

The Conscious Interlude

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THE CONSCIOUS INTERLUDE



by Ralph M. Lewis

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DEDICATION



To

MY WIFE

*Whose encouragement and moral
support have been a source of
inspiration to me in the preparation
of this work.*

R.M.L.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I must not fail to express my appreciation of the very efficient editing of this manuscript by Miss Frances Vejtasa and also to acknowledge her many helpful suggestions.

RALPH M. LEWIS

March 1957

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PREFACE

THE UNIVERSE IS a vast environment in which life finds its expression. From a biological standpoint, life exists in various forms from birth to transition. We are mostly concerned with our own lives, that is, with human life in general. The greatest attribute of life in manifestation, and of which we are aware, is the attribute of consciousness. *The Conscious Interlude* depicts that period of life in which man is particularly aware of his environment and of himself as a sentient being.

In this book, Ralph M. Lewis directs our attention to an analysis of this period of life—the intervals of consciousness. Consciousness is an accompaniment of the mind, or what we generally know as mind. To explore the human mind is the last great frontier remaining to challenge the inhabitants of our planet—the Earth. Man has by degrees pushed back the boundaries of the unknown insofar as he has dealt with the environment in which he finds himself. There are, of course, great advances yet to be made in the understanding and the manipulation of the physical environment of which man is a part. But the greatest field of exploration left to man is to explore his mind and his consciousness of it, which is an evident manifestation of mind.

Although in comparatively recent years primary emphasis has been placed upon the technological advances of man (which advancement must go on if man is to control environment and ultimately understand himself), all that has been gained from the standpoint of modern civilization and that is to be gained in the future must have its source in the human mind. Man's consciousness constitutes his realization of himself and of his environment. Some of the dreams now possessed by man to conquer his physical environment—not only of this planet but possibly of other places in the universe—must find their impetus

for growth and understanding within the human mind itself. The period when man is a conscious being is the time that life can be made useful.

The findings of man through conscious effort must become a constructive force in the formation of man's relationship to the universe. The human capacity for awareness of the potentialities that lie in consciousness is a gift which man has as to life; there is also a great responsibility in his becoming able to draw upon all the possibilities that may be evolved through an understanding of himself and of his environment.

When we consider the accomplishments of man within even a short period of time, we realize that he has in a material sense achieved a remarkable degree of advancement since the days of his primitive ancestors. At the same time, man is faced with many problems that are similar to those with which his ancestors had to cope. The future of man and that of civilization lies in the ability of the human being to further evolve a realization of himself and his environment so that he will be able to adjust life to the circumstances and conditions in which life expresses itself.

Whether or not man will eventually master the physical universe and at the same time master himself is a question that lies beyond our ability to answer at the present time. Nevertheless, it would seem logical to accept as a premise that a part of man's purpose is to work toward mastership, because in the control of himself and environment, he is adding meaning and purpose to this condition which we know as life. The development of man's self and his consciousness, including an understanding of his relationship to environment, should be the basic step in this process. The fact that we have advanced so far only in physical fields seems to make it obvious that much of our mental progress has been retarded.

To study *The Conscious Interlude*, in its logical analysis of man's productive expression of life, is to better fit ourselves to cope with the problems of living and with our environment. In this book many of the attributes and functions of man's consciousness are examined. To study and analyze and to become familiar with the scope

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of consciousness constitutes a preparation for the individual in his learning to live in a state of harmony with his surroundings. This accomplishment will lead to a more harmonious relationship, as man fits himself into his understanding of the purposes of this life that he lives on Earth. To partake of such a study and such an analysis is one of the most constructive steps that man can take at this particular stage of human evolvment.

Through *The Conscious Interlude*, the reader examines the period wherein man lives as a conscious being; he is thus preparing himself and helping to prepare the world for the growth and development which is potentially in man to create. It is most appropriate that thinking men and thinking women share in this constructive analysis of consciousness and its attributes, as the author presents it in this book.

— CECIL A. POOLE

Rosicrucian Park
May 10, 1957

INTRODUCTION

THE ADVENT OF rationalism at the end of the Middle Ages led to the beginning of modern science. Abstraction, opinion, and belief were set apart from knowledge of the phenomenal world—that is, from knowledge derived through the senses.

The Franciscan monk, Roger Bacon, implored men to forget traditional knowledge that would not stand the test of empiricism. Examine the thing in itself, was the admonishment. Extract from it its perceivable qualities and those alone must stand for knowledge. Some four hundred years later, Sir Francis Bacon, English philosopher, Rosicrucian, and scientist, exhorted men to resort to the inductive approach to knowledge. He advocated our starting with the discernible, the particular, and advancing from one such fact to another, then finally deducing from these facts the general principles. Two centuries later, Auguste Comte, French philosopher, expounded his *positivism*. He urged abandoning speculation about ultimate causes and the essence of things which man may never know; he advocated instead that men inquire into perceivable phenomena, analyze their nature and accept what is revealed to the senses as reality, as the only true knowledge.

In these doctrines was the fertile seed of *materialism*. To man, reality was to be limited to what he could perceive with his receptor senses. That man's senses were often deceived and limited in their powers was, however, readily admitted. Science at first was inclined to the view that the interpretations of the sense impressions were pictures of absolute reality that were external to the mind. Subsequently, it was conceded that the qualities associated with perceivable objects were not necessarily inherent in them. Color, for analogy, does not exist as such in the colored object. Nevertheless, the criterion of knowledge continued to be the factual experience of a phenomenon. Under

controlled conditions, if men perceived alike certain phenomenon, without any variance, that was accepted as its *real* or true nature. That constituted positive knowledge or reality.

The masses of men did not hold to this opinion. They were not ready to reject traditional beliefs hoary with age and many truths which they held to be self-evident. Many of these earlier beliefs of the common man were at first beyond either confirmation or refutation by science. The reason for this was that the techniques of science were relatively slow in being developed. However, when advance in the methods was attained, science and materialism imposed their test of knowledge upon the masses of men. In substance this test was: accept as truth what you can perceive, that upon which your senses confer a reality. To deny the truth of such knowledge was to discredit the senses. If certain experiences were accepted as demonstrable realities, then *all else* experienced under like circumstances was to be held as truth. If, for example, one were to deny what science brought to his visual attention as having reality, then he would also have to reject his common visual experiences as having reality.

It became apparent to men that they could not discard their perceptual experiences without detracting from the reality of their own being. As a result, to the majority of men, truth became factual, empirical knowledge. Philosophic abstraction lost its esteem in relation to the criteria established by the growing materialism.

One strong appeal of materialism was the apparent practical advantage of its realities. What one could objectively perceive, that is, see or feel with certainty as to its reality, was an experience that usually could be confirmed by other persons. There was a social acceptance of such experiences. This concurrence of the mass mind, of other persons' experiencing what we do, seemed to lend truth to individual perceptions. It provided unity, made co-operation possible. Men could apparently think and act in unison if there existed a bond of common experience between them. Conception, abstraction, even logic, suffered a decline of prestige when they could not be substantiated in fact, that is, by the reality of objectivity.

The enthusiasm for this materialism was due principally to its extension of the individual's sense of his own reality. Demonstrable things, those having a quality which can be objectively perceived, add to men's realization of their own entity. They become a property that adds to our personal material nature and to the pleasures of our senses. For example, these things provide for man's greater longevity, they ease his labors and extend his physical powers by giving him more direction over other "things" or realities independent of his own being.

Materialism, with the passing of time, became more justified in the position it had taken because of its successful refutation of superstition and the removing of mass fears. Several conclusions of such an ancient eminent thinker as Aristotle, whose views were authoritative for centuries, were disproved. Other concepts tumbled before the onslaught of scientific analysis and empiricism. The earth is not flat as it was long thought to be; the earth is not the center of the universe; the sun does not move across the sky from east to west; the insane are not possessed of demons; creation did not begin in 4000 B.C. Individual opinion was often discredited and toppled from its traditional eminence. Fantasy, speculation, and conception are today considered—not alone in scientific circles but by the general public—to be of little value to mankind unless they can be converted to fact.

Freedom of opinion and belief long cherished as a human right is being supplanted by the new materialistic doctrine of *freedom of search*. The exercise of individual abstraction and freedom of conscience, under the impact of demonstrability, is giving way to empiricism—to proof by the senses and by the instruments that augment them. A thought is held to have little value if it is not accompanied by a method or technique by which it can be objectified. Most certainly, it is not held to be truth or to have reality. Men are only free to search. But this search is confined to the world of particulars, that is, to whatever is perceivable. Men are free to look, free to taste and smell, but not to conceive anything outside such bounds, even though their thoughts may strive to be given validity and to receive the dignity of acceptance by the intellectual and academic world.

Imagination, once boundless, now is obliged to conform to the requirements of objective experience! It is tied fast to the manifestation of fact, tied to proved reality. At best, imagination is permitted the opportunity to reshuffle the elements of experience; otherwise, its fruits are decried scornfully as *non-reality*. The abstractionist or rationalist is made to feel puny in the individualism of his personal concepts. The preponderance of facts in the growing categories of science makes an original idea, if not clothed in such facts, seem isolated and insignificant.

Today idealism stands at the crossroads of its survival. It is continually being put to the test of support by factual particulars. If idealism cannot be analyzed, so as to have substance in demonstrable experience or so as to be reduced to the reality of objective practice, it has little or no public endorsement. The individual, when expressing an unsubstantiated idealism, is caused to feel that he is being excluded by his ideas from the circle of utilitarianism.

The incentive to express in living something other than what is provided by sheer biological compulsion, is the personal envisioning of the course of life. This goal has prompted man to plan for certain ends, or rather to put values upon the period of human existence. As the ancient Sophists declared, man became the measure of all things. He provided the reason for his personal life. He conceived an ordained divine or Cosmic mission for his *conscious interlude*. He could not prove by demonstrable realities most of the reasons he gave himself for desiring to live. His relations to gods or a god, or to metaphysical or universal causes, were wholly abstract, yet satisfying. With the growth of materialism, he has become obliged to prove his right to freedom of conscience, to retain his beliefs as truth or else see them regarded as groundless and often condemned as worthless fantasies.

