



Love and Loyalty

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LOVE AND LOYALTY.

ONE who like me has gone to Royce for wisdom now this long time and never come away empty, may yet live to know that some of his receivings are more his belongings than others. Thus if it ever happen to me that I find my hold on the Absolute slackening and the thing slipping from me, I cannot think that even in that day I shall have forgotten two words I have heard. Love and loyalty, loyalty and love: this pair I expect will still be singing its burden in my soul after other things have left off singing there. But I hope that when this day comes I shall know better than I do now whether love and loyalty are two names for the same thing, or whether they are not the same, yet brothers and friends, or whether in the end they are not rather enemies of which one can survive only if the other doesn't. Nor do I know, though I should very much like to, how Royce himself would answer these questions. Sometimes the words fall in such close juxtaposition in his writings that I wonder whether they do not express a single idea whose peculiar quality is just unselfishness. But again I bethink me that to be just unselfish is not enough for an absolutist, if for anyone; that giving up can only be justified when it is a means of acquiring, and I wonder what loyalty can have to say for itself half as convincing as the things love could point to. Until at last I find myself speculating whether if love had its perfect way with us there would be any place left for loyalty in our lives, and whether we should not look back on it then as on a virtue happily outlived.

And this may be my matter in a nutshell—is not loyalty a thing to be outlived and is not that which alone can enable us to live it down a love so perfect it calls for no sacrifices? Some such thought has long been with me, but if I am to lay my troubles before you it is time I put aside a language too rich in sentimental associations and took up the idiom I love best, that of cold and if may be mathematical definition.

Any definition of loyalty that could have meaning for me must assume the existence of something many deny to have either existence or meaning, and which I shall call in my own way the mind of a group, or a group mind. The conception of a mind belonging to a group of beings each one of which has a mind of its own, yet such that the mind of the group is no more to be known from a study of its parts than is the mentality of Peter from the psychology of Paul, is a very old conception and perhaps for that reason supposed by some to be old-fashioned and foolish. It is a mere analogy, they say, and a very thin one at that, to speak of a group of organisms as itself an organism: it is Plato, it is Cusanus, if you will, but it is not modern. Benedetto Croce even goes so far as to be polite about the matter. "The State is not an entity, but a fluid complex of various relations among individuals. It may be convenient to delimit this complex and to entify it for the sake of contrasting it with other complexes. No doubt this is so, but let us leave to the jurist the excogitation of this and the like distinctions,—fictions, but opportune fictions—being careful not to call his work absurd. It is enough for us to be sure we do not forget that a fiction is a fiction."

To Royce the group mind is far from being a fiction, though he may prefer to call it by some other name than group mind,—maybe universal mind or universal will. But if to him it seems natural, as it does to me, to recognize group minds while to Croce the entity is but a polite fiction to be pleasantly dismissed there must be some lack of definition befogging our issue. Nor can I think of any way in which old issues can better be made clear than by old images. Aristotle would not have asked when and where do new entities appear, but where and when must we take account of new forms. Now matter was informed for Aristotle when the behavior of some class of beings was recognized to be predictable in terms of purpose. Thus earth, water, air, and fire sought their proper places, one below, another above, and the others in between. But we remember how no sooner had these elements reached their proper places than transformed by the sun's heat they were no longer at home

where they found themselves, but must needs seek their new homes anew. Thus homeward bound in opposite directions they collided and became entangled, so that mixtures of the four appeared which as it proved kept their proportions for a longer or shorter while ere they lost their equilibrium and fell apart again. Among these mixtures were vegetables and animals and men, but Aristotle is very far from defining this new class, organisms, in terms of the quantities of the elements that enter into their bodily composition. No, what they have in common and all they have in common is a new purpose, that of self-preservation (and, if we are to follow Aristotle rigorously, that of type preservation). But why in this class of beings does a new form appear when there is nothing in any one of them but so much earth, so much water, and so much of the rest? Because, I take it, in order that the purpose of the group may be realized, the purpose of each constituent of that group must be defeated: when the earth in us finds its way back to earth and our fire to fire, then we are no more. Which is the fundamental difference between us and them: if we win they lose; if they win we are done for. The whole has a purpose whose realization is only possible if the purposes defining the parts are given up for it.

I suppose Croce would say that nothing better could be offered in support of a modern fiction than an ancient fable, and I confess that I can think of nothing better fitted to set forth the complex problem of how beings of one mind can combine to form groups of another mind, than Aristotle's account of the way elements in the form of mechanism combine to produce a group with that other form, life. Perhaps I can make out the connection between old and new ideas by a single example. I know of no fellow easier to get along with than your average Parisian: many a time have I sat at his board, looked in his eyes, listened to his amusing wit, and wondered how the great-grandfather of my host could have been part of the Reign of Terror. And yet I suppose the Parisian of today is not very different from the Parisian of four generations ago, when groups of these same Parisians were ranging the streets of Paris crying, "A la lanterne!"

