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CASSIAN, CONTEMPLATION AND THE COENOBITIC LIFE

of God's providence.¹ 'Caro' and 'spiritus' in this context have no particularly substantial quality, but refer rather to human inclinations. Cassian's concern was with a conflict in the sphere of 'voluntas' and 'desideria'.² It was a conflict that could be interpreted further as a process of change—a shaking off of the past, a movement forward to a more perfect state: 'et idcirco si carnales concupiscentias de cordibus nostris desideramus extrudere, spiritales in earum locis plantemus protinus voluptates'.³ Although 'carnalis' and 'spiritalis' are here sharply distinguished—one negative, the other positive in quality—they are also closely linked at a common level, referring as they do to a single-minded effort towards human perfection; an effort that concerns, in both its carnal and its spiritual aspects, the one arena of the human heart.

So far we have only defined our terms, or rather found that definitions are difficult to achieve. Bringing together now these two elements in Cassian's thought, inwardness and vision, it is possible to see with what rich effect he balanced one with another in the setting of the monastic life. In another passage, for example, that examines the connexion between the exterior and the interior life, he shows again how they form a unity, but this time with a clearer reference to contemplative terminology: 'Sicut enim nullum ferme ab eis [the fathers of Egypt] otii tempus excipitur, ita ne meditationi quidem spiritali finis inponitur. Nam pariter exercentes corporis animaeque virtutes exterioris hominis stipendia cum emolumentis interioris exaequant, lubricis motibus cordis et fluctuationi cogitationum instabili operum pondera velut quandam tenacem atque immobilem anchoram praefigentes'.⁴ Many of the points mentioned above are here sharply recalled; and Cassian continues: 'ita ut, quid ex quo pendeat, haud facile possit a quoquam discerni, id est utrum propter meditationem spiritalem incessabile manuum opus exercent, an propter operis iugitatem tam praeclarum spiritus profectum scientiaeque lumen adquirant'.⁵

There is an apparent merging of activities here that could be misleading: Cassian also considered it expedient that work and prayer should be assigned different and definite periods in the monastic timetable.⁶ Yet there is a significant element in the passage: the now familiar distinction between 'exterior' and 'interior' is matched by another, that between 'opus' and 'meditatio'. It is entirely characteristic of Cassian that he was not content to leave distinctions as they stood, but wished rather to combine them in a more vivid picture of asceticism and its aims. He makes the emphasis already noted: that manual labour is ordained entirely for the advantage of spiritual mediation, and that spiritual freedom and the insight of the man of prayer give work its dignity and sense of purpose; but now, since his description refers not only to the types of activity that

¹ *Con.*, iv. 7.

² *Con.*, iv. 11.

³ *Con.*, xii. 5.

⁴ *Inst.*, ii. 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Inst.*, iii. 1.



LIBRARY, CONTINUATION AND THE ROMANTIC NIXE

of God's providence, 'Gard' and 'light' in this context have an in-
herently substantial quality, but rather to human inclinations. Cean's
conflict was with a conflict in the sphere of 'voluntar' and 'desidera'. If
with a conflict that could be interpreted further as a process of change—
of the past, a movement forward to a more perfect state, of
which it carries consequences de conditione moralis determinate
consequente, quibus in se non locum habentur positive, et
through 'causae' and 'spatial' are more sharply distinguished—our
analysis, the other positive in quality—does not also closely linked at a
concrete level, whether it be to the so-called ideal or to the real human
particular, as when that concept, in both its causal and its spiritual
aspect, the one means of the human being.

To let us have only defined our terms, or rather found that definition
is difficult to achieve. Having together now these two elements in
Cean's thought, 'lawfulness' and 'will', it is possible in the above-
what can be balanced out with another in the sphere of the human-
to life. In another passage, for example, that contains the conflict
between the exterior and the interior life, he introduces the latter as
only, but this one with a certain tension to metaphysical transcendence.
The idea of the exterior is the idea of the object, but the interior is
the idea of the subject, and the exterior is the idea of the object.
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There is no special meaning of 'voluntas' here that could be un-
derstood. Cean also considered it essential that was and proce-
dence in various different and definite periods in the concrete dis-
tinction between 'exterior' and 'interior', is marked by another, that
between 'opis' and 'mentis'. It is chiefly characteristic of Cean that
he was not content to have distinctions as they were, but rather to give
them a more vivid picture of action and its effect. The most
conspicuous already noted that mental law is explained entirely for
the advantage of spiritual freedom, and that spiritual freedom is the
right of the man of letters give its dignity and sense of purpose; but
now, since his distinction does not only to the type of activity that

- 1. Opus, lib. 2.
- 2. Opus, lib. 2.
- 3. Opus, lib. 2.
- 4. Opus, lib. 2.
- 5. Opus, lib. 2.
- 6. Opus, lib. 2.
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- 30. Opus, lib. 2.
- 31. Opus, lib. 2.
- 32. Opus, lib. 2.
- 33. Opus, lib. 2.
- 34. Opus, lib. 2.
- 35. Opus, lib. 2.
- 36. Opus, lib. 2.
- 37. Opus, lib. 2.
- 38. Opus, lib. 2.
- 39. Opus, lib. 2.
- 40. Opus, lib. 2.