MAN - THE INCOMPLETE BEING.

It would perhaps be agreed that the proverb 'To err is human' does not mean that man establishes his human identity by committing mistakes. This proverb rather means that committing mistakes is in no way inconsistent with being human. To be sure, the proverb betokens one basic dimension of man's being - his _fallibility_. Man is a being who _does_ commit mistakes and hence it seems prudent on his part not to claim the unshakable kind of certainty with regard to what he at any given time finds reasonable to acknowledge. The intent is not that man is a systematically erring being. Neither that man should always be in the state of doubt or inconfidence about what he at a given time achieves. Whenever man acknowledge something as the case, he does so usually upon reasons or evidence, and to that extent he must put reliance upon that. And since in order to take a stand on an issue or to ascertain something man cannot wait for the date when _all_ the reasons for justifying his stand are available to him, he has to justify any such case by the up-to-date reasons. But he must always remain prepared that what he now finds reliable may turn out unreliable, that what he now achieves or accepts to be the case may eventually become modified or even cancelled. It goes without saying that man must try to find out procedures of knowing that would _diminish_ the risk of error, which he never, however, can eradicate altogether. True, until any ground is found for doubting or denying what man already achieves, he must go by his such achievements. Thus it is not that, what would be nonsense to say, everything man achieves _is_ false, that everywhere man _is_ mistaken, so that whatever man achieves or acknowledges _is to be_ refuted. The point is rather that whatever man achieves or acknowledges is _open_ to be modified or

refuted, i.e. that he might commit an error at some step in concluding what he now concludes as true.*

A claim is sometimes made that a judgment, if 'really' true, is always true; if a mistake is discovered, it was never 'really' true. But one might here ask, whether man could ever be in a position to declare that the judgements that he now (at any given time) proclaims are 'really' true, thereby being utterly immune from the possibility of being modified or even rejected at some future time. The crucial point is not whether or not a judgement is unshakably true, but whether man himself can at any given time proclaim judgements in a manner implying that he has said the last word. It is in the domain of the latter that fallibility is placed. Put differently, fallibility is essentially a matter of epistemology, not of ontology, if any such distinction be ultimately drawn in the human discourse.

Fallibility as a human phenomenon is not without significance. By making room for reconsideration of whatever man now takes for granted and also by forbidding the attitude that the task has been completed once and for all, fallibility teaches man not to remain 'satisfied' with, thereby addressing him to become critical of, what he already achieves. Fallibility thus is the very condition to impel man to raise new questions, to become (as Husserl speaks of the philosopher) a 'perpetual beginner'. In this sense fallibility constitutes one very important root of human creativity. In this sense, again, fallibility may be rgarded as another name for the openness of human knowledge; it (fallibility) does not cripple man's effort to know, but, on the contrary, because of openness, drives him to strive further in his journey of knowing. Man's fallibility in this way

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* Here of course we are speaking of discoverable error and not of undiscoverable error which cannot in principle be detected by anyone.

reminds him that on his journey of knowing (as the famous proverb puts it) it is better to travel than to arrive, traveling being a kind of constant arriving.

To anyone who would be insisting that nothing subject to correction should ever be called to be <u>known</u>, the only rejoinder we could rather helplessly make is that, in <u>that</u> case, it would be extremely difficult, perhaps <u>never</u> possible, to claim on man's part - fallible as he is - any such immutable the 'Truth'. The urge to get hold of final 'knowledge' has often been acute enough to give rise to attempts to show that the quest of 'knowledge' terminates at knowing the basic laws of nature or of logic or of thought, or such a fundamental principle as the principle of sufficient reason, from any of which alone all the rest could (allegedly) be derived. Some thinkers have tried their hands at teleological explanations, arguing that knowledge of some 'basic' goals to the fulfilment of which all the rest are means, would give us all that this there to be known. Failure of these attempts reveals the futility of the finalist view of knowledge. In face of the ups and downs of human knowledge, it is plausible to suggest that it would be on man's part quite pointless and waste of time to wonder whether there is any final 'knowledge'. If, however, anyone like R.I. Aaron[i] speaks of 'infallible knowledge' as a mere 'ideal' never admittedly attainable at human level, we have nothing important to say against him, as we are presently concerned with knowledge in the actual discourse. And we find really no reason to say that what involves the <u>possibility</u> of error goes necessarily against the concept of knowledge we are familiar with. We are of course not claiming, as is already intimated that whatever man knows <u>is</u> not true, but, that it is <u>open</u> to further investigation which eventually might lead to its modification or cancellation. Not that, thus, the false propositions can be said to be known. Rather, if a proposition is regarded