However much it was in the character of the Pierre, Paul, Jean, and Jaques Bonhomme of those old days to steer for home, their distributive tendency was contradicted by their collective tendency. A new form, a new entity had appeared: it was the spirit of the mob. It may be pleasant to call such new entities fictions, but wouldn't it be a more dangerous fiction to suppose these new entities pleasant, and isn't the object we have defined as hard and fast a fact as any in human experience?

I must let this single illustration take the place of what might at some other time grow into a systematic account of the varieties of group minds that history and personal experience reveal to us. For my world is highly organized,—groups within groups and groups within these in a way one might have learned at the feet of Nicolaus or by gathering one's history from Gierke's *Geschichte des deutschen Rechts*. But on this occasion instead of going into all this literature and all this philosophy, let me come back to the matter of loyalty's worth. There would be no such thing as a demand for loyalty were there no call for a man to deny his wish for home, whether home be on earth or on high for him, for the sake of organizing himself into a group, which means as we have seen sacrificing his purpose for the group purpose. Now what you think of the value of this sacrifice depends altogether on the esteem in which you hold group minds. If you can find some principle on which to estimate their dignity as something worth dying for in part or altogether, then loyalty may be the last word of virtue. But if you find that at their very best there is something rather primitive, sometimes amœboid, sometimes tigerish about such minds, then you should seriously consider whether your biped soul owes anything more to this polypod entity than the entity owes to it. Merging oneself into something big may not be just the same as reaching for something high.

But I am not belittling loyalty. It is a great virtue so long as it understands itself to be making a virtue of necessity. Just so is it a great virtue to acquire equanimity in the face of death, so that not being able to invent a way of getting around the thing one may accept it for the time being without disturbing

oneself or one's friends more than the episode calls for. Still if I had some genius to spend, I should rather contribute it to the suppression of dying than to the cultivation of a cheerful manner in dying. So should I rather spend my time if it were worth while in wearing away the conditions that make loyalty necessary than in developing a spirit of loyalty. And so, or I mistake him, would Royce; for I can't get over the impression that for him too loyalty is but a half-way house on the road to something better—which something better is love.

It is with relief I find a definition of love can be effected which makes no very heavy demands upon one's sentimental experience, in fact requires no more in that way than a fair understanding of the theory of substitutions. For the peculiar quality Royce finds in the idea of love is that love individuates. This its quality is for him its virtue also and its excellence, so that the more love individuates the more is it love. We are far enough from the days when a Plato could hold the love to be higher that had detached itself from the individual and attached itself to the quality, had forgotten the beautiful being to think only of his beauty. For Royce love is not love unless it has succeeded in making its object irreplaceable.

Now I do not know whether this constitutes a complete definition of love. There is something hopeful about the suggestion that it may do so, for if no one has been able to say anything very articulate about love, neither has anyone said much that is intelligible about individuation. But certain difficulties occur to one. Is love the only thing that individuates? If there is such a thing as Platonic hate, which I suppose would be the sort of hate that hates the sin and not the sinner, why should there not be such a thing as a romantic hate whose object would be just the sinner and not his fault? Or may not a process of individuation go on, cold and impassible, untouched either by hate or love?

One day Flaubert took his disciple by the hand and led him into the secret places of art. The talent of the artist, he said, is a long patience spent in learning how to portray so that your

portrayal leaves the object it offers just as individual as the thing it found. "When you pass a grocer sitting at his door, or a concierge smoking his pipe, or a stand of cabs, show me this grocer and this concierge, their pose, their physical appearance, suggesting also by the skill of your image all their moral nature, in such wise that I do not confuse them with any other grocer or with any other concierge. And make me see with a single word in what a certain cab horse is unlike fifty others following him or going before."

Why then, beside love and hate, art too claims to be that which individuates,—and not because, if we may believe a certain philosophically minded critic, art has borrowed anything of love or hate. This disciple of Flaubert, this Maupassant, carried out his master's teachings if ever an artist did, but there is that in his way of doing it which makes one feel that Anatole France's account of him is not altogether wanting: "He is the great painter of the human grimace. He paints without hate and without love, without anger and without pity,—hard-fisted peasants, drunken sailors, lost women, obscure clerks dried up in the air of the office, and all the humble folk whose humility is without beauty and without merit. All these grotesques and all these unfortunates he shows us so distinctly that we think we see them with our own eyes and find them more real than reality itself. He is a skilful artist who knows he has done all there is to do when he has given life to things. His indifference is as indifferent as nature."

I am not so very confident that all these claimants to the right of individuating—love, hate, art—are equal claimants. As for hate, some poverty of experience may account for the fact that all I know of this romantically valued emotion is directed against persons unknown whose manner of conducting themselves on the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth shows nothing more clearly than that they have forgotten the human being and are utterly lost in loyalty. A hate of such poor quality cannot well be said to individuate, and it is certainly not any experience of my own that would lead me to suppose romantic hate as we

have imagined it to be real. Respecting the impassibility of the creative artist I am no less skeptical, and so I think is France at bottom, for of this same artist whose indifference is as indifferent as nature he says in another passage of the same appreciation that his hardened hero "is ashamed of nothing but his large native kindness, careful to hide what is most exquisite in his soul."

