

Writings on Humanity from the School of Pierre Leroux

MORALS:

THE LINK BETWEEN MAN AND HUMANITY

You are struck by the moral evil that exists on earth, you sometimes go so far as to be distressed at the sight of so many unfortunate people bent under the burden of life. A burden one might well say! The word has been true for a lost number of centuries. And yet what could be more beautiful than life, what could be sweeter and easier! But it is not the present life that can be described in this way. This is only the crude image of true life, a sordid envelope that hides it from us, which we have not yet completely torn apart. This is why moral evil is still so great.

But must it last forever? You who deplore it, why do you say with sadness and despair: "There is no remedy!"? I sometimes hear you wondering if this evil continues to reign by an immutable will of God. This question, well understood and well resolved, would take you far into the field of light and truth. But no sooner have you asked it than, immediately abandoning it, you repeat your despairing words: "There is no remedy." It is because you lack a true knowledge of man's destination. A ray of this truth would open in your eye a luminous furrow towards the sky of hope.

Yes, without doubt, God permits evil; but he also allows the healing of this evil, and he wants us to strive to heal it ourselves. He gave us the effective means. In our hands is the true remedy. This means, this remedy, is the knowledge and observance of a law of our nature, the truest, the holiest and the sweetest of laws. It is the law which binds us to each other and which is formulated as follows: *man is above all united to man*. It is not new to Humanity. The true sages of all centuries have known and taught it. Only it has become better and better known, as man has developed in the true knowledge of his nature. It was also little known, as it still is. Only the ignorant people who denied it and who deny it still have not succeeded and will not succeed in precipitating Humanity into the errors in which they have fallen.

The truth is one, and error is multiple; but all errors in morality can be reduced to three. Three parties have always called men to three different excesses. Man, in his essence, is indivisibly sensation-sentiment-knowledge: some have only seen sensation, have only known solid and real sensation, and they have created materialism. Others, under the name of sentiment, have cultivated only the individual passions, and they have created egoism under the name of love, under the name of friendship, under the name of

family, under the name of city, homeland, and under a thousand other various names. Others, finally, only wanted to cultivate knowledge, and they created false spiritualism.

We write here against the materialists and against the absolute spiritualists, against the mystics of sensation, if they can be called that, and the mystics of knowledge. As for those who, without even having a doctrine, cultivate egoism under various names, admitting, as the primary goal of their relationships, a more or less restricted portion of their fellow men whom they bring with them into the sanctuary of their selfishness, we can address them another time, and try to show them the error of these passions that they deify.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the new era approached, spiritualism and materialism were summed up one after the other, each in deplorable excess. We first saw the mystics push their false principle to its most dangerous, most condemnable, and most justly condemned consequences. Then came the partisans of naturalism, who also drew the most deplorable errors from their exaggerated, absolute principle. It is a strange thing, but one that can be easily understood today; both of them nevertheless had a portion of the truth: they only lacked knowledge of the true environment of man, Humanity.

Yes, we will say with the spiritualists, man is united with God; because he communes with God in life. But we will make this reservation, that man communicates even more particularly and more directly with man, and that consequently he is more directly united with man. Yes, we will again say with the partisans of naturalism, man is united with nature, because he communicates with it in life. But we will make our salutary reservation, that man communicates more particularly and more directly with man, and that consequently he is more directly united with man. It is very true that nature and God are indirect two objects for man; but it is not true that one or the other is its direct object, its true object. Its direct object is man. Man is above all united with man.

We want to try to demonstrate this truth, which is dear to us, and which we believe to be useful, essential to the happiness of the human race, as much as it is possible for us to do so. For this we will borrow our light and our strength from the true metaphysical notion of the nature of man.

In order to live and develop, man must be turned towards himself, towards his *self*. It is the fundamental law of life; it is for us a natural need and a sacred duty. It is as the satisfaction of this need and this duty that egoism is legitimate and holy. But man is not alone; before him is his fellow. This one, who is also man, has the same need and the same duty. Man and his fellow man will therefore be turned towards themselves, each towards his own *self*.

But, to live and develop normally and progressively, they cannot always remain in themselves; because then they could neither give nor receive. But no created being lives

continuously from its own essence. Man and his fellow man, these two selves isolated until now, must therefore come out of themselves, without ever completely forgetting themselves outside; and they must turn towards an object, towards a non-self, in which each one finds himself, and thereby still turns towards himself.

