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# **Metaphysics of Love**

**Arthur Schopenhauer**

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## Metaphysics of Love.

We are accustomed to see poets principally occupied with describing the love of the sexes. This, as a rule, is the leading idea of every dramatic work, be it tragic or comic, romantic or classic, Indian or European. It in no less degree constitutes the greater part of both lyric and epic poetry, especially if in these we include the host of romances which have been produced every year for centuries in every civilised country in Europe as regularly as the fruits of the earth. All these works are nothing more than many-sided, short, or long descriptions of the passion in question. Moreover, the most successful delineations of love, such, for example, as *Romeo and Juliet*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and *Werther*, have attained immortal fame.

Rochefoucauld says that love may be compared to a ghost since it is something we talk about but have never seen, and Lichtenberg, in his essay *Ueber die Macht der Liebe*, disputes and denies its reality and naturalness — but both are in the wrong. For if it were foreign to and contradicted human nature — in other words, if it were merely an imaginary caricature, it would not have been depicted with such zeal by the poets of all ages, or accepted by mankind with an unaltered interest; for anything artistically beautiful cannot exist without truth.

*“Rien n’est beau que le vrai; le vrai seul est aimable.”* — BOIL.

Experience, although not that of everyday, verifies that that which as a rule begins only as a strong and yet controllable inclination, may develop, under certain conditions, into a passion, the ardour of which surpasses that of every other. It will ignore all considerations, overcome all kinds of obstacles with incredible strength and persistence. A man, in order to have his love gratified, will unhesitatingly risk his life; in fact, if his love is absolutely rejected, he will sacrifice his life into the bargain. The *Werthers* and *Jacopo Ortis* do not only exist in romances; Europe produces every year at least half-a-dozen like them: *sed ignotis perierunt mortibus illi*: for their sufferings are chronicled by the writer of official registers or by the reporters of newspapers. Indeed, readers of the police news in English and French newspapers will confirm what I have said.

Love drives a still greater number of people into the lunatic asylum. There is a case of some sort every year of two lovers committing suicide together because material circumstances happen to be unfavourable to their union. By the way, I cannot understand how it is that such people, who are confident of each other’s love, and expect to find their greatest happiness in the enjoyment of it, do not avoid taking extreme steps, and prefer suffering every discomfort to sacrificing with their lives a happiness which is greater than any other they can conceive. As far as lesser phases and passages of love are concerned, all of us have them daily before our eyes, and, if we are not old, the most of us in our hearts.

After what has been brought to mind, one cannot doubt either the reality or importance of love. Instead, therefore, of wondering why a philosopher for once in a way writes on this

subject, which has been constantly the theme of poets, rather should one be surprised that love, which always plays such an important rôle in a man's life, has scarcely ever been considered at all by philosophers, and that it still stands as material for them to make use of.

Plato has devoted himself more than any one else to the subject of love, especially in the Symposium and the Phaedrus; what he has said about it, however, comes within the sphere of myth, fable, and raillery, and only applies for the most part to the love of a Greek youth. The little that Rousseau says in his Discours sur l'inégalité is neither true nor satisfactory. Kant's disquisition on love in the third part of his treatise, Ueber das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen, is very superficial; it shows that he has not thoroughly gone into the subject, and therefore it is somewhat untrue. Finally, Platner's treatment of it in his Anthropology will be found by every one to be insipid and shallow.

To amuse the reader, on the other hand, Spinoza's definition deserves to be quoted because of its exuberant naïveté: *Amor est titillatio, concomitante idea causae externae* (Eth. iv., prop. 44). It is not my intention to be either influenced or to contradict what has been written by my predecessors; the subject has forced itself upon me objectively, and has of itself become inseparable from my consideration of the world. Moreover, I shall expect least approval from those people who are for the moment enchained by this passion, and in consequence try to express their exuberant feelings in the most sublime and ethereal images. My view will seem to them too physical, too material, however metaphysical, nay, transcendent it is fundamentally.

First of all let them take into consideration that the creature whom they are idealising to-day in madrigals and sonnets would have been ignored almost entirely by them if she had been born eighteen years previously.

Every kind of love, however ethereal it may seem to be, springs entirely from the instinct of sex; indeed, it is absolutely this instinct, only in a more definite, specialised, and perhaps, strictly speaking, more individualised form. If, bearing this in mind, one considers the important rôle which love plays in all its phases and degrees, not only in dramas and novels, but also in the real world, where next to one's love of life it shows itself as the strongest and most active of all motives; if one considers that it constantly occupies half the capacities and thoughts of the younger part of humanity, and is the final goal of almost every human effort; that it influences adversely the most important affairs; that it hourly disturbs the most earnest occupations; that it sometimes deranges even the greatest intellects for a time; that it is not afraid of interrupting the transactions of statesmen or the investigations of men of learning; that it knows how to leave its love-letters and locks of hair in ministerial portfolios and philosophical manuscripts; that it knows equally well how to plan the most complicated and wicked affairs, to dissolve the most important relations, to break the strongest ties; that life, health, riches, rank, and happiness are sometimes sacrificed for its sake; that it makes the otherwise honest, perfidious, and a man who has been hitherto faithful a betrayer, and, altogether, appears as a hostile demon whose object is to overthrow, confuse, and upset everything it comes across: if all this is taken into consideration one will have reason to ask — "Why is there all this noise? Why all this crowding, blustering, anguish, and want? Why should such a trifle play so important a part and create disturbance and confusion in the well-regulated

life of mankind?" But to the earnest investigator the spirit of truth gradually unfolds the answer: it is not a trifle one is dealing with; the importance of love is absolutely in keeping with the seriousness and zeal with which it is prosecuted. The ultimate aim of all love-affairs, whether they be of a tragic or comic nature, is really more important than all other aims in human life, and therefore is perfectly deserving of that profound seriousness with which it is pursued.

As a matter of fact, love determines nothing less than the establishment of the next generation. The existence and nature of the *dramatis personae* who come on to the scene when we have made our exit have been determined by some frivolous love-affair. As the being, the *existencia* of these future people is conditioned by our instinct of sex in general, so is the nature, the *essentia*, of these same people conditioned by the selection that the individual makes for his satisfaction, that is to say, by love, and is thereby in every respect irrevocably established. This is the key of the problem. In applying it, we shall understand it more fully if we analyse the various degrees of love, from the most fleeting sensation to the most ardent passion; we shall then see that the difference arises from the degree of individualisation of the choice. All the love-affairs of the present generation taken altogether are accordingly the *meditatio compositionis generationis futurae, e qua iterum pendent innumerae generationes* of mankind. Love is of such high import, because it has nothing to do with the weal or woe of the present individual, as every other matter has; it has to secure the existence and special nature of the human race in future times; hence the will of the individual appears in a higher aspect as the will of the species; and this it is that gives a pathetic and sublime import to love-affairs, and makes their raptures and troubles transcendent, emotions which poets for centuries have not tired of depicting in a variety of ways. There is no subject that can rouse the same interest as love, since it concerns both the weal and woe of the species, and is related to every other which only concerns the welfare of the individual as body to surface.