as known, it is to be regarded as ture too. But we find no impelling reason to impose the 'crucial' condition that if a proposition is regarded as known, it should ever be impossible in principle to question it.[2] At the human level knowledge can hardly be said to be in principle free of the risk of error. We must not, to repeat, confuse between 'I am in error' and 'what I claim to know is open to be questioned.' The risk of error encompasses the latter. A few lines from J.L.Evans might help us : " 'Being right' is, of course, part of what is involved in saying that someone knows something. But 'being right', though incompatible with 'actually being wrong', is not restricted in its application to situations where the risk of error is necessarily excluded. 'Being right...- means 'is right, but could have been wrong', not 'is right and could not have been wrong."[3] To be sure, there is no occasion for regret for not having the so-called unassailable 'knowledge'. No such 'know-ledge' could at all be vouched for; hence not having it does not amount to being deprived of anything. On the contrary, it should be instructive to recognise that the need of being alive in any human persuit to the possibility of future correction without of course being lunatically haunted by it, has a vital pragmatic aspect. Because, in all likelihood, by taking himself to be in possession of 'the final truth', man would become dogmatic, intolerant and fanatical, and what is more, he would cease to make further enquiry on that point, which would clearly cramp his creativity.

In any case, fallibility is something that is inherent in human nature itself, and so, human exis-tence, rather, cannot bypass or deny it. One basic root of man's being a fallible creature seems to be his being a reflective being. Man recognises whatever he takes to be the case, primarily in terms of his reflectivity in that it is his 'reflective grasp' of his encounters that ultimately determines the 'meaning'

of the world which is of any account to him. Now human reflectivity being essentially dynamic and hence potentially inexhaustible cannot accommodate any <u>final</u> horizon. As a reflective being, man is essentially a source of further 'interpretations' of his encounters, for which the 'future', for man, can never be completely seized upon. No mode of man's reflectivity could ever be said to swallow up all its possible forms of expression, not because it is too complex to be fully described, but because there can be no concluding limit to what it can make of itself. Man's reflective nature in this way does not simply allow him to enjoy any <u>eternal</u> perspective. This makes man essentially unable to give any of his 'acknowledgements' a <u>final</u> form and foundation. His fallibility being an ex-posing characteristic of his own nature, man can never escape it but <u>has to</u> face and fight it; it is precisely the fallibility of his being which makes him an <u>ever unfinished</u> creature.

Man's fallibility immediately begets his <u>finitude</u>. A fallible creature is essentially bereft of omniscience. An omniscient being could not commit mistakes and hence need not question himself or his achievements. Being essentially denied of omniscience, man needs this sort of questioning. Man's manner of questioning and the methods of his enquiry do not, however, as history reveals, remain the same. To give just one example: as regards man's enquiry into nature, the original question that was asked was: What is a thing? What is its essence? And the method in order to establish the essence of a thing was that of the analytic judgement. But this question later (in roughly the 16th and 17th centuries) began to be replaced by the question: How does a thing function? And the method in order to establish the function of a thing came to be that of the synthetic judgement.[4] Anyway man thus is able to detach himself trom and question whatever he encounters.

And by questioning himself and his attainments, man reveals his finitude.

