

## "HE WHO GETS SLAPPED"

FROM THE CULTURALIST VIEWPOINT

BY WILLIAM NATHANSON

ZINIDA: Everybody does what he wants. It's Consuelo's business and her father's.

PAPA BRIQUET: No, mother, that's not true! Not everybody does what he wants, but it turns out this way. . . . Devil knows why!

—From *He Who Gets Slapped*.

WHY "it turns out this way," instead of the other way; why and how human activity takes on one form instead of another, in other words, who and what determines the activity of human beings; who directs and controls human destinies; who guides human fate? This problem of all human problems has vexed the strongest minds of the thinking part of the world.

This problem is known in philosophy as the problem of Determinism. And this problem resolves itself into two questions: The first question is: "Is the activity of the human being determined and controlled or does the human being possess a freedom of will? Or, as the modern philosophers call it, A Will to be Free?" But since no matter how much freedom of will or will to be free we will allow to the individual, there will still remain a great deal of human effort and human activity which must be considered predetermined. For the individual in particular, and mankind in general, not only creates the future, but also carries within itself the entire past of the world, or to state it more correctly, is carried by the stream of the universal past. Consequently, there is the second question: "Who or what determines the efforts and strivings, achievements and accomplishments of human individuals and of human society; who and what guides, controls, directs and determines the activity, destiny and fate of mankind?"

And the answer to this question depends upon a larger question upon a great metaphysical problem, known as the problem of Being. This is the problem that relates to the essence of the universe, to the ultimate universal reality, to that ultimate source, from which the entire world, as we perceive it with our senses, sprouts out. They who conceive that the essence of the world is matter, and that our willing, feeling and thinking is ultimately caused by material substance, they who can picture to themselves the possibility of something that possesses neither life nor spirit to produce life as well as spirit, they must consider the material forces in the world to be determining and predetermining factors of human activity. Those on the other hand who see deeper into the problem of being and existence, and who, because of that, cannot conceive of the possibility that blind and will-less matter could be the cause of human efforts, strivings, ideals, aims and purposes, they on the other hand must hold that a universal, spiritual existence of some kind guides and determines in one way or another every movement of the world at large, as well as the activities of mankind in particular. Since from their point of view, life and spirit can under no condition be reduced to physical, chemical or economical and all other material forces cannot account for the directions that life and spirit take.

Human life, therefore, in all its manifestations is rather considered by them as the result of the attitude between the human being as such and the universal Being which is identical with Universal Spirituality.

And since these mutual attitudes express themselves, as far as we can tell, through the creations of human being which are incorporated in science, philosophy, art and religion, which all taken together go under the name of Culture, it is Culture in its broadest and deepest meaning that can be considered as the determining factor of the life of the Individual, Society and Nation.

We are, or have been until now, generally speaking, triangular beings, that is, beings who see things in a three-fold manner. Perhaps because of the same unknown reason, the stream of Culture is divided in three main currents.

Mr. Uspensky, the new, great Russian philosopher, in his book called *Tertium Organum* brings out the idea that we see space three-dimensionally, because our psychical being is three-sidedly constituted. And if we begin now to think of a fourth dimension, it is probably because in addition to our sensation, perception and conception, the faculty of intuition is beginning to be added.

Just as we have three dimensions of space, three main streams of individual psychic life and three main divisions of life in general, such as vegetable, animal and human life (superhuman life may come in time), so we also have three main currents of culture, namely, metaphysical, aesthetical and ethical.

Every individual of course, has every one of these currents running through him. There is hardly an individual that is not at some period or at some moment of his life, metaphysical. There is no individual that is not more or less motivated by aesthetic impulses, and even the most bestial individual has some smack of morality within him. At the same time, however, we can point to individuals that are more metaphysical than others, and to others who are essentially lovers of beauty, and still others who are truly ethical in their nature.

As with individuals, so with Nations. The three streams of Culture that we have enumerated run through each and every nation in the world. There is, however, a difference between one nation and another as to the intensity with which the characteristic stream runs through it.

There are nations in which, for reasons that we cannot account for, the metaphysical stream has become predominant. Others have distinguished themselves because of the great intensity of the aesthetic cultural stream, which expressed itself through them. And the third type of nation would be the moral type, that is the nation which was chosen to be the strongest conductor of the moral attribute of the Universal Self. The German nation could be taken as an illustration of the metaphysical type, the French as an illustration of the aesthetic type, and the Russian as an illustration of the moral type.

