

HAMMARSKJOLD, THE MYSTIC

It was 18 September 1961 and the rescuers approached the wreckage with a sense of awe. Yet, they had no real consciousness of the historical importance of the event. The twisted hulk of metal, charred by the explosion and flames of impact was a monument to the death it contained and spued around itself. Then, they found him: «He was lying on his back near a small shrub which had escaped the fire, his face extraordinarily peaceful, a hand clutching a tuft of grass»¹. This scene is striking. It is the symbol of all that this man had been and would be for generations yet to come. It is only in reflecting seriously upon his life and his *Markings*² that we shall see how in fact, this simple, yet striking description speaks of the reality which is Dag Hammarskjöld's deep spirituality and perhaps, his real mysticism.

Shortly after his death, those whose task it was to put his belongings in order, discovered in his night table a neatly typed manuscript entitled: *Vermärgen. (Markings)*. When it was finally published, his friends and his enemies found out something about the man they thought they knew perfectly well. They were astonished at what they read in these few pages³. The one they had seen as strong and self-sufficient and successful had really been like them: one who lived through pain and sorrow and loneliness. Yet, they saw as well that he was different. For, through these signposts he had written, he came through as someone who had reached Another or Something beyond himself. This made the whole process of life, HIS life meaningful and real. It was this relationship with the Transcendent which amazed everyone. And it was indeed a very special relationship.

¹ Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972, p. 589.

² This study is based upon *Markings* (translated by Leif Sjöberg and W.H. Auden) New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1964. In all references, the first page number refers to this edition, while the page number in () refers to the paperback edition, London, Faber and Faber, 1975.

³ Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld. The Man and His Faith*, (Colophon Books) New York, Harper and Row, 1969, p. 173-174.

Van Dusen and Aulén on Hammar skjöld's Mysticism.

Of the few people who have studied Hammar skjöld theologically, two stand out because of their discussion of his relationship with what men sometimes call mysticism. They are Henry P. Van Dusen and Gustaf Aulén⁴. Both men knew Hammar skjöld to varying degrees. Van Dusen tells us that he knew him « almost not at all »⁵. Yet, he had met and spoken with the man. Aulén is more familiar with him, having known him in his student years, as well as knowing his parents. Both men are extremely well qualified theologians who come from and are familiar with protestant backgrounds⁶. So, before getting into the writings of Dag Hammar skjöld himself, it is good for us to briefly examine the statements of these two scholars as they speak of mysticism (or the lack of it) in Hammar skjöld, the former Secretary General of the United Nations.

In Van Dusen's superb study, *Dag Hammar skjöld. The Man and His Faith*, he says: « Contrary to a widely held assumption, Hammar skjöld can hardly be identified as a mystic, if we assume that mysticism implies complete union of the human and the divine, though his thought reverberates with mystical overtones and undertones »⁷. Certainly, what we have here is a clear denial of Hammar skjöld's being a mystic. Yet, we could easily be deceived if we paid no attention to the other elements Van Dusen brings into his discussion. First of all, we must note that he distinguishes between two types of mysticism. According to him, these two are contradictory and « poles apart in their presuppositions regarding the nature of both God and man, in their 'Way' to fellowship with God, and in their goal »⁸. One, he sees as a real flight from the world and all