Man must not find himself in his object as sensation only, or as sentiment only, or as knowledge only, but as sensation-sentiment-knowledge indivisibly united and simultaneously manifested, that is to say as man. Otherwise, not being entirely there, he would only be turned towards one of the three inseparable faces of his nature. To obey the law of his being, he will therefore turn towards his fellow man, who corresponds directly to him through the Trinity.

The fellow man is the object of man, the real and normal non-self of man. Like him, the fellow man is sensation-sentiment-knowledge indivisibly united; and, like him, he needs an object in which he also finds himself. Man and his fellow man therefore find themselves in each other. There is human *self* in the human *non-self*, and vice versa. So that man and his fellow man, in turning towards one another, find themselves still each turned towards itself. They thus each leave their own *self* only to find this *self*. Each of us is thus continually turned towards ourself in two ways, each of us thus draws from himself and from our fellow men. We all live spiritually together.

This does not mean that man must borrow his entire life from his fellow man. Every man has within himself the principle of his existence; only, this principle can only be maintained and developed through the cooperation of others. This is what the Creator wanted. He has made for us a life proper to us all, common to us all, a human life, founded on the Trinity, in which we all commune with one another, and which we develop and perfect through one another, while God pours it on us incessantly in inexhaustible streams.

Thus man finds himself in man. He has before him the fellow man, and it is still himself who appears, but in his object.

Where would he find, in nature, this so necessary object? Below man, what being corresponds to him as sensation-sentiment-knowledge indivisibly united?

The poets have often liked to represent to us unfortunate people led astray by suffering, taking refuge in the depths of the forests, where they addressed bitter complaints to the trees and animals against the injustice of the gods and the cruelty of men. The poets wanted to give us a great lesson. By painting for us the horrible situation of these poor fools, who, far from man, strove to annihilate the man in themselves, without being able to obtain any other result than causing themselves incredible suffering, they wanted to teach us that it is not good for man to separate himself from man. Such is, in the poem of

the divine Fénelon, the admirable meaning of the story of Philoctetes healed by Ulysses, that is to say by man, and restored to human society.

In the ancient fable there is another fine example of the error of the man who flees his true object. Under the guise of Narcissus, I like to recognize the fool who makes himself his own idol, who loves only himself, focuses on himself, and seeks to live through himself. In love with his own beauty, the wretch whose madness I recall runs deep into the woods, to be entirely his own person, whom he idolizes. He flees amorous nymphs; he flees from Humanity, which pursues him and calls him with its passionate voice; he flees again, he is alone, he lies down at the edge of a fountain, he contemplates his image. Who does he look at like this, in the most complete oblivion of any other object but the one to whom he is attached? Himself! He has turned towards himself exclusively, and, by his self, objectifies himself himself. Guilty and fatal error! He cannot be his own object, and, fleeing the true, he loses everything, he loses even the humanity he carried within him, and he is changed into a flower. This ingenious fiction veils a profound truth. Antiquity, which hid under symbols, or, as we say, under fables, the deepest truths of metaphysics, antiquity had well understood that man cannot separate himself from his true object, either in the manner of Philoctetes, or in the manner of Narcissus, without immediately disorganizing the principle of his being, and committing moral suicide.

Yet what does the vast majority of the human race do? Instead of seeking his necessary object in the perfected, improved, happier man, man seeks his object in matter and, sacrificing his true object to this false object, tortures, crucifies, disfigures man, which he regards as different from him, and yet who is his fellow, or rather who is still him.

Proprietors of slaves, owners of men, see what sad consequences your error produces for yourselves! While your fellows cultivate your land, or exploit your gold, solely and entirely responsible for this care, they cannot develop normally and progressively. You, while you are given over to all the distractions of your dissipated life, you cannot develop normally and gradually. Sensation dominates among your brothers, the workers, but among you it also dominates. So you are all horribly incomplete. You lack your true purpose; harmony is destroyed, and progress hindered. Life does not develop, so it will become distorted and denatured. Where does this satiety come from which, for you, dulls everything? From whence these troubles, these torments, these pointless agitations? You vary and multiply your golden celebrations, and you are called the happy ones of the earth. A lie! You are deceiving, you have a mask, and you feel it clearly yourself. Your pleasures, even the most delicate and apparently best chosen among them, are none other than the pleasures of the senses, selfishly sought and tasted. Because the horse that Caligula wanted to make a consul ate a golden grain from a trough of marble or gold, was he fed differently

than his peers? Alas! Our pleasures are withered and degraded! A gnawing worm seems attached to the heart of all Humanity. We all have a true and legitimate need for happiness, so we run towards joy and we only find disenchantment! Ah! Life is distorted, poisoned! This is not the life that God made for us, and that he wants us to restore as he made it. Present life is full of bitterness for all, because we misunderstand our object, Humanity.

