

*A natural scientist looks at human relations  
and advances a thesis on contemporary man.*

## DIVIDUAL

By H. BAYER

**T**HAT which mankind has been experiencing in the past few decades—the period of world crises and World War II—is the last part and end of one consistent process of dissolution. And this in spite of the fact that the recent past has presented an immense variety of trends, movements, and developments in all the fields of life. Almost every day new discoveries, vistas, and records cause a stir, only to be outdone the next day. A changing diversity of progress in all spheres seemed to be the distinguishing mark of this age.

Yet behind this diversity of phenomena, no matter how irreconcilably different they may appear from each other, we find a dominating trend, a uniform adherence to certain laws. In this respect, our age resembles autumn, a season which pours out more color over the countryside than any other. It is the dissolution of all that is dissoluble which has permeated the recent past and which continues to permeate the present, letting it appear so kaleidoscopic. When and where this all-pervading process of dissolution began is just as hard to determine as the actual beginning of autumn. All the more unmistakably does the season make itself felt everywhere when it has reached its peak.

### SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Let us begin our survey with the communities of man, let us observe him then in his feelings, actions, and thoughts, and let us finally turn to the splitting open of his soul. The formerly so rigid and exclusive social order is already largely a thing of the past. It gave way at all corners and finally collapsed. According to his financial or intellectual resources, everyone can gain entrance and admission to any circle he cares for, since practically all former social barriers have, if not fallen, at least been more or less completely leveled. And what has remained of former political forms in those countries over which the war has passed? Exile governments, liberation committees and armies on foreign soil only go to show that the foundations underlying former states have disintegrated. This general political disorganization forms a necessary and favorable condition for plans of world conquest, whether they are of the American or Soviet type. All plans of

planetary domination only acquire a chance of realization when the political organization of the world has been profoundly disturbed.

But let us return to the individual. It cannot be denied that the individual, particularly the Western individual, has in the course of the last few decades been able with increasing facility to cut himself loose from a religious community and even from the closest of all human relationships, that of marriage. The progressive disintegration of political, social, legal, and confessional bonds has endowed the individual with more and more freedom of movement. His manners become less stiff, his moral conceptions lose in severity. The newcomer deciding on his own to enter a social class, a professional circle, or a field of work naturally brings along his own standards and ideas. He is apt to think with less prejudice, more freely, than one who has grown up in that circle. One who, while still unprejudiced, changes over from one environment to another looks at things through critical eyes, for he must learn to adapt himself to his new environment. In his accustomed circle, the individual moves spontaneously and naturally; in an unfamiliar one he is forced to reflect. Thus with the individual's freedom of movement his undermining criticism must necessarily grow too. He must adjust his thoughts and emotions to phenomena which another man can accept as a matter of course.

### THE TREND OF SCIENCE

Just as the newcomer is forced to adjust himself repeatedly to unaccustomed situations or to analyze them, in the same way modern man in general is forced by constantly changing circumstances to consider his relationship to his environment. As the existing organizations are no longer able to cope with new developments, they fall victim to disintegration; or else the disruptive criticism of the times, fed by a ceaseless flow of new phenomena, grows ad infinitum. Both trends are most clearly revealed by technical science in its tempestuous growth. In the last century it was still confined to a strictly limited field; it was intended to serve the progress of civilization; beyond that it was not supposed to make any demands. But soon it began to wreak a violent change in

human environment and daily life and to influence human thought.

Although technical science radiates such effective disruptive forces on all human organizations, it would be mistaken to regard it as the cause of the general process of dissolution. After all, technical science itself is only a creation of man, and the causes of dissolution must consequently be sought lower down. They are to be found in the thinking and in the style of living of mankind. Hence they have also affected the old order of the sciences. The origins of modern technical science are to be sought in the field of analysis, i.e., among the processes of dissolution. Natural science, on which technical science is based, has for several generations been directed almost exclusively at analysis. By means of analysis, smaller and smaller building stones and components are being uncovered. It was only by way of dismembering nature that the material and spiritual building stones could be supplied of which machines and theories are composed. It is only since physics—which has now advanced to the foundations of chemistry and dominates them completely—has dismembered matter into colloids, molecules, atoms, electrons, and even finer components that technical science has been able to go ahead at full speed.

Technical science, in turn, is contributing in various practical ways to processes of dissolution. As war technology, it serves the work of destruction; in communications it contributes toward dissolving the geographical order of things: for instance, the difference between town and country or among various political areas. With the industrial production of consumer goods, the distinctions among the crafts are leveled. Even the astronomical and biological order of day and night is disrupted by technical means.

#### DEAD END

These manifold processes of dissolution which dominate the modern world threaten to swallow up all existing forms. The objection might be raised here: "The disintegration on one side is balanced by an equally great building-up process on the other. As a result of analytical research, man has opened up a broader vista. Through the dissolution of old, rigid orders, he has become free to develop independently. Indeed, the loss entailed by this process is insignificant compared to the gains and the possibilities still ahead of us in pursuing this road." The answer to this is that the road has come to an end. There are enough unmistakable indications in all spheres of life and work to show that an impassable border line has been reached.