The very nature of human existence is expressive of finitude. The individual existence of each of us is enclosed between two limits: birth and death. Each man is born and hence begins to exist of this time, this place, of these parents, in this type of society, and so on. But my finitude is most starkly revealed in my death. My death is an essential aspect of my being in that my whole being is in constant and real possibility of encountering it. Death does not come by appointment, and what is more, it may occur – really occur – at any time – may be just now! It is true, as Sartre reminds us, that my death cannot be a given item in the field of my experience and hence is not observable to me. Wittgenstein echoes this when he declares: '(My) Death is not an event in (my) life: we (I) do not live to experience (my) death.'[5]   All this is true. My death is never a given item in my experience. But what is important to note is that this does not prevent me from visualising my death. I witness the death of other human beings and in this way come to realise what it means for a man to die. Thus emerges the meaning of my death to my awareness. I become aware that I shall die. Talk of 'inductive doubt' would be nonsense here. Now to become aware that I shall die is immediately to recognise a limit or boundary -- the boundary which I can in no way overstep - of my existance.

Often it is the case that the awareness that I shall die (henceforth death-awareness) implying an inevitable and final cessation of whatever I am and could become, begets in me a somewhat paralytic attitude of considering myself as an already lost being. This is no wonder. The thought that the world with all other inhabitants would continue to exist as usual but I shall not be there may well create in me a feeling of emptiness. In truth, death terrorises us

not so much because we think it painful, but more because we cannot stand the idea of losing ourselves permanently. Miguel de Unamuno once reports in writing that 'as a youth and even as a child, I remained unmoved when shown the most moving pictures of hell, for even then nothing appeared to me quite so much horrible as nothingness itself.[6] But precisely because man knows what death means to him, the need of his coming to terms with it is pressing. It might be interesting to note that my death-awareness as an inescapable and final end of myself, may itself instill in me an urge to become creative. The awareness that I shall not continue to live for ever, that my existence has a definite termination which is the final negation of all my possibilities, may well incite me to go all out to realise my potentialities. As both Heidegger and Sartre recognise, death-awareness gives to life a sense of urgency that it would otherwise lack. And Freud once compared life without death-awareness to game played without stakes.[7] Seen from this perspective, death-awareness may be said to 'hand over' (to use a phrase of Heidegger) me to myself, thereby helping me to turn toward myself now in the most fruitful manner. In this way, death-awareness may well shatter all stagnation and become one most vital determinant of creativity. It is perhaps this aspect, among other ones, of death that Heidegger wants to emphasise when he says: 'It (death) does not come at the end of my life; it is present in every act of my life, in the very act of living.'[8]

Man's embodiedness is another expression of his finitude. It is clear that in order to be inserted and participate in the world, one is to be embodied. To be in the world is to be embodied, or (as Marcel puts it) to be incarnate. But as an embodied being man immediately becomes a finite being. As Marvin Farber observes: '... the question of human finitude is bound up with the fate of the human organism [9]

This is mainly because my body provides me, at any given time, only a particular space-position to occupy (though I can move from one such space-position to another) and hence one specific view-point. This clearly limits me in having and exercising my point of view at any given time. Always I have and can have a particular point of view whence alone the world then is ordered for and offered to me, thereby putting limits to what I can encounter and grasp. In this way my bodily existence determines and limits the modes of involving myself in the world. By the same token, and especially in terms of my bodily condition; I become further limited in executing my programmes, in effecting my potentialities. Stated differently, my embodiedness limits the horizons into which I can project myself, or, to state in more simple words, limits me as regards what I can do and become.

My bodily existence, then, may be said to form one basic dimension of my situationality. My situationality, however, is not constituted only by my bodily existence. Two other important aspects of it are : (1) the 'structure of being' that I inherit; and (2) the socio-cultural-cum-linguistic 'framework' in which I am born and brought up. There are, thus, on the one hand, certain 'features' that are implanted in my being by my ancestors and more directly by my parents. On the other hand, there already prevails a 'system of values', shaped and hallowed by the thoughts of my predecessors and contemporaries, in which system I come to exist and am initially nurtured. These two, taken together, may be regarded as constituting my primary 'form of life'. In virtue of the influence of this 'form of life', certain limits are simply there in my being from its very inception--and it is not just possible for me to begin before the beginning.