While the multitude of men pursue happiness where it does not exist, where it cannot be, and, failing to know the true object of man, attach themselves only to pleasure, there is a particular class of men who put all their superiority into cultivating knowledge only within themselves. "I would give the entire history of humanity for the well-made description of the leg of an insect," said one day in the national forum a scientist who, we would like to believe, no longer thinks that way today and would gladly make amends. He was told that it had taken the entire life of humanity until the seventeenth century for a scientist, with the help of the microscope and all previous anatomical discoveries, to be able, in twenty years of work, to bequeath to posterity the anatomy of the cockchafer. Men of science, don't you feel above all united with man? Well! Who is the scholar who does not need man? Is it given to only one of you to invent an entirely new science? Is there a discovery whose germ is not more or less developed in what men have already developed? Every scientist continues a science that he has received from man, and which he intends to bequeath to man, enlarged and perfected by his own work. Who would not feel the deep bond of man with Humanity in this faculty given to man to enter into the ideas of his fellow man, to appropriate them, and to draw from them the consequences that previous man had not felt! The scientist receives science from man, and he continues it for man. To labor for Humanity, isn't that the purest and most beautiful motive for scientists?

The scientist cannot ignore this obvious link between man and Humanity without wounding himself deeply. If he regards science as his direct object, he turns away from the true, and soon arrives at disastrous consequences for himself and others. Attracted entirely by the unknown spice, he locks himself in his laboratory or in his office, he rushes to the solution of the problems that tickle his self-esteem and his ambition, embodies in himself the terms and formulas of his favorite science, becomes foreign to the habits of ordinary life, makes himself unfit for friendship as for love, and, putting his ideal of delight entirely in the satisfaction of his curiosity, he soon loses sight of any object that is not the science by which he is possessed. Thus his solitary knowledge develops monstrously, until it becomes nothing more than a vast mass of nomenclatures, processes, combinations and systems, piled up and not truly coordinated, lacking relationships, links, union. Analysis is the vice of the scientist who lacks a deep feeling of man's bond with

Humanity. Through analysis, he will get lost even in the most futile objects of science; and, never being able to rise to synthesis, he never conquers the notion of this unity in which each science and each object of all science are linked, through everything that touches them, to everything that surrounds them.

This is how the majority of scientists pass, leaving work that can be called sterile, because they do not produce all that they truly contain. No great feeling inspires them; because they have killed the feeling in themselves. They have only developed their knowledge, and satisfied their sensation, in an abnormal and disordered way; because in their lives sensation never fails to play its part, and far too often. Like the proprietors of nature, these proprietors of science love to surround themselves with luxury and pleasures, heedless of the ignorant, among whom the god of knowledge has not, as among them, called to the god of gold. How many heads reputed to be strong and powerful bend every day towards the filthiest of pleasures!

It is truly indivisible, the human Trinity; it really has only itself as its object, not in the individual, but in his fellow man. Those who reject this object in order to go to God through sentiment do not see how wrong they are. If he could have God as his object, man would not be man, he would be God. The finite cannot have infinity as its direct object. We are infinite in aspiration, but this aspiration towards God must be pursued through Nature and through Humanity. We are sensation-sentiment-knowledge indivisibly united, and it is only through the simultaneous impulse of the three indissoluble aspects of our being that we can aspire to the source of this being.

The mystic loses his way in his uncontrolled aspiration towards God. He anathematizes the earth, he despises nature, he repudiates his body, neglects it entirely, and subjects it to the harshest privations; he would consider himself fortunate if he could rid himself of this heavy hindrance. Rejecting sensation as vile and embarrassing, rejecting knowledge as incapable of leading him to his goal, he rushes towards infinity. In the deceptive hope of achieving it, he devotes himself to contemplation; he immerses himself in ecstasy, in rapture; and he takes a fatal taste from it, from which nothing can cure him. Once there, he lets himself be led more and more astray by his sick imagination; he falls into a delirium full of strange voluptuousness; and, believing himself then to be very close to God, he turns entirely towards himself, he shuts himself up in his own heart, makes himself his own object; because, in this state, it is himself, and not God, that he has just reached. It was towards himself that he has been led, by running towards God outside of the path that alone can lead to God. It was him alone that he found, but he in a state of madness, he disturbed, disordered, perverted; him alone, and he believes he has God!