⁴ Gustaf Aulén, *Dag Hammar skjöld's White Book. An Analysis of « Markings »*, London, S.P.C.K., 1970; Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammar skjöld. The Man...* Other studies have been done such as Gustaf Aulén, « Om Dag Hammar skjöld's Vagmärken. » in *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskift*, 43 (1967) p. 65-81; B. Brisman, « Master Ekehart i Dag Hammar skjöld's Vagmärken Predikan Om den eviga fodelsen. » in *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskift*, 46 (1970) p. 219-233. J.W. McClendon, « Twice-born Religion of Dag Hammar skjöld. » in *Review and Expositor*, 70 (1973) p. 223-238; R. Schafer, « Glaude und Werk - ein Beispiel aus der Gegenwart; Beobachtungen zu Dag Hammar skjöld's geistlichem Tagebuch. » in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 67 (1970) p. 348-393; Sven Stolpe, *Dag Hammar skjöld: A Spiritual Portrait*, New York, Charles Scriber's Sons, 1966; E. Sundstrom, « Why Hammar skjöld Was Silent. » in *Frontier*, 5 (1962) p. 313-317. Henry R. Van Dusen, « Dag Hammar skjöld's Spiritual Journey. » in *Theology Today*, 21 (1965) p. 433-447. Another work which unfortunately I was unable to consult is that by Hans Hof, « Kristen mystik i Dag Hammar skjöld's Vagmärken. » quoted by G. Aulén, *Dag Hammar skjöld's White...* p. 44.

⁵ Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammar skjöld. The Man...* p. xi.

⁶ These two men are certainly aware of the Christian mystical tradition. However, as one reads their points of view, one wonders if perhaps their own protestant tradition in this regard might not be somewhat of a handicap in appreciating fully the role of the mystic in the life of the Christian community.

⁷ Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammar skjöld. The Man...* p. 185.

⁸ idem. p. 11.

that is human. Life is futile in this view and only a denial of it can free man to move into union with the divine⁹. The other type of mysticism is what Van Dusen calls «ethical mysticism»¹⁰. This is seen as a union with God through action and duty and relationship to the world and fellow man. Having spoken of this form of mysticism, especially as seen in Martin Buber's writings, Van Dusen tells us: «This is the ethical mysticism of Albert Sweitzer and Dag Hammarskjöld»¹¹. Therefore, it seems that when Van Dusen says that Hammarskjöld is NOT a mystic, he means that he was not one whose «mysticism» was based upon a despair of the world and life, but rather his relationship with the transcendent was one founded and rooted in the meaningfulness of human life and history. So, ultimately, in this light Hammarskjöld — even for Van Dusen — is a mystic. The same hesitation seems to be present in Aulén, yet there is more of a positive attitude in him.

Aulén considers the question important enough to devote several pages of his work to its response¹². He begins the whole question by noting the ambiguity of the word «mysticism». However, he does not leave it at that. He goes on by underlining two views of mysticism which he sees as rather common: 1) mysticism as identified with faith and religion; 2) mysticism as defined so exotically and with so many distinctions that only very few ever fulfill this definition¹³. Having said this, he goes on to say that «For Hammarskjöld mysticism doubtless provided a way forward into Christian Faith»¹⁴. It provided him with different perspectives on union with God, service, prayer and Christian life as a whole. Finally, Aulén admits that «If we are to see mysticism in *Markings*, it must be a God-mysticism» as distinct from a Christ-mysticism¹⁵. Whether this distinction is but a matter of words denoting a reference in *Markings* to Godhead or to Christ, Aulén does note that Hammarskjöld's mysticism has two basic elements: introspection and a realization of this life of faith in God in action¹⁶.

⁹ It must be said that wherever Van Dusen gets this idea of mysticism in the Christian tradition, it is a place which is well versed in caricature and particularly a caricature of the Pseudo-Dionysian «via negativa» along with all the great mystics who followed that tradition (including the medieval ones whom Hammarskjöld himself admired so greatly.) Yet, perhaps Van Dusen has in mind certain pseudo-mystics who pretend (consciously or unconsciously) that their fear of the world and human relationships is but true spirituality.

¹⁰ The idea of «ethical mysticism» and the consequent distinction is one which Van Dusen tells us was originally developed by Rufus Jones. Cf. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld. The Man...* p. 186.

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 188.

¹² Aulén deals with the role and influence of the medieval mystics on p. 37-50 and attempts to answer the question of Hammarskjöld's personal mysticism on p. 113-123 in *Dag Hammarskjöld's White...*

¹³ *ibid.* p. 113-114.

¹⁴ *ibid.* 115.

¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 123. This distinction as used here seems to indicate just a terminal object: v.g. referring the union either to God or to Christ.

¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 118-119. Much could be said about this way of expressing it. Suffice

From all of this, while Aulén never says so explicitly, it seems that he would be hesitant to call Hammarskjöld a mystic without some qualification. He would apparently think of Hammarskjöld as a mystic when mysticism is one identified with faith or religion. However, he would add then that such a mysticism is not really mysticism.

Others have said that Dag Hammarskjöld is a mystic, and even the two authors we have just mentioned begrudgingly accepted Hammarskjöld's mysticism as true. However, what do his own writings tell us of his relationship with the Transcendent? For it is here that we will discover, if not a definite answer, at least the indications of an one.

Markings and mysticism.

Each man's life is filled with events which have, as it were, a « natural » meaning or interpretation. A man accomplishes a particular feat and expresses it through a descriptive paragraph or phrase. Sometimes this event and the expression of it also have a deeper, more symbolic meaning for the one who is careful to listen. Hammarskjöld's life and *Markings* are filled with these types of events and expressions. Here is one:

He broke fresh ground because, and only because he had the courage to go ahead without asking whether others were following or even understood. He had no need for the divided responsibility in which others seek to be safe from ridicule, because he had been granted a faith which required no confirmation — a contact with reality, light and intense like the touch of a loved hand: a union in self-surrender without self-destruction, where his heart was lucid and his mind loving. In sun and wind, how near and how remote - how different from what the knowing ones call mysticism¹⁷.

This particular section of *Markings* was written around the beginning of August, 1955. Shortly before this, a diplomatic surprise came to the world. China had released the captured United States fliers. This was on

it to note that Aulén, in his attempt to clarify, tends to deroute the reader from Hammarskjöld's actual thought. Where Aulén seems to make action flow FROM the faith and introspective qualities, Hammarskjöld speaks of action IN which faith and union and holiness is in fact accomplished. Cf. *Markings*. 1955 p. 122 (108).

¹⁷ *Markings*. 1955. p. 110 (100).

the fiftieth birthday of Hammarskjöld (29 July)¹⁸. Van Dusen says that this part of *Markings* in fact refers to Hammarskjöld's own handling of the negotiations with Peking on the question of these American airmen captured during the Korean conflict in 1953¹⁹. Such a statement is certainly valid. It cannot be disputed that the roots are to be found in this event. Yet, as with most - if not all - of Hammarskjöld's writings, we are allowed to look at it on another level. In fact, his very form of writing is meant to push the reader to consider things on a deeper level.

We begin to see more clearly the validity of looking more deeply into it when we attempt to compare this text with others. For example, there is one which he wrote four years earlier in 1951²⁰. Here Hammarskjöld speaks of an adamant, committed young man. Without mentioning the name of Christ, there is absolutely no doubt this is the person he has in mind. In this text, the reader is presented with a Christ who is fully human. He is seen by Hammarskjöld as a young man who «...had assented to a possibility in his being...», «still uncertain...» and walking «...the road of possibility...» to the end. The young man is a Christ who knows, values and chooses the Risk of faith. And that risk is the chance he takes that he might be wrong. This Christ sees it clearly, yet continues in this chosen path, «...adamant in his commitment...». He does this even as God, with all that this fact implies. The choice is made because being human, he sees that this is the only possible chance to grow.

The same underlying theme which runs like a thread through the whole fabric of the 1951 «adamant, young man» marking is found in the 1955 text we are considering now. The Hammarskjöld of 1955 chooses to go ahead into the untested. It is a risk²¹. It is not only the Peking venture, but it is the very core of his life which he invests in this solitudinous choice of going ahead. Somehow he was in union of some sort with something or someone beyond touch. This had brought him into a faith which chose the risk («a contact with reality»). Hammarskjöld attempts to tell us here in 1955 that he had experienced a beyond and a union with that beyond. This was accomplished for him only in this faith which chose to admit the possibility of being wrong, deceived while being unable but to choose this way, this path as real. Here then Hammarskjöld exhibits how being drawn into self-surrender is the core of his experience²². Such

¹⁸ For more detail on the importance and facts of this diplomatic feat accomplished by Hammarskjöld, cf. Brian Urquhart: *Hammarskjöld*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972. p. 94-131.

