INTROVERSION AND INDWELLING

By GEORGE CROFT

IT IS OF THE essence of the Church', says the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 'that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it. She is all these things in such a way that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come'.[1]

This two-dimensional nature of the Church and of the christian life has tended to take on paradoxical proportions. In the high middle ages, flight or withdrawal from the world was a *sine qua non* of christian perfection, understood almost entirely as the assimilation to the divine, through solitary contemplation, of the graced human person. In our day, on the contrary, the stress has largely been on the human and visible qualities of Christ and his followers, on presence in the world almost to the point of being at home in it, on service of the brethren as the surest and most authentic, if not the only, way to God.

It is true that the spiritual tradition has consistently stressed the subordination of action to contemplation, and not always with the balance and clarity of Vatican II. In the west, especially after Augustine, a sharp distinction was consistently made between the active and contemplative 'lives', usually to the detriment of the former. It has also taught, however, that contemplation is never the prerogative of the few but is open to all.[2] Whilst the Council, in stating that 'all the faithful of Christ, of whatever rank or status, are called to the fulness of the christian life and to the perfection of charity',[3] would seem to imply that some measure of contemplation

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[1] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2.

[2] Cf Butler, Cuthbert: 'Contemplation open to all', in *Western Mysticism* (2nd ed. London, 1951), pp 166–7, 186–8, 197–8.

[3] *Lumen Gentium*, 40.

is necessary for all. So we read, for example, in the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity:

> Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God 'in whom we live and move and have our being',[4] seek his will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they be close to us or strangers, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relation to man's final good.[5]

Such an ideal integration of the 'vertical' and the 'horizontal' certainly demands that every christian be a contemplative: foster, that is, his own personal need and desire for God – 'seek to see his face'; seek, therefore, at least from time to time, that solitude, that isolation and nakedness of self without which conscious awareness of the divine immanence is ordinarily impossible. How feasible is all this for the christian 'man in the street', called as he is to reach out to every person and every need, cooperating as a citizen with other citizens of this world, for the renewal of the temporal order and the building up of society?[6] If grace builds on nature, to what extent is such integration of action and contemplation psychologically possible?

Introversion

Cuthbert Butler, in his classic treatment of the contemplative tradition in the western church, distils from the teaching of SS Augustine, Gregory the Great and Bernard a remote and a proximate preparation for contemplation.[7] The remote preparation is purification by self-denial, self-conquest, mortification and the practice of virtue. Proximate preparation is by way of recollection – 'the gathering together and concentrating of the mind', and by introversion – 'the entering of the mind into itself . . . its concentration on its own deepest, highest part'.[8] The theological meaning of this latter term he explains as follows:

> Let it be plainly understood that we cannot return to God unless we first enter into ourselves. God is everywhere but not everywhere to us: there is but one point in the universe where God communicates with us, and that is the centre of our own soul. There he waits for us; there

[4] Acts 17, 28. [5] *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4. [6] *Ibid.*, 7 and 13.
[7] *Western Mysticism, ed. cit., passim.* [8] *Ibid.*, p 29.

> he meets us; there he speaks to us. To seek him, therefore, we must enter into our own interior.[9]

The use of a term like introversion in the context of contemplative prayer immediately poses the question whether and how far personal and psychological factors offset prayer; and further, whether such factors are in any way related to, or even the source of, the two-dimensional nature of the christian life: the relationship between action and contemplation. It might then be fruitful to examine current psychological understandings of the terms introversion and extraversion, and to see to what extent they might refer to christian prayer and action.

