

Dignity

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Why, however, should it be necessarily wrong to discuss the nebulous in a businesslike manner?

Findlay, *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values*, 2nd edn (1963), p. 315

I. General Approach (Priming, Grundierung)

1. *The Conceptual Area of Dignity*

The English word 'Dignity' is a noun directly borrowed from the Romance (Latin, French); like 'Beauty', it is an abstract noun not derivable from a primary English adjective. Just as there is no direct analogue in English of 'beau', 'bello', 'schön', etc., there is none for 'dignus', 'digne', 'digno' or even for 'würdig', though the German adjective is itself derived from the noun 'Würde' (dignity). These foreign adjectives are all capable of a determining genitival or phrasal construction: thus, 'digne d'attention', 'digne d'être honoré', 'liebenswürdig', 'würdig, gewählt zu werden', etc. For the idea of desert, aptitude, equivalence or suitability as here expressed, we must use in English some word not connected with 'dignity' e.g. the verb 'deserve' itself or, especially, the adjective 'worthy' or sometimes 'worth' (an adjective for predicative use): 'worthy of being admired', 'worth doing', etc., as indeed in German 'wert' (small 'w') may stand for 'würdig' ('liebenswürdig' is closer to 'amiable', 'liebenswert' to 'lovable'). On the other hand, 'Dignity' does exactly correspond with 'dignitas', 'dignité' and 'Würde'. For the quality of *having dignity*, possessed by that which is 'digne', 'würdig', etc., 'absolutely', without a specifying genitive or clause, we use the term 'dignified' (for which German also has 'würdevoll'): a word synthetic and somewhat clumsy exactly like 'beautiful'. From 'worthy' or 'worth' to 'dignified' there seems to be a pretty far cry. But an essential link clearly subsists. Dignity means Worth or Worthiness in some 'absolute', autonomized and objectivized, as it were 'featural' sense; and it is towards an elucidation of that sense—Dignity as the quality of that which is 'dignified'—that I am concerned to make an attempt here.

If Dignity means Worthiness or Value of some kind—perhaps something not far remote from 'Worth'—it plainly does not mean Worthiness, Value or the quality of being 'good' either in the sense open to any further determination as expressed by 'worthy of . . .' or in the sense of Value or Goodness as a blanket *pro*-concept regardless of any more specific deter-

mination. It has a *descriptive content*. Significant kinds of value, goodness, appreciability or desirability may have nothing in particular to do with Dignity. It is, in this respect, on a par with any of the basic moral virtues such as justice, truthfulness, benevolence, chastity, courage, etc., including even integrity or conscientiousness, none of which is synonymous with Moral Goodness or Virtue as such, and each of which, notwithstanding its possible built-in reference to Morality (and moral evaluation) as such, is susceptible of contentual description.

I propose now to examine (i) what appears to be the proper and characteristic *response* we yield to dignity when we sense its presence in an object, (ii) the set of more particular and concrete *features* which may be empirically ascertained to cluster round the phenomenon of Dignity: its conceptual aura or halo as it were.

(i) What is 'good' in any sense will evoke a *pro* attitude as such, an attitude appreciative, supporting, bearing a sign of attraction, etc.; what is 'pleasant' will evoke liking, desire, delight; what is 'instrumentally good' is naturally rewarded by something like appreciative recognition, a response of approbation, and a tendency to choose it; the 'beautiful' elicits a response that might be described as delight with a tinge of devotion; and the morally right conduct or good character (moral virtue) compels 'approval', i.e. a sort of devoted appreciation with an aspect of volitive approbation to it—a gesture of sanction as it were. Obviously there is a very high degree of overlapping between these modalities of appreciative response; as indeed, on the object side, the pleasant and the beautiful, the morally good and the beautiful, the morally good and the useful, etc., display an intrinsic overlap which only prigs and pedants, slaves of didactic classifications, and fanatics of hierarchy, would deny. Still, the distinctions are natural, ineliminable, and well grounded in our experience of reality. Can we attempt at all to assign, to adumbrate at least, a distinctive response to Dignity (or 'the dignified')? Whatever such a response may be, it must bear a close resemblance to our devoted and admiring appreciation for beauty (its 'high' forms at any rate) on the one hand, to our reverent approval of moral goodness (and admiration, say, for heroic virtue) on the other. Dignity commands emphatic respect, a reverential mode of response, an 'upward-looking' type of the *pro* attitude: a 'bowing' gesture if I may so call it. There is less emphasis in the paradigm response to Dignity on delight and satisfyingness than in aesthetic appreciation, and at the same time less on the deontic or mandatory or even on the hortatory aspect of moral approval; and no intentional reference at all to the useful and functionally efficient. In contrast with moral approval as such, it has little, if anything, to do with practical approbation and 'action-guiding' rule-obedience in any direct sense. Our experience of Dignity is centrally an experience of 'Height': a concept, alas, obscure and insufficiently analysed, yet widely and intimately familiar to men—except perhaps to consistent

and inveterate positivists. But if cautious sobriety and careful fidelity to facts are seen to be the criteria of a positivistic approach, I am all for positivism. I do not imagine that by pointing to the splendid notion of Height I have said anything definitive about our response to Dignity. For one thing, I cannot now embark, in passing, on an elucidation of 'Higher' and 'Lower'. In the second place, our experience of the quality of Dignity, though it presupposes our sense of the distinction between Superior and Inferior (e.g. the Spiritual and the Material, or the Rational and the Instinctual), is by no means identical with it. What is dignified is not necessarily sublime, and Dignity is not just a lesser degree of Sublimity. Our response to the sublime has something awe-struck about it, as if the presence of the sublime edified us but at the same time shocked or crushed us. Whereas, when faced with the quality of Dignity as such we certainly also feel edified but not so much 'crushed', overwhelmed or even deeply excited as, rather, tranquillized and perhaps impressed with a sense of *our own* dignity rather than with a sense of our own smallness and triviality. In other words, the dignified connotes the idea of *verticality* in a more discreet fashion than does the sublime, and connotes, at the same time, a certain idea of *reciprocity*. So far as we recognize Godhead or anything 'Divine', we eminently attribute sublimity to it, rather than dignity; on the contrary, even 'humanists' in any sense of the word would seldom speak of 'human sublimity', whereas the strange concept of 'human dignity'—discussed in part II—is one of the notions we seem to be most familiar with in whichever linguistic medium we may live and think.