¹⁹ *Dag Hammarskjöld. The Man...* p. 133.

²⁰ *Markings*. 1951. p. 68-69 (72-73).

²¹ *ibid.* p. 69 (73): «...fulfilling the destiny he had chosen — even sacrificing affection and fellowship when the others are unready to follow him — into a new fellowship.» Compare this with our own particular text we are considering: «... without asking whether others were following or even understood...»

²² Again, this text of ours is better understood in the light of his Whitsunday Marking. 1961. p. 205 (169) «I don't know Who - or what put the question... But at some moment I did answer YES to Someone — or Something — and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore,

experience is the lot of all the mystics. In being truly grounded in the conflicts and paradoxes of reality, and yet choosing nonetheless to go ahead, he follows those great medieval mystics he admired so much²³. Those mystics «...for whom 'self-surrender' had been the way to self-realization...»²⁴ were the same ones who thus showed him how to have a «...contact with reality, light and intense like the touch of a loved hand: a union with self-surrender without self-destruction...». This union was accomplished in that reality, that life «...where his heart was lucid and his mind loving». This very phrase itself reminds us of the constantly recurring element of union in the mystics. The union of which they speak is not accomplished in the mind, but in love - in the loving person²⁵. Such was always the way of true mystics: a union with God in love, knowledge of love²⁶. Yet all of this brings us to his final phrase - «How different from what the knowing ones call mysticism».

Who are these «knowing ones»? What were they saying about mysticism? We have no answer. We have only conjecture. Hammarskjöld, in his radio interview shortly after his arrival in New York to become Secretary General, notes that real mystics were people of and in the world, serving the needs of their brothers. The connection of ideas expressed in the interview and even the verbalizations are very similar to the text we are considering. This allows us to conclude that the «knowing ones» are intellectuals or would-be scholars who see mysticism as a purely ecstatic delight which has no foundation in the day to day real world. The «knowing ones» could also be easily seen as pseudo-self-styled mystics whose idea of mysticism is the same unreal ecstasy which has no connection with service to fellow man. Therefore, it seems that his last phrase concerning the knowing ones and mysticism is but the introduction of a bit of irony. What he is saying then is that some people, thinking that they know what mysticism is all about, have failed to grasp that it is not an ecstatic experience which takes man away from the real. Rather, for Hammarskjöld, mystics are real flesh and blood persons who have chosen to risk a lifetime in service. This idea of mysticism as incarnated in real life is one which Hammarskjöld himself lived out in that total body-time element which constitutes his own being.

From all this we may say that Hammarskjöld in this 1955 marking is speaking of himself and how he has viewed his continuing life experiences. In this particular entry of his journal, he is speaking of a union

my life, in self-surrender, had a goal... I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph...».

²³ Cf. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld, The Man...* p. 46-47. Here Van Dusen reproduces the text which Hammarskjöld gave on his radio interview with Edward R. Murrow.

²⁴ *ibid.* p. 47.

²⁵ Richard P. Hardy, «Christian Mysticism as Harmonization.» in *Eglise et Théologie* 6 (1975) p. 241-251.

²⁶ Melquiades Andrés Martín, *Los recogidos. Nueva visión de la mística española.* Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española. 1976. p. 102.

with an intangible beyond, a transcendent. This union he sees as being accomplished only by risking faith and plunging forward in the dark. The plunging is not ethereal, but incarnational, earthy and concretely expressed and realised in service to his fellow human beings.

Such a union brings about a deepening sensitivity to nature, to the whole of creation. There is a new incarnational perspective. This incarnational element of Hammarskjöld's own existence is evident through his whole work, but it is to be found more uniquely expressed in the last years of his life. Using the haifu form of oriental expression, Hammarskjöld gives us some of his deepest insights into experiences of the concrete world about him. Here are a few of those written in 1959:

The brilliant notes of the flute
Are heard by the gods
In the Cave of Birth -

Himalayan ice cliffs
Beyond the hills
of Vezelay at Easter...