At this moment, he is even more excited than ever; he still has to march; there are steps towards God that one must climb to arrive at God. He therefore goes always, always solitary and insane, abandoning more and more Humanity, which he finds too imperfect, too unworthy of him, which he disdains in order to go toward the infinite, to lock the infinite in his heart, or rather to sink into it. The result of this race towards a chimera, the possession of God outside of nature and Humanity, that is to say outside of life, is that the mystic arrives at the disgust of all things here below, that he falls into complete oblivion or at least into a very reprehensible neglect of Humanity, communicating to it only through a sort of proud commiseration for this imperfection. Then a kind of mystical death, after which he sighed, strikes him according to his wishes, and he becomes like a corpse in the midst of life, ridiculous if he were not miserable, foreign to everything, without strength, without energy, doing nothing for himself, expecting everything from God. Populate the earth with mystics, or rather convert all of Humanity to the deplorable excesses of mysticism, and soon Humanity will be no more. But they will still not have found God.

So neither above nor below is the true stage where man's life must take place, on which his indefinite development must continue. Or rather, to speak more truthfully, there is neither high nor low nor middle; these three terms merge into one, which includes all three. They unite, in the field proper to man, in Humanity. Humanity gives everything to man: nature, and his fellow man, and God. By the will of the Creator, who has admirably united everything for the happiness of man, by the holy and inviolable law that has subjected us all to the most kind and salutary yoke, we are above all united to man.

We carry this bond, we feel it, too often, it is true, without noting it, but really. What being gives birth to man? Isn't it man and woman, the human couple, Humanity! See the consequences of this origin. The child participates so intimately in the essence of the father and that of the mother, that when he comes into the world he always carries the main characteristic traits of his family, either morally or physically.

On what legitimate basis, legitimate that is in a certain sense, could castes have been founded, if not on the poorly understood link between man and Humanity! There is, in the old claim to descending from this or that people, a very striking proof of what we are trying to demonstrate here. There is another equally striking aspect in this pride of the noble child, who draws enough moral strength from the memory of his ancestors to remain pure in his own way from all taint. Would you not say that they bound themselves together, swearing to keep in the world the reputation of their honor intact? And truly they are bound, not by an oath, but by their own nature.

They were, undoubtedly, wrong, these patricians of all times and places, as their bastardized remains are still wrong, in separating themselves from Humanity to confine

themselves to the caste of family, or to the caste of homeland, or to the caste of property. They were wrong, as those are still wrong who imitate them by basing on some so-called virtue of their blood these iniquitous and chimerical rights by which inequality still subsists. For Humanity is one, because there is only one blood in the human family, and it is neither patrician blood nor plebeian blood, but human blood. But their belief was based on the link, misunderstood it is true, of man with Humanity. It is not with just a few men of a certain caste that man is united; it is with all men of all times and all places. However, we should say in passing that they were superior, those patricians of the past, decorating themselves with the virtues of the men their ancestors, to these patricians of today, borrowing all their fame from the brilliance of the gold that they possess! The former, despite their errors, still felt Humanity, while the latter only feel the fictitious value of an insensible metal.

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Human society has always provided a thousand proofs of this link that we proclaim here. This facility that man possesses to learn about the properties of his fellow man, where does it have its cause and what does it mean! A few errors and a few truths, certain virtues and certain vices particular to an era, are they not the more or less the complete prerogative of all the men of that era? Does not every man of the same period of time find himself in his fellow man, whether they march with their century, whether they come after it or whether they go ahead of it? What character is so strongly individual that it is not modified by those around it? Men shape each other in the commerce of life. Each remains what he is virtually, but each also becomes what his environment makes him. Transport among us the child who was born in a wild tribe, and you will one day see him share in his parents and his tutors. Why was a man or a few men able to establish the civilization of their century among populations three thousand years backward in the progress of the human spirit? A man of genius has always influenced his time. Moses, Socrates, Jesus, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, all the great men of action and all the great men of thought, have they not molded the world according to their individual type?