It looks as if our response to Dignity is the purest 'value response' (*Wertantwort*) as such: in particular, less stirring and less impregnated with delight than our aesthetic, less organically connected with approval and with any practical or deontic accent than our moral responses. If Dignity means 'being worthy of . . .', the completion that most aptly suggests itself would seem to be 'worthy of being appreciatively acknowledged *as* worthy to be thus acknowledged and appreciated, *sans plus*'.

(ii) What are some of the 'more particular and concrete features' that strike us as eminently dignified? No two of us might answer this question in exactly the same way, but I trust that the following attempt at a random enumeration would hardly shock or surprise anybody: at least, not in virtue of anything I include, though very likely as regards my inevitable sins of omission. Here, then, are the features typifying Dignity that most vividly occur to me. First—the qualities of composure, calmness, restraint, reserve, and emotions or passions subdued and securely controlled without being negated or dissolved (*verhaltene Leidenschaft* in German). Secondly—the qualities of distinctness, delimitation, and distance; of something that conveys the idea of being intangible, invulnerable, inaccessible to destructive or corruptive or subversive interference. Dignity is thus comparable, metaphorically, to something like 'tempered steel'. Thirdly, in consonance

therewith, Dignity also tends to connote the features of self-contained serenity, of a certain inward and toned-down but yet translucent and perceptible power of self-assertion: the dignified type of character is chary of emphatic activity rather than sullenly passive, perhaps impassive rather than impassible, patient rather than anxiously defensive, and devoid but not incapable of aggressiveness. So far, the predicates we have listed are largely but by no means exclusively of the moral order: they appear partly to imply wisdom and percipience; and they are chiefly applicable to so-called 'human beings', i.e. persons, but again not exclusively so: much dignity in this sense seems to me proper to the Cat, and not a little, with however different connotations, to the Bull or the Elephant. What about the monumentality of some trees and the silent life that animates plants in general? Is not the austere mountainous plateau of Old Castile a dignified landscape, even if we set aside the dignity of the wiry stoic race it has bred and the majestic sonority of the language it has brought alive? And, though man-made, cannot works of art (especially of the 'classic', though not exactly 'classicistic', type) have a dignity of their own? What we credit with 'dignity' here is, above all, the kind of 'simplicity' that is not the simplicity of linear monotony or notional perspicuity but, on the contrary, a great complexity of aspects and fullness of significance condensed into a bold stroke, whether suggestive of sweet harmony or of bitter asperity, by an extreme and perhaps undecipherable economy of means. (The Spanish adjectives *escueto*—'spare'—and *adusto*—'dry', 'parched'—express it most evocatively.)

In conclusion, I must point to one more, and fairly central, aspect of Dignity, though I have hinted at it already when mentioning 'inward power' and the quality of the 'monumental'. The aspect I have in mind is *weight*; the weight of strong bones rather than of exuberant flesh; the 'weight' that impresses itself upon us in some portraits by Rembrandt rather than that which oppresses us in Rubensian opulence. I have also anticipated my reference to it in emphasizing the quality of the self-contained (in German: *das In-sich-Ruhende*). With its firm stance and solid immovability, the dignified quietly defies the world—even though, like everything else, it would have no significance whatever outside the context of the world.

2. Dignity and Value Categories

Dignity obviously should not be identified with Morality. To a large extent, it enters into the category of the aesthetical. An indefinite variety of objects plainly unsusceptible of moral appraisal can none the less exhibit dignity. Nor is it possible, conversely, to interpret morality as a sub-class of dignity. Moral virtues as important as benevolence and diligence, or

again some forms of self-improvement, are not paradigmatically relevant to dignity. It implies no contradiction to say that X is a morally better but a less dignified person than Y or that Y is a more sinful person than X and yet less prone than X to certain frivolous attitudes which are distinctively opposed to dignity. Again dignity is not a purely aesthetical concept—unless we water down the category of the aesthetic to the point of wanting to say that everything that is intrinsically valuable is *ipso facto* ‘beautiful’—and that, on the other hand, such basic aesthetical dimensions as grace, shapeliness, intensity and poignancy have little or nothing to do with dignity (cf. the characteristic contrast established by Schiller between *Anmut und Würde*). Does this mean that Dignity must be accorded a primordial categorial status of its own, bordering on the ethical and the aesthetical alike, or intercalated between the two even though merging into both? That question is merely terminological. The phenomenon of Dignity remains the same, whether we choose to call it a participant in both the ethical and the aesthetical realm of values or to erect it into a third realm of value overlapping with both. Two remarks, however, need to be made at this point.

(i) When I associate Dignity with ‘Weight’—I might also speak of solidity, firmness, density or ‘compactness’—does this not sound as if I had in mind something like an ‘ontological’ value, as distinct both from the ethical and the aesthetic? But the phrase ‘ontological value’ has an un-savoury naturalistic tang about it: reminiscent of the Eleatics, Plato, Aristotle and his scholastic copyists and bowdlerizers, of ‘static’ rationalists and ‘dynamic’ vitalists, of historicist and millennialist Utopians. It is not Value that constitutes Being, and not a ‘more real’ Being or a ‘perfection’ of any kind of ‘nature’ *qua* a nature of its kind that we emotively apprehend as value or a ‘greater’ or ‘higher’ value. It is not Power in any sense that we mean by Good or Right, nor does superior Power testify to ‘truer’ Goodness or a more valid Right. I am second to none, be it Reid or Price or Kant, Moore or Prichard or Ross, in my moral hatred of such naturalistic misconceptions. Nevertheless, I do not feel sure at all that the notion of an ‘ontological value’ is nonsensical in itself; I believe that we may legitimately inquire into it provided only that we scrupulously abstain from identifying it with the concept of either Reality or Value in general, and strenuously resist any temptation to define either morality or beauty, or indeed dignity itself, in its terms. When we contrast the genuine with the counterfeit, apparent ‘thisness’ or power or value with a mere appearance of it, transparent with merely pretended worth, etc., we are thinking in both ontological and axiological terms with an eye on their peculiar connection—*toto coelo* different from any reductionist confusion or conflation or mutual ‘collapse’ of the two orders of concepts. Thus, when we say in praise of Jones that he ‘is a man’, in contrast with being a mere ‘ghost of a man’, a mere puppet, a shadow, a clown, a paper tiger, a mere

automaton or flunkey, a hollow dandy or demagogue or mystagogue, we assert the presence in Jones of a *'virtue'* in the full and strong sense of the word, though what we mean is not that Jones is an eminently 'virtuous' or righteous or conscientious man, not that he is naturally handsome and captivating without the use of elaborate cosmetics (or an athlete in perfect health). 'Ontological value' is not, then, a mere fancy of speculative metaphysics to be lightly dismissed as a 'misuse of language'; I certainly would not propose it as a definiens of Dignity—I am myself enamoured of tentative and groping analytical description, and wary of premature definitions, i.e. of all definitions in philosophy—but I *would* risk the surmise that Dignity is not perhaps simply a twilight zone between the region of the ethical and that of the aesthetic but also connotes a specific trait of 'ontological value'. Far from reductionism—'*Entia sunt multiplicanda secundum necessitatem*'.