No, I am not convinced that love has any rivals in the art of individuating, and if not, then to call it that which individuates is to define it completely. But whether it is a deduction from this definition or whether it is an independent element in a fuller definition of love, it must be set down as an important fact about it that love wants the will and desire of the beloved to prevail. It wants the will of another to prevail, and as the easiest and most obvious way of bringing about this result is to yield its own will, it has generally been supposed that love was less the art of individuating than the art of yielding. But this is just the mistake that has prevented love from taking its place among the more seriously meant categories of philosophy and realities of life; for this yielding disposition that might be supposed to make for peace in a republic of lovers is the very matter which introduces trouble and perplexity there. It is the very matter which has made traditional Christianity less effective than it might have been, failing where it fails not because there is anything better to be conceived than its gospel of love, but because it has supposed a good heart and convinced will was enough to bring about its kingdom.

Our two great experiments at loving—the love of man and woman and the love of one's neighbor—have been too much alike in this, that they both supposed love to be the sort of thing one could fall into and be done with. But it is clear this is not at all the way of the matter, and in our poor imaginings about the lovers' republic we have been too much guided by our imperfect experience of what our loves have been to think our way into what the love that individuates ought to be. Oh, yes, our love has yielded; its great vice has been its contentment in yielding

rather than suffer the labor and unrest of that thinking which alone could have saved its kingdom. In this dear, illogical passion for yielding we have been content with a division of the spoils: one is allowed to give this, the other that; one now, the other then, and so we have patched up our lovers' quarrel as best we could without logic. But logic, which is supposed to have nothing to do with love and has had little enough to do with the old loves of this world, has everything to do with the love that individuates. For the moment love begins to be a mutual affair neither lover has the right to usurp the privilege of giving, else what is left for the other lover to do? Without logic our lovers are doomed to stand bowing to each other before the door of promise till time grows gray.

However, besides logic there is such a thing as bad logic, which is perhaps nothing more than a well meant half-thoughtfulness in presence of puzzling experience. As a result of this half-thoughtfulness there has sometimes crept a half-reasonableness into the matter we are considering, which would begin by suggesting that the various and contradictory desires of lovers, though equally strong, cannot, save by improbable chance, be equally high and worth while; that therefore the logical thing to do would be to let the lower ideal recognize the higher and bow to it, while the higher might somehow forget its longing to give and content its poor heart with being given to.

There are many difficulties in the way of making such an account of the affair persuasive, but there are more serious troubles ahead of anyone who would try to make it meaningful. Chief of these is the hopelessness of defining high and low in the matter of purposes and ideals. Here once more Royce is quick to analyze the difficulty and remove it; for, if I read him aright, he sees no way, and no more do I, by which the value of ultimate objects of desire may be compared. It is easy to calculate the better means but how is one to know the better end? Only this may we do—we may discover that purposes which seem contradictory are not really so, and that neither need sacrifice itself to the other if thought be allowed to work its perfect work. No

doubt happiness lies in getting what we want, but this is not the same as getting what we think we want, as capturing what we go after, for our wants are none the less difficult to make out because they are our own.

This, then, is thought's infinitely difficult task in the service of love, to analyze apparent desires until it has found the real want at the core of appearance, while the postulate on which alone the advent of the kingdom becomes possible is that thought may find our real wants not contradictory. The times are not without sign that Christianity as an ethics is coming to realize how very intellectual is the task it has set itself in trying to bring the kingdom of Christ's vision to be on earth. What Christianity most needs, writes Tennant, is a philosophy.

The twenty minutes we allow ourselves for our communications have usually proved ample for a person of industry and thrift to make himself thoroughly misunderstood, and I hope I have used them to no less purpose on this than on former occasions; but among the misunderstandings I would prevent if I could is that which would sum up the matter of my paper as a defense of individualism against collectivism. Such an issue could only be meaningful for one to whom the collectivity was denied some sort of individuality which the 'individual' enjoys. But I have tried to show that I could conceive no such difference between the mind of the part and the mind of the group. The group mind may be loved with the human love that individuates as well as can the soul of a fellowman, and no doubt one may love one's country as a mistress. But the difference between the love of equals and the love of constituents is plain. The latter sort of love can last only so long as its object endures, and as long as it lasts its sacrifices are incurable; for in a world that has conquered strife there would no longer be that contradiction between the will of a group and the will of its parts which alone makes the group entity meaningful. Groups bound in mutual respect of each other and studying to preserve their parts irreplaceable have no minds; the entity born of struggle and calling for sacrifice has simply disappeared; where we had a group mind, we have

now but an aggregate of minds, 'a fluid complex of relations among individuals.' But the love of equals can push on toward the ideal without destroying the very object of its devotion; it can go on searching the core of concord in the stupid appearance of discord until love has found a way to make loyalty a lost virtue and a group mind a thing that is no more.

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