This is why it is so difficult to make a drama interesting if it possesses no love motive; on the other hand, the subject is never exhausted, although it is constantly being utilised.

What manifests itself in the individual consciousness as instinct of sex in general, without being concentrated on any particular individual, is very plainly in itself, in its generalised form, the will to live. On the other hand, that which appears as instinct of sex directed to a certain individual, is in itself the will to live as a definitely determined individual. In this case the instinct of sex very cleverly wears the mask of objective admiration, although in itself it is a subjective necessity, and is, thereby, deceptive. Nature needs these stratagems in order to accomplish her ends. The purpose of every man in love, however objective and sublime his admiration may appear to be, is to beget a being of a definite nature, and that this is so, is verified by the fact that it is not mutual love but possession that is the essential. Without possession it is no consolation to a man to know that his love is requited. In fact, many a man has shot himself on finding himself in such a position. On the other hand, take a man who is very much in love; if he cannot have his love returned he is content simply with possession. Compulsory marriages and cases of seduction corroborate this, for a man whose love is not returned frequently finds consolation in giving handsome presents to a woman, in spite of her dislike, or making other sacrifices, so that he may buy her favour.

The real aim of the whole of love's romance, although the persons concerned are unconscious of the fact, is that a particular being may come into the world; and the way and manner in which it is accomplished is a secondary consideration. However much those of lofty sentiments, and especially of those in love, may refute the gross realism of my argument, they are nevertheless in the wrong. For is not the aim of definitely determining the individualities of the next generation a much higher and nobler aim than that other, with its exuberant sensations and transcendental soap-bubbles? Among all earthly aims is there one that is either more important or greater? It alone is in keeping with that deep-rooted feeling inseparable from passionate love, with that earnestness with which it appears, and the importance which it attaches to the trifles that come within its sphere. It is only in so far as we regard this end as the real one that the difficulties encountered, the endless troubles and vexations endured, in order to attain the object we love, appear to be in keeping with the matter. For it is the future generation in its entire individual determination which forces itself into existence through the medium of all this strife and trouble. Indeed, the future generation itself is already stirring in the careful, definite, and apparently capricious selection for the satisfaction of the instinct of sex which we call love. That growing affection of two lovers for each other is in reality the will to live of the new being, of which they shall become the parents; indeed, in the meeting of their yearning glances the life of a new being is kindled, and manifests itself as a well-organised individuality of the future. The lovers have a longing to be really united and made one being, and to live as such for the rest of their lives; and this longing is fulfilled in the children born to them, in whom the qualities inherited from both, but combined and united in one being, are perpetuated. Contrarily, if a man and woman mutually, persistently, and decidedly dislike each other, it indicates that they could only bring into the world a badly organised, discordant, and unhappy being. Therefore much must be attached to Calderon's words, when he calls the horrible Semiramis a daughter of the air, yet introduces her as a daughter of seduction, after which follows the murder of the husband.

Finally, it is the will to live presenting itself in the whole species, which so forcibly and exclusively attracts two individuals of different sex towards each other. This will anticipates in the being, of which they shall become the parents, an objectivation of its nature corresponding to its aims. This individual will inherit the father's will and character, the mother's intellect, and the constitution of both. As a rule, however, an individual takes more after the father in shape and the mother in stature, corresponding to the law which applies to the offspring of animals... . It is impossible to explain the individuality of each man, which is quite exceptional and peculiar to him alone; and it is just as impossible to explain the passion of two people for each other, for it is equally individual and uncommon in character; indeed, fundamentally both are one and the same. The former is explicit what the latter was implicit.

We must consider as the origin of a new individual and true punctum saliens of its life the moment when the parents begin to love each other — to fancy each other, as the English appropriately express it. And, as has been said, in the meeting of their longing glances originates the first germ of a new being, which, indeed, like all germs, is generally crushed out. This new individual is to a certain extent a new (Platonic) Idea; now, as all Ideas strive with the greatest vehemence to enter the phenomenal sphere, and to do this, ardently

seize upon the matter which the law of causality distributes among them all, so this particular Idea of a human individuality struggles with the greatest eagerness and vehemence for its realisation in the phenomenal. It is precisely this vehement desire which is the passion of the future parents for one another. Love has countless degrees, and its two extremes may be indicated as [Greek: Aphroditae pandaemos] and [Greek: ourania]; nevertheless, in essentials it is the same everywhere.

According to the degree, on the other hand, it will be the more powerful the more individualised it is — that is to say, the more the loved individual, by virtue of all her qualities, is exclusively fit to satisfy the lover's desire and needs determined by her own individuality. If we investigate further we shall understand more clearly what this involves. All amorous feeling immediately and essentially concentrates itself on health, strength, and beauty, and consequently on youth; because the will above all wishes to exhibit the specific character of the human species as the basis of all individuality. The same applies pretty well to everyday courtship ([Greek: Aphroditae pandaemos]). With this are bound up more special requirements, which we will consider individually later on, and with which, if there is any prospect of gratification, there is an increase of passion. Intense love, however, springs from a fitness of both individualities for each other; so that the will, that is to say the father's character and the mother's intellect combined, exactly complete that individual for which the will to live in general (which exhibits itself in the whole species) has a longing — a longing proportionate to this its greatness, and therefore surpassing the measure of a mortal heart; its motives being in a like manner beyond the sphere of the individual intellect. This, then, is the soul of a really great passion. The more perfectly two individuals are fitted for each other in the various respects which we shall consider further on, the stronger will be their passion for each other. As there are not two individuals exactly alike, a particular kind of woman must perfectly correspond with a particular kind of man — always in view of the child that is to be born. Real, passionate love is as rare as the meeting of two people exactly fitted for each other. By the way, it is because there is a possibility of real passionate love in us all that we understand why poets have depicted it in their works.

Because the kernel of passionate love turns on the anticipation of the child to be born and its nature, it is quite possible for friendship, without any admixture of sexual love, to exist between two young, good-looking people of different sex, if there is perfect fitness of temperament and intellectual capacity. In fact, a certain aversion for each other may exist also. The reason of this is that a child begotten by them would physically or mentally have discordant qualities. In short, the child's existence and nature would not be in harmony with the purposes of the will to live as it presents itself in the species.

In an opposite case, where there is no fitness of disposition, character, and mental capacity, whereby aversion, nay, even enmity for each other exists, it is possible for love to spring up. Love of this kind makes them blind to everything; and if it leads to marriage it is a very unhappy one.