(ii) Again, I want to draw attention to that sense of Dignity in which it is inherent, not in the character of persons nor in the quality of any extra-human objects but in hierarchical positions or relations such as rank, status, place, function, office and the like: that is to say, the dignity pertaining to 'dignitaries'. (Cf. 'being *in* authority' as distinct from 'being *an* authority *on* something' and further, from 'having authority'.) This is neither dignity as a distinctive personal quality nor dignity in the sense of 'human dignity' as ascribed to persons as such, but an aspect of verticality proper to institutionalized and even, to a lesser extent, to informal social coexistence, co-operation and division of labour. I cannot expatiate here on the problems involved by the relations between dignity of office and qualitative dignity.

3 *Dignity and Related Qualities*

I have spoken above of the kinship and the differentiation between the dignified and the sublime. We might likewise discuss the relation between the dignified and the rational as well as the dignified and the spiritual (i.e. the deep and predominant attachment of some persons to intellectual, moral, religious and artistic themes); and again the close relations, which however do not attain to identity, between the dignified and the noble, the distinguished, or the exquisite. Obviously rational self-control is an integral aspect of dignity; but calculating rationality on the one hand, hard-headed or sweet reasonableness on the other hand, are less so. A spiritual centre of gravity eminently tends to make a person dignified; but dignity does not necessarily involve any marked and specified spiritual interests. We often use the words 'dignity' and 'nobility' synonymously, but not always: deep contemplation or sustained earnestness is dignified rather than noble, while the lineaments of a living body or even certain modes of gracious and

graceful behaviour may more naturally be called noble than dignified. Distinction appears to imply originality and some outstanding achievement more than does dignity; but a measure of easy-going irresponsibility is more compatible with distinction than with dignity (Max Scheler was not only an exceptionally sharp, clever and cultured thinker but a highly distinguished philosopher and perhaps a generous man, but he certainly was not dignified). A dignified bearing may fully strike us as something exquisite; but emphasis on fine quality as such, in whatever respect, pertains to the sphere of the exquisite rather than to that of the dignified.

II. The Quality of Dignity and 'Human Dignity'

1. *The so-called 'Rights of Man'*

It is generally held that some fundamental linkage obtains between Dignity and what we somewhat clumsily and misleadingly call 'the Rights of Man'. A dignified attitude involves respect for such 'rights' in others and a claim to one's own 'rights' being likewise respected by others—though, according to circumstances, that claim may manifest itself in the form of active assertion, of disdainful silence, or even of charitable admonition or a sympathetic attempt to make the offender understand it. Dignity and the belief in 'human rights' converge in the ethical model of human relationships based on mutual respect and indeed tinged with a reverent acknowledgment of the alterity of others and the differentness of individuals. (Of course, what is meant here by 'rights' is not 'positive' but 'natural' rights—a most ambiguous and infelicitous figure of speech—i.e. rights invested with intrinsic evidence and not enacted by legal or other specific stipulations; the ethical validity of legal or conventional rights presupposes such intrinsic principles as *pacta sunt servanda*, or that any wanton or arbitrary interference with another's sphere of autonomy is morally wrong.) Yet the logical status of Dignity and that of the 'Rights of Man' sharply contrast with each other.

Dignity is a quality; the concept of dignity is descriptive, though it also bears an essential and inseparable evaluative note. Rights are *not* qualities; their concept is not descriptive but prescriptive—ascriptive if you like, but their ascriptive is parasitic on their prescriptive sense. That rights ought to be respected is a tautology exactly like 'Duties ought to be complied with': they just consist *in* that they ought to be respected. Dignity does *not* 'consist' in that it ought to be prized, praised, admired or revered. Disrespect of a right constitutes an *offence*; indifference to dignity is only a *defect*, as is any lack of adequate response to a value. (Or, indeed, any impercipiency towards a significant fact.) My mental qualities are just as real as my physical properties, though perhaps they can only be perceived by others through the medium of some kind of behavioural or otherwise

physical observation (yet not, of course, 'discovered' by a scientist dissecting my brain); my rights are not in any comparable sense 'real' and cannot be ascertained by any method of psychological observation. Through the action of environmental or other factors, my dignity (like my knowledge or my courage, or my predilection for or bias against this or that thing) may increase or diminish in the course of time. Whereas, my being accorded some new positive right or my being deprived of one I have possessed does not directly alter my character; and my 'human rights', within the meaning of that term, while they can be punctiliously respected or brutally disregarded and trampled upon, cannot at all be conferred upon me or amplified or annulled or lessened: your accomplishment of your duty is not what makes it your duty, and your failure to comply with it does not invalidate that duty. Thus, we feel both that Dignity is somehow consonant with the 'Rights of Man' and that the two are situated on entirely different levels. This fact may not pose any noteworthy practical difficulty in our moral striving or even in the work of moral education, but it is likely to give rise to some philosophical puzzlement.

2. *The Hybrid Concept of 'Human Dignity'*

It may be from some such sense of puzzlement that the oddly ambiguous concept of 'Human Dignity' has sprung. For 'Human Dignity'—the term 'Dignity of the Person' would be more correct, and 'Dignity inherent in being a Person' more accurate still—seems to share some characteristics of the 'Rights of Man' (or 'Rights of the Person') and some of Dignity proper (Dignity as a Quality) alike. The concept of 'Human Dignity' is properly and principally *ascriptive* rather than *either* descriptive or prescriptive. To respect 'Human Dignity' is a strict moral obligation on the same footing, if not wholly identical, with the respect due to the 'Rights of Man'—quite unlike the reverent response it is right and proper to give to 'Dignity as a Quality'. Yet 'Human Dignity' is not, like the 'Rights of Man', reduced to complete vacuity if we remove it from the context of that rigorously owed respect. It has something about it of a faceless and inchoate *quasi*-quality we 'ascribe' to persons as such, independently of their distinctive virtues, modes of bearing, and mental levels and attitudes. It demands respect, but its meaning does not consist just in that demand. 'Human Dignity' is not, like 'Dignity as a Quality', a matter of more or less, not a matter of virtue, accomplishment or refinement; rather, it seems to be something 'inalienable' much like 'Rights of Man', and yet not quite in the same manner. Whereas the 'Rights of Man' can only be disregarded, negated, insulted, violated or 'suppressed', 'Human Dignity' can actually be impaired and destroyed, temporarily or irreversibly, like any real 'quality'. If tomorrow I fall into the hands of Communist torturers, they cannot 'eliminate' my human rights but only prevent me from exercising