The idealist is acquiring a growing sense of inferiority. He feels the increasing dependence of his whole being upon the realities of existence, that is, upon the dynamic thrust of the proclaimed physical laws of the sciences. The average man of our time hesitates to believe, to dream, to aspire, unless such has the support of material reality. Nevertheless, the laws of the phenomenal world revealed by the specialized sciences are mostly of a nature impossible of having an

intimacy to him. They have less reality than his own concepts because the technical intricacies of the revelations of science are mainly difficult for man to comprehend.

The thinking man, the contemplative individual, cannot fail to be aware of the voids lying between what is known as demonstrable reality on the one hand, and the unknown on the other. His conceptions about that which is yet not factual are often brought into conflict with the almost revered prevailing doctrine of realism. Nevertheless, he derives a satisfaction from his abstractions, his idealistic conceptions, which fill a gap in the pattern of existence to him. Must man discard what he cannot support in fact, merely because he does not know even how to begin to objectify it?

Suppose that man conceives of a teleological cause wherein everything is of the divine mind, or universal consciousness, lying behind the phenomenal world. Perhaps this notion of mind-direction, of a determinism, is more gratifying to him than the mechanistic concepts of modern science explaining the universe, all of which has only in part been substantiated. Is such an individual to cast aside his metaphysical beliefs, unfounded in objective reality as they may be?

The human mind strives for the unification of all its experiences. The unexplained, the mysterious, aggravates the thinker; it disturbs his peace of mind and may inculcate fear. Men strive to overcome this. Where objective knowledge is not forthcoming to remove doubts and tie the phenomenal world together in a pleasing pattern, man *imagines* things and conditions to substitute for the deficient knowledge. This abstraction and fancy without foundation of fact is the target of the new materialism. Such thought is regarded as futile and held to be an obstruction to the advancement of knowledge.

There would be justification for this criticism of the “unreal,” if, in the span of a human lifetime, it were possible, for man to *know all* in objective experience about that into which he might inquire. Patience then would be a virtue until science and the analysis of phenomena would have discovered the answers to the questions that arise in the mind of the contemplative man. However, absolute reality in all

its infinite manifestations can never be known by the finite human intelligence. For analogy, we can go on discovering celestial bodies, remote planets, *ad infinitum*, and yet never know or perceive them all.

So why not, then, allow the individual, without fall from social or intellectual grace, to conceive the universe as he wants it? The conception need not necessarily be constructed of figments of the imagination alone, but also of those facts at his disposal. These facts, the known particulars, would be the mundane realities. No matter how far the concepts would extend beyond the facts, the *form* they assumed under the influence of abstraction would constitute true *intellectual freedom*.

A free association of ideas in idealism which has conviction to the reason—that is, appears self-evident to the individual—should have a place in the thought-life of everyone. Such should not, however, obstruct the acceptance of empirical knowledge, of demonstrable realities or facts. It is realized that abstractions and concepts must give way, under specific conditions, to the knowledge of experience. The point is that our sense impressions and our interpretations of them are not absolute. Time has often caused us to change our views. The reason for this is that we are also physical beings, a part of the reality which we objectively experience, as has been noted.

To disregard our perceptions would then be to remove ourselves from material existence and cease to live. Further, as previously stated, objective experience has a greater *universality* than do abstractions. A group of us may have different opinions as to the origin of the sun, yet we all *see* it sufficiently alike to have a common visual experience.

Our rational conceptions, which are gratifying, should be expressed. We should not harbor them but allow them to be freely challenged. Only if objective knowledge, the so-called truth or fact, can refute such conceptions, should we bow to such knowledge and dispense with our concepts. Unless we do so, we will run counter to the phenomenal world, the one to which our senses were designed to adjust. On the other hand, if our notions cannot be refuted by fact, then we should try to objectify them. We should seek to draw from the world of reality

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those experiences that will give these personal notions the substance of objective truth—not only to our minds but to the minds of others, so that they may perceive and realize such truth as well.

The greatest function of man is reason. Aristotle said, “If then the reason is Divine in comparison with the rest of man’s nature, the life which accords with reason will be Divine in comparison with human life in general.” If the reason of man approaches the nearest to the Divine, it should not be wholly dependent upon the senses in its realization of reality. It should transcend the senses, conceive that which the senses have not perceived. The reason should transcend every interest of the body and its desires; it should seek to know the universe through contemplation and abstraction, *as it is to the mind*, not just as man might perceive it through the senses alone.

Mind itself is cause, and it should be concerned with the nature of what we think to be Infinite causes. The true and noble life of man during the precious *conscious interlude* is the life of philosophic speculation. It is the periodic isolation of his consciousness from the world of things, the turning of it inward to a contemplation of the Cosmos.

Aristotle further said, “The more I find myself by myself alone, the more I become a lover of myth.” (*myth* in this sense meant *contemplation*, meditation.) It is, then, the object of the following pages to assist the reader through contemplation to attain a more intimate and satisfying comprehension of the realities of this conscious interlude called *life*.

A concept which cannot be proved false by objective experience retains its reality to our mind. To the individual it is then as real as anything he may ever have objectively experienced.

—RALPH M. LEWIS

San Jose, California
January 2, 1957

Chapter I

INQUIRY INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

WHAT DO WE mean by consciousness? What are the personal characteristics or attributes which we associate with our own consciousness? Perhaps a negative approach to this question will help us to answer it better. What do we recognize as being a state or condition opposite to consciousness? In general, we conclude that it is that which appears to have no realization of its own entity, or of any other reality. Consequently, we believe that consciousness confers upon us a realization or awareness.

As we think about it further, this realization, awareness or consciousness is of various kinds. Let us suppose that you were to back up against a lighted match so that the flame touched the nape of your neck. You would recoil with the sensation of pain. Then, let us imagine that there is suddenly emitted a piercing shrill whistle. You might be so startled that you would clamp your hands to your ears to shut out the irritating sound. Both of these analogies indicate, on your part, an *awareness* of irritation.

This kind of awareness, that is, a realization of that which irritates, is not limited to complex organisms, just to highly developed living things like man. Other living things, even simple homogenetic organisms, such as appear to be of one substance like the amoeba, likewise display awareness. Were we to probe an amoeba, it would recoil, just as we would recoil from the lighted match. We agree then

that this awareness is an elementary form of consciousness which all living things possess. It is a responsivity of animate matter to the influences of its environment.

Sometimes it is quite difficult to differentiate between this awareness and a similar phenomenon which is exhibited by nonliving matter. For example, two like poles of a magnet, as we know, repel each other. The emulsion of a photographic film consists of a gelatin of fine grains of silver compounds. Light acts upon these grains. At least the grains seem to *respond* to light. Then we have still another example: If we have two tuning forks of the same pitch, that is, of the same vibratory rate, and we strike one, causing it to vibrate, its vibrations will set the surrounding air into motion and the pulsations of this air will cause the second tuning-fork to vibrate in resonance with the first one. In other words, the second fork sympathetically *responds* to factors which have been brought into contact with it.

There is one way to distinguish the responsivity of inanimate things from that of organisms or living things. Living things appear to resent any retrogression in their nature, that is, they seem to oppose any basic change in whatever their structure or constitution may be. At times a living thing may actually assimilate that which is acting upon it. It will seem to co-operate as though to respond willingly to the conditions of its environment. At other times, however, the organism will try to withdraw or retreat from the acting agents. It will at all times, we repeat, try to avoid influences which will alter its basic nature.

Our awareness, as humans, is far more than this simple responsivity. It is true that we, like the simple organisms, also recoil from irritation. Also at times we voluntarily submit to the influences of our environment; in other words, we intentionally participate in them. However, in addition, we *perceive*. Perception is that aspect of awareness which localizes the causes of those agents or impulses acting upon us. We respond to the influence but, in addition, we have a realization of the agents which are related to or cause our response.

If a light were suddenly flashed in your presence, you would perhaps be startled, jump to your feet, and maybe cry out. All such actions would be a response to the irritation, to the impulse acting upon you

but, in addition, there would be the realization that these things which so act upon you are apart from you. You would realize the cause perhaps as light, or at least as a kind of reality. This kind of awareness or *perception* is not limited to man. It is also had by the higher animals as the dog or horse. Thus, consciousness, as awareness, is of at least two kinds, namely, *responsivity* and *perception*.

What are the common results of consciousness which we ordinarily experience? Whether your consciousness at this moment is responsivity—that is, a reaction to your environment—or whether it is perception, a realization of certain factors acting upon you and apart from you, there will follow nevertheless from the state of consciousness one of two general effects. Consciousness is either agreeable or it is disagreeable. Pain and pleasure are the two extremes of the effects of consciousness. In other words, there are two fundamental qualities of all kinds of consciousness, pain and pleasure, with a graduated scale of difference between them.

It may seem at times that, though we are conscious and perceiving, we are experiencing neither pain nor pleasure, as, for example, while reading this. However, there is no intermediate state between these two qualities. If you experience no discomfort, that is then an agreeable state. What is agreeable is pleasing. If we are simply freed from aggravation, that in itself is a mild pleasure. Most certainly to be unperturbed and to have a sense of peace is gratifying. Whatever is gratifying is pleasing. Think for a moment. Can you not group all the past experiences you can recall into one or the other of these two classifications?

There is another common result of consciousness. It is related to that aspect of consciousness which we have described as perception. We have said that perception is the faculty of localizing the causes of our experiences, that is, placing them in time and in space. By perception we give the causes of stimuli acting upon us a certain proximity to ourselves—that is, here, there, far or near, etc. We also relate them to the now, to the immediate of our consciousness. Therefore, this other result of consciousness, which is related to perception, is *existence*. Whenever an organism is capable of perception, it displays

a realization of externality. With animals lower in the scale than man, this realization is not an understanding of the particulars which it perceives, but at least the animal gives evidence of an awareness of the separateness of its own being.