Of all the expressions of Culture, the Russian nation has laid the greatest emphasis on the moral principle. All the creations of the Russian mind are tinged deeper than the creations of any other nation with morality. And of all the elements that constitute morality, such as love, humility, reverence and justice, the Russian nation has laid stress more than any nation in the world on the elements of love and humility. Every line in the writings of the two greatest Russian thinkers, Tolstoi and Dostoyevsky, is saturated with love and humility. From the point of view of Tolstoi and Dostoyevsky, love and humility are the shortest roads to Universal Reality.

Raskolnikov, the hero of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, murders an old woman, who, from all logical standpoints, is good

for nothing. But the moment the murder is committed, something, of which logic seems to know nothing about tells Raskolnikov, "You are a murderer, you have committed a crime." The world around him knows nothing of it. He succeeds in his efforts to delude everybody. But he cannot find a place for himself in this big world. He knows of no way to save himself, of how to get back his quietude of soul until he comes to the simple, unsophisticated girl, Sonia, who is full of love and steeped in the spirit of humiliation. And it is this girl who points to him the way of salvation. She tells him to go out on the street and to fall on his knees and in the spirit of greatest humbleness, and deepest humiliation, confess before every passerby his crime.

It is this moral culture that has found its strongest expression in the Russian nation, that explains the views of the relationship of individuals to each other and of mankind at large, to the Universal Self.

Morality does not, like metaphysics, merely speculate about the source, origin and essence of the world, neither does it merely admire and appreciate the world around as aesthetics does. Morality is the most subjective and intimate feeling of a concrete relationship between one self and another; it is a synthetic feeling of love, reverence, pity, humility and justice, that expresses itself in the relationship between one self and the other—a relationship that must eventually extend not only between man and man individually, socially and nationally, but also between the human self and the Universal Self.

It is this concreteness in the relationship between human self and Universal Self that characterizes the Russian. It is because of this concreteness that the Russian has become known as the mystic par-excellence. For mysticism after all, means nothing more than a sensing of a concrete relationship between the individual "I" and a spirituality that fills each and every nook and corner of the world that surrounds the "I". It is this sensing of the invisible threads that run uninterruptedly and web themselves constantly between the human and the superhuman, between the natural and the supernatural, that fills the heart and soul of the simple, uncivilized and illiterate Russian peasant. And it is the characteristic of the Russian peasantry as a whole that reflects itself in the works of Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky and Andreyev.

And to the extent that the newer tendencies in modern thought tend to emphasize more and more the importance of feeling and

willing instead of thinking in the role and function of human life; to the extent that intuition is beginning to play the predominant role in determining human thought; to the extent that the thinking world today is following more and more in the footsteps of Rousseau, Shopenhauer and Nietzsche, rather than in the footsteps of Kant, Hegel and Fichte; to the extent that intellectualism is being more and more supplanted through the efforts of the great philosopher Henri Bergson, by intuitionism, to that extent are the creations of the Russian mind beginning to attract the entire world. Tolstoi has long been what Gorki calls "the sounding bell of the world." And Dostoyevsky, who only a few years ago was hardly known to the world at large, is now becoming the psychical x-ray of the world, the great spiritual searchlight that sees through the crude materialism, that up to recently prevailed, to the essential reality lying beyond it.

The great German critic, Herman Hesse, tells us that the German students today are more fascinated by Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, than by Goethe's *Faust*; and he is not satisfied to speak of him as an artist and thinker, but he wants him to be placed forever among the great world prophets.

As long as science hoped to prove to the world the possibility of analyzing life and spirit into its minutest constituents and thus to reduce it to the same elements that physics and chemistry deals with, there was no room for such works as those of Dostoyevsky, to whom life and spirit are irreducible entities and to whom spirit is more real and substantial than matter, and who has seen and felt in the most concrete way possible a distinct relationship between the Universal Spirit and the human self—a relationship without which, he thought, life has no meaning and morality—neither a basis or a purpose.

Today, science has abandoned its hope of finding the secrets and causes of life in the crucibles of the chemical laboratory, and it has acknowledged that we know no more today than we knew before about the essence of life.

Intellect has now been taken down from its high pedestal and more prominence is given to feeling and to that mystic consciousness which seems to be a synthesis of instinct, feeling and intuition.