them; whereas they can easily make short work of my 'Human Dignity', *more so* even than of such inner 'Dignity is a Quality' as I may possess, by maltreatment, the administration of certain drugs, and putting me in one of their slave-camps. In a less dismal way even, my 'Human Dignity' may well suffer by drunkenness or more sinister drug habits, as well as by grave accidents independent of anybody's guilt. If I am a congenital moron or have my brain permanently crippled by meningitis or am today perhaps the victim of incipient senile dementia, do I really 'possess' the same 'Human Dignity' as that 'possessed' by any other—normal, average, or even slightly sub-standard—'human being'? Thus, there still seems after all to be some rudiment of a 'more or less' about 'Human Dignity', in a fashion closely similar to the possible 'degrees' of free-will and responsibility (i.e. imputability)—greatly contrasting, of course, with the vast scale of gradation proper to the spiritual quality of 'inner freedom' or any other mental or physical qualities. Again, if you just gratuitously insult my 'Human Dignity' without any action apt to cripple my faculties of self-possession, what happens is much like a mere infraction of my rights: my 'Human Dignity' has not really been diminished, but you have yourself, by your lapse into iniquitous or uncivilized conduct, revealed and aggravated your own lack—not of 'Human Dignity', to be sure, but of Dignity as a Quality.

Although the 'Rights of Man', whatever they are, are not positive (legal, institutional, conventional) rights, we can only conceive of them in a somehow codifiable form: we invariably speak of them in the plural, not in the sense of an indefinitely great number but as if there were four or five or sixteen of them, despite the fact that we cannot without some arbitrary stipulation enumerate them as we can count our fingers and toes, or the departments of France. On the contrary, we never speak of 'Human Dignity' except in the singular, similarly as we talk of civic rights but only of citizenship, or of moral virtues but only of (moral) sense, and of conscience. It looks as if we conceived of 'Human Rights' as postulates, i.e. specified rules for other people's conduct towards a person, grounded in 'Human Dignity', which in its turn were neither a 'claim' nor a 'quality' but a kind of half-way house between a set of prescriptive claims and the basic quality of being-a-person: a semi-fictitious, semi-real *status* 'ascribed' to the person as such.

3. 'Human Dignity' and 'Dignity as a Quality'

We might feel tempted to interpret 'Human Dignity' as a *minimum* of actual dignity (Dignity as a Quality) quasi-automatically, quasi-tautologously 'possessed' by everyone in virtue of simply being a person; or again, as the *virtual* presence in everyone of Dignity as a Quality, a 'perfection' that everyone is 'called' to achieve actually, though only some

of us do so and in very different degrees, while some of us are conspicuous by their display, again in very different degrees, of features specifically opposed to 'Dignity as a Quality', such un-dignity equally presupposing the unquestioned status of 'Human Dignity'. This would pretty closely correspond to Aranguren's distinction between *moralidad como estructura* (the fact that man is a 'moral being', subject to moral categories, exercising moral judgment and an object thereof) and *moralidad como contenido* (the actual morality, the moral value-and-disvalue or goodness and badness of men). Neither of these schemas seems to be altogether satisfactory. 'Human Dignity' is not, I think, important *only* in view of its representing a minimum level of actual 'Dignity as a Quality', nor of its potential blossoming out into 'Dignity as a Quality'; and I do not feel sure about whether qualitative un-dignity also implies a loss or impairment of 'Human Dignity' or, on the contrary, would be impossible in a person who was no longer in possession of his 'Human Dignity' or, say, no longer in a state or condition of 'Human Dignity'. An attempt to elucidate these complex relationships would overreach my present scope. But it seems certain that our 'Human Dignity' is threatened mainly by the impact on us of powers alien to our own will, whereas our lack of 'Dignity as a Quality' or indeed our un-dignity is mainly our own work: it cannot express itself or come to be except through our own agency. Deficient, alas, in heroic virtue and not of the stuff martyrs are made of, I would most likely ingloriously collapse under torture and fail to stand up to pain, fright and numbing poisons: I would then be ready to behave, perhaps without even feeling that it matters much, in a fashion incompatible with 'Human Dignity'. But I venture to believe I would still retain a higher degree of 'Dignity as a Quality' than the people of substantially liberal convictions who tend to welcome the ascendancy of a totalitarian tyranny as the fulfilment of Progress or of the 'meaning of History', or again as the surge of superior vitality or the Wave of the Future. Let us vary the example. Suppose you could do with my co-operation in a shady but profitable business deal, and offer me as a bribe a packet of twenty fairly good Dutch cigars. I feel tempted for a moment; but such traffic would be beneath my dignity. Realizing, however, that the success of your scheme to a large extent depends on my support, you raise your stingy offer to a promise of 500 Upmans or Partagas. Ah, that's a different matter. 'A woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke', as the young Kipling sang; and I sing, 'Honour is only honour, but Havana is heaven'. I accept. Perhaps I have come to discern that there are loftier things on earth than the ordinary pedestrian standards of Right and Wrong; or to find out that in the long view your ostensibly crooked scheme is calculated to maximize pleasure in the world, very properly beginning with *my* pleasure. I cynically put up with my loss of dignity or, worse, slur it over in my mind and idealistically explain it away. No doubt, you have been my corrupters. But I am not just

corrupted; I am corrupt! My lack or loss of dignity ('Dignity as a Quality'), my un-dignity, my indignity is authentically mine. The question may now be asked: Have I thus also lost my 'Human Dignity'? To raise the question is not to answer it. In a way, being now assailed by remorse, I may feel that I 'no longer exist morally'; but the position is not quite that. Rather, it is that I do exist morally, and precisely am an immoral wretch. Admittedly, though, you the hatchers of the dishonest enterprise who have invited me to 'lend you my aid in this raid' (Kipling again) are at least as immoral as I am, but one would be less disposed to call you moral *wretches*. The distinction between the indignity opposed to 'Dignity as a Quality' and the vanishing of 'Human Dignity' stands out in bolder relief in your case than in mine.

