formalism, rigidity—the farther it gets away from immediacy. Every mode of naturalistic immediacy moves towards blindness—that is towards meaninglessness, formlessness, incoherence, unrelatedness, disunity, and finally chaos—in the measure that it is not held together by a principle transcending immediacy. The conscious and the unconscious, the calculated and the spontaneous, bruteness and form, idea and fact, meaning and life, discipline and freedom, individuality and totality, in short, nature and art must come together in a *coincidentia oppositorum* if life is not to be lacking in integrity, authenticity and reality.

Whatever be the domain under consideration, to yield unduly to the pressures of immediacy, to give unrestricted freedom to the material, to remove the guidance and restraint of form is to ensure that the parts will begin to fall apart. Whether it be the case of a system of government, a musical composition, or the human psyche, always, as the parts are inordinately indulged the unity of the whole is impaired, and then the situation approaches the state of affairs in ancient Israel when there was no judge in the land and each man doeth that which is right in his own heart. This is the fallacy of all theories which seek salvation in the merely primitive, or the natural, or the informal. They are all guilty of absolutizing a relativity, and are blind to life's need of form and structure. Without an *arché*, there can only be '*anarchia*', that is, incoherent multiplicity.'

But this is only half the truth. Just as life requires order, ideals, norms, rationality, conscious control, organization, wholeness, and some containment of sheer individuality, so, no less, does it demand naturalness, freedom from manipu-

lation and formation, some place for the irrational vitalities and for unconstrained individuality, some concession to the immediate realities. As life comes to be dominated by an excessively transcendent principle, freedom, mobility, individuality will be brought under a totalitarian yoke. This will entail a forcing of life to fit some preconceived unity, a pressuring of the parts by something beyond themselves, the rationalization of behavior, and the imposition of a formal coherence which is antithetical to individuality. Perfect order means death, for it necessitates the abolition of individuality.

Where there is life there must be a place for wildness, for unruliness, for non-conformity and dis-order. Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic identification of reality with the world of form on the grounds that it did not account for motion may be generalized to every phase of life. Dynamism and vitality may be given form, but they cannot be generated by form. In the end, an excess of form freezes life into immobility. An idealistic universe is inevitably a block universe of static perfection. A perfectly planned economy paralyzes individual initiative; a purely formal garden or work of art has pattern and structure but no life; ethical formalism leads to a rigid inflexibility and an inability to cope with immediate realities; the over-formalization of manners leads to a stiffening of social relationships. Goodness, truth, beauty, authenticity can never result from mere *conformity* to principle; *conformity* yields *formality*, not reality. Herein lies the fallacy of all formalist or transcendentalist theories whether in religion, in art, in morals or in education. Reality resides not in form alone, but only in the union of meaning and vitality, form and freedom, idea and matter, mind and nature, universality and individuality.

The natural and the formal are in opposition to one another, and yet in need of one another. This is the frustrating paradox which plagues every human transaction. But has not Hegel charted the route by which man may escape from this sterile predicament? Must there not be a truth and a reality in which both nature and man are absorbed and in which they lose their mutual antagonism? Must they not be seen as merely thesis and antithesis which are to be '*aufgehoben*' in an ultimate synthesis? And does not the synthesis emerge as an Absolute Spirit in which the opposition of Nature and Mind is finally 'cancelled'?

Such a dialectical resolution would indeed be an easy way out of the human dilemma—if only it were a way out. But as a merely theoretical solution of a problem which is existential, it no more extricates man from his concrete predicament than a menu will dispel the pangs of hunger. The burdens of finite existence are not the easier to bear because the contradictions which haunt human existence have been eternally resolved in the Absolute Spirit. The marriage of nature and mind needs to be consummated *sub specie temporis*; it is in no wise facilitated by the rational demonstration that it is already consummated *sub specie aeternitatis*. How shall man confront his daily tasks when he has come to the recognition that to actively force his ideas on life is as unsatis-

factory as to passively yield all of his ideas to life? How shall he cope with an antagonist who will neither submit to conquest nor accept man's surrender? This is the dilemma which confronts the man of flesh and blood and which frustrates his yearning for a harmonious relationship to life? How shall he evade this dilemma, when logic can envisage only two alternatives: either man's actions stem from his rational intellect—and this entails the subjection of nature to form—or intellect abdicates in favor of nature and immediacy—with the consequence that meaning and coherence are engulfed in unconscious automatism? Neither alternative is feasible, and no other alternative seems possible.