And now let us more thoroughly investigate the matter. Egoism is a quality so deeply rooted in every personality that it is on egotistical ends only that one may safely rely in order to rouse the individual to activity.

To be sure, the species has a prior, nearer, and greater claim on the individual than the

transient individuality itself; and yet even when the individual makes some sort of conscious sacrifice for the perpetuation and future of the species, the importance of the matter will not be made sufficiently comprehensible to his intellect, which is mainly constituted to regard individual ends.

Therefore Nature attains her ends by implanting in the individual a certain illusion by which something which is in reality advantageous to the species alone seems to be advantageous to himself; consequently he serves the latter while he imagines he is serving himself. In this process he is carried away by a mere chimera, which floats before him and vanishes again immediately, and as a motive takes the place of reality. This illusion is instinct. In most instances instinct may be regarded as the sense of the species which presents to the will whatever is of service to the species. But because the will has here become individual it must be deceived in such a manner for it to discern by the sense of the individual what the sense of the species has presented to it; in other words, imagine it is pursuing ends concerning the individual, when in reality it is pursuing merely general ends (using the word general in its strictest sense).

Outward manifestation of instinct can be best observed in animals, where the part it plays is most significant; but it is in ourselves alone that we can get to know its internal process, as of everything internal. It is true, it is thought that man has scarcely any instinct at all, or at any rate has only sufficient instinct when he is born to seek and take his mother's breast. But as a matter of fact man has a very decided, clear, and yet complicated instinct — namely, for the selection, both earnest and capricious, of another individual, to satisfy his instinct of sex. The beauty or ugliness of the other individual has nothing whatever to do with this satisfaction in itself, that is in so far as it is a matter of pleasure based upon a pressing desire of the individual. The regard, however, for this satisfaction, which is so zealously pursued, as well as the careful selection it entails, has obviously nothing to do with the chooser himself, although he fancies that it has. Its real aim is the child to be born, in whom the type of the species is to be preserved in as pure and perfect a form as possible. For instance, different phases of degeneration of the human form are the consequences of a thousand physical accidents and moral delinquencies; and yet the genuine type of the human form is, in all its parts, always restored; further, this is accomplished under the guidance of the sense of beauty, which universally directs the instinct of sex, and without which the satisfaction of the latter would deteriorate to a repulsive necessity.

Accordingly, every one in the first place will infinitely prefer and ardently desire those who are most beautiful — in other words, those in whom the character of the species is most purely defined; and in the second, every one will desire in the other individual those perfections which he himself lacks, and he will consider imperfections, which are the reverse of his own, beautiful. This is why little men prefer big women, and fair people like dark, and so on. The ecstasy with which a man is filled at the sight of a beautiful woman, making him imagine that union with her will be the greatest happiness, is simply the sense of the species. The preservation of the type of the species rests on this distinct preference for beauty, and this is why beauty has such power.

We will later on more fully state the considerations which this involves. It is really instinct aiming at what is best in the species which induces a man to choose a beautiful woman,

although the man himself imagines that by so doing he is only seeking to increase his own pleasure. As a matter of fact, we have here an instructive solution of the secret nature of all instinct which almost always, as in this case, prompts the individual to look after the welfare of the species. The care with which an insect selects a certain flower or fruit, or piece of flesh, or the way in which the ichneumon seeks the larva of a strange insect so that it may lay its eggs in that particular place only, and to secure which it fears neither labour nor danger, is obviously very analogous to the care with which a man chooses a woman of a definite nature individually suited to him. He strives for her with such ardour that he frequently, in order to attain his object, will sacrifice his happiness in life, in spite of all reason, by a foolish marriage, by some love-affair which costs him his fortune, honour, and life, even by committing crimes. And all this in accordance with the will of nature which is everywhere sovereign, so that he may serve the species in the most efficient manner, although he does so at the expense of the individual.

Instinct everywhere works as with the conception of an end, and yet it is entirely without one. Nature implants instinct where the acting individual is not capable of understanding the end, or would be unwilling to pursue it. Consequently, as a rule, it is only given prominently to animals, and in particular to those of the lowest order, which have the least intelligence. But it is only in such a case as the one we are at present considering that it is also given to man, who naturally is capable of understanding the end, but would not pursue it with the necessary zeal — that is to say, he would not pursue it at the cost of his individual welfare. So that here, as in all cases of instinct, truth takes the form of illusion in order to influence the will... .

All this, however, on its part throws light upon the instinct of animals. They, too, are undoubtedly carried away by a kind of illusion, which represents that they are working for their own pleasure, while it is for the species that they are working with such industry and self-denial. The bird builds its nest; the insect seeks a suitable place wherein to lay its eggs, or even hunts for prey, which it dislikes itself, but which must be placed beside the eggs as food for the future larvae; the bee, the wasp, and the ant apply themselves to their skilful building and extremely complex economy. All of them are undoubtedly controlled by an illusion which conceals the service of the species under the mask of an egotistical purpose.

This is probably the only way in which to make the inner or subjective process, from which spring all manifestations of instinct, intelligible to us. The outer or objective process, however, shows in animals strongly controlled by instinct, as insects for instance, a preponderance of the ganglion — i.e., subjective nervous system over the objective or cerebral system. From which it may be concluded that they are controlled not so much by objective and proper apprehension as by subjective ideas, which excite desire and arise through the influence of the ganglionic system upon the brain; accordingly they are moved by a certain illusion... .

The great preponderance of brain in man accounts for his having fewer instincts than the lower order of animals, and for even these few easily being led astray. For instance, the sense of beauty which instinctively guides a man in his selection of a mate is misguided when it degenerates into the proneness to pederasty. Similarly, the blue-bottle (*Musca vomitoria*), which instinctively ought to place its eggs in putrified flesh, lays them in the



blossom of the *Arum dracunculoides*, because it is misled by the decaying odour of this plant. That an absolutely generic instinct is the foundation of all love of sex may be confirmed by a closer analysis of the subject — an analysis which can hardly be avoided.

In the first place, a man in love is by nature inclined to be inconstant, while a woman constant. A man's love perceptibly decreases after a certain period; almost every other woman charms him more than the one he already possesses; he longs for change: while a woman's love increases from the very moment it is returned. This is because nature aims at the preservation of the species, and consequently at as great an increase in it as possible... . This is why a man is always desiring other women, while a woman always clings to one man; for nature compels her intuitively and unconsciously to take care of the supporter and protector of the future offspring. For this reason conjugal fidelity is artificial with the man but natural to a woman. Hence a woman's infidelity, looked at objectively on account of the consequences, and subjectively on account of its unnaturalness, is much more unpardonable than a man's.