But the converse is also true: there is no man so superior that he is not the obvious, manifest product of the Humanity of his time. Man always recalls man; each man recalls all men, starting with those closest to him in time and space. Name Plato. At this name what idea arises in us? Don't we go back to ancient times? Are we not transported to Greece, to Athens? Can we detach the author of the *Phaedo* from his father and mother, from his family, from his fellow citizens, from all Greeks, finally? Don't the Greeks make us think of their neighbors, their allies, the neighboring peoples, all the contemporary peoples? So, if we stop at the name of Plato, if we let our mind go, pushed by imagination,

aided by memory and directed by logic, we will see around us being described, through times and places, an immense circle in which we will embrace, with a synthetic and rapid glance, not only the era and the generation of Plato, but also, higher, before him, the previous eras and generations, and lower, closer to us, and up to us, all the successive eras and generations.

And again if, considering the question in another way, we stop at the idea of Plato as a philosopher, we will neither be able to detach him and separate him from the philosophers of his country, nor from those who were his contemporaries, nor from those who preceded him, nor from those who followed him. Thus the study of Plato's opinions necessarily brings to mind all opinions; because they are all linked and chained together, in sequence, like the times. The name of a man thus awakens in us the idea of all centuries and all men, of all the sentiments and all the ideas of Humanity. It is impossible to dismiss this universal idea; it is implicitly contained in the enunciation of every human name, whether we stop there long enough to see it emerge and develop, or whether we pass too quickly for the mind to notice it. This is why the name of Plato being given, the history of Humanity up to the present day can be made and linked to this name, which then becomes like a link uniting the times before Plato with the times after Plato. It is the same with every name, from the most obscure to the most brilliant; for every man calls to mind all men.

If the name of one man recalls all men, all of nature, modified by Humanity, bears traces that also remind us of our fellow human beings. Visit the galleries where masterpieces of painting and sculpture are stored. There is not a statue, not a painting that does not bring you back to Humanity. Travel the earth, you will not find a column that does not indestructibly bear the memory of Humanity. The pyramids of Egypt, the Apollo of Belvedere, a Virgin by Raphael, like the name of Plato, can recall the entire history of the human race.

But of all the proofs that we could multiply in favor of the bond between man and his fellow man, those provided by love and friendship are the most beautiful and the most touching. All the poets have sung of these two sentiments. It is the eternal canvas on which the richest fantasies of the imagination are embroidered; it is the always original theme on which the most brilliant variations of inspiration and thought rest. Take the highest types in which poets have realized their ideal of love and friendship; they will all tell you that the most real object of man, the most worthy, the most fertile in happy consequences, is man and woman, that is to say Humanity. They will all tell you that after losing the object of their love, they no longer found themselves. Death had taken away the best part of their being, taking away the heart in which they had placed it. Amid the pain caused by this loss, the weakest could not survive, and the strongest quickly spent their

last days in horrible solitude. That is their fault. After Romeo's death, after Charlotte's wedding, Juliet and Werther still have all of Humanity to love. But, in their very error, how much they prove that man cannot do without his fellow man, because he is above all united to his fellow man!

I will stop here. I feel that after having responded to those who abuse sensation and knowledge, to the materialists and the mystics, I would have to respond to those who abuse sentiment. Yes, I would have to respond to those who abuse this very art that I have just attested to, this art born from the third human faculty, sentiment; this art that takes its source directly from the relationship of individual man to Humanity, but which, turning, so to speak, against its origin, often tends to constitute individualism and egoism under the beautiful names of friendship and love of family, of homeland. This is too big a topic for me to cover in this article; this is the question of art itself. There is a false art that works as parricide against Humanity, that allies itself with sensation or with false knowledge, to deify the passions, instead of turning the attributes of human nature towards their goal, Alas! Existing society seems not to suspect this link. I still see in its bosom this nameless shame, man slave to man, to his fellow man, to his equal; I still see the majority toiling with tears and pain to earn the bitter bread that cheats their hunger.

No matter! Everything seems to us to invite man to unite with man. Humanity calls him, and nature and God throw him back toward Humanity. When this bond is felt by all men, moral evil will disappear from the earth. Then there will be no more castes, no more divisions, no more inequality based on birth or fortune; in the world there will only be the great human family restored to its true dignity, marching with unity towards the fulfillment of its inexhaustible destinies.

GRÉGOIRE CHAMPSEIX.

Grégoire Champseix, "Morale: Lien de l'homme et de l'Humanité," *Revue social* 1 no. 2 (Novembre 1845): 25-28.

SCIENCE:
OF THE WORD HUMANITY

Explanation of the definition contained in the book OF HUMANITY.

§ 1.

No word is more often used, and yet no word is more vague and less understood than the word *humanity*.