From the purely logical point of view, it must be conceded, *tertium non datur*. As concepts, the formal and the formless are contradictories, and the laws of thought forbid their marriage. Nevertheless, there are occasions when that which is a scandal to reason emerges as a living reality. There are occasions when man's responses spring neither from reflection nor from impulse, but from what can only be described as his wholeness. At such times, he is neither active nor passive in relation to the given, but somehow both at once. He is neither merely shaping his materials nor merely shaped by them, but rather in creative unity with them so that he is transformed even as he transforms. The *tertium quid* which is the existential synthesis of activity and passivity is creativity. Creativity stems neither from the side of the agent alone (for this would be merely the imposition of form) nor from the side of the immediately given (for this would be the acquiescence in the formless), but from a fructifying union between them. In this creative union, the bifurcation of man and nature is existentially overcome, and the offspring of such a union will bear the genetic traits of both parents.

There are two opposite modes of uncreative experience—in the one, mind dictates to nature, in the other, nature dictates to mind. They are uncreative for the same reason, namely, that dictation or subordination is not integral synthesis. A creative transaction is one unanimously approved by all the parties concerned. The uncreative action is partial; it does not express a *volonté générale*, and it is not approved by the entire electorate because it favors some interests at the expense of others. Thus it must arouse resistance, friction, disharmony, and will require some amount of forcing, and suppression on the one hand, and some degree of surrender and submission on the other. It will thus lack the quality of being totally satisfying which is the unmistakable badge of the products of creative action. When the idea is merely imposed on the materials, they will always be inspired to some degree of resistance; when the raw materials govern the situation, the mind's need of form and unity remains unsatisfied. When there is creative response, neither is slighted; the mind's longing for formal unity and nature's demand for freedom are simultaneously gratified.

The creative experience can flow neither from man's "higher," or rational, or transcendent dimension, nor is it the fruit of that immediacy of response

which characterizes his unreflective or "lower" side. Neither the natural man nor the "supernatural" man can be truly a creator for neither can muster the endorsement of the whole man. Whether man identifies his true self with his "higher" self or with his "lower" self he is idolizing only an aspect of his being. Only when he surmounts this fragmentation and lives and acts out of the fullness of his being, do his actions and his life take on the quality of creativity.

When man is in a state of oneness with himself and in union with his task, then his life is graced by that organic quality which appears only when wholeness is creatively responding to wholeness. When he acts from a condition of inner division and from a position which is external to his task, then his life reveals only the uncreative response of the partial to the partial, and he must then make the impossible choice between two equally barren alternatives. Only in deeds born of a creative union with life is there achieved that merger of opposites which neither thought nor impulse, neither mind nor nature, neither activity nor passivity can ever effect. So far as creativity may be described at all, it consists of just this marriage between meaning and life, form and matter, man and nature. In every domain of experience, a want of creativity is manifested by the separation of these opposites, and then either a tyrannical form oppresses an unwilling material, or the material burst out of the bounds of form into a meaningless and incoherent multiplicity.

Thus a classical or formal garden represents a forceful imposition of pattern on matter and an excessive curbing of nature. The more formal it is, the more artificial does it appear. At the other extreme and inspired by the mood of romanticism is the garden which disdains all formal structure and is but little to be distinguished from sheer wilderness. But the truly substantial beauty of, say, a Japanese garden flows precisely from this, that it exhibits perfection of form and utter naturalness simultaneously. Its structure and meaning have been achieved without violating nature; nature has been satisfied and so has the human need for form.

Similarly, in the field of teaching, the formal or authoritarian mode of instruction ignores the nature of the individual student or defines it in abstract and universal terms, and seeks to impose on it, willy-nilly, an ideal or formal subject matter. The opposite sort of teacher is he whose concern is to do no violence to the natural interests of the student, and who tries to adapt the eternal verities to the particular interests and capacities of his individual students. He may end up by knowing all about the individual natures of his students while they, for their part, may absorb only very little, if anything, of a common subject matter. But the creative teacher is he who can be simultaneously faithful both to the universal and the particular, and who satisfies the requirements of the formal subject matter even as he promotes the expression of individuality in his students. His classroom will exhibit neither anarchy on the one hand, nor the lifeless formality and rigid ordering of an authoritarian situation on the other hand. When teaching reaches the level of a creative art it creates the

living union of freedom and discipline, and thus bypasses the false dichotomy which plagues the uncreative teacher.