In order to be quite clear and perfectly convinced that the delight we take in the other sex, however objective it may seem to be, is nevertheless merely instinct disguised, in other words, the sense of the species striving to preserve its type, it will be necessary to investigate more closely the considerations which influence us in this, and go into details, strange as it may seem for these details to figure in a philosophical work. These considerations may be classed in the following way:—

Those that immediately concern the type of the species, *id est*, beauty; those that concern other physical qualities; and finally, those that are merely relative and spring from the necessary correction or neutralisation of the one-sided qualities and abnormalities of the two individuals by each other. Let us look at these considerations separately.

The first consideration that influences our choice and feelings is age... .

The second consideration is that of health: a severe illness may alarm us for the time being, but an illness of a chronic nature or even cachexy frightens us away, because it would be transmitted.

The third consideration is the skeleton, since it is the foundation of the type of the species. Next to old age and disease, nothing disgusts us so much as a deformed shape; even the most beautiful face cannot make amends for it — in fact, the ugliest face combined with a well-grown shape is infinitely preferable. Moreover, we are most keenly sensible of every malformation of the skeleton; as, for instance, a stunted, short-legged form, and the like, or a limping gait when it is not the result of some extraneous accident: while a conspicuously beautiful figure compensates for every defect. It delights us. Further, the great importance which is attached to small feet! This is because the size of the foot is an essential characteristic of the species, for no animal has the tarsus and metatarsus combined so small as man; hence the uprightness of his gait: he is a plantigrade. And Jesus Sirach has said (1) (according to the improved translation by Kraus), “A woman that is well grown and has beautiful feet is like pillars of gold in sockets of silver.” The teeth, too, are important, because they are essential for nourishment, and quite peculiarly hereditary.

The fourth consideration is a certain plumpness, in other words, a superabundance of the

vegetative function, plasticity... . Hence excessive thinness strikingly repels us... . The last consideration that influences us is a beautiful face. Here, too, the bone parts are taken into account before everything else. So that almost everything depends on a beautiful nose, while a short retroussé one will mar all. A slight upward or downward turn of the nose has often determined the life's happiness of a great many maidens; and justly so, for the type of the species is at stake.

A small mouth, by means of small maxillae, is very essential, as it is the specific characteristic of the human face as distinguished from the muzzle of the brutes. A receding, as it were, a cut-away chin is particularly repellent, because *mentum prominulum* is a characteristic belonging exclusively to our species.

Finally, we come to the consideration of beautiful eyes and a beautiful forehead; they depend upon the psychical qualities, and in particular, the intellectual, which are inherited from the mother. The unconscious considerations which, on the other hand, influence women in their choice naturally cannot be so accurately specified. In general, we may say the following:— That the age they prefer is from thirty to thirty-five. For instance, they prefer men of this age to youths, who in reality possess the highest form of human beauty. The reason for this is that they are not guided by taste but by instinct, which recognises in this particular age the acme of generative power. In general, women pay little attention to beauty, that is, to beauty of face; they seem to take it upon themselves alone to endow the child with beauty. It is chiefly the strength of a man and the courage that goes with it that attract them, for both of these promise the generation of robust children and at the same time a brave protector for them. Every physical defect in a man, any deviation from the type, a woman may, with regard to the child, eradicate if she is faultless in these parts herself or excels in a contrary direction. The only exceptions are those qualities which are peculiar to the man, and which, in consequence, a mother cannot bestow on her child; these include the masculine build of the skeleton, breadth of shoulder, small hips, straight legs, strength of muscle, courage, beard, and so on. And so it happens that a woman frequently loves an ugly man, albeit she never loves an unmanly man, because she cannot neutralise his defects.

The second class of considerations that are the source of love are those depending on the psychical qualities. Here we shall find that a woman universally is attracted by the qualities of a man's heart or character, both of which are inherited from the father. It is mainly firmness of will, determination and courage, and may be honesty and goodness of heart too, that win a woman over; while intellectual qualifications exercise no direct or instinctive power over her, for the simple reason that these are not inherited from the father. A lack of intelligence carries no weight with her; in fact, a superabundance of mental power or even genius, as abnormalities, might have an unfavourable effect. And so we frequently find a woman preferring a stupid, ugly, and ill-mannered man to one who is well-educated, intellectual, and agreeable. Hence, people of extremely different temperament frequently marry for love — that is to say, he is coarse, strong, and narrow-minded, while she is very sensitive, refined, cultured, and aesthetic, and so on; or he is genial and clever, and she is a goose.

*“Sic visum Veneri; cui placet impares  
Formas atque animos sub juga aënea*

*Saevo mittere cum joco.*”

The reason for this is, that she is not influenced by intellectual considerations, but by something entirely different, namely, instinct. Marriage is not regarded as a means for intellectual entertainment, but for the generation of children; it is a union of hearts and not of minds. When a woman says that she has fallen in love with a man's mind, it is either a vain and ridiculous pretence on her part or the exaggeration of a degenerate being. A man, on the other hand, is not controlled in instinctive love by the qualities of the woman's character; this is why so many a Socrates has found his Xantippe, as for instance, Shakespeare, Albrecht Dürer, Byron, and others. But here we have the influence of intellectual qualities, because they are inherited from the mother; nevertheless their influence is easily overpowered by physical beauty, which concerns more essential points, and therefore has a more direct effect. By the way, it is for this reason that mothers who have either felt or experienced the former influence have their daughters taught the fine arts, languages, etc., so that they may prove more attractive. In this way they hope by artificial means to pad the intellect, just as they do their bust and hips if it is necessary to do so. Let it be understood that here we are simply speaking of that attraction which is absolutely direct and instinctive, and from which springs real love. That an intelligent and educated woman esteems intelligence and brains in a man, and that a man after deliberate reasoning criticises and considers the character of his fiancé, are matters which do not concern our present subject. Such things influence a rational selection in marriage, but they do not control passionate love, which is our matter.

Up to the present I have taken into consideration merely the absolute considerations — id est, such considerations as apply to every one. I now come to the relative considerations, which are individual, because they aim at rectifying the type of the species which is defectively presented and at correcting any deviation from it existing in the person of the chooser himself, and in this way lead back to a pure presentation of the type. Hence each man loves what he himself is deficient in. The choice that is based on relative considerations — that is, has in view the constitution of the individual — is much more certain, decided, and exclusive than the choice that is made after merely absolute considerations; consequently real passionate love will have its origin, as a rule, in these relative considerations, and it will only be the ordinary phases of love that spring from the absolute. So that it is not stereotyped, perfectly beautiful women who are wont to kindle great passions. Before a truly passionate feeling can exist, something is necessary that is perhaps best expressed by a metaphor in chemistry — namely, the two persons must neutralise each other, like acid and alkali to a neutral salt. Before this can be done the following conditions are essential. In the first place, all sexuality is one-sided. This one-sidedness is more definitely expressed and exists in a higher degree in one person than in another; so that it may be better supplemented and neutralised in each individual by one person than by another of the opposite sex, because the individual requires a one-sidedness opposite to his own in order to complete the type of humanity in the new individual to be generated, to the constitution of which everything tends... .