Besides this 'form of life', my existence faces another kind of situation, namely, the actual state

of affairs, I am at any given time placed in. This situation, too, limits my activities in various ways. Clearly, while acting on possibilities, I have to choose, in face of the situation I am then placed in, one alternative to the exclusion of others, and what is more, only a limited number of alternatives would be available to me at any given time. Furthermore my situation puts limits to the possible ways of realising my potentialities. I cannot, because of the nature of the particular situation I am in, sensibly venture whatever I wish. I must take note of myself vis-a-vis my situation, and project my possibilites accordingly. My possibilities are never free-floating ones, but are always set and become <u>realistic</u> ones from within a given situation. Not that the limits of a situation are dead-ends to which I must succumb and which I never can fight and transcard. Were that so, my existence would become an utterly closed one and the whole point of my <u>projecting</u> myself would be lost. The limits encountered by me in a given situation may be termed as 'frontiers' which I cannot simply refuse to take into account while projecting myself in <u>that</u> situation, otherwise my whole programme might well become a sheer fancy. The intent, however, is not to suggest that I could, in the process of transcending the frontiers of the given situation, someday place or find myself outside <u>all</u> sorts of frontiers - i.e. outside any situation whatsoever. If I succeed in overcoming or fighting out the frontiers of <u>this</u> situation, it is only to find myself in <u>another</u> with some other frontiers thereof.

To see man as finite and incomplete is not, it must be kept in mind, to dispossess him of his <u>freedom</u>. On the contrary, one might observe, man's finitude makes his freedom not only necessary but significant too. It is obvious that, for the Infinite nothing remains unrealised; nothing, that is, for Him could be considered to be a <u>possibility</u>. But as a finite being, man surely needs <u>project possibilities,</u> and this needs him to be a <u>free</u> being. Freedom

provides him the very condition of his actions in that
it is through the exercise of freedom that man can
strive to achieve anything at all. In the context of
action, man's freedom ultimately amounts to his
ability to choose one particular course of action out
of a limited number of alternatives. Unless in this
way there exists a set of 'real alternatives' in a
given situation, one would hardly understand what he,
as a free being, is really asked for. Furthermore, to
save freedom from being futile and vacuous, man
must not go into the programme of achieving any
the-type of 'perfect state of being'. Any such state
is not simply admissible into the arena of human
existence. There are, as is already pointed out,
various sorts of limitations that man can never
completely eschew. Furthermore, as we have also
tried to show, for man, to transcend one set of
limitations means to be placed in another set of
limitations – there being no terminal point. So to
conceive of freedom, in the human context, as
pathway toward any absolute or perfect tranquility
would be to go against the very nature of human
existence and for that matter run into fiasco. And
it would be instructive to note that it is in terms
of his freedom itself that man cannot lie frozen into
any given state of his being and existence. The
awareness of himself as a free being, i.e. as a being
who can project possibilities, immediately leads man
to the awareness that any given state has its
boundaries meant to be transcended. In this way, in
the very awareness of freedom man recognises him-
self as finite and incomplete. 'Man's freedom is
inseparable from his consciousness of his finite
nature'.[10]

The germ of this incompleteness lies in man
himself. First, as we have already noted, there is the
ever-open reflective aspect of man for which man
himself can never guarantee any level of existence
as the final one, each level, however 'satisfactory'
it might appear, being subject to further questioning

and hence open to be transcended. To believe in change sometimes appears 'discomforting', but it (change) is rather logically inevitable inasmuch as man is <u>consciously</u> alive. Along with this reflective aspect, man's being contains a psychological side viz. desire, which too does not allow him to remain static. As a desiring being, man is invariably lured toward a 'more satisfactory' state of being and existence - a <u>beyond</u>. <u>Desire</u> is itself related to <u>scarcity</u>. <u>I desire</u> betokens <u>I lack</u>, and the grasp of desire is always greater than its reach. For this, man continuously tends to create new needs and is never sated. In the act of desiring man thus constitutes himself an <u>incomplete</u> being. Seen in terms of his reflective and desiring aspects, it is human nature itself 'which prevents him from feeling at home in any fixed pattern of life or framework of ideas, no matter how comprehensive or coherent it may be.'[11]