Sough of palm and beat of wave
Joined in the anthem
From the land of snow

Orgasams of bodies
On hot nights, lit
By flickers of summer lightening

With a thrill of desire
His body sank, sun-drenched,
Into the salt wave²⁷.

These haikus and others like them should be read as sparks of incarnate experience. They illuminate images and sensations within the writer and the reader. They enable one to experience a concrete element of the world, while at the same time they teach us something about the author. That is, he is one who Lived life, his own life more and more consciously. The expression of this conscious living is meant to say just that. Furthermore, it is meant to show others how they are to pay attention to what surrounds them. In other words, Hammarskjöld desires himself and everyone else to see and live the day by day, concrete elements which make up a life. Entering this life, daring to go on to the Beyond is the mark of Hammarskjöld himself. He says this and the wonder of it all in 1955: « Thou takest the pen - and the lines dance. Thou takest the flute - and the notes shimmer. Thou takest the brush-and the colors spring. So all

²⁷ *Markings*. 1959 p. 186-187 (156).

things have meaning and beauty in that space beyond time where Thou art. How, then, can I hold back anything from Thee »²⁸. In these few lines, he praises the mystery of God's presence in all elements of life. The beautiful is constantly not only the symbol of God, but His abiding presence to man. So, gradually man comes to see all things, more clearly and paradoxically mystery appears as present in all.

As one becomes more and more consciously alive in his surroundings, he necessarily sees more deeply the thread of risk which runs through his existence. We have already seen the risk and daring which Hammar skjöld sees as part and parcel of existence. This same idea continues as a theme and holds an important place in his own mystical tendencies. Within the last few months of his life, Hammarkjöld wrote a poem about himself as a gladiator in the arena²⁹. The entrance into a consciousness of deciding to answer « Yes » to life becomes the moment of entry into the arena of battle - and risk. It is at this time:

The combat beings: calm,
Yet exultant, I fight,
Until they cast the net
And I am caught.

I have watched the others:
Now I am the victim,
Strapped fast to the altar
For sacrifice.

Dumb, my naked body
Endures the stoning, dumb
When slit up and the live
Heart is plucked out³⁰.

Hammar skjöld begins the steady movement to death which takes place in a very definite process. From the decisive yes to a meaning beyond and yet within, he is to find life in whatever it is that surrounds him. Others had done it before. They were the objective seen. Now, he himself is called into the fray. He is now the victim. Defenseless in the hands of those who « ...are of the earth and only speak of the earth... » (Jn: 3:31), he gives up his life - for them. It (life and all its constitutive elements) has been a serious play. It is a drama which speaks the meaning and purpose of existence. But to see that meaning, to know it truly, one must enter the whole process consciously. One must come into contact with reality. Oftentimes men « live » and move, but never really come into contact with the real which surrounds them. This is to say that they are not conscious

²⁸ *Markings*. 1958 p. 118 (105).

²⁹ *Markings*. 1961. p. 206-207 (170).

³⁰ idem.

of things. However, when one does finally come to a consciousness of life and decides to say «yes» to whatever is and will, he enters into the stunning self-surrender which fulfills life in serving one's fellow man. Such is the meaning of being the «victim», no longer the spectator and enduring the «stoning», until «...slit up and the live Heart is plucked out».

All of this could even be futile. Maybe it is all a mistake. Yet, Hammarskjöld sees that the union he is being given is found in the risk of self-surrender to a possibility. It is a surrender which takes place here and now in a real incarnationism. Union, for him, is not found by escaping, by being a pure spectator, but only by entering the concrete reality surrounding him. This has been the key idea for Hammarskjöld and it finds its ultimate expression in another signpost.