Psychological types

Jung's well-known work on psychological types appeared shortly before the publication of *Western Mysticism* in 1922. It is unlikely, on the face of it, that Butler used the term introversion independently of Jung. However this may be, Jung's thesis was that people tend to experience and to behave according to one or other of two types: introversion and extraversion. In Jung's conception, the extravert is the person who is predominantly influenced by the object of knowledge, attention, or relationship. The object for such a person has, wittingly or unwittingly, a higher value than the subject. Jung's own definitions may be useful here:

> Introversion means a turning inward of the libido, whereby a negative relation of subject to object is expressed. Interest does not move towards the object, but recedes towards the subject. Everyone whose attitude is introverted thinks, feels, and acts in a way that clearly demonstrates that the subject is the chief factor of motivation while the object at most receives only a secondary value. Introversion may possess either a more intellectual or more emotional character, just as it can be characterized by either intuition or sensation. Introversion is active when the subject wills a certain seclusion in face of the object; it is passive when the subject is unable to restore again to the object the libido which is streaming back from it. When introversion is habitual, one speaks of an introverted type.

On the other hand, extraversion is defined as:

> An outward turning of the libido. With this concept I denote a manifest relatedness of subject to object in the sense of a positive movement of subjective interest towards the object. Everyone in the state of

[9] *Ibid.* Butler is here citing Bishop Ullathorne.

> extraversion thinks, feels and acts in relation to the object, and moreover in a direct and clearly observable fashion, so that no doubt can exist about his positive dependence upon the object. In a sense, therefore, extraversion is an outgoing transference of interest from subject to the object. If it is an intellectual extraversion, the subject thinks himself into the object. If a feeling extraversion, the subject feels himself into the object. The state of extraversion means a strong, if not exclusive, determination by the object. One should speak of an active extraversion when deliberately willed, and of a passive extraversion when the object compels it, that is, attracts the interest of the subject of its own accord, even against the latter's intention. Should the state of extraversion become habitual, the extraverted type appears.[10]

Jung arrived at the above definitions by considering various theological, philosophical and literary personalities, the views they expressed and the controversies into which they entered. The theological examples which he chose to exemplify his types are taken from early trinitarian controversies and also from eucharistic theology: it is extraverted, he feels, to give exclusive emphasis to the concrete reality of Christ's presence; it is introverted to give more, if not exclusive, emphasis to any subjective component of eucharistic devotion. In the realm of medieval philosophy, Jung alleges that it is extraverted to claim the concrete existence of universals, and introverted to deny them any existence, as did the nominalists. Psychology also affords him examples: one close to Jung himself was Freud, whom he styles as extraverted in contrast to Adler, an introvert.

Jung also considered that subsumed under the two types were four functions: thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting; and he gives descriptions of the various type-function categories. As far as we can judge (Jung did not turn to religious subjects until much later), he placed the 'mystical dreamer and seer' in the thinking-introvert category, though his definition of 'mystical' is somewhat trivial, if not contemptuous.[11]

Jung, then, associates the term introversion and its psychological type with so-called mystical activity. He also considers the activities of introversion and extraversion as being to some extent under

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[10] Jung, C. G.: *Psychological Types* (London, 1920), pp. 567 and 512.
[11] *Ibid.*, p 442.

voluntary control. What of the subsequent psychological history of these terms?

Types since Jung

In an era of swiftly changing psychological fashions, Jung's types have proved fairly durable. According to the habit of more recent psychological endeavour, which is to subject what it can to rigorous examination and to enumerate the results, the types (more or less as Jung defined them) have been given technical test expression. By this means it has been possible to verify some of the things Jung said about them. For example, it was his hypothesis that when the introverted person is psychologically ill-adjusted, the likelihood is that he will be obsessively or compulsively disturbed; when the extraverted person is so troubled, the likely disorder will be more hysterical in kind. This has been broadly verified in more recent work, associated especially with the name of Eysenck.[12] It has also been established that the types can be distinguished in other ways than those suggested by Jung: for example, introverted people can, in certain ways, be conditioned more easily and rapidly than the extraverted. Again, it has been shown that the two types differ markedly in the levels of external sense-stimulation with which they are at home. The introverted has very little 'stimulus-hunger'; the contrary type has a much more voracious appetite for the disturbing. More concretely specific definitions of the types, from a recent research source, run as follows:

> The typical extravert is sociable, likes parties, has many friends, needs to have people to talk to, and does not like reading or studying by himself. He craves excitement, takes chances, often sticks his neck out, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. He is fond of practical jokes, always has a ready answer, and generally likes change; he is care-free, easy-going, optimistic, and likes to 'laugh and be merry'. He prefers to keep moving and doing things, tends to be aggressive and lose his temper quickly; altogether his feelings are not kept under tight control, and he is not always a reliable person.
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> The typical introvert is a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; he is reserved and distant except to intimate friends. He tends to plan ahead, 'looks before he leaps', and distrusts the impulse of the moment. He does not like excitement, takes matters of everyday life with proper seriousness, and likes a

[12] Eysenck, H. J.: *Handbook of abnormal psychology* (London, 1961), ch. 1.

> well-ordered mode of life. He keeps his feelings under close control, seldom behaves in an aggressive manner, and does not lose his temper easily. He is reliable, somewhat pessimistic, and places great value on ethical standards.[13]

There has, however, been no advance since Jung's reflections on questions concerning the extent to which any one person may change typologically in the course of time, or how voluntary control can modify habitual type. Though the relationship between type and various forms of occupation and status has been studied, as yet that between type and religious responsiveness has not.[14]

For Jung, as for those who have subsequently studied his categories, the introversion-extraversion axis was considered as value-free. At a certain level of popular discourse, it is commonly thought better to be extraverted than the contrary; but Jung and his successors have refrained from any such evaluation of the types.

This raises a difficult and delicate question, one not unconnected with any relationship between type and contemplation. From the point of view of human ideals, as well as godly and theological ones, one might say that the ideal would be to commend the assets of both types, and the liabilities of neither. (From the specifications cited above, it will be seen that both types have liabilities as well as assets.) On the other hand, there is evidence that the person tending to the extraverted, at least where clinical conditions are involved, possibly has the better therapeutic outlook, since he is at any rate able to enter into a therapeutic relationship; the disorder here is that the person tends to relate almost to a fault, as it were. At the other pole, there is a sometimes persistent tenacity, as is often experienced in the pastoral care of the scrupulous: whatever is said to such folk is disputed to the last syllable, even when helpingly said. For all the value-free caution of psychological investigators, it may well be that here popular sensibility has the wiser word to say.

Type and contemplation

In Cuthbert Butler's definition of introversion as a proximate preparation for contemplation, there is clearly a 'readiness for value'. It can hardly signify a mere absence of sense-stimulation, quieting of impulse, freedom from rigidity or whatever, simply for

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[13] Eysenck, H. J. and S.B.G.: *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Inventory* (London, 1963).

[14] Cf Eysenck, H. J.: *Readings in Extraversion and Introversion* (London, 1970), vol 2.

its own sake. Conversion is much more than a deliberate act describable in terms of type-function: it involves the whole person, and values too – rather obvious ones which touch the very centre of the person so disposed to pray. This, it would seem, is more than a matter of mere typology. The most that we can say is that a voluntary withdrawal will always help a person to enter into contemplation. But habitual, typological withdrawal or introversion would probably be as inimical to prayer as its unwitting contrary.

There is little evidence to suggest that one habitual type disposes more readily to praying than the other.[15] Empirical attempts to tie observable religious activities exclusively to any one kind of personality pattern or type have so far proved almost entirely fruitless. It has, however, been suggested on qualitative grounds that there are, perhaps, introverted and extraverted types of prayer which can be called mystical.[16] The contemplation of St Teresa of Avila has been called extraverted, that of St John of the Cross, introverted. The differing characteristics of the two are the search for God in the oneness of all things (extravert), and the search through a unified consciousness freed from all interruption and distraction (introvert). The theoretical pitfall to be avoided by each type is respectively pantheistic and monistic. However all this may be, there is, thankfully, no evidence that one type more than the other is likely to be better disposed to pray. Experience does suggest that those who are habitually, if not unwittingly, introverted find the more individual and secluded aspects of praying somewhat easier to cope with; and those who are habitually, if not unwittingly, extraverted find the more sociable and active aspects of prayer and apostolate more easily agreeable (which may have something to say about differences between vocation to the *ex professo* contemplative life and the apostolic life: certainly the directive of Ignatius Loyola to his jesuits concerning finding God in all things, and that of Jerome Nadal on being contemplative right through to action – *contemplativus usque ad actionem* – would appear to differ psychologically in some respects to the teaching of, say, Gregory the Great on the continual necessity of withdrawal and isolation for contemplation[17]). Perhaps the error to be avoided in either case is the suppo-