The difficulty of vindicating for man any fixed absolute kind of 'System' or 'Level' seems to have another root -- man's essential inability to predict his future with exactitude. The course of human existence is, it might be agreed, influenced by the nature and growth of human knowledge. But the history of human knowledge appears to be the story of the rise and fall of 'truths' and 'meanings'. This makes it hard to hold that man's future knowledge can be unfailingly predicted. It is true that, upon our knowledge achieved in the past as well as the present, we may and often do anticipate the future wherein we form a possible or the most likely picture of human existence. But man remains essentially unable to detect any set of rules that would enable him to find out any 'truth' in respect of which modification or alteration should of necessity be impossible. Hence, unshakable certainity seems impossible in any anticipation. That would be to suppose, quite unwarrantedly, that all the possible expressions of human reflectivity fall within foresee-

able categories covred by definite rules.Indeed once we recognise the true meaning of the <u>open</u> character of human reflectivity, we would in no way hesitate to agree with Jaspers when he remarks: 'No one can foretell ...what men will do, what will happen due to human action. We can envision possibilities and probabilities and improbabilities, but experience tells us that the impossible can happen, that the probable may never happen, and above all that new, completely unthought-of realities may appear.'[12] He remarks further: 'We should like to be sure what will happen, but such knowledge is not for man'.[13]   For we cannot foreknow what exactly would the forthcoming moments come up with. 'Each moment', as Bergson observes, 'is not only something new, but something unforeseeable; ... change is far more radical than we suppose.'[14]   We must not confuse here <u>lived-time</u> with the abstract time of science. 'Lived-time' means time in respect of actual, consciously willing man--- and here the future cannot be made present to us because it depends crucially upon the-then man's experience and decision. Here, as Berdyaev puts it, 'time is in man, and not man in time'.[15] If so, how could we assure ourselves of any 'The system' or - 'The Level' that would remain valid for all time to come?

An attempt is sometimes made to justify an - 'absolutely perfect portrait' of man in terms of an allegedly pure 'formalised systematisation' of the human world. This 'portrait' is claimed to exhaust all that is cardinal regarding man and his world and in this sense to be the 'essential' or 'complete' picture of the same. But in view of the essential <u>openness</u> of human existence, any attempt to cast it (human existence) into a nice, neat, formal, axiomatic system begins to look a little forced. The formalists, however, are so eager to <u>formalise</u> human existence and the world that they forget that they are thereby distorting and leaving so much of our existence, that it becomes difficult to regard such

a 'portrait' as the <u>real</u> representative of the same. Arguing in this line, one might say that human life as picked bare by 'formal representation' appears even less than the skeleton. For often it happens that no idea whatsoever of many vital spheres of the lived life can be had from the 'formal account'. Russell once remarked that 'the formalities are like a watchmaker who is so absorbed in making his watch look pretty that he has forgotten the purpose of telling time.'[16] The formalists might argue that, at any rate, the 'formalised' representation of the human discourse suffers less inaccuracy. But this is simply beside the issue. Whether the 'formal account' is less accurate or more accurate is another matter. The point is, no matter to whatever extent it could be regarded as an accurate representation of life and the world, it remains doubtful whether it could be treated as the <u>final</u> one. The formalists often take recourse to mathematics and argue that mathematical systems can be cited as examples of pure perfection. This sort of claim appears controversial after Godel has shown that any system rich enough to contain arithmetic within it suffers certain <u>internal</u> shortcomings in that it must contain propositions which are true but not 'provable' within that system. Godel's attack is against a central problem in the foundation of mathematics. It is with the question of adequacy of the axiomatic method. The axiomatic method consists in accepting without proof certain propositions as axioms or postulates, and then deriving from the axioms all the properties of the system as theorems. Thus the relatively small number of axioms carry the whole weight of the limitless propositions derivable from them. But it should be clear that there is no reason to accept any axiom or set of axiom as <u>absolute.</u> In fact, axioms are no longer regarded as absolute. When a certain proposition is nowadays called an axiom all that is meant is that the proposition is <u>assumed in a particular system</u> in which it affords a basis for demonstration