A snake strikes at a stick which is probing it. This is a conscious act. It is a combination of responsivity and of perception. The snake is irritated by the sensations caused by the probing stick, but the snake also sees the stick and strikes in the direction in which it appears to be. No matter how elementary we may consider this reaction, the snake does have a realization of *existence*, that is, of objects or realities apart from itself. Perception, then, causes us to have an awareness of existence in all of the various forms which it assumes to us.

It must be apparent that perception is the basis for *knowing*. Without going into an epistemological explanation, which shall be considered in a later chapter, we can generalize for now by saying that to know is to group all the experiences of consciousness into ideas, meaningful things. Whenever perception has developed from merely focalizing sensations, placing them in space and time, to a knowledge of their causes or their nature, we then have *conception*. Seeing a flash of light and realizing it as a separate existence is one thing. Thinking of it as light, or having any ideas whatsoever about its cause and nature, that is conception.

We have said that conception is knowing. Perhaps it would be better expressed, if we referred to it as judgment. After all, if we conceive, that is, know something, have we not formed a judgment about it? If we know something, we have conferred a value upon it, in relation to other things or to ourselves.

We cannot say, with certainty, that conception is the direct result of consciousness, that is, that conception arises directly out of it. There is considerable psychological evidence that conception is a part of the functioning of the organ *brain*. Brain has such mental processes as conception and reasoning in all its forms. However, these processes associated with the brain are nevertheless *dependent* upon consciousness.

There may be a blue electric light in a room, but the brilliant blue that the lighted lamp gives off is not a direct result of the electrical

current in the bulb. There are other factors such as the colored glass of the bulb which filters out the wave lengths of light emitted by the heated filament in the incandescent bulb, but does not filter the wave length of the color *blue*. However, without the electrical current heating that filament, the brilliant blue which we observe, when the light is switched on, would not exist. So likewise consciousness is essential to the various aspects of reasoning and conception.

How does consciousness originate? What is the nature of consciousness? We have previously designated certain acts as arising from consciousness and certain effects of it. It is, however, quite another problem to define the nature of consciousness. We can, for analogy, differentiate light from darkness and we can demonstrate, in the physics laboratory, such phenomena as refraction, reflection, and diffusion, but not any of these explain what constitutes light. It is merely a demonstration of the effects of it.

Is consciousness, therefore, derived from something else? Is consciousness a substance in some way implanted within the organic being or is it innate? Is it a definite part of man's being as some organ, just as protoplasm is a part of a living substance? Let us look at it this way: Could consciousness perhaps be an ethereal substance, a strange kind of energy with which man is imbued?

The *substance* idea of consciousness has had a strong appeal to man, because it is difficult for the mind to think of anything as intangible. The mind is accustomed to associating everything with a sense quality, with taste, with fragrance, with dimensions, and the like. Consequently, if something can cause us to have sensations by acting upon our organism, we are inclined to attribute substance to it. In other words, that which affects us we think of as being of some kind of stuff or as a thing. It is natural, therefore, for that which causes our experiences, or consciousness, to be considered as a kind of substance.

For many persons, consciousness is a stage somewhere within the mind, and our ideas and thoughts are the actors who assume roles upon this stage. McDougall, eminent classical psychologist, said that consciousness is thought by many to be a lighted stage, which causes all the ideas and thoughts to stand out clearly upon it.

The unconscious is like a stage but it is thought to be a dark one existing in some actual recess in the mind. In this dark area, in this recess, are deposited the ideas and thoughts waiting to be called forth to take their places and assume their roles on the brilliantly lighted stage of consciousness. Even as recently as Freud, there has prevailed the conception that consciousness and mind are some sort of ethereal stuff. It has been held that consciousness is more like a super-substance which impregnates man's being. All our ideas or thoughts are either composed of consciousness or it reflects them like tennis balls rebounding from a net.

The *substance* idea of mind and consciousness, though long a favorite in many circles, is by no means a new one. It was entertained by the Greek philosopher, Leucippus, as early as the fifth century B.C. Leucippus contended that all matter can be reduced to atoms—that is, all the numerous forms which we perceive—and that these atoms are in motion. According to him, the soul also is composed of atoms—fire atoms he called them—and they are the finest and most active of all. Leucippus further related that, when these fine or soul atoms are combined in any quantity, as within man's being, then they are endowed with sensation or consciousness. At death these atoms dissolve, they fall apart. Then sensation leave sand, with its leaving, there is a cessation of consciousness.

Since there are also the unconscious processes of which we will have more to say later, the same school of thought that looks upon the consciousness as substance, also holds to the belief that the unconscious is some sort of mysterious stuff or thing. To use a simile, we perceive darkness as being quite distinct from light. Yet modern intelligent persons would not consider darkness as being a separate reality, having existence in itself. Rather they consider darkness as a negative aspect of light, a variation or degree of light, an apparent absence of it. So, too, the unconscious is not a separate reality but it is merely a variation of consciousness. One thinker said that the word *unconscious* is a misnomer. He held that it would be far better to substitute the word *experience*. Then, we would certainly not think of experience as being a substance or as being an innate thing.

The opposite theory from the substance one, which we expound, is that consciousness is generated or aroused within us. This concept is more consistent with actual experience. The familiar term “the stream of consciousness” refers to the flow of consciousness throughout the whole organic being. Now, let us substitute for that term the stream of organic *life force*, the stream of vitality throughout every living thing. We have presented the two basic general results that follow from consciousness—the agreeable and the disagreeable. Whatever positively fulfills or frustrates to any degree the vital life of an organism seems to arouse consciousness. In other words, that which plays upon the life force of an organism, either fulfilling its function or inhibiting it in anyway, results in that state or condition which we realize as awareness.

There is an outer manifestation of consciousness as well. It is the value of things which it imparts to the organism. It is our evaluation of whatever is affecting the vital life force in every cell of our being. Perhaps we can better understand this point by a brief discussion of sensation.

Sensation is the impact of impulses or vibrations of energy, if you will, acting upon the life force of an organism, either within the organism itself or as impulses from the environment in which the living organism exists. In other words, when an impulse comes in contact with the vital life force of the organism, from the unity of these two, there is a third point, a point of manifestation, and that is *sensation*. We must conclude, therefore, that *sensation is a unit of consciousness*.

It has been wisely said that sensation is the meeting point of self with things. Sensation occurs when the organism is brought into contact with an existence other than itself. If we consider the whole of an organism, that is, the whole physical unit as self, then, when the physical world acts upon this self, we have sensation. The various kinds of consciousness to which we ordinarily refer are merely variations of sensation, depending upon how the sensations are aroused within the organic being. Let us understand that consciousness is not the impulse which acts upon the organism but rather that consciousness is aroused as the result of the impulse. To use a simile, the drumbeat which we hear is neither the drum nor the drumstick; it is a combination of

them disturbing the air and eventually producing the sensation which we have of the sound. In other words, the beat has no independent existence. It is aroused within us as a result of the impulses acting upon the auditory sense.

Early experimentation with the nature of consciousness made it appear that the locus of the consciousness is in the cortex or outer region of the brain. Later experiments, however, proved that this brain cortex can be removed without a complete loss of consciousness. In such instances, responsivity or elementary awareness of irritation has remained. The organism responds to the stimulus of alcoholic fumes brought into contact with it. This disproves the focalizing of consciousness in the cortex.

There are, of course, thresholds or, shall we say, levels of consciousness. This means that impulses of one kind will produce a certain consciousness in an organism and will not produce another. Certain vibrations acting upon an organism will produce a sensation of feeling. If they are increased, then we hear them. Yet these vibrations are not separate states of consciousness. To use a homely analogy, we may have two doors in a room both of which are ajar. The hinges of one door are very tight. The door is opened and closed with difficulty. The hinges of the other door are very loose. The door can be easily moved. If there is a sudden draft into the room, that draft will slam or close the door with the loose hinges. The one with the stiff hinges will not budge.

We could then say that each door has a threshold which responds differently. If we increase the draft to a sufficient strength, then the door with the higher threshold, namely, with the stiff hinges, will also close. Because each door would function only according to the force brought to bear would not mean that inherently the air was different for each door—and so it is with consciousness. Certain parts of the nervous system, certain senses of an organism, will respond to some stimuli and not to others. Their point of response constitutes their level or threshold.

The variations, the different aspects of consciousness, are no indication that consciousness is not a single phenomenon. It is these

thresholds, these various reactions and sensations of the organism, which account for the seemingly various kinds of consciousness. One researcher has pointed out that, in the field of the unconscious, there are sixteen versions of the unconscious. In other words, there are sixteen ways in which the state of the unconscious may be defined. So, too, the *single* consciousness of man has a multiplicity of designations. We know that each musical note has a different mathematical value or frequency. Yet we do not consider each as being a different phenomenon but rather that all are of the single phenomenon of sound.

There is also a prevailing theory that consciousness arises as the result of a resistance. This is held to be the resistance to a passage of impulses at the synapse. A synapse is a locus or a little body between neurons—that is, nerve cells—and nerve fibers. It does not actually connect these, but it permits the passage of nerve impulses from one to the other.

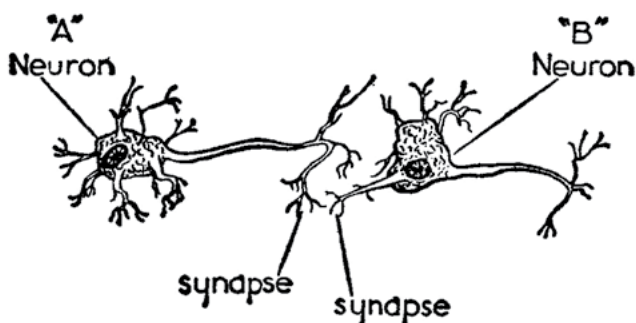


Fig. 1

At the synapse, a message (nerve impulse) can travel only in one direction. For example, in Illustration, Fig. I, the message will travel only from neuron "A" (nerve cell) to neuron "B." A message within a single neuron, however, can travel in any direction, but once it has passed through a synapse it cannot return.