Of course, to confess to one's own confusion is a cheap and scarcely dignified method of blunting the edge of the confounding objections one may anticipate.

III. The Undignified

1. *Bernard Shaw's Short-winded Sense of Dignity*

There is a rightly famous, incisive witticism by the late Bernard Shaw, which I am quoting from memory, but I hope with essential accuracy: 'See to it that you get what you like, or else you will like what you get'. Surely this conveys a plea for Dignity and a warning against the lack of it. Whatever the intrinsic quality of our likes and dislikes themselves, and notwithstanding the prudential as well as the moral necessity of our controlling, repressing, tempering and modulating many of them, there is an elementary, not to say an elemental, feature of dignity about clarifying, developing, pursuing and making valid our personal tastes and choices. Again, albeit I hold that many of the most precious and delightful things (goods, experiences, values, satisfactions, etc.) we 'get' in life are such as are meted out to us gratuitously by Chance or Incident or Providence rather than obtained or attained or achieved by our own pre-existent desire and effective striving, it is true that pliability, unresisting adaptability and unreserved self-adjustment are prototypal opposites of Dignity. (When once as a small boy I had to write in a school essay that 'Spring is the pleasantest season'—a cliché I was acquainted with, finding however myself at that time that summer was more pleasant, though I have since come to appreciate a mellow early October day most—everything in me revolted at the idea that a *taste*, as distinct from a rule of conduct, should be forced upon me.) Thus Shaw seems to be eminently concerned with the dignity of the person: he exhorts the individual to shape his life according to his own vision rather than to allow his inmost preferences to be shaped

by circumstantial facts and to fall into slavish dependence on his environment. But the predictive form in which he clothes his admonition—‘or else you *will* like what you get’, a sanction appended to his counsel rather than an expansion of it—shows his pitiable failure to understand what is most important about Dignity: not to ‘get what one likes’ but to be able to endure what one ‘gets’ without necessarily assenting to it and growing to ‘like’ it. (The Stoic sage put it admirably when he admonished a youth complaining of his father’s lack of parental virtues, ‘Did Nature owe you a good father? No, only a father.’ He wrote *neither*, ‘You are wrong; the goodness of fathers is often inscrutable; you are too immature to discern it; you *have* got a good father’, *nor* ‘Make haste to depose your father and fashion unto yourself another that comes up to your standards’.) What Shaw does is to erect into an inexorable decree the very dependence on externals of the person he is inciting us to rebel against. Like any Naturalist, he confuses Dignity with Power, Wealth and Success. But, while naturalists of the conservative hierarchical temper taught us to participate in Dignity by admiring the Power, etc., of ‘our betters’, while those of a liberal capitalistic temper improved upon this by announcing that Power, etc., are ‘anybody’s’ and thus virtually everybody’s, those of the Socialist and fake-realist brand, like Shaw, completed the turn from embellishing Illusion to Utopian Delusion by asserting that Power, etc., can be organized revolution and subversive ‘conquest’ be made actually everybody’s. Perhaps people of this cast of mind believe that by the ensuring through a collective agency of everybody’s ‘Human Dignity’ (including a sense of individual self-assertion and self-fulfilment) everyone will also acquire Dignity as a Quality or, what comes to the same thing, the concept of ‘Dignity as a Quality’ will lose its point—a view prefigured by the first great apostle of Progress, Condorcet, who confidently foresaw a rationally and scientifically redrawn world in which there would be no opportunity for the exercise of heroic virtue nor any sense in revering it.

The core of Un-Dignity, as I would try to put it succinctly, is constituted by an attitude of refusal to recognize, experience, and bear with, the tension between Value and Reality; between what things ought to be, should be, had better be or are desired to be and what things are, can be and are allowed to be. That refusal, which may take an immense variety of forms, includes of course the now fashionable anathema on our (most happily) incurable ‘splitness’, ‘alienation’ and yearning for (religious and extra-religious, reverentially stated or more specifically pursued) ‘self-transcendence’. It does *not*, of course, include either submission to the existing order of things and the virtue of patience, or a sustained endeavour for reform, improvement and assuagement. Heraclitus may well have had this in mind when he wrote the magnificent words, ‘Better (or stronger?) is invisible than visible harmony’: ἀρμονίη ἀφανής φανερώς κρείττων.

2. *The Feature-world of the Undignified*

I must content myself with a fleetingly sketched and hopelessly incomplete grouping of the relevant dimensions. Questions like how far—how exactly or how roughly—these correspond to the contrary dimensions of Dignity, or how far we might distinguish between mere lack of dignity (in an object in which its presence would be expected) and positive un-dignity, or the criteria of distinguishing between an awareness and pursuit of dignity which is itself a component of dignity and a pretence of or pretension to dignity which is peculiarly destructive of dignity—these and other fascinating problems about our subject must be entirely forgone here.

Undignified is everything that is antithetic to distance, discretion, boundaries, articulation, individuation and autonomy: the features, then, of confusion, chaos, disorder, unruliness, indiscriminate community or consorting or intimacy, promiscuity, domineeringness and servility, and others down to conspicuous loquacity or (I will not go into this distinction) garrulity. (It need not be emphasized that clarity-seeking simplification has nothing dignified, the rejection of *fausse clarté* and the experience of tints fading into one another, etc., nothing undignified about it.) Another heading under which undignified features may be grouped: brutish and noisy, or even naively unreserved and of-a-piece self-assertion, self-assurance and self-complacency; self-pity, emotionalism, exhibitionism, demonstrativeness, etc. Further, untruthfulness and unguineness; hypocrisy, false pretence and the whole empire of the showy, flashy and gaudy, the *Kitsch*, the *cursi*, the *endimanché*, the ornate trash or *camelote*, the *poshlost*' (ponderous platitude). Finally, as opposed to 'Weight' or Gravity, all that is levity, frivolity, irrelevance, shallowness, needless triviality. Some clarifications and qualifications would obviously be necessary. Stage-acting and dancing are not as such undignified: a good deal of dignity can in fact enter into them; but whatever is stagey outside the stage connotes un-dignity. Opinions may differ about jazz, 'entertainment' in the closer sense of the word, many other frontier zones of art. Wit and brilliance as such are not undignified; humour, far from being undignified, supposes a keen sense of weights; but all forced humour and programme gaiety is undignified. Satire is a problem. (Austin: To pretend to be vulgar often, alas, is to *be* vulgar; but when? Karl Kraus the Viennese satirist, probably the finest writer of standard German prose in this century, in a sort of obsessive hallucination would pour forth pages interlarded with the most hideous Viennese semi-Yiddish and Aryan Viennese 'cockney' slang as well as with Prussian barbarisms more reminiscent of New-Yorkese, sometimes in visible but often in more effective invisible quotation-marks, without for a moment becoming vulgar. When I use locutions such as '... or I'm a Dutchman' or 'You betcher sweet life' or 'She is forty if she's a day' or 'exquisitely girlish'

I fear I am *being* vulgar.) What professions outside the properly criminal ones are undignified as such? One answer is E. Friedell's: that of a *Professor* (university don), because it involves a slow metabolism, a sluggish bowel a penchant for gradualist doctrines, and pedantry. I wonder.