As this mystical consciousness gains ground in the thinking world over the intellectual consciousness our subconscious will be more and more looked upon as the source of our logical thought and as the connecting link between human consciousness and Universal

Consciousness, and as a consequence of this, the Russian moral and mystical culture will win the sympathy and appreciation of the world at large.

It is only in the light of the Russian culture as we have here analyzed it and in the light of the newer tendencies in modern culture at large, that a work like Andreyev's *He Who Gets Slapped* can be thoroughly grasped and understood.

One may pick the world apart, pick it to its last shread of matter, but it is precisely here that life—that inexplicable, unanalyzable, intangible roots of matter—begins and the scalpel must abdicate in favor of the imagination, the winged intelligence.

My vision! Who can take that from me? My impassioned dream that burst my brains—dikes and overflows on to canvas, that forced the marble block to yield its curved secrets, or that flashed on paper as a rhapsody—that is the *Real* moment, over against which the seething caldron of mutilations we call "the great world" has only that validity for being that a fertilizer has.—From de Casseras' *Chamelion*.

"He" (to Consuelo): Can you hear the sun, singing. Like the strings of a divine heart spreads the golden rays. Do you not see the hand of God, which gives harmony, light and love to the world? Do not the mountains in the blue cloud of incense sing their hymn of glory? Remember, Oh Consuelo, remember the prayer of the mountains, the prayer of the sea.

Counsuelo (a little later to "He"): This morning when I went without breakfast I became so sad, so disgusted and I thought: If God should come and give me something to eat! And as I thought it, I suddenly heard, honestly, it's true, I heard: Counsuelo, somebody's calling you.

"He" (to Consuelo as both are dying): No, it is the sea and the sun. . . . What a sun! Don't you feel that you are the foam, white sea foam and you are flying to the sun? You feel light, you have nobody, you are flying higher, my love!

I am flying. I am the sea foam, and this is the sun, it shines . . . so strong . . . I feel well. (To the Baron, uttering his last words) And you want to be ahead of me even *there*? No! I am coming. We shall prove then whose she is to be forever. . . .—From *He Who Gets Slapped*.

Who is "He"?

"He," as we learn from the conversation between him and the gentleman, is a man of very deep insight into the essence of things. He sees and understands more than the people around him, even more than those of his own circle. He tells us that as a young boy he would dream of clowns at the time when his fellowstudents were thinking of Plutarch's heroes, and of the light of science. He has

before everybody else, it seems, realized that if the world is in its ultimate reality really no more than what science in the middle of the nineteenth century had taken it to be, if the roots of life and spirit are capable of being analyzed and reduced in one form or another to blind will-less and lifeless substantiality, if those roots are not, as De Casseras takes them to be, inexplicable, unanalyzable and intangible, if the scalpel is to kill our imagination instead of abdicating in its favor—then human life is nothing but mockery, and our roles and functions are only those of clowns.

But these heavy abstractions as he himself calls them were as little understood by the people around him as were, for instance, the abstractions, or rather the deep visions of Dostoyevsky at that time when he lived and worked.

And there came a perfect gentleman, of the type sometimes met, and robbed "He" of his thoughts, vulgarized them and brought them in an easily digestible form to the people, and thereby became the author of a so-called great book and reaped the glory and fame that justly belonged to somebody else. Not only does this gentleman rob him of his thoughts, but he also succeeds in taking away from him his wife whom he loved and by whom he was loved and adored.

He is left alone in this great world; nobody to love him, nobody to respect and acknowledge him. Wherever he turns he sees his thoughts, the children of his mind, who do not recognize him as their father any more than his wife recognizes him as her husband. The gentleman is the recognized father of his spiritual children and the acknowledged husband of his flesh and blood wife.

And how does "He" resist the assaults of the gentleman? He resists it through non-resistance. He humiliates himself, he completely annihilates his ego and thus he expects to take revenge from his enemy—the gentleman. "He," one through whom the moral culture has in the most intense way expressed itself, feels that there is an absolute justice in the world, and that therefore, sooner or later, in one way or in another, the one who has committed an injustice will be punished, and that he can therefore afford to resist in a passive manner all the injustices heaped upon him.

At the same time, "He" gets a deeper realization of the worthlessness of our temporal life, that brings back to him the clown-dreams of his youth—the dreams of those who can at liberty mock at everything and everybody.