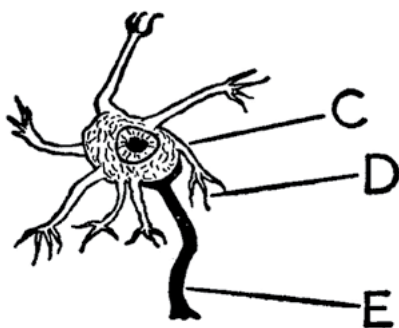


Fig. 2

In Illustration, Fig. 2, “C” represents a neuron. “D” depicts the *dendrites* or receiving organs of an impulse from some other neuron or source. “E” represents the *axon* of a neuron or those fibers that transmit only impulses. The synapse, therefore, acts as a valve permitting passage of the impulse in one direction from the axon to the dendrites.

This is accomplished in somewhat the same manner as a condenser in an electrical circuit. The energy is seemingly stored up and then discharged. When the resistance to a current is great enough in a line, heat is then generated. When a synapse resists the nerve impulses caused by stimuli, that resistance becomes a sensation. This sensation, as we explained, is an *awareness*. We then have a consciousness of the condition. If the impulses are repeated sufficiently, the neuron path or nerve passage is figuratively worn smooth. No resistance is offered. There is no sensation. Consequently, there is no consciousness of impact—habits are an example of this. This theory supports our postulation that consciousness is engendered by stimuli, acting upon the life force of the organism, and that it is not innate.

The most prominent aspect of consciousness, so far as man is concerned, is that referred to as self-consciousness. It is the measuring rod of his personal existence. But what is this self? That must be our next inquiry.



Chapter II

ADVENTURE INTO SELF

MOST OF US are intrigued by tales of adventure. There is a thrilling romance about journeys to remote places—across seas, over mountains, and across desert wastes. In addition, by means of giant telescopes the present-day astronomers are probing worlds which lie thousands of light-years away in the vast reaches of stellar space. Also, through electronic devices, modern physicists are exploring whole galaxies of energy, infinitesimally small universes which may be placed upon the head of a pin. And yet, for all this adventuring, there is still a realm into which most men have never entered. It is a strange region to them. Even their imaginations have never ventured to its frontiers or dared to cross its boundaries. It is the world of self. Unfortunately, to the majority of people the nature of self constitutes an iron curtain behind which they will not penetrate.

The influence of this world of self is nevertheless felt, by most persons, as vague and subtle impressions. This self is the sun, the very center of man's personal solar system, around which revolves his whole existence. The understanding of self causes all the other worlds of human experience to assume an orderly relationship. Very early in life the normal human being comes to realize what to him are two primary states of existence. These are the *I am* and the *I am not*. Upon first consideration it may seem that I am quite certain as to what I am. But upon further thought, I am obliged to ask myself, but what am I?

As we inquire into the nature of self, we find that it is not a substance as we think of the substance of other things. It does not appear to

have any special qualities, nor does it have any quantity. In fact, we cannot isolate self in consciousness as we would other things, in order to define it as we would other experiences. Furthermore, we have no special organs by which to perceive self, as we have organs by which we see, hear, taste, and smell.

Ordinarily we are accustomed to think of the configuration of our bodies, our limbs and organs, as giving rise to the principal idea of self; we think that this particular mass of our being is self. However, about us are many other bodies not greatly unlike our own. At least they have many of the same components, the same physical properties, as we have. Therefore, the physical characteristics of our body are not distinct enough apparently to give rise to the idea of self. The conception then must arise from certain other factors.

Up to this point we have been considering self in a general sort of way. However, there are today three very specific and prominent popular theories on the nature of self to which we should first give thought. These theories are substantialism, integrationism, and transcendentalism.

Substantialism, as the name itself implies, calls self a substance, just as the body is matter or material substance. This theory contends that there is a soul body, and that self is of it. Obviously, substantialism is a dualism, recognizing a psychic or soul body to which self is related, and that there is also a material body.

Integrationism seeks to identify self with a system. It endeavors to integrate the states of mind, the emotions, and the experiences—to state that this combination of things, the systems of thinking, of emotionalism, and experiences as a whole, is what we term *self*.

Transcendentalism is more complex. It tries to have self rise above the theory of its being a substance or an object. It defines self as *the subject* of the experiences which we have; namely, it presupposes that self is that which recognizes or perceives, and that which apprehends or comprehends as well. The contention is that consciousness presupposes such a thing as self because it conceives a world, and reacts to what it conceives.

Transcendentalism opposes the other two systems in their advocating of *self* as substance. It holds that substantialism actually admits the theory of self as a subject. Transcendentalism further points out that since integrationism declares that the emotions and states (as a system) are self—and a system would be an object—that therefore an object would also be substance. This resolves down to a polemic discussion about the substance and the object of self—or, in other words, which is it?

It must be admitted that self is ever implied in our thoughts and in our actions. We do many things daily only because we conceive that we have self, and we act in response to what appear to be the dictates or impulses or motives of that self. At least, self does have sufficient reality, no matter what we call it, to be argued about. If it did not have such reality as to cause us to contemplate and discuss it, we would not be concerned about it.

This reminds us of the principle, now a classic of philosophy, expounded by the French philosopher, René Descartes, *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am). He meant by this that we can argue the whole world away, we can say that nothing exists in the heavens or in the bowels of the earth, that there are not any heavens or earth. Yes, we could even say that there is no God, and that we do not exist. But for all of that, that which is able to argue all things away must at least itself exist.

If self is a substance, it is a distinctive kind of substance, like pain and pleasure. A toothache is not an object like the tooth, but no one will rationally deny the reality of the pain, and that it has some kind of substance. Though self cannot be an object that can be weighed or measured, it is a substance which is perceived. The question is: what kind of substance? Is it altogether psychical, or has it some material, physical aspects?

There is also a school of thought concerned with the nature of self, which has persisted for some time, though it has become prominent only periodically. It is known as *panpsychism*. It affirms that all nature has a psychical reality—that is, that everything that exists (all being, all particulars) is of a psychical nature. Thus, *matter* is no less nor more

psychical than brain, and consciousness does not have any more psychic essence than does matter. All of these things are expressions of nature, and nature is psychical. The *personal consciousness* of man, or what we designate as self, is the highest expression in nature, but even though it be the highest, it is no more psychical in quality than is man's body. In other words, everything which manifests is a process of nature, a gradation of phenomena. According to this view, in essence all realities are *psychically* the same. In the importance of their manifestation, in the complexity, some, such as the personal consciousness, exceed others.

Self, the *I Am*, is one of the impressions of consciousness, one of those things which are identified with consciousness. How is it that we can distinguish the *I Am* or self from the multitude of other impressions of which we become conscious? There is one large class of impressions which we always associate with our receptor senses, our objective faculties, and these are those things which we seem to hear, feel, see, taste, smell, and the like. However, when we shut off these senses by blindfolding ourselves or by placing our hands over our ears, we close out those impressions which are related to our sense organs. When those impressions are excluded, we find that consciousness still remains with us. Consciousness, then, consists of other kinds of impressions. One of these we know is memory.

Further, we know that memory images are not immediately related to our sense faculties. What we recollect is not that which is just immediately seen or heard. Another phase of consciousness, which we realize when we suppress our objective senses, is what we might term *organic* sensations. These are the sensations of pressure, constriction, and pain which appear to arise within our being, all of which are unrelated to the usual receptor senses. Added to these are those states of consciousness which we call the emotions. Suppose, as is usual, we call *external* the impressions that appear wholly related to our receptor senses, or that belong to a world outside of us. As a result, then this would seem to make the sensations of thought, of memory, the organic impulses and the emotions, to constitute the *I Am*. But is self merely those things?

Animals which are lower in the scale than man do not express the same consciousness of self as he does. However, they have organic sensations; they, too, manifest memory and emotions. What is it, then, that in particular causes man to distinguish one class of impressions as the self?

As human beings, we have the faculty of directing our consciousness. We may make it responsive to certain sets or kinds of impulses. For example, we can focus consciousness specifically on the impressions of our sense organs, something we wish only to see or hear. Likewise, we can terminate that consciousness so as to exclude such impressions. Then, again, we may focus consciousness alone on our conceptions, that is, the ideas of reason or the impulses of our emotions. At all times there is, on our part, a consistent realization of our volition, that is, we realize that we can *will* the vacillation or changing of our consciousness as we want it.

The will is ever striving to be; that is, the will continually desires certain states of consciousness which are felt to be most harmonious to our being. The will is continually seeking to have the organism become conscious of those things agreeable to it. Sometimes the will may identify the consciousness just with the world of senses, merely with that which we call the external. At other times, will may direct that we become conscious alone of the ideas of reason or of the internal sensations of our being. When we say "I," therefore, we mean that *preferred* state of our being which constitutes will, because will at all times is the desire for a preferred state of being. All the impressions of consciousness which we have are a kind of reality because of the fact that we realize them, but will is the most exalted reality of all.

My volition, which I realize, is outstanding overall the other things which I realize. "I am that I am" means that I am that state of being that I *will* to be, that I prefer to be. I am that which I want to be conscious of. Since, wherever there is self-consciousness, will is also present, this realization of our volition, this will, is the self. The self, as an experience, stands as against or above all other experiences which we have in its impressiveness.

We experience certain dominant inclinations, certain impulses and urges, and every time we impose our will, exercise our volition to further those inclinations, we develop self. Conscious action expands self. The more we act in accordance with our thoughts and our decisions, our organized thoughts and our definite decisions, the more we develop self. It is not sufficient that we merely register impressions, become a storehouse of impulses, in order that self may develop. Something more is needed—choice and will.