Analytical natural science was pursued in strict consistency. All the results collected with an incalculable expenditure of work, patience, intellect, and technical as well as

financial means have not sufficed to provide us with a clear, unambiguous conception of the world; for as knowledge grew, so did doubt. Our grandfathers' conception of the world was less ambiguous than ours. The strict consistency in the dissolving process is not balanced by any methodical building-up process. This is shown by countless inconstancies and surprises in technical science. But the best proof is the present world war which, in the last resort, is only being fought over various plans of reconstruction (most of them utopian) which exclude each other. And it is not impossible that further wars will be fought for the same aim.

The liberation of the individual, finally, is doubtless the most questionable gain of these processes of dissolution. The liberalistic style of life had already begun to free the individual of many bonds which had once seemed indestructible. Theoretically most extreme in this respect was Marxism as, according to its dogma, man depends solely on his economic—or, to put it crudely, animal—requirements, being "liberated" of all social, racial, family, national, religious, and other bonds.

#### THE ULTIMATE OBJECT

So profound and all-encompassing a process as is manifest in these phenomena of disintegration must have a deeper meaning. We are convinced of that. *This meaning can only be the discovery of that which is indissoluble.* The whole process of dissolution progressed almost as if in accordance with natural laws and only to a small part consciously guided by man. No wonder that it did not terminate exactly at that point at which man with his immediate desires would have liked to see it end: at the liberation of the individual. This was indeed not the final result. The individual himself fell victim to disintegration.

The fact that the object of analytical research was actually the discovery of the indissoluble is testified by the very words "atom" and "individual." They both mean—one in Greek, the other in Latin—the same thing: indivisible. Science wanted to discover the indivisible, but also believed that it could anticipate this goal by speaking of the smallest particle of matter and, on the other hand, individual man (or the individual creature) as indivisible units.

Consistent analysis then produced more than had at first perhaps been expected: the atom proved to be a dissoluble planetary system of electrons and as such lost its material nature. Further disintegration of the building stones of the atom led beyond the borders of the clearly conceivable, the borders of direct perception having long been left behind.

Nor is the individual able to withstand analysis. Biology has split up his body into organs, tissues, and cells, whose physical and chemical working can in turn be analyzed. The in-

dividual creature is beginning more and more to resemble a machine which can be taken apart and whose characteristics are determined by the mechanism of heredity. Not as if all this is being accomplished only in theory: it is supported step by step by experience and has been tested by experiment. Modern medicine, basing on the results of these analyses, has systematically and successfully intervened in those structures of life which have at least been partially analyzed. Destiny and character represent themselves to advancing analytical examination as the interplay of hereditary traits, hormones, and environment.

Before the human eye has seen an atom, it has already disintegrated into a planetary system of electrons and even further. Before the liberation of the individual aspired at by human progress could be completed even roughly in practice, the individual was no longer an indivisible unit, had already been divided into building stones. Are these similarities in the history of the individual and that of the atom really only a coincidence? Or are they merely the expression of one and the same process of dissolution? But if the latter should be true, how was it possible for so universal a process, manifesting itself in the most varied fields, to have remained unobserved so long?

#### OUR LIMITED VISION

As long as the loosening and gradual demolishing of old orders could be regarded as a gain and a liberation, their disadvantages went unnoticed. Moreover, technical science, progressing as it was by means of successful analysis, and the civilization it engendered, gave the illusion of a world of the most magnificent synthesis and of calculable possibilities for the future. In view of such circumstances, there could hardly be any talk of disintegration, although in actual fact it was the source of all progress. But the main reason is that the eyes of modern man are simply not trained to observe general phenomena. His eyes are always directed at that which is special, he has learned critically to particularize, to see special-istically. The successes of which modern man is so proud were achieved almost exclusively by analysis and consequent synthesis of the building stones thus uncovered. This seemed to be the best recipe for success: to accept nothing as it presented itself but first to dismember everything critically in order then to be able to put the parts again at one's own discretion. The type of man educated in this way will always struggle hard against acknowledging general associations which do not lend themselves to direct analysis. The result was that the general process of disintegration could reach a very advanced stage before it was recognized in all its implications. It is only the crises of our present age which have begun

to open our eyes to relationships hitherto concealed.

With many, mostly irrelevant objections, man resisted all attempts to analyze the individual scientifically, although the same methods were employed for this purpose as had previously provided—and are still providing—that same individual with all his successes in other fields. We need only recall the vehement controversies over anatomical dissections, over the biological study of human life, over theories on heredity and human origin. In every case the spirit of analysis was victorious over all objections. Only the realm of the soul remained an impenetrable secret, until finally that, too, was no longer able to hold out.

#### DISSECTING THE SOUL

Psychoanalysis penetrates most profoundly and most dangerously to the core of the individual. Correspondingly vehement was the resistance put up against its initial endeavors. Undoubtedly the psychoanalytical theory, particularly in its earliest forms and designs, contains many fallacies, exaggerated conclusions and even objective errors. Nevertheless, its progress was not to be halted. The basic principles of psychoanalysis—purged as they gradually were of all unnecessary excesses—have become generally accepted; the psychoanalytical method is now part and parcel of scientific research. Disintegration has advanced to the innermost recesses of the individual. And, just as the analysis of the atom uncovered not just even more primitive building stones but the vision of a tiny planetary system, so psychoanalysis discovered a multiple order. In this case it was not that man turned out to be divisible: the individual showed himself to be merely part of a greater "dividual."