Two particular aspects, however, seem to me to require express mention.

3. *Uncontrolled Passion*

No forms of the Undignified that are mainly constituted by loss of self-restraint, enslavement by or half-hearted yielding to a passion, or even a shameless display of it, can, I submit, reach the apex of un-dignity. With the possible exception of Vanity—in which levity and inward dependence on pleasing others rather than passion proper occupy the central point—this applies to all standard passion, however objectionable and beastly, however morbid and devious: to Lust, Avarice, Ambition, craving for Power, Revenge, Anger (and even Cruelty if suffused with anger), rebellious or jingoistic Mob Violence. Shylock's insistence on his pound of flesh has *something* dignified about it. So has Sappho's drastic description of her state of sexual excitement at the sight of some pretty lass (though it cannot even be candid animal amorality, for in another poem she repels the amorous advances of a man in primly graceful terms of chaste indignation). Carlyle, much rather a proto-Fascist than a believer in Democracy, depicts the *terreur* and the excesses of the revolutionary mob with a sense of sublimity rather than with unmixed loathing; and I was myself enough of an aesthete when Englishing and commenting on the texts of some of the crazy visionaries of the Third Reich to betray a certain degree of horrible fascination. How can we account for this relative privilege of Passion? Not only does a note of dignity attach to the elemental forces of Nature; it is even represented, however dimly and however swamped by un-dignity, in man's implicit avowal of weakness when seized, and swept off his feet, by forces of that order, in his submission to what ought not to be but imperiously *tends* to be above his strength and beyond his control. I have omitted, presumably from a personal sense of shame, the intensest and at any rate most universal of passions, Fear. Cowardice is paradigmatically undignified. Yet a person crying out in pain, trembling with fear, quivering and writhing in anguish, imploring to be spared, etc., is not an incarnation of Un-Dignity. A tragic and thereby a remotely dignified note enters into his picture. His failure to achieve, and even to have striven for, stoic endurance has placed him in its perspective. In his flight from the inexorable Split he dare not face, his awareness of it is set aflame. The 'Human Dignity' he has been bereft of—though, as we here presume, not without his own complicity—bears witness to the Qualitative Dignity he has fallen short of and perhaps has come near to achieving. If not the

outright coward, the victim of fear is a caricature of the hero and his disfigured countenance may be lit up with an ironic reflexion of martyrdom.

4. *The Meretricious*

It might be argued that the feature sometimes described as the 'meretricious' embodies the culmination of Un-Dignity. There is, within my knowledge, no wholly exact foreign equivalent for the term, seeing that none of the more easily translatable words with their habitat in its neighbourhood—such as 'venal', 'briable', 'whore-like', 'mercenary', or the nouns 'toady' or 'flatterer', or again 'pandar' or 'pimp'—offer a perfect rendering of the quality in question. The professional harlot (*meretrix*, she who 'earns' by selling her carnal intimacy) including her more 'classy' variants, or again the pandar or procuress, are too narrowly specialized examples; the sales-agent need not have anything meretricious about him; the so-called 'good mixer' may or may not have a touch of it; the etymological lineage of 'courtesan' (French *courtisan* and Italian *cortigiano*, in English 'courtier') may be usefully remembered in the context of 'toady' or 'flatterer'; perhaps advertisement-writers, 'hidden persuaders' and propaganda agents need a fair amount of meretriciousness to excel in their profession, but of course I mean 'meretricious' in a less technically restricted context. Anyhow, though commercial advertisements are morally harmless and relatively honest in as much as they overtly offer for sale some commodity which some people may have an interest in acquiring and which the vendor has an obvious and undisguised interest in selling, their study (along with that of *Woman's Own* and similar or more sophisticated magazines) supplies an excellent method for getting acquainted with the objective feature of 'the meretricious'. 'The nylons worthy of *your* legs' or 'If your face doesn't really feel clean with cream, yet soap and water is too drying, then Estés Lauder's *New Fresh-Water Treatments* were just created for you' may serve as random examples. But the titles of certain (perhaps instructive) popular books may sound even more exciting to the logician: I mean such as *Slimming for You*, *Your Arthritis* and *Your Sinus Trouble*. The point is not so much the predominance of the appeal to base instincts, even though these are of course most directly liable to crude stimulation by seductive imagery, as the indiscriminate fake-personal mode of address: whereas in injunctions like 'Thou shalt not kill' or 'Know thyself' the incisive personal form of address patently refers to a universality (of which the concrete singular case is merely the point of application). When my glance first fell on *Your Sinus Trouble* I caught myself imagining for a moment that the author really meant *my* sinus trouble and was anxious to help *me* rather than just anybody suffering from that complaint.

What characterizes the meretricious attitude is the intimate unity of abstract self-seeking and qualitative self-effacement. The meretricious type of person is, ideally speaking, at once boundlessly devoted to the thriving of his life and indifferent to its contents. He wallows in his dependence on his environment—in sharp contrast to the dignity of a man's setting bounds to the impact of its forces and undergoing their influence in a distant and filtered fashion—and places himself at the disposal of alien wants and interests without organically (which implies, selectively) espousing any of them. The tout (including such variants as the slave of fashion, the echolalic loud-speaker, the genius for opportunism, etc.) embodies a parasitical, coreless, not to say ghost-like mode of life; he escapes the tensions of alienation by precipitate fusion and headlong surrender, and evades self-transcendence by the flitting mobility of a weightless self. His peculiar un-dignity resides in his jubilant renunciation of dignity: his spectacular success, that is, in creating around himself a world for his own use from which all reference to dignity *and the missing of it* has been crowded out; in which dignity no longer appears to be crushed but, rather, its very concept appears extinguished.