In the writing of a novel, to consider still a third example, there is the same need to achieve the blending of immediacy and transcendence. To proceed with the determination to embody an idea is to ensure that the embodiment will never be a living body; the characters and the situations will lack life—that is a life of their own—and be merely vehicles for carrying the idea. Where the form is antecedent to the materials, the materials become immaterial, that is not truly significant or substantial, and serve only to illustrate a meaning which is essentially abstract. The end result is propaganda or moralizing, but not art, for it is not the fruit of creativity but of the mind's contrivance. Wherever the rights of nature, of matter, of immediacy are overlooked, the lapse into the abstract, the formal, the artificial is inevitable. The idea cannot simply mold the matter; the matter must also be allowed a measure of natural development, if the final product is to have true grace. But this does not imply that the writer must completely surrender to the materials, and abandon every effort to permeate them with form and structure. For when he yields his active control over the materials to let them take their purely natural course, and as he backs down from the task of taming the wildness of brute fact, so must his work become a merely photographic registering of details. It can then possess no inner logic or necessity or coherence of meaning—for these always vanish as the transcendent recedes before the immediate. The more "realistic" (that is, unconstrained by a formative idea) any composition strives to be, the less can it show any reason for beginning where it does or for ending where it ends or for containing what it contains. Such work has the appearance of pure contingency, arbitrariness and incompleteness, and can never be deeply or enduringly satisfying.

In every authentically creative response, the transcendent and the immediate have been integrated; man and his materials have been married. Then there is neither priority of form nor of matter, nor are they segregated into "separate but equal" compartments. Where art and nature are no longer opposed, there art has become artless; elsewhere it is artifice. The creative impulse is neither classicist nor romanticist nor naturalist nor realist. It favors neither man nor nature; it does not seek meaning at the expense of life, nor does it seek vitality through the destruction of meaning. In creative actions the matter has shaped the idea as much as the idea has shaped the matter. The form is not a pre-existent pattern which has been imposed on an antecedent matter, for in this case the form would require a forcing, and the matter would be provoked to some resistance. Nor does the form merely tag along after the matter, which has been given free rein, for that would make for incoherence. Wherever a living or creative solution has been effected, there significance and vitality have emerged in a state of oneness or *advaita*, i.e., non-duality: the meaning is then neither *ante rem* nor *post rem* but *in re*.

The opposition of nature and man is, thus, one which is overcome only in the creative experience. It is not an opposition which can be resolved by any theory, nor by any action based on a theory, for every theory must end by absolutizing either mind or nature, or else it will proclaim their equality without eliminating their antagonism. Every response born of a theory will be either partial or vacillating, but in no case creative. Neither idealism, nor naturalisms nor dualisms will solve life's problems: what is called for is a living, that is, an existential solution in connection with the specific challenges which life presents. Creation is born of a living wholeness which is more comprehensive, more real—if one may say so—than either nature or man. When man lives and acts out of this wholeness, he is neither impulsively free nor formally constrained but somehow both at once. Thought can neither understand this wholeness nor ever attain to it. *Solvitur ambulando*.

To characterize the creative act as one which accomplishes the union of immediacy and transcendence is, in the language of law, to provide a substantive but not a procedural definition. When in any branch of life there has been a creative response to an existential challenge, there the union of man and nature will be found to have occurred. When the response has been less than creative they will be left in some degree of separateness, each contending with the other. Understandably, man would like to know in advance just what steps to take towards the creative solution of a given problem, so that he may thus be spared the pangs of labor. But there can be no recipe for creativity, for recipes are necessarily general formulae, that is forms, and will never accomplish that ineffable unity of the formal and the natural which is the trademark of all products of creative experience. The "how" of creativity can never be told, for creativity is not any kind of "know how" which can be articulated. "Know how" is technique, and technique is the possession of a form which will be applied on any number of subsequent occasions. Creativity has no stock of antecedent forms; it is rather a kind of fullness which is at the same time empty of specific forms, and therefore completely open without pre-judgment to what is before it. Out of this fullness is crystallized the living union of idea and matter, but the creative act itself is beyond all conceptualization. There is no technique for being creative, and there will always be an ineffaceable difference between a merely technical, formal, unoriginal solution to a problem and an existential, living, artistic, real, or creative response.

When man's mind *form*-ulates solutions to living problems, those solutions will always appear unnatural and forced. But when man's mind altogether abdicates to nature, then his life and actions tend to be impulsive, uncoordinated and irrational. Only when he is responding creatively is he neither self-consciously striving nor passively driven; he seems then to be living from a source which is deeper than either his mind or his "lower" impulsive nature—and which somehow contains both in a unity. When his responses stem from this nameless creative center of his being, then they take on the quality of gracefulness, and

instead of being as heretofore either too rigid or too loose, too constrained or too wild, they will unite spontaneity and restraint, naturalness and discipline, relaxation and control.

It was Oscar Wilde who once said that women were not made to be understood but only to be loved. Love, in its ultimate meaning, is only another name for creative unity. Love is neither a conquest of the other nor a surrender to the other; it is the living union with the other. May it not be said in analogous fashion, that nature is not made to be understood or to be conquered by man but only to be loved by him? Out of that love and that creative union of nature and man is born all that is true, all that is beautiful and all that is wholly good.