A photographic plate has the capacity to register light impressions, innumerable ones, but it cannot select them; it cannot prefer anything. *Man can* select, and in his exercise of that power, he is manifesting self. The Rosicrucians declare that our consciousness of self, or our personality, depends upon the distinctions which consciousness makes. The more definite these certain distinctions, the more exact is our consciousness of self. The self, in its impressiveness as an experience, stands as against or above all other experiences which one has.

Though self may appear to be independent and quite distinct, yet from this we see that it directly has its roots in experience, for without experience the self would have no distinction. By this method of reasoning, we have reduced all reality, that which we call the *I am* and the *I am not*, to two general classes, impulses and sensations. We may say that *impulses* and *sensations* are, in fact, the two primary qualities of a single state of the world of being. All of being has these two attributes.

The illustration below may assist in an understanding of how the idea of self is the result of an organism perceiving its own responses and developing notions or conceptions about them.

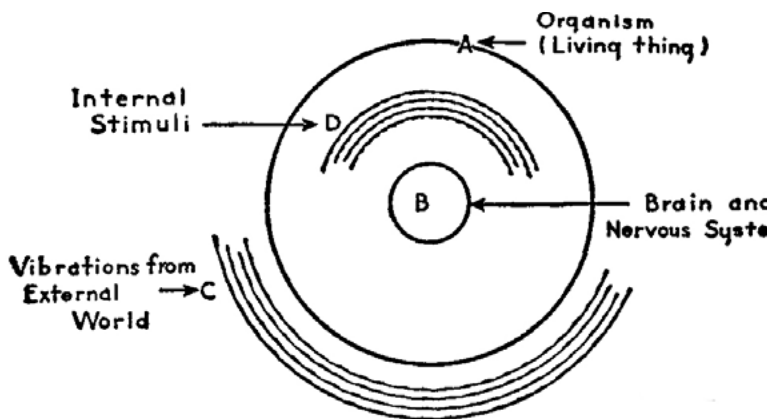


Fig. 3

A, the large circle, represents an organism, a living thing as a whole. B represents the central point of that organism, such as a brain and nervous system. Here the organism particularly interprets impulses or stimuli acting upon itself. C represents the impulses of energy, vibrations of all kinds coming from the physical world in which the organism exists. Each living thing is in a sea of such vibratory energy.

These impulses, or various ones of them, are continually acting upon the organism, and the central point interprets them either as irritations or as favorable actions. This constitutes a response and perception of the exterior world of the organism. In addition, however, within the organism are certain other impulses or vibrations which we have indicated here by the letter D. The organism responds to these as well. They act upon its central point, as you will see from the illustrations; they are the internal stimuli.

And so an organism, such as man, is able to define and differentiate between its internal and external stimuli. From this distinction between that which is without and that which is within arises the idea of the world within and without. However, the *will* to choose certain preferred experiences, to select as much as possible the stimuli desired, constitutes that reality which we call *self*.

A function of self is the acquiring of knowledge. It is, therefore, into the nature of knowledge which we shall now inquire.

Chapter III

INQUIRY INTO KNOWLEDGE

WHEN WE SAY “I know,” what do we mean by that rather common expression? Most of us will agree that usually it means we have a realization, *an awareness*, of something. Now since it is generally accepted that consciousness is a state of realization or awareness, this then would make consciousness synonymous with knowledge. But is it? Can we say that the sensations of a toothache, or any pangs of pain of which we are very much conscious, are the equivalent of knowledge? If this were so, then all animals that experience suffering to any degree could be said to be *knowing* animals, having knowledge, because they are cognizant of pain.

We might go even further along the lines of such extreme reasoning. All simple living things have a kind of consciousness. From experience, we know that plants react to their physical environment, that they are affected by their surroundings. A tendril will withdraw from certain substances, but will cling to others. Some plants, in the function of their leaves, will display a kind of consciousness. They will fold or close in the light, or again seek the light and expose themselves to it. But most certainly we cannot say that such *responsiveness* is comparable to the state of *knowing* as we ordinarily think of it.

When, as an involuntary action, we suddenly jerk our arm away from a flame with which it has come in contact, can we say that that sensation, that consciousness, is knowledge? Is it equal, for example,

to our knowing the time of the day, the month, or the seasons of the year?

We find upon further inquiry that *objects of knowledge*, things which we know, parallel our own existence; in other words, objects of knowledge seem to persist equally with *self*; that is, the things which we know seem to be equally in existence with ourselves. We may further ask: What is it that knows these objects? We say: "I know." This very statement implies that we have a knowledge of the reality of ourselves, that *we know we exist*. Therefore, at first blush it would appear that all objects of knowledge are tangible, that they have a substance equivalent to ourselves. But this is not so.

We may go to our window, look out upon an opposite street, and see the throngs passing by—men and women. Now that experience is commonly an object of knowledge. The things that compose it—the people—are as tangible, as existential, as we are. But, on the other hand, we also have what are called *judgments, decisions, and conclusions*. For example, it may be our judgment that it is very offensive to insult another. That judgment is an object of knowledge too, but in substance it certainly is entirely different from the men and women we perceive walking past a street corner. Therefore, we must conclude that objects of knowledge fall into two general classes: the objects of perception, and the objects of conception.

Objects of perception are the sensations which we have of the world of matter, of certain forces and energies. They are the vibrations of atoms and molecules which engender within us those sensations which constitute the things which we say we perceive, whether we realize them as sight, sound, touch, or something else. However, these objective realities, these things of the atomic world, are not always confined to things apart from us or that are external to us. Parts of our own body—our hands, our feet, as we see them—have as much objective reality to us as have trees or rocks. In other words, we perceive them equally with things that are not of ourselves.

We find, too, that there are certain *qualities* which accompany all of our perceptions, regardless of their nature. For example, our auditory perceptions, the things we hear, the myriad sounds, all have certain

similar qualities. They have *pitch*; the sound is either high or low, and sounds have that quality of being either soft or loud. All of our visual perceptions also have certain qualities regardless of the nature of the forms they assume. Thus, for further example, everything we see is a gradation of light between dark and brilliant white, or it has the quality of color.

Now these qualities take part, that is, they participate in our objects of knowledge. They are also things we seem to know. But we have to ask ourselves, "Do these qualities exist in our mind, or do they exist in the things outside of us? Do the sense impulses—that is, the impulses that actuate our physical senses—arouse those qualities such as pitch, soft and loud, in our own consciousness?" Let us put it this way: Which is an object of knowledge to our eye, the blade of grass, insofar as it has form or dimension, or its color *green*? Does the color *green* arise in our consciousness as we perceive the object of knowledge, the blade of grass, or does the color accompany the visual impulses which cause us to perceive the entire blade of grass?

Let us now consider *objects of conception*, perhaps we shall find in them answers to some of the questions we have asked ourselves. Objects of conception are distinguished from objects of perception by the fact that the former seem to originate entirely within our own minds. Objects of conception might be called *the appraisals* we have of things, the values we put on them—or more simply put, our notions. We have a notion of confusion but also we have the notion of order. We appraise certain things as good, others as evil, and still others as beautiful. Now these appraisals or notions are objects of knowledge, but since they originate within our minds, they are objects of conception as well.

In addition to judgments or decisions about things, we also have opinions. These, too, are objects of knowledge. We may have the opinion, for example, that a high tariff is an injurious practice because of the barring of the products of one country from another. We may believe that it incites enmity between nations, disturbs trade relations, and that some substitute for it should be found. Now if we had experienced these things, that is, if we had read books which described these tariffs, had visited lands where the goods were practically banned

because of these tariff walls, and if we had seen people suffering as a result of these restrictions placed on the export of their goods, the tariff with its accompanying conditions would not be an opinion, it would be something we had perceived. Consequently, as a point of knowledge, it would now be an object of *perception*.

However, a true opinion is inferential; it is drawn from a combination of things, as we shall see. Suppose you were walking along a road and you saw a deep rut traversing it. That experience is purely one of perception. But if while looking at the rut, you form an opinion that automobile wheels striking that rut might blow out their tires, might break an axle or a spring, how did you arrive at such opinion? You did it by the process of inductive reasoning, that is, reasoning from the particular thing which you saw, the rut, to a general conclusion which you had not experienced, namely, that the car would be damaged if it struck the rut.

This brings us to the point of endeavoring to define just what is an opinion, as an object of knowledge. *An opinion is a conception which arises out of that relationship which the mind conceives as existing between objects of knowledge.* To expatiate, we have certain objects of knowledge, the results of perception or of conception, such as thinking and judgments. At times we seem to see in our mind's eye a certain relationship as existing between these different kinds of objects of knowledge, and that relationship which we conceive as existing between them is an opinion. It is a new conception itself. Sometimes *an opinion* has a tendency to strengthen the particular objects of knowledge out of which it arises. Sometimes it weakens them. At such times the previous objects of knowledge seem to have become less real to us.

The problem now before us is whether or not there is *immediate knowledge*. By immediate knowledge, we mean knowledge which is complete, self-sufficient, and at hand; it is not the result entirely of reason, or entirely of perception, and appears to be exactly as we are conscious of it. As Dewey, the eminent philosopher, puts it, there are two schools of those who logically inquire into the content of immediate knowledge. These schools oppose each other, but they agree that there is an immediate knowledge. One school is known as

the *rationalists*; the other, as the *empiricists*.

The rationalists say that the *nature* of immediate knowledge consists of ultimate principles of a universal character possessed by men. In other words, there are certain ultimate principles at which humanity arrives, and which are periodically accepted, and because of that they are termed *immediate knowledge*; otherwise, they would not be arrived at ultimately and held universally. For example, such ultimate principles would be our conceptions of liberty and of freedom, and that general division of phenomena which we recognize, such as the categories *astronomical*, *physical*, *spiritual*, and *moral*.