Among the more or less incomplete definitions that have been given, two are most generally widespread.

The first consists of considering humanity as the assembly of human generations, past, present, and future;

The second, of recognizing a certain influence of generations on each other, and of seeing in this influence a kind of life of the human race developing over time.

These definitions each seem to us, more or less, as insignificant as the other. The first really has no value; it presents no other idea than that of an indeterminate number of men, formed by the assembly of generations confusedly added together.

The second, it is true, tends to discern a link in this kind of ossuary formed by the remains of the entire human race. We see that there is a relationship between generations, and we even go so far as to see that a sort of collective life reigns within all human races. But on what is this relationship based, where does this influence come from, how is this collective life exercised, and by virtue of what principle? This is what we cannot see at all.

The link between the individual man and men in general, between Man and Humanity, not being even glimpsed in this definition, the collective life of which we speak remains an enigma for which we do not have the word. The essential relationship having been missed, the consequential relationship of the generations to each other that we point out is only a confused and dark perception.

These two definitions therefore not only seem vague to us, they completely lack a certain basis. We can nevertheless affirm that all the thinkers of our time, with the exception of one, do not have a clearer metaphysical notion, when they speak, which as it happens they often do, of Humanity.

But it must nevertheless be recognized that these definitions are already progress on the ideas that were formed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I open the Dictionnaire de l'Académie, and I read: "HUMANITY," *human nature*." Then come the examples: "*Jesus Christ took on our humanity. He took our humanity. The humanity of Jesus Christ. Holy humanity. The sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, of the Son*

of God.” According to the academicians of the seventeenth century, the word Humanity therefore has no other meaning than that of *Human nature*, without any more precise determination; and yet the incarnation of the Son of God in this Humanity is present in their minds. All the examples they cite are taken from this incarnation. We could ask them: Why did Jesus Christ take on our Humanity? Why do you call our Humanity thus deified *holy Humanity*? Don't you see that if the Son of God, as you say, was incarnated in Humanity, it is apparently because Humanity is a collective being; for assuredly he was not incarnated in this or that man in particular, but in human nature in general. And if, as you say, he saved Humanity through this incarnation, it is therefore because from this human nature in which he was incarnated, his divine influence was poured out on all generations of men; these generations of men are therefore not isolated from each other, foreign to one another. Do you not yourselves call Jesus Christ thus incarnate *the second Adam*? If the first Adam, qui was the collective Humanity, has by his sin incurred degeneration, how would the second Adam have redeemed men from this decline, other than by embodying in God the very essence of Humanity, and thus bringing back, not men as individuals, but the entire species, to the state of innocence and holiness? What did this Son of God who became man tell you, what did he teach you about human nature? That *all men are brothers*. So to your definition of Humanity you should at least have added what your Savior revealed to you; and your lexicon should contain this definition: “*Humanity*, human nature,” the characteristic of which is that all beings who are clothed with it are *brothers*.” So your examples, taken from religion, would have meaning; because *human fraternity*, sanctified by Jesus Christ, would determine the true meaning of this word Humanity.

But the academicians who wrote the Dictionnaire did not take the trouble to align their knowledge of words with this religion for which they had or professed so much respect. They vaguely defined the word Humanity, and spoke with idolatry of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, without understanding this great symbol.

In the eighteenth century, Voltaire pursued Humanity in Adam with his sarcasm, failing to understand anything about *Genesis*; and yet he has, in many of his writings, and in all his beautiful moments, a sort of true worship for Humanity. No one uses this word more often or with more feeling. He thus seeks, so to speak, the trace of what he has lost. The feeling brings him back to the idea of a collective bond between all men; and this same man who treats with so much irony religious monuments where human solidarity is imprinted and formulated as a cult, is never more eloquent than when he speaks to men about their brotherhood. But do not ask him for true knowledge of the relationship between Man and Humanity; Voltaire is at least as incomplete and as negative in this

respect as Richelieu's Academy. The proof is that you will search in vain, either in the Encyclopédie or in the Dictionnaire Philosophique, for the word Humanity. This word is missing. But instead you will find, at the word *man*, endless jokes about Adam and Eve.

The author of the book OF HUMANITY (page 256 of the first edition) said: "Humanity Is an Ideal Being, Composed of a Multitude of Real Beings, Who Are Themselves Humanity in Germ, Humanity in a Virtual State; and, Reciprocally, Man Is a Real Being, in Which Lives, in a Virtual State, the Ideal Being Called Humanity. Man Is Humanity in an Individual and Present Manifestation." This definition of Humanity seems to us to contain the germ and the main basis of that religion of the future which all the thinkers who are all profound have, for half a century, announced to us as necessary to regenerate society, and which they call upon with all their wishes.