His words of 1958 are absolutely essential to the fuller understanding of what Dag Hammarskjöld, the man and the mystic was all about:

In the faith which is 'God's marriage to the soul', you are one in God and God is wholly in you, just as, for you He is wholly in all you meet. With this faith, in prayer you descend into yourself to meet the Other in the steadfastness and light of this union, see that all things stand, like yourself, alone before God. and (sic) that each of your acts is an act of creation, conscious, because you are a human being with human responsibilities, but governed, nevertheless, by the power beyond human consciousness which has created man.

You are liberated from things, but you encounter in them an experience which has the purity and clarity of revelation.

In the faith which is 'God's marriage to the soul', *everything*, therefore has a meaning.

So live, then, that you may use what has been put into your hand... »³¹.

It was on the day that Hammarskjöld officially began his second term as Secretary-General, that he penned these lines. And significant lines they are. Van Dusen tells us that «This meditation, one of the half dozen most important for an understanding of Dag Hammarskjöld, is at once a concise summary of the destination to which the pilgrimage of more than a quarter century has brought him and the definitive 'Guide Post' for the all

³¹ *Markings*, 1958. p. 165 (139). Cf. G. Aulén: *Dag Hammarskjöld's White...* p. 118-119, for more detail in the analysis of this statement.

too brief final reach of that pilgrimage »³². Considering the importance of the text, there are things which we should examine more carefully. The first element to be noted is that there is an error in the translation. Rather than « marriage with the soul », it should be « union with the soul »³³. The idea of using the word « union » is certainly more in keeping with Hammarskjöld's personality than is « marriage ». Yet, the ideas expressed by the word union still contain the same ideas as would the image of « marriage ». This is especially true when we consider that the origin of this description of Faith comes from Juan de la Cruz. Faith is seen by Hammarskjöld as a unifying element. Faith produces a oneness, a communion with God based upon a loving fidelity both from the side of God and from the side of man. The accent is placed upon the unity of the two, rather than upon the process of that union (The word « marriage » would have accented the process slightly more than the union itself). However, it does include the process which is a real covenant love. The lines we find here « ...you are one in God and God is wholly in you... » remind us of the texts from the Johannine writer³⁴ whose mystical qualities are beyond doubt: « ...he lives with you and he is in you... » (Jn. 14:17); « I am in my father and you in me and me in you ». (Jn. 14:20); « He who lives in me and I in him, bears much fruit ». (Jn. 15:5). The mutual indwelling, the divine inhabitation is the point of Hammarskjöld's thought here. So, if we consider this particular text as well as the over all trend in *Markings*, we discover that the same realities are being expressed both by Hammarskjöld and by the writer of the johannine scriptures.

This provides us with another element to underline: faith. Within the johannine context, faith is a total commitment of the whole person to Christ. This produces a union whereby God and man become more and more one. The actual commitment of Faith is the union realised and being realised. It is this growing oneness which enables man to « bear much fruit ». That is to say, becoming one with God, « ...each of your acts is an act of creation, conscious, because you are a human being with human responsibilities, but governed, nevertheless, by the power beyond human consciousness which has created man ». In other words, Hammarskjöld is saying that in faith man is in the process of total union with God. This union of faithful love is such that nothing escapes the possibility of divine action in time. This divine action is not outside the sphere of human action. Rather, it is accomplished in and through each of man's own acts. Thus, do those acts become creative and divine in

³² Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld. The Man.* p. 150-151.

³³ Gustaf Aulén, *Dag Hammarskjöld's White...* p. 41-42.

³⁴ Aulén (ibid. p. 123) attempts to play down the similarity found between the johannine writer(s) and Hammarskjöld. However, the few examples which I have mentioned in the text gives us to see that there is a strong resemblance which should not be forgotten. In fact, a study should be done examining more closely the relationship of the New Testament influence on Hammarskjöld's writings.

proportion as they are human, conscious. Man then knows the intimate presence of God in all things. He sees each act as it is: God working in and through man because of the intimate covenant union which has been established in faith, which is the « union of God with the soul ».