What the systematic dissection of the subconscious life discovered in the innermost soul of the individual appears to us to be of extreme significance. It was found that the decisive impulse to all spiritual and physical action and reaction going beyond the purely animal requirements of life was the sex instinct (libido). We grant that the first representatives of this theory—which has since grown into a science of its own—in several respects overestimated the effect of the sex instinct on every branch of human conduct, and correspondingly underrated the influence of other motive forces. It is true that cultural creations are not to be explained merely as sublimated sexual experiences. However one may feel about the various representatives in that field (who are by no means in accord with each other or all of equal standing), there can be no denying that we are indebted to psychoanalysis for having, by analytical penetration into the subconscious reactions of man, proved the decisive influence of a principle as well as the scientific serviceability of a new method.

## BINDING MOTIVE FORCE

So the principle which psychoanalysis has shown so emphatically to affect human life in the most varied manner is the sex instinct, i.e., an instinct which binds one individual to another. Indeed, a motive force determining the fate of the individual and discovered by means of a severe analysis of his soul binds the individual to another and thus places him as a link into the chain of generations. In the innermost core of the individual, analysis discovered nothing else but an order into which the individual himself has been placed. This means that analysis, that disintegration here, too, has reached the borders set by nature: the principle found by analysis binds the individual to his sex partner and, far beyond that, shapes his relationship to his environment, in short, makes him part of a dividual, of something divisible.

It was, we believe, no coincidence that psychoanalysis at first overrated the significance of the sexual sphere in the composition of the soul. While the individual had to a large extent rid himself of most other bonds, the binding forces of sex had remained unimpaired. Just as a candle seems to shed more light in the dark than an arc lamp in day time, it was natural for the effective force and range of sex to have been overrated. Even those extremely one-sided psychoanalysts are now ready to acknowledge a more modern psychoanalysis which, in addition to sex, reckons with other spiritual bonds binding the individual to the dividual.

That which is happening in psychoanalysis—which we have chosen merely as an example—is also becoming evident to every scientific specialist in his own field and to the keen observer in almost every sphere of modern life: analysis is approaching its final goal in recognizing relations, structures, and constitutions to be the essential characteristics of that which is indivisible. And in a corresponding manner the universal process of dissolution is approaching its end by showing up the indissoluble orders more and more clearly. Let us quote a few brief examples.

## PERPLEXED SCIENTISTS

Although biological analysis is capable of analyzing animals and plants down to the last details of substances and processes, no amount of analysis is able to solve the riddle of the collective action, of the balanced harmony of all components. A special harmony-producing force cannot be traced. Nor can natural science imagine it but as affecting all parts simultaneously. That which is lost in analysis, the

attuning of the various components to each other, has with some perplexity been called the "totality." An animal or a plant is, it is said, a totality. But this (provisional) term is questionable, if only for the reason that there is not a single living thing which could exist independently as a totality of its own. Each is dependent on others, all animals on the plants and most of the plants on each other or on animals. We need only think of the relationship between blossoms and insects. The word "totality"—the child of an analytical age—attempts to isolate something that cannot be isolated. Wherever the term "totality" turns up, identical or very similar processes are taking place which all point to the fact that the analytical age is approaching its end.

These phenomena lead us to the conclusion: that which no analysis can get hold of directly, that which slips through its fingers, the bonds of relation or constitution, belongs to the essence of the parts. *Analysis was able to fathom only one side of reality. The other, that of the various orders without which the single parts cannot be comprehended, has remained inaccessible to it. The destiny of the parts is determined by the orders which are also inherent in them.*

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Practical experience has made us all familiar with the fact that origin, family, and environment exert a profound influence on the life of every individual. Hitherto, the general endeavor was chiefly directed at liberating the individual, i.e., at removing these bonds, or at least loosening them or denying them. At first, this "liberation" was bound to impress the individual as a gain. But if a change in the spiritual trend—from the individual to the dividual—is now beginning to make itself felt, this means that the individual can no longer regard as an advantage the dissolution of the bonds placed upon him by fate. Instead, he recognizes that his best forces flow to him out of these bonds, as long as the dividual of which he is part is sound in itself. This conviction enhances the individual's sense of responsibility toward the orders shaping his fate.

We are beginning to realize that the riddles of the world cannot be solved by taking them apart and spelling them out. This can at most be regarded as a preparation for the work that is to come. The meaning of these riddles is to be found in words and whole sentences. The turning toward the dividual and its laws, most of which are still deeply buried, will have a profound effect on the style of life of the coming age.

*Real Reason*

A girl who was not much to look at was very pleased when a US marine hailed her on the street in San Francisco: "My, you're beautiful," "Thanks," she said, delighted, "that's because I've just been six hours at the beauty parlor." "No," said he, "it's because I've been six months in the Solomon Islands."