We will try to explain as clearly as possible, while confining ourselves within narrow limits, this definition, on which we base the greatest hopes.

Humanity is an ideal being:

That is to say, what we call Humanity is not a real being that the senses can grasp. It is up to the mind alone to conceive of *Humanity*, which is the *ideal type* containing within itself everything that particular beings called men can feel, love, or know, through the three faculties, sensation, sentiment, and knowledge, which constitute them.

Composed of a multitude of real beings:

Yes; because to contain within itself everything that these beings can achieve, it must be these beings themselves, without thereby becoming real and graspable like them.

The type *Humanity* is in every man, as God, source of all life, is in everything: it lets its manifestation be seen, without ceasing to be hidden.

Who are themselves Humanity in germ, Humanity in a virtual state:

Just as the ideal being Humanity contains within itself everything that particular human beings can achieve, every man carries within himself the germ of everything what the ideal being Humanity includes.

All the sensations, all the sentiments, all the knowledge of this being Humanity, he can assimilate them. He is able to feel everything, to know everything, to love everything.

However, these sensations, these sentiments, and this knowledge are only in him as the oak is in the acorn; that is to say in the state of a virtual germ, of an aspiration, and not yet of a manifestation.

And, reciprocally, man is a real being, in which lives, in the virtual state, the ideal being called Humanity:

This is what has just been said above.

Man is Humanity:

Yes, Man is Humanity, since he is given to assimilate everything of which this Humanity is capable. He is Humanity, since not only can he assimilate everything that it understands, but he has all of this Humanity within him. But how does he have this Humanity? What is this Humanity like? Here the author of this definition responds:

He is Humanity in an individual and present manifestation:

An individual manifestation; for man, differing from other men as to form, is the manifestation of the type Humanity, in preponderance either of sensation, or of sentiment, or of knowledge. These three faculties are infinitely varied in each being; which in no way prevents the fundamental identity of essence that connects these same particular beings to make them equals, fellows.

A present manifestation; for, although this sentence of the famous Leibnitz is profound and true: "The present, generated from the past, is pregnant with the future," there nevertheless exists a characteristic difference between the past, the present, and the future, and we cannot without absurdity confuse these three points of time. Thus the man of today, although being the same, in substance, as the man of yesterday, differs no less in form. He is the same individual; but it is transformed by the progress that he has accomplished from yesterday to today, by assimilating non-selves through sensation, sentiment, and knowledge, by communing with these non-selves, necessary objects of his life, through the three faces of his being.

As we see, the life of man is progressive, and the individual being is only the present manifestation of Humanity.

What we have just said about the individual being can be demonstrated in the same way when it concerns all of Humanity.

§ 2

We must seize this beautiful definition of Humanity; for, deep and true as it seems to us to be, it is this definition, let us have no doubt, that will lead us to resolve all the important problems that the human mind has posed; it is this definition that will give us the complete solution to all the great, disturbing social questions of our days.

What, for us, emerges first of all from this definition of Humanity is the observation of the principle of the radical equality of men among themselves; here is how:

If I suppose myself momentarily in front of any man, and if I examine myself, observe myself internally, *psychologically*, to use here the favorite expression of the eclectic school, what will I see in myself, examining myself like this? I will see the type of Humanity in

its entirety in the state of a germ, and manifesting itself there individually and presently by *sensation-sentiment-knowledge*:

By *sensation*; because I have a body, sensitive organs, capable of communicating with all of nature;

By *sentiment*; because I feel drawn, by a sort of sympathy and attraction, towards this or that being, repelled by others; I am susceptible to a host of movements perfectly discernible from sensation, which can all be reduced in general to love and its opposite; I therefore have a love by means of which I unite with the universal love that connects the beings composing this nature, and more particularly with my fellow men;

By *knowledge*; because I have a mind, which makes me conceive this universal harmony that my heart loves, makes me penetrate into the secrets of this nature that my organs perceive, and makes me distinguish between them, compare, analyze all the individual beings spread in this infinite nature.

Let me examine this man who is there, in front of me. The organs, the body that constitute my Humanity through the external form, and which are, so to speak, the doors of my *sensation*, does he not have them as well as me?