"He" disappears and the "gentleman" as well as the world around him believe that he is dead, while "He" busies himself in the

circus to play the role of a clown, and thus fulfills the dream and realizes the ideals of his youth.

When he is asked by the manager of the circus for his name, he tells them: "What difference does it make to you? When a stray dog comes to you, you don't ask for his name, you give him another name. Let 'He' be that dog."

He wants to reach the lowest depths of humiliation, so as to make the vengeance stronger. And at the same time he feels that the least there will be left of that ego that plays such an important role in the world he has left behind him, as he entered the circus, the more possible it will be for him to give the fullest and completest expression to his *self*. And when the question arises as to what his role should consist of as a clown, in the circus, he chooses, after only a few minutes of consideration, the role of one who gets slapped.

When he gets the first slap, he still feels the humiliation of it. He feels his cheek burning though the slap did not hurt. The other slaps make no impression on him whatsoever. His ego is killed and buried at least for a while, and his self is free. This world which means so much to each and every individual, means nothing to him. He can laugh and mock at it.

And when the "gentleman," after exerting great efforts to find "He," whom he somehow suspected of being alive, finally found him by accident in the circus, he told "He," "You wanted to take vengeance upon me through your humbleness." And when he asks "He" what was his idea of choosing a circus for that purpose, "He," in answer to this question, grimaces his face, thumbs his nose and says, "This is my idea."

At the moment that he enters the circus the great world tragedy folds and unrolls before us.

What is the central world tragedy? It is after all nothing but the conflict between the beast and the superman in the breast of man. It is the struggle between the god attribute and animal attribute in one and the same individual.

The more he succeeded in ignoring all the values that the temporal world offered him, the greater was his independence from the external world; the more he subdued his ego, the more room there was in him for the exercise of the god attribute in him, and the more possible did it become for him to feel intuitively the invisible threads that run between the human self and the Universal Self.

It is this feeling, this consciousness of the self that lies deep in the soul of man, that "He" brought with him into the circus and



infected everybody there with it. Everybody who came in contact with "He" felt his great spiritual power and became inspired and filled with an indescribable awe and reverence for him. The career maker and the money maker feared him. No wonder that Jackson, the career maker, told him that it would have been better if "He" hadn't come to the circus at all, and Papa Briquet regretted that he has ever had any dealings with "He." Others in the circus, especially those in whom the spiritual forces were still at the state where an awakening was possible, revered him and respected him.

Zinida, the lion tamer, asked "He" before the latter had a chance to pronounce a half dozen words, to tell her why it was that the man who took care of the cages, who was a very simple and unpretentious fellow, came in and out of the cages, without being afraid of the animals or the animals being afraid of him, while the same animals feared her.

And after a few conversations with Consuelo, the young girl, the incarnation of simplicity itself, began to hear the voices of God. And even the career maker himself, Mr. Jackson, gained such respect for Providence, that he would not allow "He" to say a word against the Almighty.

There is, however, one thing that "He" had not succeeded in leaving behind, as he soon found out, and that is Love, in all its manifestations. "He" began to feel an overflow of love in his heart the moment he saw Consuelo.

The strong attachment that grew up between Consuelo and "He" raises an important question. Why does this simple, uncivilized, not exceptionally beautiful girl call out such an intense and extraordinary love from every one who met her? Even the baron, called by "He" the great defiler of love, experienced love feelings towards her that were different from the feelings that hundreds of other girls he had dealings with called forth in him.

The girl Consuelo succeeded in doing that because she possessed an exceptional soul—a soul that had an inexhaustible supply of love in it. And it is because the Russian attributes such great importance to love that Consuelo became a figure in Andreyev's drama.

Consuelo really loved as very few can, and perhaps as nobody in actual life has ever yet loved. She loved not only her friends, but also her enemies. She knew, or rather felt that Zinida loved Bezano, whom she herself loved very passionately, though unconsciously. She felt the rage of hatred in Zinida's heart toward her.

but still she loved her, pitied her and was willing to help her in every way possible. Her heart really could embrace the entire world and still have room left. She practiced what Tolstoi taught. Tolstoi felt deeply in his heart and soul the impossibility of loving one who hated you and who committed constant injustice against you, but he saw and felt that love, absolute love, that is to say a love that would be all inclusive, is the road to the ultimate reality, the best means of reaching the world's end, which is the Universal Self, and because of that it is also the only road to man's happiness and blessedness. Tolstoi came to the conclusion that the salvation of man lies in love, in absolute love of his fellow men and if man as we know him today cannot attain this ideal, the man to come—the Superman—will.