The following is necessary for this neutralisation of which we are speaking. The particular degree of his manhood must exactly correspond to the particular degree of her womanhood in order to exactly balance the one-sidedness of each. Hence the most manly man will desire the most womanly woman, and vice versâ, and so each will want the

individual that exactly corresponds to him in degree of sex. Inasmuch as two persons fulfil this necessary relation towards each other, it is instinctively felt by them and is the origin, together with the other relative considerations, of the higher degrees of love. While, therefore, two lovers are pathetically talking about the harmony of their souls, the kernel of the conversation is for the most part the harmony concerning the individual and its perfection, which obviously is of much more importance than the harmony of their souls — which frequently turns out to be a violent discord shortly after marriage.

We now come to those other relative considerations which depend on each individual trying to eradicate, through the medium of another, his weaknesses, deficiencies, and deviations from the type, in order that they may not be perpetuated in the child that is to be born or develop into absolute abnormalities. The weaker a man is in muscular power, the more will he desire a woman who is muscular; and the same thing applies to a woman... .

Nevertheless, if a big woman choose a big husband, in order, perhaps, to present a better appearance in society, the children, as a rule, suffer for her folly. Again, another very decided consideration is complexion. Blonde people fancy either absolutely dark complexions or brown; but it is rarely the case vice versâ. The reason for it is this: that fair hair and blue eyes are a deviation from the type and almost constitute an abnormality, analogous to white mice, or at any rate white horses. They are not indigenous to any other part of the world but Europe — not even to the polar regions — and are obviously of Scandinavian origin. En passant, it is my conviction that a white skin is not natural to man, and that by nature he has either a black or brown skin like our forefathers, the Hindoos, and that the white man was never originally created by nature; and that, therefore, there is no race of white people, much as it is talked about, but every white man is a bleached one. Driven up into the north, where he was a stranger, and where he existed only like an exotic plant, in need of a hothouse in winter, man in the course of centuries became white. The gipsies, an Indian tribe which emigrated only about four centuries ago, show the transition of the Hindoo's complexion to ours. In love, therefore, nature strives to return to dark hair and brown eyes, because they are the original type; still, a white skin has become second nature, although not to such an extent as to make the dark skin of the Hindoo repellent to us.

Finally, every man tries to find the corrective of his own defects and aberrations in the particular parts of his body, and the more conspicuous the defect is the greater is his determination to correct it. This is why snub-nosed persons find an aquiline nose or a parrot-like face so indescribably pleasing; and the same thing applies to every other part of the body. Men of immoderately long and attenuated build delight in a stunted and short figure. Considerations of temperament also influence a man's choice. Each prefers a temperament the reverse of his own; but only in so far as his is a decided one.

A man who is quite perfect in some respect himself does not, it is true, desire and love imperfection in this particular respect, yet he can be more easily reconciled to it than another man, because he himself saves the children from being very imperfect in this particular. For instance, a man who has a very white skin himself will not dislike a yellowish complexion, while a man who has a yellowish complexion will consider a dazzlingly white skin divinely beautiful. It is rare for a man to fall in love with a positively ugly woman, but when he does, it is because exact harmony in the degree of sex exists

between them, and all her abnormalities are precisely the opposite to, that is to say, the corrective of his. Love in these circumstances is wont to attain a high degree.

The profoundly earnest way in which we criticise and narrowly consider every part of a woman, while she on her part considers us; the scrupulously careful way we scrutinise, a woman who is beginning to please us; the fickleness of our choice; the strained attention with which a man watches his fiancée; the care he takes not to be deceived in any trait; and the great importance he attaches to every more or less essential trait — all this is quite in keeping with the importance of the end. For the child that is to be born will have to bear a similar trait through its whole life; for instance, if a woman stoops but a little, it is possible for her son to be inflicted with a hunchback; and so in every other respect. We are not conscious of all this, naturally. On the contrary, each man imagines that his choice is made in the interest of his own pleasure (which, in reality, cannot be interested in it at all); his choice, which we must take for granted is in keeping with his own individuality, is made precisely in the interest of the species, to maintain the type of which as pure as possible is the secret task. In this case the individual unconsciously acts in the interest of something higher, that is, the species. This is why he attaches so much importance to things to which he might, nay, would be otherwise indifferent. There is something quite singular in the unconsciously serious and critical way two young people of different sex look at each other on meeting for the first time; in the scrutinising and penetrating glances they exchange, in the careful inspection which their various traits undergo. This scrutiny and analysis represent the meditation of the genius of the species on the individual which may be born and the combination of its qualities; and the greatness of their delight in and longing for each other is determined by this meditation. This longing, although it may have become intense, may possibly disappear again if something previously unobserved comes to light. And so the genius of the species meditates concerning the coming race in all who are yet not too old. It is Cupid's work to fashion this race, and he is always busy, always speculating, always meditating. The affairs of the individual in their whole ephemeral totality are very trivial compared with those of this divinity, which concern the species and the coming race; therefore he is always ready to sacrifice the individual regardlessly. He is related to these ephemeral affairs as an immortal being is to a mortal, and his interests to theirs as infinite to finite. Conscious, therefore, of administering affairs of a higher order than those that concern merely the weal and woe of the individual, he administers them with sublime indifference amid the tumult of war, the bustle of business, or the raging of a plague — indeed, he pursues them into the seclusion of the cloisters.

It has been seen that the intensity of love grows with its individuation; we have shown that two individuals may be so physically constituted, that, in order to restore the best possible type of the species, the one is the special and perfect complement of the other, which, in consequence, exclusively desires it. In a case of this kind, passionate love arises, and as it is bestowed on one object, and one only — that is to say, because it appears in the special service of the species — it immediately assumes a nobler and sublimer nature. On the other hand, mere sexual instinct is base, because, without individuation, it is directed to all, and strives to preserve the species merely as regards quantity with little regard for quality. Intense love concentrated on one individual may develop to such a degree, that unless it is gratified all the good things of this world, and even life itself, lose their importance. It then becomes a desire, the intensity of which is like none other;