although it is not itself demonstrable; it is in this sense that the proposition is called an axiom or a postulate, and not in the sense that the proposition enjoys an unfailing kind of truth. Thus it should be obvious that what is a theorem or a demonstrated proposition in one system may quite be an axiom or an undemonstrated proposition in another. This clearly strikes at the so-called system-invariant or 'in-itself' sort of indispensability of an axiom. Not only that proposition's being an axiom depends upon how it stands in a particular system, but sometimes a proposition's even being true is system-relative. Take for example the case of geometry. Beside the geometry of Euclid, there are now other geometries - that of Reiman, or of Lobatschewsky, and of many others. And there are propositions that are true in one such geometry are not so in another. Precisely for this, today's geometricians if asked whether a certain proposition is true, would immediately enquire: in which system?

Anyway, as Godel shows,[17] given any consistent set of arithmetical axioms, there are true arithmetical statements that cannot be derived from the set. One might suggest that eventually the axioms could be modified or augmented so as to make hitherto unprovable statements derivable in the enlarged system. But Gödel shows that, even if the axioms of arithmetic are augmented by an indefinite number of other true ones, there will always be further arithmetical truths that are not formally derivable from the augmented set. Such further truths may be established by some meta-mathematical reasoning about an arithmetical system. But this procedure fails to satisfy the requirements, first, that the calculus must be, so to say, self-contained, and the second, that the truths in question must be exhibited as the formal consequences of the specified axioms within the system. There is, in this way, an inherent limitation in the axiomatic method as a way of systematising the whole of arithmetic.

Gödel's method of representation shows that neither the arithmetical formula corresponding to a certain true meta-mathematical statement about the formula, nor the arithmetical formula corresponding to the denial of the alleged statement, is demonstrated within the calculus. But evidently one of these arithmetical formulae must codify an arithmetical truth. Yet neither is derivable from the axioms. Consequently the axioms must be regarded as incomplete. Gödel's method of representation yields an arithmetical formula corresponding to the meta--mathematical statement 'The calculus is consistent', and also shows that this formula is not demonstrable within the calculus. It follows that the alleged meta--mathematical statement cannot be established unless rules of inference are used that cannot be represented within the calculus, in other words, in proving the alleged meta-mathematic statement rules must be employed whose own consistency may be as questionable as that of arithmetic itself.

The formalist sometimes tries to restore his position by taking recourse to what he calls 'the model-method'. This method consists in finding out a 'model' (or'interpretation') for the abstract postulates of a system, so that each postulate is converted into a true statement about the 'model'. It is then argued that, since the postulates agree with our actual, though limited, experience of the 'model', we are justified in extrapolating from the ungeneralised to the generalised or the universal. But such move seems unsatisfactory because of at least two reasons. In the first place, it presupposes, rather unduly, the human reality as 'organic' in the sense that, from any portion adequately understood, the 'whole' could be adequately inferred, to be sure, as it might now become clear from our discussion, no such 'already-whole' can be ascertained to be there of which we are approximating gradually. Secondly, it underrates or overlooks the basic limit of any

reasoning <u>inductive</u> in character which the move itself clearly is. Whatever inductive evidence can be adduced in support of any claim, our best proof would remain logically incomplete. For, we can never rule out the possibility that, in the course of experience, a fact may appear that might come in conflict with any of the postulates upon which the claim has been made. Inductive considerations indeed can show no more than that any such postulate is <u>probably</u> true, however high the degree of this probability might be. We are not intending here in any way to invalidate or belittle the inductive method, since indeed it is this method that we have in most cases, if not all, ultimately to fall back upon in some way or other. But we must remind ourselves what the inductive method is all about. Inductive reasoning consists in the argument that if everything so far observed which had the property P also had the property Q, then we should assume that everything in existence which has P also has Q, <u>and</u> that this would in all probability continue to be the case. The argument is based on the claim that it is more reasonable to assume this kind of uniformity of nature than to assume otherwise - without ever cancelling the possibility that this uniformity may not hold. Otherwise rationality requires that we assume the unobserved cases should be observed. The limitations of the inductive method point to some basic limitations of our making conclusions about ourselves and our world. Surely we cannot be expected to sit and wait and make no observation about the future, until we are provided with a method which would enable us to do so with <u>conclusive</u> certainty. But however in order to live we need not have an <u>unfailing</u> guarentee about the future. Human life is led and is to be led upon probabilities of varying force. This aspect of human existence is mirrored in highly sophisticated domains when the present day scientists are showing an increasing inclination to regard different laws as probalistic or statistical ones.[18]   The admission of

such probabilism eliminates or at least threatens a univocal endorsement of <u>absolutely</u> certain laws or anything like that.