In other words, the rationalists hold the nature of immediate knowledge to be *apperception*, which is a kind of understanding. For further example, we may look up at the heavens at night and perceive the moon as a great silver disk seeming to float in space. The actual seeing of it, the light waves actuating the retina of our eyes, is a perception; but if we are puzzled or confused by it, all we have experienced then is an object of perception. Apperception is the *understanding* of what we see. It is the meaning to us. It is our being able to comprehend what we experience.

To these rationalists then, immediate knowledge is this understanding of what we perceive or experience. It is not just what comes to us through our senses, but the ideas we have concerning what we see. They hold that *the faculty* which produces immediate knowledge is the *reason*.

Now the empiristic school contends that sense perception—that is, our five sense faculties—constitutes *the organ* whereby we receive immediate knowledge. They say that *the nature* of immediate knowledge is the sense data, namely, the sensations which we have of things. According to the empiricists, everything we see is exactly as it appears to our understanding, and that is immediate knowledge.

But let us return to the two main divisions of knowledge—the perceptual and the conceptual. The distinction between perceptual and conceptual knowledge goes beyond the fact that the objects of perceptual knowledge appear to be wholly objective and often

immediately related to the senses. At times our perceptual knowledge is not so complete as to be called *immediate*. We cannot avoid, of course, having certain ideas when we expose our receptor senses to particular vibrations and the sensations they arouse.

As the Irish philosopher, Berkeley, said: "Whatever power I may have over my own thoughts, I find the ideas actually perceived by sense have not a dependence on my will. When, in broad daylight, I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view."

We must fully grasp this difference between the ideas of simple perception and the ideas of conception. To accomplish this, let us use the analogy of the photographic process. We shall make the broad comparison of the eye to the lens and shutter of the camera. The objective mind we shall liken to the photographic film in the camera. When the lens and shutter are so opened as to expose the film to the vibrations of light reflected by some object, the image of it is impressed upon the film. This image, photographed upon the film, constitutes the end of the whole perceptual process of the camera.

When the mind registers the impressions received through the eye, a visual image is created upon it. When we are conscious of the image, realize it as something seen, then the perceptual process of the mind is also completed. As Berkeley has pointed out, we cannot escape such sense images as long as the sense organs are functioning and we are conscious.

From the foregoing, it is evident that certain perceptual knowledge is instantaneous. The sensations had, the very perception itself, become the object of knowledge. When we receive the vibrations of light that cause us to see *blue*, the idea of blue is concomitant in our minds with the very sensations that have caused it. Originally, man might have given that color another name, but, regardless of what we call the particular wave lengths of blue, to the mind there is an inescapable immediate image of that color.

Now, under such circumstances, would you say that a person is thinking when he is merely registering these impressions of the basic qualities of his senses? Can we say a man has a wide fount of knowledge because he has perceived the sensations of hot and cold, hard and soft, high-pitched and low-pitched sounds, red and green colors, and other fundamental qualities of his senses?

In such examples, the idea itself arises directly out of the perception and cannot be separated from it. Such ideas constitute a most elementary kind of knowledge. Certainly, if the most of anyone's knowledge is composed of the reception of these simple ideas, then it is exceedingly limited. Not all impressions, however, that are perceived or experienced through the senses, produce ideas which are directly a part of them. Suppose you see a red circle resting upon a green cube which, in turn, is standing on two blue triangles. As this combination of objects approaches you, it emits a series of shrill whistles. In this example your perception is both visual and auditory.

In experiencing this combination of visual and sound images, you would find that their identity is not completely contained within them. You immediately, of course, would have the simple ideas of color and the geometrical forms of the circle, triangles, and so forth. Further, you instantaneously would have the idea of high-pitched or low-pitched sounds as you listened to the whistle. However, what does the combination of these objects represent? Why are these colors, forms, and sounds so related? Unless you have had a similar experience upon which to call in order to confer identity upon what you now see and hear, you would find your knowledge incomplete.

Locke, the great English philosopher, would refer to the above analogy as consisting of "inadequate ideas." The experience would consist of several unrelated sensations. The colors and sounds as impressions would not provide an immediate united idea. If the impressions remained as separate color and sound images to our consciousness, we would have nothing but simple perceptual knowledge.

When we perceive such an unnatural relationship, as the colors and sounds combined in this example, and we seek to form some idea as to their arrangement, we then enter the realm of *conceptual knowledge*.

The idea that is finally conferred upon the experience is a concept. Once a combination of simple ideas has been identified and become a concept, then, whenever the experience recurs, it is immediately known. However, the conceptual ideas as an object of knowledge, we must repeat, do not arise directly out of the perception of the separate impressions.

If our knowledge is to expand, we must create from our experiences. We cannot depend upon the involuntary process whereby the simple qualities of our senses generate ideas for us. It is incumbent upon us to find in each experience some greater relationship to ourselves, some more extensive value to self. When we open our eyes and see a field of green, we cannot refute the visual perception and its reality. The image persists so long as the vibratory agent, the particular wave band of light, acts upon our organs of sight. But perceptions which do not immediately suggest their own nature must also become comprehensible and have significance to us. We must have a conception for them which is irrefutable by the senses and in harmony with the reason.

The ideas of conceptual knowledge have often been known as ideas of *reflection*. This reflection is, therefore, also a matter of the relation of the various ideas arising out of perceptual knowledge. Of these Locke has said: “... the last sort of complex ideas is what we call Relative, which consists in the consideration and comparing one idea with another.” Without this relationship of conceptual knowledge, much of our experience of the senses would be confusing to us. Only those elements of them which are related directly to the sense qualities would be understood. The more complex experiences would leave us without any positive reality, without any certainty within us as to their nature.

Is there an a priori knowledge that we are born with—complete, self-sufficient? Is there a *knowledge of the soul*—a knowledge having a divine content, with which man is imbued at birth? Socrates was the first in the West to advocate the idea of a soul knowledge. He considered all knowledge of the senses to be evanescent, false, unreliable, because of the unreliability of the senses themselves, their weakness, their

imperfection, their susceptibility to deception. The true knowledge, he held, is of the soul and he reasoned that the soul is immortal. It emanates from a divine source, and is then embodied in man. It returns to a divine source. However, when soul is embodied in a mortal, it retains those influences, the result of its previous contiguity with the Divine; namely, soul retains the knowledge acquired, the result of its association with the divine source from which it came.

Consequently, if man wishes to possess this divine knowledge, he must awaken it within his own being, where it resides, dormant; and as he stimulates it, he can recollect its impressions. This stimulation of knowledge is in the form of an inquiry—*self-inquiry*—the asking of thought-provoking questions of one's self, probing into the depths of one's own being. The knowledge takes form in the inquirer's own consciousness as dreamlike impressions, according to Socrates.

Socrates sought to prove that man possessed such knowledge of the soul by interrogating his fellows, asking them such thought-provoking questions as would awaken this soul knowledge. He was successful in the sense that he was able to take individuals who were illiterate in fact, who during their lifetime could not possibly have acquired profound knowledge of the arts, sciences, and crafts, and yet by interrogating them he had them eventually arrive at the same profound conclusions as the most learned men of their times.

Knowledge, Socrates also said, is virtue. He who has true knowledge is virtuous. He realized the value of the virtuous life; for he who is virtuous, he who disciplines the body and its desires, has that freedom of mind to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, Socrates held that virtue cannot be taught, that the rules of virtue, so-called, are ineffectual if there is not a response toward virtue on the part of the individual himself. Further, *right opinion*, that is, any opinion we hold which has been proved to be right, is the equivalent of that knowledge which has been taught. This he held proved that right opinion comes from within—and that it is of the soul knowledge.

Plato, Socrates' distinguished disciple, held that true knowledge consists of the universals—that is, the universal ideas which all men have alike, regardless of their station in life, or their education. Such

universal ideas, for example, are those of justice and the beautiful. Every man is possessed of them to some degree. They are eternal. They continue to spring from the breast of humanity. They are unchanged. Further, they are of the mind, said Plato. The mind, to Plato, was synonymous with the soul. In fact it was the function of the soul.

The things of the world, to Plato, were likewise held as being false knowledge, that is, the particulars which we ordinarily experience. Things acquire a semblance of reality, of being a true knowledge, only to the extent in which they participate in the universal ideas which men have. Thus if man sees beauty in a rose, that rose, then, is a true knowledge, a reality, to the extent that it is beautiful, because the idea of beauty which man has is a knowledge of the soul.

Baruch Spinoza, Dutch philosopher of Portuguese-Jewish parentage, stated that there are three kinds of knowledge—the *inadequate* ideas, the *adequate* ideas, and the *intuitive*.

The *inadequate* ideas are of the passions and the emotions of the body. They are born out of the sensations we have of the impulses coming to us from the physical world, which create within us our ideas of external agencies, that is, of outside things. Spinoza held that such knowledge is not true, because it is not representative of our bodies nor of the world but of an interaction between our bodies and the world. In substance, then, we do not know the true things of the world; we know only the effects of their action upon us.

The *adequate ideas*, however, according to Spinoza, are a much more reliable knowledge. They are ideas which are self-sufficient in the mind of man. To put it simply, they are the results of our reasoning. They are the ideas which spring up entirely within our mind, by thinking. They are adequate because, according to Spinoza, our minds are an attribute of God. They have the same consistency as God, and therefore, such ideas must be a true knowledge.

The highest kind of knowledge of all, says Spinoza, is *intuitive*. It is that knowledge which flashes into our consciousness in complete form, unprovoked, even unsought. According to the Spinozistic doctrine of *Sub-Specie Aeternitatis*, all things exist under a form of eternity; that is,

all things, regardless of their content or diversity of nature, comprise a whole pattern in the universe. Now intuitive knowledge is that momentary realization we have of God, a portion of God—thorough, complete, pure. It is part of that one universal form of all things which we suddenly realize.

There is also a modern theory which we cannot pass by without some thought. It is the *relative theory of mind*. To a great extent it disputes the idea that mind is of soul, that it possesses any divine or inherited knowledge. In fact, this theory even disputes that mind is a substance, an entity of any kind, or a force, or a flow. Rather, it holds that mind is an *integrated system*—that it consists of our nervous systems, our brain, our body, our environment, and the atomic world that acts upon us. All these things related constitute a system of effects or conditions which we have caused to be known as *mind*.