IV. Some Ethical Problems Concerning Dignity

1. *The 'Paradoxes' of Self-assertion and Self-renunciation*

The paradoxes or *aporiae* in question constitute a familiar subject in Ethics or rather the study of Virtues; they originate from Plato's conception of a 'hierarchical equilibrium' and Aristotle's medico-moral idea of the 'right mean', important new dimensions having been added by the Christian prizing of Humility and the modern shifts of emphasis to Objectivity and the 'Critical Tradition' on the one hand, to Individuality on the other. Awareness of this set of problems invades, of course, the areas of Epistemology and especially of Linguistic Logic. Most of the terms implied, such as 'Pride' and 'Humility', are ambiguous even within their purely descriptive concepts; and according to our own evaluative attitudes and our views about the relation between the descriptive and the evaluative we tend to speak of 'true humility', 'pride as rightly understood' (cf. the distinctions between 'Stolz' and 'Hochmut', 'fierté' and 'orgueil', and the English adjectives 'proud' and 'prideful'), or 'the golden mean between pride and humility', or again the 'right kind of pride' and the 'right kind of humility' (without necessarily implying that these two should coincide, as if it were desirable that all men should have the same sort of *temperament*).

A few hints must suffice here.

(i) *Personality* and *Impersonality* are equally integral to Dignity in the

sense of 'personality' interpreted as an intangible and imperturbable inward core, depth and weight, and 'impersonality' in the sense of self-detachment, self-transcendence and objectivity. The theme of 'personal response to impersonal standards of value', not confined of course within the context of Dignity, may provide the key formula here.

(ii) *Modesty* (in its general sense, not in that of sexual reserve) and its apparent opposite *Exactingness* (i.e. the display of high value claims, making high demands on the quality of objects, being 'hard to please' or being 'particular', in German 'anspruchsvoll') again are both essentially and positively related to Dignity. The 'paradoxy' is at least partly resolved by pointing to the distinction between 'possession' and 'enjoyment' as material and exclusive control of 'goods' on the one hand, and as experience, intentional reference and percipience of values on the other. The ideal of Poverty and even of smallness has been praised not by Christians alone (the finely worded formula *Paix et peu* is, I think, of Chinese origin); 'scarcity' and 'spareness', and a certain disproportion between 'being' and 'seeming' as a constituent of Dignity we have emphasized earlier. Conspicuous display and ostentation, pomp and circumstance are likely to be undignified unless they have some specific justification in terms of publicly relevant status and 'dignitary's' dignity. Yet no one in his five wits, or perhaps even out of them, would praise a man for his 'modesty' who would visit only third-rate provincial museums or at the Louvre or the Prado or the National Gallery confine his attention to minor painters and at the Rijksmuseum to the Department of Eighteenth-century Decadence, because these are good enough for him, while everywhere shyly averting his glance from the el Grecos, Rembrandts or Cézannes lest he should enjoy a sight he does not deserve. Another relevant distinction concerns the simplicity of certain kinds of goods as contrasted with poor quality within one given genus. It is more dignified to content oneself with even very plain fare of acceptable standard than to prefer a more elaborate cuisine of fancy dishes ill cooked and made of inferior ingredients. This thesis involves further and fascinating category problems, which however cannot be discussed here any more than the wider problems of thrift and waste, or asceticism and the generous sharing of pleasure, etc.

(iii) *Pride* and *Humility*, a theme partly merging into but distinguishable from that of Claim to Value or Possession and Modesty, again can no more than be touched upon here. If pride in the sense of 'being proud' strikes much the same note of distance, self-contained reserve and inexpugnable integrity that is characteristic of the dignified attitude, pride in the sense of 'being prideful' tends to be at variance with dignity in two respects: first, in view of its obvious links with coarse self-assertion and a puffed-up insistence on a privileged status of self as against others; secondly, in view of its likely desiccating and isolating effect on the agent himself which is antithetic to the sense of values, an inseparable aspect of dignity. Again,

'being proud of' one's own virtues and accomplishments is apt to endanger dignity inasmuch as it tends to transfer emphasis from response to value to the cult of the self as such; and being proud, jealous and centrally (rather than merely peripherally) conscious of one's own dignity borders on self-contradiction and conjures up the danger of a kind of obtrusive un-dignity, seeing that dignity eminently belongs to the type of moral and personal values which, unlike, e.g. justice, veracity or intellectual probity, are second-order qualities and are acquired—apart from the express removal of certain definite impediments—wholly or mainly indirectly, through the pursuit of values other than themselves and through the agent's response to the same values *present in others*. The relation between Dignity and Humility seems to me to be even more ambiguous—and to show a greater amplitude between the positive and the negative extremes. Humility slanted towards servility and self-annulment (on the mundane plane, conflatable with 'the meretricious'), not excluding 'hero-worship' and devotional servility—the attitudes of slavish self-abasement and systematic self-negation before the Divine—utterly flies in the face of Dignity. Such devotional postures and all too placid and complacent 'I am naught' modes of penitence and prostration are an insult to the dignity of God (conceiving of Him as a sort of Asiatic despot and capricious 'Omnipotence', an object of idolatrous adulation); again they proclaim the denial and hopelessness of moral discernment and effort. As Samuel Johnson has splendidly put it, 'To find a substitution for violated morality is the leading feature in all perversions of religion'. Devout humility of this kind means, indeed, Pharisaism raised to the second power: the self-confessed 'sinner' and so-called 'publican' priding himself on not being like that Pharisee who is satisfied with his degree of sanctity. In contradistinction, however, to that short-circuited humility, that gesture of craven self-devaluation and as it were nihilistic yearning for ontological absorption, Humility *qua* self-transcendent surrender and submission to 'What is higher than ourself' is the very idiom or at any rate the crowning act of Dignity, in that it casts our being into the mould of 'due response' to what is '*worthy of . . .*' (being thus recognized and served). It is not, I think, 'perversion' or idolatry and lack of dignity but one of the highest expressions of Dignity I know of that speaks from Péguy's famous prophetic vision—'Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour des cités charnelles . . . '—of the coming Armageddon (and his own glorious death in action at its decisive turning-point):

. . . Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans ce couronnement
Et cette obéissance et cette humilité.