Besides 'formalised account', a review of <u>ordinary language</u> -- the language in and through which we lead our life, also reveals our incompleteness. Our language, to be sure, is not just a medium of expression, but rather an expression of our very <u>being</u>. Human language signifies a body of sounds pregnent with meanings that betoken <u>man's</u> thoughts and ideas. Our language is thus not external to us, not 'a ready-made cloak' (to use a phrase of Kalidas Bhattacharya[19]) for us to pick up and wear. This is not to deny the instrumental function of language. Our language helps us to 'objectify' and communicate what we encounter. But our encounters, it should be clear, are identified -- <u>are what they are for us</u> -- mainly through their disclosure in language. As W.Von Humboldt puts the point: 'Man lives with his objects chiefly ..... as language presents them to him.[20] Or as Peter Winch observes in a somewhat different context: 'Our idea of what belongs to the realm of reality is given for us in the language that we use,[21] All this reminds one of Whorf', famous principle of linguistic relativity expressive of the idea that the structure of man's language influences the manner in which he understands reality and behaves with respect to it. 'It is quite an illusion', says Sapir - Whorf's teacher, 'to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially witout the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group ... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation'.[22] Human language captures the world as not simply being there, but as being significant; the world gathers and expresses its

identity <u>for</u> <u>man</u> in and through his language. Now there is a sense in which the modes of man's being may be said to be structured to a considerable extent by what he encounters and hence to that extent by his language. If so, any incompleteness of man's language would be expressive of his own incompleteness.

The incompleteness of human language may, in the first place, be traced to man himself. Man's reflective potency, as is already noted, is not closed but essentially open. Hence, since the meanings of the items constitutive of human language stem from within man's reflectivity, there clearly can be no final shape of language.

Language may be seen to be incomplete in terms of its openness to absorb new words or pharases external to its own vocabulary, so that it (the language) becomes infinitely expansible with imported words or phrases of words. This is rather a serious point. This indicates that no given language can enjoy any continuous <u>status quo</u>, but is always potentially open to become restructured. This potential openness of human language does never allow man to conclude that what he at any given time grasps through language would continue to remain the case for ever, since the possibility that a new recast thereof may take place in course of time cannot be <u>a priori</u> ruled out.

> So we conclude: the human being is a <u>fallible,</u> <u>finite</u> and <u>incomplete</u> creature. Not that man is yet to find out his 'essence' but that there is and cannot be said to be any such 'essence' for him to be placed in once and for all. Man is, rather, one might say, <u>essentially</u> an unsettled being. In the awareness of this incompleteness of himself, man comes to recognise that he does at no stage fulfil himself <u>finally</u>, that he is a being who is always 'to-be-made-to-be'

(to use a pregnent phrase of Paul Ricoeur [23]).
This awareness clearly saves man from being
fossilised, i.e. from being inertly encapsulated
into his 'present', but drives him to endeavour
further, to enhance his being and existence.
Man's incompleteness, thus, is another name for
his becoming. Man becomes and becomes and
becomes...

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2. An instructive discussion of this point may be
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3. J.L.Evans, Knowledge and Infallibility, The
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4. This example I owe to G.A.Roucher. See his
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5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philoso-
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7. Sigmund Freud, 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' in Standard Edition of the complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (eds. James Strachey and Anna Freud), London, 1957, Vol. XIV.

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9. Marvin Farber, Phenomenology and Existence, Harper Torchbooks, 1967, p. 53.

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22. Edward Sapir. Quoted in B.L.ι Whorf's 'The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language', Language, culture and personality, essays in memory of Edward Sapir (ed. Leslie Spier), Mansha, Wis,: Sapir Memorial Publication Fund, 1941.

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