Consuelo knew nothing of Tolstoi's teaching, but she was endowed with a soul full of innocence and love—love for everybody who had a human countenance, and it was her innocence and her inexhaustible love that attracted everybody who came in contact with her.

Zinida loved too, but what a different love it was! It is likely that Zinida's love is brought in, in this drama by Andreyev just to contrast it with the love of Consuelo, and thus emphasize more the moral quality, the ethical tone of Consuelo's love. Zinida loved Bezano, but it was a love that knew only of aesthetics, nothing of ethics. It was a love which is abhorrent to the Russian temperament. The Russian knows and feels very well that there is, there must be, and there will be an aesthetic element in every love between man and woman, but the Russian cannot stand the elimination of the ethical element in any relationship between human beings created in God's image. He cannot bear the idea of sacrificing ethics on the altar of aesthetics. And Andreyev therefore made Zinida not only thirst and crave for the love of Bezano, but when that love was not to be gotten, any love would do, even that of animals. Zinida risked her life in order to get a kind attitude, a loving glance from her lions.

But more than anywhere else is this peculiar and specific Russian love, the love that is saturated with morality, brought out in the relation between "He" and Consuelo.

He loved Consuelo as only a man can love a woman, but at the same time he felt that in Consuelo's soul, deep in the recesses of the sub-conscious strata of her soul, there brewed a great deal of love for the young handsome Bezano, and that Bezano loved her in

return and that they both would make, as far as human reason can tell, a splendid match. And "He" did not hesitate for one moment to help bring about the aesthetically commendable and morally unobjectionable union of the two. He frequently told them that they reminded him of Adam and Eve. And when it became a question of saving Consuelo from the hands of the "defiler of love," the baron, he begged Bezano to take Consuelo and to run away with her, and if there was no way of escape, he advised him to kill the baron.

Bezano gave him a characteristic Russian answer to his advice of killing the baron. The answer was put in the form of a question: "And who will kill the others to come?"

This question truly reflects the Russian spirit of passive resistance.

The question seemed to sink deeply into the soul of "He." He takes it upon himself to save Consuelo from the baron and he saves her also in a typical Russian way. He did not kill the Baron, but he killed the one whom he loved and admired, he killed the innocent and lovable Consuelo and himself. He divides between her and himself the drink into which he put the poison. He resisted the Baron again through a passive non-resistance. He killed forever hers and his ego. He annihilated his and her earthly existence because his Russian mystic consciousness had created in him an intuition of a positive heavenly existence into which ourselves come in after our egos have been destroyed.

And isn't "He" justified in believing in the existence in a world of Selves that is different from the world that is known to us as temporal beings only? Didn't "He" have in his short-lived life sufficient proofs for the existence of a communication between Selves that does not seem to have any physical background, a communication that resists each and every scientific interpretation?

Once he declared himself dead to the world and still the "Gentleman" somehow, for some unexplicable reason felt in the deepest crevices of his soul that "He" is still alive. And he kept on searching for him everywhere, until he finally found him in the circus. And through meeting the "Gentleman," "He" found out that the "Gentleman" had not enjoyed for one moment the glory and fame that he had gained by robbing "He" of his thoughts.

The Gentleman told him: "I am respected and I am famous, yes, I have a wife and a son, yes. My wife still loves you; our favorite discussion is about your genius. She supposed you are a genius. We, I and she, love you even when we are in bed. Tss! It is I

who must make faces. My son—yes, he'll resemble you. And when, in order to have a little rest, I go to my desk, to my ink-pot, my books—there, too, I find you. Always you! Everywhere you! And I am never alone—never myself and alone. And when at night—you, sir, should understand this—when at night I go to my lonely thoughts, to my sleepless contemplations, even then I find your image in my head, in my unfortunate brain, your damned and hateful image!"

It turned out so as to prove convincingly to "He" that there was an absolute justice in the world, and because of that the robbed proved to be a robber, and the robber complained of theft and cursing.

And therefore, when the Baron shot himself so as to be the first to meet Consuelo in the next world, "He" said upon hearing of that: "No! I am coming. We shall prove then whose she is to be forever. . . ."