The great German essayist E. Jünger has aptly if somewhat bizarrely written: 'Piety (*Frömmigkeit*) is only possible as a relation between miraculous beings'. The inequality it entails may be immense—as it is

between God and the Believer, in the religious framework—but it is not the straight inequality between a higher and a lower object which functionally complement each other. In at least every interpersonal context, Dignity connotes reciprocity no less, but rather more strictly, than it does inequality. The Greek idea that the height of our thinking is necessarily proportionate to the height of the object it refers to has caused great confusions in both Philosophy and Religion (e.g. that the objects of geometry are the noblest and most divine, and again that the devotional attitude as opposed to critical and scientific thought confers the greatest and most essential dignity upon us); but neither is the reverse as true as N. Hartmann seems to have thought it to be. We rightly smile when we come across the phrase—a decayed and probably commercialized remnant of religious piety and technically so-called ‘spirituality’—that ‘thinking of beautiful things tends to make us beautiful’; but under a ghastly débris it buries a grain of truth. Moreover, the dignity of our thought as ‘masters’ of creation, our thought about lowly and mechanical objects itself, indeed all thought as such, implies a dimension of humility: in all intentional reference to objects, all awareness of facts, howsoever destined to enhance our ‘possession’ of truth and our purposive control of nature and its processes, we cannot but exercise a basic act of humility: that of surrendering to ‘compulsive evidence’ and submitting to the ‘Sovereignty of the Object’. Percipience in its ultimate root is recipience. ‘Natura non nisi obtemperando vincitur’, wrote Francis Bacon truthfully enough but without understanding that our greater honour resides in the obedience rather than in the successes in mastery which it may instrumentally subserve. His earlier namesake, Bacon the Franciscan, had been the worthier founder of science.

2. Moral Dignity and Rule-morality

So far as Dignity is a moral virtue, or perhaps rather a condensed manifestation of ‘being a virtuous person’, it is a relatively ‘object-free’, ‘stance-like’ (*Haltung*) quality, only secondarily and quasi-occasionally *pursued* by the agent and not directly expressible in terms of rule-obedience. Nevertheless, rules or maxims of conduct may be dignity-inspired and presuppose an awareness of the concept of dignity. ‘I will behave in a dignified fashion’, thus put, sounds comical and unreal; indeed, specifically undignified. (At the other extreme, that of purely directional virtues, ‘I will be just’ is a perfectly normal utterance, since it means nothing but the decision to conform to the purely object-referred duty of justice.) Yet there is nothing comical or morally dubious about a practical reflection like ‘No, I will not do this after all: it would be definitely undignified’; or again, ‘I will rather do as X did in that very similar situation: that was a

truly dignified way of insisting on his rightful claim but, the principle being secured, quietly renouncing the personal advantage it might have afforded him'.

A paramount concern about one's own dignity impresses us as self-centred, self-important, perhaps self-complacent to the point of hypocrisy, and again as gauche, quirky, beside the point, humourless, priggish, aesthetically as well as morally self-defeating. A person's maintaining or protecting his own 'Human Dignity' or indeed the dignity of the office he happens to represent—which is an objective responsibility, and probably a strict obligation—is a quite different matter. But it may well be one of the techniques of civilized coexistence to hint at times that one's own dignity is something slightly funny and to some extent expendable. For this, precisely, is implied in its being secure and invulnerable: such a style of behaviour expresses rather than negates one's dignity itself, as a possession stable and self-evident—organically rooted—enough to allow for a certain latitude of carelessness. The same principle of 'tempering and thereby perfecting imperfections' is not in the same sense applicable to the particular moral virtues, especially not to the strictly directional virtues. A man obsessed with exact justice might by occasionally mellowing his strictness and according himself a margin of casual lapses from justice in small matters become a more lovable but not a *juster* man; occasional display by a philanthropist of selfish indifference might make him less of a bore but not a *more benevolent* person.

Nothing, however, could amount to a more fatal misunderstanding of 'Dignity as a Quality' than placing it in an antithesis or setting it up as an alternative to plain deontic morality. Suppose X is an eminently and typically dignified person. What characterizes his actions, words and deportment is a *penumbra* of awareness of his own worth, his fidelity to duty and his respect for others' rights and response to others' virtues and to alien values—awareness of this compound of traits as a 'self-evident', by no means hidden or denied but conspicuous and yet *under-emphasized* constituent of his being. X *commands trust* not only in the sense that he can be trusted not to lie or to cheat, to honour commitments and claims, but even in the sense that any moral *lapse* he may be guilty or suspected of is *powerless against the basic trust he inspires*. That is not so, as irrationalist and anti-bourgeois romantics would have it, because he (X) is invested with a mystical and unanalysable quality of absoluteness, quasi-divinity, special intimacy with superior Powers, a privilege of experiential depth or anything independent of 'ordinary', publicly accessible and applicable criteria and standards of Right and Wrong; but on the contrary, because he is felt to be *penetrated*—rather than merely commanded, controlled, governed or interested—by Morality to the point of being *personally inseparable* from it. Some crazy fanatic or monomaniac 'idealist' may in some sense be appreciated or admired, an 'amiable rogue' like Gogol's

Chichikov who trades in 'dead souls' (registered as live serfs) may excite affection, but neither of these is an instance of our dignified X. A man accredited with dignity may commit some deception and yet continue to be respected or trusted, *not* because his admirers place him above the moral law and feel that so fine and daemonic or inwardly powerful and existential a personage cannot be judged by ordinary codes but in the following way. *Either* his 'wise and prudent' friends (spectators, valuers) feel that his blameworthy action has had some exceptional justification and is not really blameworthy at all by ordinary standards: i.e. that in its wrongful character under some obvious categorial description it does not express X's character as such and perhaps *does* express it, in X's favour, under a finer though perhaps less patently available categorial description. Or else they feel that he has committed this actually blameworthy action in some particular, morally disabling, circumstances and that the action, though certainly his action and thus imputable and reprehensible, is *uncharacteristic* in the stricter sense of the term. His past and enduring conduct are surer guides to his appraisal, and he continues to deserve trust as if nothing to the contrary had happened. Yet the 'intangibility' or 'invulnerability' inherent in Dignity as a Quality is a peculiar *quality* rightly and reasonably apprehended as such by the valuer who recognizes its guarantee of future behaviour and accords it 'credit' and 'implicit trust'; it is not a *fact* vouched for by some immutable 'law' of nature or supernature. Dignity as a Quality can go to seed and be lost (whatever the Stoics may have said to the contrary about Virtue) though not, I suppose, to the point of leaving behind no vestige of it at all.

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