[15] See, for example, Brown, L. B.: 'A study in religious belief', in *Psychology and Religion* (London, 1973).

[16] Cf Stace, W. T.: *Mysticism and Philosophy* (London, 1961), esp. pp 131ff.

[17] *Western Mysticism, ed. cit.*, p 72.

sition that what is agreeable to any one person is ideal, and should be adopted by all.

In this more permissive (if not more tolerant) age, there are grounds for suggesting that psychological intolerance, describable in different type-categories, between persons, dies very hard indeed. This is the more true where unwitting and uncriticized personal style becomes linked with expressions and usages presented as theologically or pastorally desirable. There seems little doubt that a good deal of the polarization between differing religious viewpoints and languages now associated with renewal in the Church might have in it a large psychological element of this kind. However, this possibility has not been tested technically; nor have psychological attempts to understand christian interdenominational differences in such terms as yet got very far.

If, then, the types may provide a pointer to at least a partial understanding of the two-dimensional nature of the christian life, it must be said that, ultimately, a more fundamental basis for such dimensional expression may well lie in the composite nature of man himself, and in the conflicts experienced to understand this. For, as the Council has said (for example), though 'the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed' and 'inspires the faithful to become one heart in love . . ., the spiritual life is not confined to participation in the liturgy. The christian is assuredly called to pray with the brethren, but he must also enter into his room to pray with the Father in secret'.[18]

Sequences in christian life

All this said, it remains likely that the more or less static designation of human psychological types may not, even in personal terms, measure far up towards the realities involved in the sequence of human growth, and growth in the order of grace. For instance, there are grounds for saying (in very general terms) that the newborn child is almost totally socially receptive in as much as he is more or less totally dependent for survival on those around him. The course of ordinary human growth entails such individual development as to be able to realize this dependence, and then to live in accord with it, rationally and lovingly. This also demands some measure of individual development, preferably without that degree of assertiveness, on the part of the growing person, which

[18] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 9 and 11.

would attempt to deny the fact of dependence. Similarly, consciousness itself, for the child, is undifferentiated before it becomes differentiated. Nor does the mature ideal of human development place consciousness as a goal in itself. Indeed, it has been suggested that the freedom of consciousness from its own shackles and limitations might in the end be its maturation.[19] Humour, imagination, creativeness, all free us from the 'clarity of the lunatic'. So does sleep.

Further, in matters concerning the life of the religious person, it has, again, been pointed out that it is more spontaneous to believe than to disbelieve: disbelief is a derivative condition, subsequent to what may have been a whole belief, but one as yet uncritical.[20] One is left wondering speculatively whether there may not be some similar element in development in relation to the psychological types. Impulsiveness, the need of, and uncritical orientation to, surrounding objects and persons, is, after all, a characteristic of childhood – and very extraverted. (So also is the *envoi* at the end of the liturgy, and all that it spiritually signifies.) Could it be that a phase of development has to intervene for the good of man, involving self-critical development, some introversion? Though it has been shown that there is quite probably some connection between a person's heredity and his more likely type,[21] the connection is not so complete as to render this sequence a psychological impossibility. A christian's end, as his beginning, is lost in another, with no subject standing in the way.

[19] Cf Jacobi, J.: *The Psychology of Jung* (London, 1949), p 119.
[20] Cf Allport, G.: *The individual and his religion* (London, 1950), p 103.
[21] Cf Eysenck, H. J.: *Crime and Personality* (London, 1964), p 699.