consequently it will make any kind of sacrifice, and should it happen that it cannot be gratified, it may lead to madness or even suicide. Besides these unconscious considerations which are the source of passionate love, there must be still others, which we have not so directly before us. Therefore, we must take it for granted that here there is not only a fitness of constitution but also a special fitness between the man's will and the woman's intellect, in consequence of which a perfectly definite individual can be born to them alone, whose existence is contemplated by the genius of the species for reasons to us impenetrable, since they are the very essence of the thing-in-itself. Or more strictly speaking, the will to live desires to objectivise itself in an individual which is precisely determined, and can only be begotten by this particular father and this particular mother. This metaphysical yearning of the will in itself has immediately, as its sphere of action in the circle of human beings, the hearts of the future parents, who accordingly are seized with this desire. They now fancy that it is for their own sakes they are longing for what at present has purely a metaphysical end, that is to say, for what does not come within the range of things that exist in reality. In other words, it is the desire of the future individual to enter existence, which has first become possible here, a longing which proceeds from the primary source of all being and exhibits itself in the phenomenal world as the intense love of the future parents for each other, and has little regard for anything outside itself. In fact, love is an illusion like no other; it will induce a man to sacrifice everything he possesses in the world, in order to obtain this woman, who in reality will satisfy him no more than any other. It also ceases to exist when the end, which was in reality metaphysical, has been frustrated perhaps by the woman's barrenness (which, according to Hufeland, is the result of nineteen accidental defects in the constitution), just as it is frustrated daily in millions of crushed germs in which the same metaphysical life-principle struggles to exist; there is no other consolation in this than that there is an infinity of space, time, and matter, and consequently inexhaustible opportunity, at the service of the will to live.

Although this subject has not been treated by Theophrastus Paracelsus, and my entire train of thought is foreign to him, yet it must have presented itself to him, if even in a cursory way, when he gave utterance to the following remarkable words, written in quite a different context and in his usual desultory style: *Hi sunt, quos Deus copulavit, ut eam, quae fuit Uriae et David; quamvis ex diametro (sic enim sibi humana mens persuadebat) cum justo et legitimo matrimonio pugnaret hoc ... sed propter Salomonem, qui aliunde nasci non potuit, nisi ex Bathseba, conjuncto David semine, quamvis meretrice, conjunxit eos Deus.* (2)

The yearning of love, the [Greek: *himeros*], which has been expressed in countless ways and forms by the poets of all ages, without their exhausting the subject or even doing it justice; this longing which makes us imagine that the possession of a certain woman will bring interminable happiness, and the loss of her, unspeakable pain; this longing and this pain do not arise from the needs of an ephemeral individual, but are, on the contrary, the sigh of the spirit of the species, discerning irreparable means of either gaining or losing its ends. It is the species alone that has an interminable existence: hence it is capable of endless desire, endless gratification, and endless pain. These, however, are imprisoned in the heart of a mortal; no wonder, therefore, if it seems like to burst, and can find no expression for the announcements of endless joy or endless pain. This it is that forms the

substance of all erotic poetry that is sublime in character, which, consequently, soars into transcendent metaphors, surpassing everything earthly. This is the theme of Petrarch, the material for the St. Preuxs, Werthers, and Jacopo Ortis, who otherwise could be neither understood nor explained. This infinite regard is not based on any kind of intellectual, nor, in general, upon any real merits of the beloved one; because the lover frequently does not know her well enough; as was the case with Petrarch.

It is the spirit of the species alone that can see at a glance of what value the beloved one is to it for its purposes. Moreover, great passions, as a rule, originate at first sight:

*“Who ever lov’d, that lov’d not at first sight.”*

— SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*, iii. 5.

Curiously enough, there is a passage touching upon this in Guzmán de Alfarache, a well-known romance written two hundred and fifty years ago by Mateo Alemán: No es necesario para que uno ame, que pase distancia de tiempo, que siga discurso, in haga elección, sino que con aquella primera y sola vista, concurren juntamente cierta correspondencia ó consonancia, ó lo que acá solemos vulgarmente decir, una confrontación de sangre, à que por particular influxo suelen mover las estrellas. (For a man to love there is no need for any length of time to pass for him to weigh considerations or make his choice, but only that a certain correspondence and consonance is encountered on both sides at the first and only glance, or that which is ordinarily called a sympathy of blood, to which a peculiar influence of the stars generally impels.) Accordingly, the loss of the beloved one through a rival, or through death, is the greatest pain of all to those passionately in love; just because it is of a transcendental nature, since it affects him not merely as an individual, but also assails him in his *essentia aeterna*, in the life of the species, in whose special will and service he was here called. This is why jealousy is so tormenting and bitter, and the giving up of the loved one the greatest of all sacrifices. A hero is ashamed of showing any kind of emotion but that which may be the outcome of love; the reason for this is, that when he is in love it is not he, but the species which is grieving. In Calderón’s *Zenobia the Great* there is a scene in the second act between Zenobia and Decius where the latter says, *Cielos, luego tu me quieres? Perdiera cien mil victorias, Volviérame*, etc. (Heavens! then you love me? For this I would sacrifice a thousand victories, etc.) In this case honour, which has hitherto outweighed every other interest, is driven out of the field directly love — i.e., the interest of the species — comes into play and discerns something that will be of decided advantage to itself; for the interest of the species, compared with that of the mere individual, however important this may be, is infinitely more important. Honour, duty, and fidelity succumb to it after they have withstood every other temptation — the menace of death even. We find the same going on in private life; for instance, a man has less conscience when in love than in any other circumstances. Conscience is sometimes put on one side even by people who are otherwise honest and straightforward, and infidelity recklessly committed if they are passionately in love — i.e., when the interest of the species has taken possession of them. It would seem, indeed, as if they believed themselves conscious of a greater authority than the interests of individuals could ever confer; this is simply because they are concerned in the interest of the species. Chamfort’s utterance in this respect is remarkable: *Quand un homme et une femme ont l’un pour l’autre une passion violente, il me semble toujours que*

quelque soient les obstacles qui les séparent, un mari, des parents, etc.; les deux amans sont l'un à l'autre, de par la Nature, qu'ils s'appartiennent de droit de naissance, malgré les lois et les conventions humaines... . From this standpoint the greater part of the Decameron seems a mere mocking and jeering on the part of the genius of the species at the rights and interests of the individual which it treads underfoot. Inequality of rank and all similar relations are put on one side with the same indifference and disregarded by the genius of the species, if they thwart the union of two people passionately in love with one another: it pursues its ends pertaining to endless generations, scattering human principles and scruples abroad like chaff.

For the same reason, a man will willingly risk every kind of danger, and even become courageous, although he may otherwise be faint-hearted. What a delight we take in watching, either in a play or novel, two young lovers fighting for each other — i.e., for the interest of the species — and their defeat of the old people, who had only in view the welfare of the individual! For the struggling of a pair of lovers seems to us so much more important, delightful, and consequently justifiable than any other, as the species is more important than the individual.

Accordingly, we have as the fundamental subject of almost all comedies the genius of the species with its purposes, running counter to the personal interests of the individuals presented, and, in consequence, threatening to undermine their happiness. As a rule it carries out its ends, which, in keeping with true poetic justice, satisfies the spectator, because the latter feels that the purposes of the species widely surpass those of the individual. Hence he is quite consoled when he finally takes leave of the victorious lovers, sharing with them the illusion that they have established their own happiness, while, in truth, they have sacrificed it for the welfare of the species, in opposition to the will of the discreet old people.