This proces of growing in union is exactly the same process of growing in freedom. As man is consciously more God-directed, he is liberated from things which enslaved him previously. Hammarskjöld constantly sought this freedom. He says in 1953, « To be free, to be able to stand up and leave *everything* behind - without looking back. To say *Yes* - »³⁵. In 1957, the year before the major text we are considering was written, he notes: « You will have to give up everything. Why, then, weep at this little death? Take it to you -quickly — with a smile die this death, and become free to go further — one with your task, whole in your duty of the moment »³⁶. This freedom encountered or given as a result of detachment from things gives clarity of vision in two ways. First, from this point on, Hammarskjöld sees the meaning of his existence (and this means of all life in general) in a unique way³⁷. It is in this light that we should read the 11 June 1961 entry « ...and free to deny it, I saw for one moment... »³⁸. This is to say, now freed from the encumbraments of overwhelming desire, things fall into place. A direction is seen and entered upon. The oneness of his existence, despite appearances, is observed. Everything, in this freedom, becomes clearly a straight line leading to total perfecting union with God. Secondly, freedom now acquired gives him to see the creation which surrounds him. There is a new and fuller consciousness. His sensitivity to nature is seen busting forth now in a unique way in the haikus from 1959 on³⁹. In these we discover someone's intense passion for sense reality. Yet, it is not the blinding passion of absolute desire which clouds and suffocates reality in a solipsistic world. Rather, as one reads these lines of the haiku one cannot but be struck by the « purity and clarity of revelation », which the elements described now take on. The words provide a clear insight of a world filled with the delight of human sensuality without destroying the communicative reality which that world was always meant to be.

In other words, this text of Hammarskjöld tells us that life is reaching its fulness in him. All levels, all parts of man are alive. Free from all, he returns to all. And there he discovers the All, the Transcendent, God. Consequently, we may say that there is here and in Hammarskjöld's own life a real mysticism, a union of love with the Transcendent, with God. This union produces — even in its process of growth — a real harmony with everything and everyone that is. The few texts which we have discussed so briefly show us this union, this growing harmony which was to

³⁵ *Markings*. 1953. p. 91 (88).

³⁶ *Markings*. 1957. p. 158 (135).

³⁷ *Markings*. 1961. p. 205 (169).

³⁸ *Markings*. 1961. p. 205 (169).

³⁹ *ibid.* p. 211 (173).

³⁹ *Markings*. 1959. p. 175 seq. (149 seq.).

be found in Hammarskjöld. This final text of 1958 is indeed the signpost of his deep and valid mysticism.

Conclusion

Dag Hammarskjöld's expression of what he had experienced in life may be too difficult for the everyday, casual reader. However, he offers something which is universally valid. Through a variety of rich and superb literary expressions, Hammarskjöld digs deep into the earth to turn over the soil of what is the real root of human existence. Like the medieval mystics before him, he sees that life has its meaning only when one surrenders the self he is totally to the transcendent God who comes continuously in every person and every event one lives day by day. A union is obtained through learning to let go and learning to give. Hammarskjöld's paradox is the paradox of human existence: to receive one must give, to be free, one must be possessed. His mysticism was definitely not that of a false view which would have « souls » flying about in divine rapture. His was a mysticism that was the one real one: grounded in the earth where God comes to man, serving fellow man in self-sacrifice and self-surrender. It is a mysticism where one comes to see the beauty of all that surrounds him and his oneness with that beauty and with the God who is there and yet transcends it all.

Further study should be done on Dag Hammarskjöld. His implicit and explicit relationship with scripture in the Christian tradition and Jewish tradition is one area. The seeming aloofness of his relationship with others should be examined in the light of the warmth and passion of his writings. What is his real relationship with Christianity, as a religion and as a way of life? Each examination of his signposts in *Markings* provides the reader with more material for reflection and study. Hammarskjöld's approach to life and God in life is one which every human being can appreciate.

It is for this reason that his broken body lying around the wreckage of the plane becomes the symbol of all that he had to say about life, death, God and man. He had clutched the patch of grass in his dying hand: the last act of a man who knew how God was to be found.

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