This same theory affirms that consciousness is not an attribute in the sense that it is a substance, or that it is actually a force or entity, but that consciousness is the interrelationship of various parts of our physical being and the relation of these parts to the world and to the life force within our being. In other words, consciousness, according to this theory, is just a name which we have given to a receptional function; that is, as an organized being, we are receptive. That state of reception, we call *consciousness*.

This theory holds, however, that there are variations of consciousness, and that the highest form of all is *self-consciousness*. But that begins only with the more complex nervous systems in living things, such as in man, for example. The self-consciousness is said not to be of a divine nature. It is held to be a result of the more complicated nervous systems whereby the living organism has a reception, not only of other things but of itself as well. It is like a thing knowing other things, and *knowing that which knows*, as well.

That which is known in consciousness consists of our objects of conception and our objects of perception which we have considered, and also that condition of consciousness which is the knower, and knows that it knows. This latter we call *self*, according to this theory.

The Rosicrucian philosophical doctrines agree with many of the past systems of philosophy, and with the rationalists today as well, that empirical knowledge, the knowledge of our senses, is not reliable, and as a whole is false. It is very simple for us to cite numerous examples of the deception of our senses. Every individual knows of numerous optical illusions. We know also that, with the changing of the intellect (the expanding of our intellect through study, through experience), our opinions and conclusions, our apperceptions change. So consequently, what we held to be absolute knowledge ten years ago, most of us would look upon with doubt today, provided that we have not already abandoned a great deal of it. Therefore, the Rosicrucians affirm that the only true knowledge is *intuitive knowledge*.

Intuitive knowledge is that which arrives in our consciousness so complete that we know it has not suffered by any process of reasoning or laborious thought on our part. But we do not hold it to be true just because we and others cannot dispute it or find a means of criticizing it. Rather, we hold that it is true knowledge because it is so satisfying. It is satisfying to the emotional self as well as gratifying to the reason. Whenever we are the recipients of intuitive knowledge, our spirits are exhilarated. We seem to be lifted up, pleased, happy, as though a burden had been lifted from us. Such knowledge is not only so rationally consistent that it pleases the reason, *but it satisfies the self as well*.

This intuitive knowledge is the result of man's conscious and unconscious attunement of his mortal consciousness, of his objective mind, with the very essence of his being. If he seeks it consciously, he practices introspection. He turns his consciousness within himself and endeavors to attune with the psychic powers of his own nature. The psychical force of man is part of the same great Cosmic force and intelligence which pervades the entire universe. It is part of the great universal rhythmic order.

When man is successful in making this attunement, even if it is but momentarily, these higher sensations or vibrations of the inner consciousness pass through into his objective mind; they enter the consciousness of his brain. There those vibrations draw to themselves all those complementary and sympathetic objects of knowledge,

sensations or experience if you will, which he has acquired *objectively*. They are fitted into the perfect pattern of thought which the Cosmic sensations organize within his objective mind.

To use a homely analogy, when man makes his attunement with the Cosmic with the deeper consciousness within his own being, there is seemingly a pattern set up within his objective mind. This pattern has apertures in it of different sizes and shapes, and nothing can pass through this pattern except those sensations, those objective experiences, those ideas which man has already had, and which those openings accommodate. And so the result is a Cosmically directed and organized knowledge, perfect and complete, but had objectively by man.

One philosopher has said that the end of knowledge is truth. But what is truth if that is what the thinking being seeks? It is in this direction that our inquiry must next take us.



Chapter IV

THE NATURE OF TRUTH

WE SEEK TRUTH in all human experience, principally because we want security; we want that certainty that we are not deceiving ourselves. The question is, how do we know when we have attained truth? To most of us, truth consists of the substantiation of our ideas. We may hold that an idea is a mental image, a mental picture, that which our consciousness embraces. Ideas are born out of experiences, as we have seen, either antecedent sense impressions—that is, impressions of a minute, an hour, or years ago—or they may be the result of our immediate perceptions.

All of the ideas of which we are capable may be divided into two general types: *intimate ideas* and *representative ideas*.

Intimate ideas are those which seem to spring, to arise, out of our own intelligence. They consist of our personal interpretations of our empirical sensations, that is, of the things which we seem to perceive—as our interpretation of sounds and sensations of touch. Then, again, intimate ideas may consist of the results of our reasoning, the combining of existing ideas into new forms, as conclusions. When we look upon a bright object in the sky, that object causes us to have visual impressions. These we interpret in our consciousness in accordance with our ability to reason and with our past experiences. The idea of what we see may conform to modern astronomical conceptions, or it may be some primitive notion, depending upon our intelligence and education. Nevertheless, whatever the idea, it is *intimately* of our consciousness.

Representative ideas are those which are communicated to us, transmitted to us by intelligences outside of ourselves—by other persons, for example. Such representative ideas are in the form of symbols, signs, or spoken or written words. Consequently, a representative idea is an integrated one; that is, it is a unity of the sense impressions by which we perceive the symbol, a word or sign, and the idea likewise consists of that interpretation given the symbol by those who are communicating it to us. For example: Someone may say to us, “It is raining.” When we experience the word, we have really experienced a symbol. We have been given a word picture of rain only. We have not experienced those sense qualities which intimately and ordinarily cause us to realize rain. In other words, those qualities of wetness, coldness, and so on, are missing.

Therefore, to substantiate a representative idea, to make it exist as a truth to us personally, it must be converted into an intimate idea. In other words, it must be made to be part of our personal consciousness. We have to become intimately aware of the component parts of the idea. The sum total of our personal experiences of the idea must be a state of consciousness equal to the representative idea itself; otherwise, we will not agree with it—it will not seem true to us.

From the foregoing, it would appear that truth is dependent upon objective reality. It seems essential that before something is accepted as truth, we must find that cause of it which actuates our senses. We must consciously become aware of an *external archetype* of the idea. This puts a great deal of dependence upon the senses, yet our senses are said to be unreliable. In our own personal experiences, our senses have seemed to deceive us. What is true, then, at present might be so only because of the limitations of our senses at this time. The cause of this may be that we cannot see extensively enough, nor hear greater or lesser sounds. Possibly if we augment our senses tomorrow, today’s truths may seem false. Consequently, truths which are dependent for their substantiation upon the senses are *relative truths*. They are related to sense experiences. They depend upon the sense experiences which are producing in our consciousness a corresponding idea to the one we already have.

Relative truths are those which must be rooted to objective impressions. They are the truths that brought forth the old adage, "Seeing is believing." This statement means that the idea must have confirmation in sensations having external origin, or it is not true. Relative truths need not be universally accepted. All men relatively do not have to accept as true the same thing. In other words, all men do not have to derive the same idea from the same experience to give their own idea the appearance of truth.

Two men can simultaneously see an object on a distant horizon. One of them may declare that what he sees is a tree. The other may proclaim it to be a group of men. What each sees constitutes a truth to him. *It is relative.* It is based upon his interpretation of his perceptions. It is born out of his consciousness. So long as his perceptions do not change, what he personally sees is a truth to him. The two men need not agree in accepting their personal ideas as truth.

We must not pass by without dwelling for a moment upon the subject of *assumed truths*. An assumed truth is an idea which is accepted by an individual only because it is generally held by others. For an example: Many men are of the opinion that the universe had a definite beginning. They accept this as true, because it is an idea so prevalent and so persisted in by many others. An assumed truth, consequently, is merely a representative idea, one that has been communicated to a person. It is a symbol, and its substance—that of which it consists—has not been personally experienced by the individual. It is, therefore, not even a relative truth. Its elements do not constitute objective particulars which we may have heard, seen, or felt, etc.

It must be apparent that assumed truths are very dangerous to accept, since they are foreign to our consciousness. We really know nothing about them, as we have not truly experienced their nature. They are not really true to us in the sense that we have so far considered the nature of truth. We can make the positive assertion that *whatever is real to us is truth*. Whatever in its entirety seems to be the direct consequence of our own consciousness, seems to come out of the experiences of our consciousness, is real—and therefore true. It is true because we cannot conceive it as being unreal or false. The challenge of this

statement may be: Are ideas only true when the elements of them can be objectively perceived? In other words, must every idea have an objective cause? Must we be able to relate it to some external agency?

We will admit that there are also abstract realities, those which do not seem to have any counterpart beyond our nature. Numbers, geometrical forms, such as triangles, squares, and circles, and also states of consciousness as *time* are abstract realities. These abstract realities are notions. They have no positive existence in nature. For example: There is no such thing as a circle which exists in nature. There are things and conditions which we particularly notice, and to which we assign the idea of a circle.

Therefore, abstract ideas are *negative realities*. For example: Darkness is an idea we have, yet darkness has no positive existence. In fact, the idea of darkness arises from the seeming absence of light. The fact that darkness is not a reality exists in the truth that we first must have the positive condition of light before its opposite, or darkness, seems apparent.

Nevertheless, these negative conditions are very real to us, and they are therefore *self-evident truths*. In themselves, they seem just as true as that which appears to have an objective existence, as that which we can perceive through our sense faculties. The abstract idea is real in itself. The idea is its own reality. Since there are no actual external conditions participating in the idea, it has no dependence upon the outside world whatsoever. For example: We may define a circle as a closed plane—as having no beginning or end. Our definition of a circle is the reality itself. We cannot find in nature, outside of ourselves, any substances or conditions which could possibly be so construed. We merely confer the definition on certain visual experiences. The illusion is therefore its own reality.

There are also what are termed *intuitive truths*. This subject has been touched upon in the previous chapter as intuitive knowledge. These are the conceptions which seem to flash into our consciousness from out of nowhere. They appear not to be the result of a process or method of reasoning. They are not the result of our labored-over and directly related ideas. They are not intimate ideas, because these intuitive truths

are not related to any experiences of our consciousness of which we have recollection. We have not seen, heard, or felt the physical causes of them. In other words, we cannot trace back the idea through our sense impressions.