It has been attempted in a few out-of-the-way comedies to reverse this state of things and to effect the happiness of the individuals at the cost of the ends of the species; but here the spectator is sensible of the pain inflicted on the genius of the species, and does not find consolation in the advantages that are assured to the individuals.

Two very well-known little pieces occur to me as examples of this kind: *La reine de 16 ans*, and *Le mariage de raison*.

In the love-affairs that are treated in tragedies the lovers, as a rule, perish together: the reason for this is that the purposes of the species, whose tools the lovers were, have been frustrated, as, for instance, in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Tancred*, *Don Carlos*, *Wallenstein*, *The Bride of Messina*, and so on.

A man in love frequently furnishes comic as well as tragic aspects; for being in the possession of the spirit of the species and controlled by it, he no longer belongs to himself, and consequently his line of conduct is not in keeping with that of the individual. It is fundamentally this that in the higher phases of love gives such a poetical and sublime colour, nay, transcendental and hyperphysical turn to a man's thoughts, whereby he appears to lose sight of his essentially material purpose. He is inspired by the spirit of the species, whose affairs are infinitely more important than any which concern mere individuals, in order to establish by special mandate of this spirit the existence of an



indefinitely long posterity with this particular and precisely determined nature, which it can receive only from him as father and his loved one as mother, and which, moreover, as such never comes into existence, while the objectivation of the will to live expressly demands this existence. It is the feeling that he is engaged in affairs of such transcendent importance that exalts the lover above everything earthly, nay, indeed, above himself, and gives such a hyperphysical clothing to his physical wishes, that love becomes, even in the life of the most prosaic, a poetical episode; and then the affair often assumes a comical aspect. That mandate of the will which objectifies itself in the species presents itself in the consciousness of the lover under the mask of the anticipation of an infinite happiness, which is to be found in his union with this particular woman. This illusion to a man deeply in love becomes so dazzling that if it cannot be attained, life itself not only loses all charm, but appears to be so joyless, hollow, and uninteresting as to make him too disgusted with it to be afraid of the terrors of death; this is why he sometimes of his own free will cuts his life short. The will of a man of this kind has become engulfed in that of the species, or the will of the species has obtained so great an ascendancy over the will of the individual that if such a man cannot be effective in the manifestation of the first, he disdains to be so in the last. The individual in this case is too weak a vessel to bear the infinite longing of the will of the species concentrated upon a definite object. When this is the case suicide is the result, and sometimes suicide of the two lovers; unless nature, to prevent this, causes insanity, which then enshrouds with its veil the consciousness of so hopeless a condition. The truth of this is confirmed yearly by various cases of this description.

However, it is not only unrequited love that leads frequently to a tragic end; for requited love more frequently leads to unhappiness than to happiness. This is because its demands often so severely clash with the personal welfare of the lover concerned as to undermine it, since the demands are incompatible with the lover's other circumstances, and in consequence destroy the plans of life built upon them. Further, love frequently runs counter not only to external circumstances but to the individuality itself, for it may fling itself upon a person who, apart from the relation of sex, may become hateful, despicable, nay, even repulsive. As the will of the species, however, is so very much stronger than that of the individual, the lover shuts his eyes to all objectionable qualities, overlooks everything, ignores all, and unites himself for ever to the object of his passion. He is so completely blinded by this illusion that as soon as the will of the species is accomplished the illusion vanishes and leaves in its place a hateful companion for life. From this it is obvious why we often see very intelligent, nay, distinguished men married to dragons and she-devils, and why we cannot understand how it was possible for them to make such a choice. Accordingly, the ancients represented Amor as blind. In fact, it is possible for a lover to clearly recognise and be bitterly conscious of horrid defects in his fiancée's disposition and character — defects which promise him a life of misery — and yet for him not to be filled with fear:

*“I ask not, I care not,  
If guilt's in thy heart;  
I know that I love thee,  
Whatever thou art.”*

For, in truth, he is not acting in his own interest but in that of a third person, who has yet to come into existence, albeit he is under the impression that he is acting in his own. But it is this very acting in some one else's interest which is everywhere the stamp of greatness and gives to passionate love the touch of the sublime, making it a worthy subject for the poet. Finally, a man may both love and hate his beloved at the same time. Accordingly, Plato compares a man's love to the love of a wolf for a sheep. We have an instance of this kind when a passionate lover, in spite of all his exertions and entreaties, cannot obtain a hearing upon any terms.

*"I love and hate her."*— SHAKESPEARE, *Cymb.* iii. 5.

When hatred is kindled, a man will sometimes go so far as to first kill his beloved and then himself. Examples of this kind are brought before our notice yearly in the newspapers. Therefore Goethe says truly:

*"Bei aller verschmähten Liebe, beim höllischen Elemente!  
Ich wollt', ich wüsst' was ärger's, das ich fluchen könnte!"*

It is in truth no hyperbole on the part of a lover when he calls his beloved's coldness, or the joy of her vanity, which delights in his suffering, cruelty. For he has come under the influence of an impulse which, akin to the instinct of animals, compels him in spite of all reason to unconditionally pursue his end and discard every other; he cannot give it up. There has not been one but many a Petrarch, who, failing to have his love requited, has been obliged to drag through life as if his feet were either fettered or carried a leaden weight, and give vent to his sighs in a lonely forest; nevertheless there was only one Petrarch who possessed the true poetic instinct, so that Goethe's beautiful lines are true of him:

*"Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Quaal verstummt,  
Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen, wie ich leide."*

As a matter of fact, the genius of the species is at continual warfare with the guardian genius of individuals; it is its pursuer and enemy; it is always ready to relentlessly destroy personal happiness in order to carry out its ends; indeed, the welfare of whole nations has sometimes been sacrificed to its caprice. Shakespeare furnishes us with such an example in *Henry VI Part III.*, Act iii., Scenes 2 and 3. This is because the species, in which lies the germ of our being, has a nearer and prior claim upon us than the individual, so that the affairs of the species are more important than those of the individual. Sensible of this, the ancients personified the genius of the species in Cupid, notwithstanding his having the form of a child, as a hostile and cruel god, and therefore one to be decried as a capricious and despotic demon, and yet lord of both gods and men.

*[Greek: Su d' o theon tyranne k' anthropon, Eros.]  
(Tu, deorum hominumque tyranne, Amor!)*

Murderous darts, blindness, and wings are Cupid's attributes. The latter signify inconstancy, which as a rule comes with the disillusion following possession.