The *sentiment*, this love manifesting itself in me through various passions, do I not find it in him? Is he not, like me, endowed with the faculty of loving or hating, depending on whether the sensations produced on him by the external world are pleasant or unpleasant to him?

This *knowledge*, which I use to judge him, appreciate him, compare him to myself or to other beings, does he not also possess it? Is it not given to him, as well as to me, to judge, compare, analyze all things? The judgments he will make will undoubtedly differ from my judgments; but they will not be any less judgments. Therefore, he is, like me, knowledge, although his knowledge differs, in appearance, from mine.

As I have just demonstrated, every man is therefore identically linked to every man by the fundamental *sensation-sentiment-knowledge*; which constitutes in him the type Humanity, which only manifests itself in these three aspects.

If this is true, one consequence follows first of all. It is that two terms hitherto divided, separated from each other, as being essentially different in their nature, are found united, and mutually imply each other: these two terms are *right* and *duty*.

Let us prove it.

You are sensation, and, therefore, you have the right to infinitely develop this faculty that is within you. But a man appears before your eyes. Like you, this man is sensation, and, therefore, has the same rights as you to the development of this sensation. Now what does duty consist of, if not in rendering to our fellow man what belongs to him? And what

is his? What also belongs to you: the inalienable right to freely develop sensation, a constituent part of our being. So the whole duty here consists of respecting in our fellow human beings the legitimate right that we all feel we have.

What we have just said for sensation, it will be easy for us to say for sentiment and knowledge.

You perceive bodies in nature; these bodies move in all directions, grow, and gravitate. Using the knowledge that is in you, you penetrate to a certain extent, according to the degree of your intelligence, into the law, the universal intelligence that causes these bodies that your organs (sensation) perceive to grow, gravitate and move. You feel led, by your intellectual nature, to compare, decompose, analyze these bodies. And you have the right to do so, gifted as you are, with the ability to do so. But this man, whom I opposed to you earlier when it came to sensation, is he not also endowed with this powerful faculty, knowledge? Therefore, he, as well as you, has the right to develop this faculty. Your duty, which consists of protecting this right, becomes, for knowledge, as well as for sensation, extremely simplified.

But this perception of bodies and this penetration of the law that governs them (sensation and knowledge) is not all for you. The action of this law on these bodies always produces in you a third term, which is the *sentiment* of attraction or repulsion that you experience for these bodies, or for the phenomena that are accomplished in them and through them. And you experience this feeling because it is within you, just like the other two terms of your psychological Trinity; which means that you have the right to develop it infinitely. But this fellow man that we have opposed to you when it came to sensation and knowledge, does he not also have this faculty of loving or hating the bodies or the phenomena that his organs perceive and that his intelligence knows? And if he has this faculty, this feeling (and he has it because he is similar to you), does he not have the same rights as you to the development of this third face of his being? So here again, we can affirm that your duty consists of protecting in your fellow man the right that you feel in yourself.

We can conclude from what we have just said that these two things hitherto called *right* and *duty* are now united in one.

The right of my fellow man is my right. I proclaim his by exercising mine. By proclaiming his right, I fulfill my duty, which is really only respect for the rights of others. And likewise, in fulfilling my duty, I proclaim the duty of others. Therefore, rights and duties are now one and the same thing for all men, *equals, fellows*; for all are Humanity. And all of them are Humanity because they all contain, in their germ state, the type of Humanity, although they are each only its individual and present manifestation.

It would therefore be wrong for us to allow ourselves to be dazzled by the differences in forms that appear in men, and for us to draw this false and absurd consequence, the inequality of rights and duties.

My fellow man may very well be a great scientist, a great artist, a great industrialist: he will always be Humanity in an individual manifestation; he will never be more, all sciences, all arts, all industries being contained in the type of Humanity. And as I have within me the type of Humanity in all its grandeur, in the germ state, I am its equal in substance; the form alone is varied, which is perhaps only a question of time between us.

This being admitted, no more inequality is possible between individuals of the species Humanity. Whatever their tastes, abilities, aptitudes, or predispositions, things will never give rise to caste or privilege. There will only be a difference in function for individuals in the great whole of Humanity.

If we understand all of the above, if we are convinced of the radical identity of men among themselves, an identity that seems obvious to us, we will be able to move with a firm steps towards the conquest of equality, our goal, the goal of all Humanity.

ADOLPHE BERTEAULT.

Adolphe Berteault, "Science: Du mot Humanité," *Revue social* 1 no. 3 (Décembre 1845): 37-38.