

SIGLA



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This special edition of **MENTAPHYSICS** has been carefully typeset using a number of different fonts to convey the sense and meaning of the words as well as provide a visually pleasing text. The author has employed a number of unconventional English usages in order to express philosophical ideas which are necessarily innovative.

In the history of speculative philosophy newly simple and complex ideas have required that philosophers create neologisms and forms of expression that at first seem difficult and hard to fathom. This is a normal part of philosophical and linguistic development. Some obvious exemplars are found in the greatest speculative texts. Plato's *αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό* [*itself according to itself; absolute*] and Aristotle's *τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι* [*the to be what it was; essence*] are typical examples. Not by chance the Ancient Greek and German languages have been heretofore the most fruitful vehicles of speculative expression. The fluidity of their inflective and agglutinative character has been conducive to the peculiar needs of a thinking that must go beyond the literal meaning of any language.

The nature of speculative thought is necessarily highly abstract insofar as it must attempt to express the ideality of ideas as concrete conceptions whose content as universal is purely non-imaginative. As such, and this is a most important and crucial point, the content of speculative thought is not containable in the particularity of any one human language.* Like music, art, and religion, which in their universality are open to the understanding and appreciation of all mankind, true thinking goes well beyond the peculiarity of any linguistic expression. The truth of philosophical expression must finally be a whole as the result of a thinking whose temporality is discursive but whose universality is without discursion.

Once the relation of language to thought is philosophically known, the peculiar demands of speculative philosophical thought on the fluidity and limits of any

* The problem of the expressibility of speculative truth in any natural language was well understood by Augustine when he struggled to understand how the concept of time could be a measure of natural temporality. By overcoming the limitations of human language as a natural mode of speculative expression he was able for the first time to come to a purely intellectual notion of temporality as contrary to eternity: "... *intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis nec hebraea nec graeca nec latina nec barbara veritas sine oris et linguae organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret: 'verum dicit,' et ego statim certus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem: 'verum dicis.'*" [Yea, for certainly within me, in that inward house of my thoughts, Truth, neither Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin, nor of any other language, without helps of the mouth and tongue, without any sound of syllables, should tell me he {i.e. Moses} says true; and myself thereupon assured of it, would confidently say unto that servant of thine: Thou speakest truth.] *Confessions, Book XI, iii., LCL, tr. W. Watts, Cambridge, MCMLXX.*

particular language can be understood as a necessity of thinking. No doubt some languages by their very grammar and the extension of their inherent vocabulary are more easily moulded in the effort of thought than are others. This does not mean, however, that any language is finally perfect. One need only think of the contrast between Latin as a liturgical and as a philosophical language. Liturgically Latin has a marvellous compact energy and profound sublimity which makes it especially suitable for liturgical use; yet, philosophically, Latin has a cumbersomeness and awkwardness that it not easily overcome.

Since **MENTAPHYSICS** is written in English it is appropriate to comment on the peculiar character of the language in relation to speculative expression. The history of the English language is unique on many counts. Of the modern languages it is unrivalled for the beauty and meaning of its poetic possibility. This is largely because of the coming together of the simplified nature of its once complicated germanic grammar with an unparalleled richness of vocabulary rooted in both germanic and romantic streams. Saxon and Norman have produced a hybrid which can span the monumental range of Shakespearean musicality with the endless expansion of a modern *lingua franca*, peculiarly adapted to the use of expressions from other languages, particularly ancient Greek. An example, germane to the present work, is the ability to use in English the separate expressions *MIND and SPIRIT; PSYCHE and SOUL; PHYSICS and NATURE*. The term *mentaphysics* becomes easily possible once it is first thought as ultimate speculative modality.

The English language is actually, of all modern languages, the most suited for the rigours of speculative thinking. The fact

that it has not been so used, except as a somewhat indifferent vehicle for translation, is due to the fact that philosophy, unlike literature and poetry, has not flourished among the inhabitants of the sceptred isle. More akin to the Romans than the Greeks in their practicality and propensity for rule, the English have ensnared themselves in the mire of an unrelenting empiricism mixed with common sense. Such a mixture is not without its benefits in the sciences of law, war, and nature, but it is not conducive to the thrust and parry of the mature intellect, which needs the ballast of religion free of the limits and vagaries of sense to flex its wings in the theoretical realms of contemplation.

We can perhaps say that the full value of the English language for philosophy may find a home in the freedom of its North American progeny where access to the Ancient and European treasures is more possible than in the twilight of their homelands.

With the above considerations in mind a number of innovations have been used in the **MENTAPHYSICS** text.

With respect to the language of the text itself we may allow ourselves the following comment:

The creation of various neologisms and on occasion the use of ordinary language in an extraordinary way is integral to the thoughts expressed. While such liberties with current or conventional usage can seem and perhaps sometimes are awkward, they are taken only because the need to express what could not be otherwise expressed simply has to take precedence in speculative thinking over less

accurate though more usual linguistic usage. There is no other way to map waters as yet uncharted by the human mind.

With respect to the various typesetting formats used for the text the most notable aspects are twofold:

- I. The elimination of hyphenation for various words that are conventionally hyphenated. In order for readers to be able to determine when this is being done for reasons of philosophical sense two different hyphenation symbols are used. When the hyphenation is just for the purpose of dividing a word for line justification a simple dash [-] symbol is used. If the hyphen is purposive to express the author's meaning a wavy dash [-] is used.

- II. Italicization and capitalization have been used rather unconventionally in some cases. The simplification of English grammar and syntax over time has the advantage that English is admirably suited to being the modern *lingua franca*. At the same time English has lost the flexibility of using word order and a plethora of particles for the kind of emphasis that is realizable only in the intonation and timbre of the spoken word. For the written word the use of certain forms of typesetting can largely overcome these disadvantages. This is more especially true in English just because of the simplified conventions of common usage. Thus italicization can be used to substitute for emphasis lost by an inflexible word order. As well

capitalization of various words can lend an emphasis not otherwise realizable in a written English text. The typesetting of the present **MENTAPHYSICS** text has attempted to take advantage of the various possibilities of combining italics and capitalization with conventional usage to achieve an accuracy and expressiveness not otherwise obtainable.