Because, for instance, love is based on an illusion and represents what is an advantage to the species as an advantage to the individual, the illusion necessarily vanishes directly the

end of the species has been attained. The spirit of the species, which for the time being has got the individual into its possession, now frees him again. Deserted by the spirit, he relapses into his original state of narrowness and want; he is surprised to find that after all his lofty, heroic, and endless attempts to further his own pleasure he has obtained but little; and contrary to his expectation, he finds that he is no happier than he was before. He discovers that he has been the dupe of the will of the species. Therefore, as a rule, a Theseus who has been made happy will desert his Ariadne. If Petrarch's passion had been gratified his song would have become silent from that moment, as that of the birds as soon as the eggs are laid.

Let it be said in passing that, however much my metaphysics of love may displease those in love, the fundamental truth revealed by me would enable them more effectually than anything else to overcome their passion, if considerations of reason in general could be of any avail. The words of the comic poet of ancient times remain good: *Quae res in se neque consilium, neque modum habet ullum, eam consilio regere non potes*. People who marry for love do so in the interest of the species and not of the individuals. It is true that the persons concerned imagine they are promoting their own happiness; but their real aim, which is one they are unconscious of, is to bring forth an individual which can be begotten by them alone. This purpose having brought them together, they ought henceforth to try and make the best of things. But it very frequently happens that two people who have been brought together by this instinctive illusion, which is the essence of passionate love, are in every other respect temperamentally different. This becomes apparent when the illusion wears off, as it necessarily must.

Accordingly, people who marry for love are generally unhappy, for such people look after the welfare of the future generation at the expense of the present. *Quien se casa por amores, ha de vivir con dolores* (He who marries for love must live in grief), says the Spanish proverb. Marriages of convenience, which are generally arranged by the parents, will turn out the reverse. The considerations in this case which control them, whatever their nature may be, are at any rate real and unable to vanish of themselves. A marriage of this kind attends to the welfare of the present generation to the detriment of the future, it is true; and yet this remains problematical.

A man who marries for money, and not for love, lives more in the interest of the individual than in that of the species; a condition exactly opposed to truth; therefore it is unnatural and rouses a certain feeling of contempt. A girl who against the wish of her parents refuses to marry a rich man, still young, and ignores all considerations of convenience, in order to choose another instinctively to her liking, sacrifices her individual welfare to the species. But it is for this very reason that she meets with a certain approval, for she has given preference to what was more important and acted in the spirit of nature (of the species) more exactly; while the parents advised only in the spirit of individual egoism.

As the outcome of all this, it seems that to marry means that either the interest of the individual or the interest of the species must suffer. As a rule one or the other is the case, for it is only by the rarest and luckiest accident that convenience and passionate love go hand in hand. The wretched condition of most persons physically, morally, and intellectually may be partly accounted for by the fact that marriages are not generally the result of pure choice and inclination, but of all kinds of external considerations and

accidental circumstances. However, if inclination to a certain degree is taken into consideration, as well as convenience, this is as it were a compromise with the genius of the species. As is well known, happy marriages are few and far between, since marriage is intended to have the welfare of the future generation at heart and not the present.

However, let me add for the consolation of the more tender-hearted that passionate love is sometimes associated with a feeling of quite another kind — namely, real friendship founded on harmony of sentiment, but this, however, does not exist until the instinct of sex has been extinguished. This friendship will generally spring from the fact that the physical, moral, and intellectual qualities which correspond to and supplement each other in two individuals in love, in respect of the child to be born, will also supplement each other in respect of the individuals themselves as opposite qualities of temperament and intellectual excellence, and thereby establish a harmony of sentiment.

The whole metaphysics of love which has been treated here is closely related to my metaphysics in general, and the light it throws upon this may be said to be as follows.

We have seen that a man's careful choice, developing through innumerable degrees to passionate love, for the satisfaction of his instinct of sex, is based upon the fundamental interest he takes in the constitution of the next generation. This overwhelming interest that he takes verifies two truths which have been already demonstrated.

First: Man's immortality, which is perpetuated in the future race. For this interest of so active and zealous a nature, which is neither the result of reflection nor intention, springs from the innermost characteristics and tendencies of our being, could not exist so continuously or exercise such great power over man if the latter were really transitory and if a race really and totally different to himself succeeded him merely in point of time.

Second: That his real nature is more closely allied to the species than to the individual. For this interest that he takes in the special nature of the species, which is the source of all love, from the most fleeting emotion to the most serious passion, is in reality the most important affair in each man's life, the successful or unsuccessful issue of which touches him more nearly than anything else. This is why it has been pre-eminently called the "affair of the heart." Everything that merely concerns one's own person is set aside and sacrificed, if the case require it, to this interest when it is of a strong and decided nature. Therefore in this way man proves that he is more interested in the species than in the individual, and that he lives more directly in the interest of the species than in that of the individual.

Why, then, is a lover so absolutely devoted to every look and turn of his beloved, and ready to make any kind of sacrifice for her? Because the immortal part of him is yearning for her; it is only the mortal part of him that longs for everything else. That keen and even intense longing for a particular woman is accordingly a direct pledge of the immortality of the essence of our being and of its perpetuity in the species.

To regard this perpetuity as something unimportant and insufficient is an error, arising from the fact that in thinking of the continuity of the species we only think of the future existence of beings similar to ourselves, but in no respect, however, identical with us; and again, starting from knowledge directed towards without, we only grasp the outer form of the species as it presents itself to us, and do not take into consideration its inner nature. It

is precisely this inner nature that lies at the foundation of our own consciousness as its kernel, and therefore is more direct than our consciousness itself, and as thing-in-itself exempt from the principium individuationis — is in reality identical and the same in all individuals, whether they exist at the same or at different times.

This, then, is the will to live — that is to say, it is exactly that which so intensely desires both life and continuance, and which accordingly remains unharmed and unaffected by death. Further, its present state cannot be improved, and while there is life it is certain of the unceasing sufferings and death of the individual. The denial of the will to live is reserved to free it from this, as the means by which the individual will breaks away from the stem of the species, and surrenders that existence in it.

We are wanting both in ideas and all data as to what it is after that. We can only indicate it as something which is free to be will to live or not to live. Buddhism distinguishes the latter case by the word Nirvana. It is the point which as such remains for ever impenetrable to all human knowledge.

Looking at the turmoil of life from this standpoint we find all occupied with its want and misery, exerting all their strength in order to satisfy its endless needs and avert manifold suffering, without, however, daring to expect anything else in return than merely the preservation of this tormented individual existence for a short span of time. And yet, amid all this turmoil we see a pair of lovers exchanging longing glances — yet why so secretly, timidly, and stealthily? Because these lovers are traitors secretly striving to perpetuate all this misery and turmoil that otherwise would come to a timely end.

# Notes

(1) Ch. xxvi. 23.

(2) De vita longa i. 5.