He died just as he lived, with the fullest possible conviction given to him by the mystical consciousness, that this world, the part of the universe as it is translated to us by our senses, is not the only world in existence, and that death may therefore mean an end only to one form of individual existence, may be only a transitional state from one form of life to another. It is this conviction that our temporal life may be only a spark of the eternal, inexhaustible fire called Life that made it possible for "He" to give such full expression in his life on this earth to that self in him which in some invisible manner, he felt to be connected and united with that Universal Self, which, as he told Consuelo, gives harmony, life and love to the world. It is this conviction that made him lead a life which, when ended, made it possible for Zinida and so many others to say that "He" was a man, and to envy Consuelo that she died through the efforts of "He" to save her from a low and filthy life. It is "He's" mystic sensing of the transcendental and its manifestations, which is concretely bound up with our everyday existence, that made him lead a great life and die the death of a great man.

We must remember, that if we go back to history, and ask ourselves what individuals have remained the unanimously acknowledged great men, we will find them to be those who died with the fullest conviction that death does not end all. It is not the greatness of Socrates' philosophical speculations that made him go down in history as the great immortal Socrates, but it is the calmness and the quietness with which he drank the cup of poison because of a certainty that our temporal existence flows into an eternal existence.

and that this vision of that existence is the reality and it matters therefore, more than anything else in the world. And what is true of Socrates is true of Jesus, Bruno, and Spinoza, and of every other real great man in the world.

It doesn't matter in the least, of course, as to just how we conceive the process of the absorption of our individual being into the Universal Being. It makes very little difference whether we believe with those who imagine the possibility of the individual self entering after it rids itself of the body, into the Universal eternity as a self with full preservation of its identity, or whether we believe with others who, for instance, like Spinoza, conceive of that absorption into universal spiritual existence as a process that ipso-facto destroys the self-hoodness of the individual beings. There is only one thing that is absolutely important in order that our lives should have a meaning, and in order that it should be possible to attach any value at all to our efforts and strivings, aims and purposes, ideas and visions and that is the conception or the intuition that the ending of our temporal life means an absorption into a Universality that has a will and a purpose that points directions and creates tendencies—and not into a Universality which is blind as it is dead and without purpose, as spiritless and valueless as it is will-less.

He too seemed to me like an old stone come to life, who knows all the beginnings and the ends of things, who considers when and what will be the end of the stone, of the grasses of the earth, of the waters of the sea, and of the whole universe from the pebble to the sun. And the sea is part of his soul, and everything around him comes from him, out of him. In the musing, motionlessness of the old man I felt something fateful, magical, something which went down into the darkness beneath him and stretched up like a searchlight into the blue emptiness above the earth; as though it were he, his concentrated will, which was drawing the waves to him and repelling them, which was ruling the movements of cloud and shadow, which was stirring the stones to life. Suddenly, in a moment of madness, I felt, it is possible he will get up, wave his hand, and the sea will become solid and glassy, the stones will begin to move and cry out, everything around him will come to life, acquire a voice, and speak in their different voices of themselves, of him against him." I cannot express in words what I felt rather than thought at that moment; in my soul there was joy and fear, and then everything blended in one happy thought: "I am not an orphan on the earth, so long as this man lives on it."—From Gorki's *Reminiscences of Tolstoi*.

And I, who do not believe in God, looked at him for some reason very cautiously and a little timidly. I looked and thought: "This man is godlike."—Closing words of the *Reminiscences of Tolstoi*.

In a passage not quoted here Gorki says in his reminiscences of Tolstoi that his relations to God were very suspicious and that it reminded him of "The two bears in one den." May we not say the same of "He's" relations to God? Don't they, too, remind us of "The two bears in one den?" And it seems to me that in the relations of "He" to the Universal spirituality and spiritual Eternality, there is a message of Andreyev to mankind—a message which is in full harmony with the newest that there is in science today, and with the newest tendencies in modern thought at large. This message as I read it is: That human life has no meaning and no value if we cannot in some way, somehow, conceive the human self and the Universal Self as like two bears in one den, abiding in one and the same Universe. And if Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky and Andreyev are getting such a tremendous respect from mankind the world over for their creations, it is because mankind is beginning to realize more vividly than ever the necessity of postulating a spiritual reality that expresses itself through us and becomes in every moment of its existence deeper and fuller, because of our presence within it. Our being, in one way or the other, makes a difference to the Universal being, because we are part and parcel of it.