Further, these intuitive truths have such perspicuity, they are so indubitable, as to seem to have absolute reality. They are clear, real, definite. As heretofore stated, the quality of truth depends on whether or not the idea which it embraces *is real* to us. Therefore, since these intuitive ideas are so real, they are accepted as being true.

All of us have ungratified mental, or shall I say intellectual, desires. There are times in our lives when we experience intellectual impasses—seeming mental obstructions—where all advancement of an idea or thought ceases. Such an intellectual obstruction may be a provoking question for which we can find no answer, or it may be a confounding problem to which no solution is apparent. The more we dwell on such matters, the more we are confronted by such impasses, and the more they aggravate or annoy us. Thinking about them is like stimulating an appetite that cannot be satisfied.

There is only one thing that can gratify these intellectual desires, and that is the removal of the cause, the irritating idea, by providing its antithesis. We must provide *the contrasting opposite* to our idea. This antithesis may be the necessary solution to a problem or the answer to a question. It completes the idea, gives it balance, provides the direct opposite. Consequently, we can say that an intuitive truth is one that provides a lacking intellectual antithesis, a needed opposite conception. It is the satisfaction of an intellectual irritant. It is like providing a scratch for an itch, with the resulting satisfaction.

Obviously, then, intuitive truths stir the emotions deeply, and we sense great relief and relaxation. Emotions are conscious states, intense ones. Therefore, they have great reality to us. No one will doubt that an emotional experience is quite real. That which is real is true, and so intuitive ideas which flash into the consciousness are accepted as immediate truths.

In addition to the mystical explanation of intuitive knowledge in the previous chapter, there is a related psychological one which I shall advance for intuitive truths. It can be held that our previous experiences are registered as memory impressions in our subconscious mind. Ultimately they become unconsciously associated with the objects of our thought, as for example, a problem or question which constitutes our intellectual desire, and which we seek to overcome or to disabuse. We have a sudden realization of the inference, the link between these latent ideas and experiences and the one with which we labor objectively. It enlarges our entire conception, and the hurdle is cleared in the flash of a second. That inference, *that enlarged conception*, is the intuitive idea.

The conceptions of truth by different thinkers and philosophers through the ages have had many similarities. The minds of men with respect to this subject have at times seemed to reach a certain common focal point, being divergent only occasionally. Let us consider Epicurus, 342?-270B.C. To him, there were two kinds of truth, the *truths of existence* and the *truths of judgment*.

As for a truth of existence, everything which exists in the nature of a thing is that thing, said Epicurus. To simplify: If our idea of a thing corresponds to the reality, to the nature of that thing, then the thing is true. In other words, if our perception of something (the sum of the impressions we derive from it through our senses, of which the thing inherently consists so far as its objective appearance is concerned) equals our idea of it, then it is true. To look at it in another sense: If an apple in nature is said to consist of the color *red*, and to be round in form, and of a certain sweetness in flavor, and we experience those things, then our experience is true and our idea is true, since both are the same.

The truth of judgment, to Epicurus, is whether our conceptions, our conclusions, no matter how they are arrived at, agree with the declarations of others as to the nature of a thing. In other words, our judgment is right when it corresponds to the expressed judgment of others. Epicurus, contrary to many who preceded him and who have followed, expounded that our sensations, the result of our sense

impressions, are always true—that they are not false, and that our senses *do not deceive* us. To him, it is our judgment or opinion which changes, and not our sense impressions.

These new opinions and judgments create conceptions which may cause us to believe that the former ones were false. Epicurus cites an analogy: One sees a tower in the distance, and it appears to him as round. As one approaches it, however, he discovers that now it is not round, but rather, octagonal in shape. To Epicurus, this is not the consequence of deception of the senses, for as we come closer to an object we add to or intensify our sensations. Consequently, we change our opinions as to the cause of them. Therefore, according to Epicurus, everything is relatively true. If something exists in our consciousness, *it is real while it is there*. We might, however, ask ourselves the question: Which is true, which is real, the round tower at a distance, or the octagonal tower close at hand?

He offers what purports to be evidence as to the truth of our sensations. Sensations are true occurrences when their obstacles are removed. When there are no contraries associated with the sensations, no doubts about them, then they are true. More effectively put, when an idea derived from a sense impression, something we see or hear, has but a single reality, can be conceived of as just one thing, then it is true.

Epicurus used still another analogy. He said that we may see a figure approaching which we guess to be Plato. We are not certain. There is a vagueness about the sensations. The idea is not clear. However, when finally the figure is close enough to us for the senses to attest the trueness of the sensations—in other words, when there can be only one construction put upon them, no confusion existing—then they constitute truth.

Centuries after the time of Epicurus, another philosopher came forth with similar ideas. We merely offer them to indicate how a search for the nature of truth has many times in the history of thought brought forth ideas which paralleled each other, even though they were separated by centuries. Let us consider Leibnitz, German mathematician, logician, and eminent philosopher of the seventeenth century. He also postulated that there are two kinds of truth, *truths of*

reason or necessity, and *truths of fact* or contingent truths. The truths of reason are eternal, and no contradiction of them is possible. Such truths of reason concern the nature of God, and the final ends, the mission of man, the purpose of the universe, and so on.

Such eternal truths are really abstract truths, as we have explained. They have no external counterparts. There are no such objective realities which can be conceived, and can become a part of the consciousness. The idea is its own reality. It consists of no elements outside of the mind of man which would directly give rise to similar ideas.

Contingent truths, on the other hand, to Leibnitz were those truths which are dependent upon the senses of man. These constitute man's empirical knowledge, that is, the knowledge of human experiences, a collection of external impressions such as things heard and seen. Now, though they may seem to be true, it is possible for us to acquire contradictions of them. We could have an experience, by the same means as the contingent truth exists, that would produce ideas which would oppose its reality, refute it possibly—or at least confuse us. Therefore, the contingent truths are *relative truths*, true at the time, but possible of change at any future moment.

Consequently, to Leibnitz, the highest truths, those of the greatest importance to man, are the truths of necessity, namely, the truths of reason, the abstract truths that flow from the necessity of our own nature, our own being, such as our conception of God. Our conception of God has no external counterpart, and cannot be objectively perceived. In other words, no aggregation of sense impressions amounts to the idea of God.

We may conclude, then, that the only test of truth (we offer this as a proposition) is the singleness of the nature of the idea we have. If the idea alone is *real*, represents nothing but one reality, means one thing to us, cannot be distorted or confused, it is truth to us.

We may also take in connection with truth a pragmatic view. The value of anything depends on the extent of its usefulness to us, that is, whether it can be used spiritually or to further our physical or our mental welfare. In this sense, even disagreeable things have value,

because their disagreeability, such as pain or irritation, impels us to avoid the cause of them, and in so doing we refrain from disrupting the entire harmony of our being. Consequently, as we singly realize a thing, its nature and the idea we derive from it, it is true; and the thing is a truth worthy of being retained if it has value to us, that is, if it can be used.

In opposition to this conception of truth is the rather universal opinion that there are *absolute truths*. What could be the requisites of absolute truth? This depends upon a defining of the qualities of absolute. That which is absolute would need to be *invariable*. Its characteristics must be positive, not enter into any other nature or digress from its own particular quality. That which is absolute is limited, at least in kind. It must be eternal, that is, timeless. It cannot be perceived in any of those variations of consciousness which we call *past* or *future*, because, if it could be, it would then lose that positiveness necessary to that which is absolute.

We will agree that what we relegate to the past still does not have the same characteristics to us as that which is of the now. It has in some way been altered, at least sufficiently enough to be assigned to the past. The absolute must have an equal effect upon our consciousness no matter at what point our personal *now* or present may be. To better understand, let us use the analogy of the name *John Brown*. It will have the same reality in the life of the individual so named when he is seventy years of age as when he was seventeen, nor can he think of it as being any different when he is eighty.

Could such limited unvarying elements as absolute truths exist? Almost all systems of metaphysics and ontology, which are considered advanced, have one principle in common: they do not expound a static or inert universe. We use the term *universe* in this particular to mean the whole of being. Even mind, as a teleological cause behind such a universe, could not be static. Is there any more *active* principle than consciousness or thought? How is mind discerned? Is it not by its conscious motivations? Can mind, as intelligence, be separated from action?

We repeat that nothing is more active than thought. Ideas are not mind. Rather they are products of the whole process or function of mind. Therefore, even a divine or supreme mind cannot be absolute in the sense of being limited and unvarying in its nature. It cannot even be eternal in the sense of displaying identical characteristics throughout what we call *time*.

If being, including mind, is a co-ordinated force in continual flux, then absolute truths would have to be like little seeds floating in an ever-changing stream. What would be the relation of these seeds to the whole stream? The sum total of them could never be all the truth, the full reality of the universe. If you plucked all these seeds, these absolute truths, you would still need to account for the stream itself which, we admit, is the cause of the phenomenon which we experience as self and the universe.

What are we striving for when we speak of attaining absolute truths? We are trying to ascertain basic elements to which all else can be reduced. We are trying to unify all the variations of existence and say that these basic things are the primordial elements out of which all else springs: Knowing these, we would then have the key to all existence. We are wont to call as absolute truths, God, the physical universe in its entirety, life and the like. We are, in reality, trying to put our hands out to stop something in its dance of change. We want to say, now this is this and it shall always be. In groping for so-called absolute truths, the mind is trying to encompass or embrace the whole. If there is only becoming, then truth must always be relative. How can we say that God is absolute truth, when there is yet no agreement on the *reality* of God among men? It is not sufficient to say that there is something to which men attribute the appellation of God and, therefore, that *something* is an absolute truth. We have tried to point out that whatever is designated *absolute* must have certain positive qualities. To call it a mysterious something, from which the concept of God arises, is not conferring upon it the true characteristic of absolute. The same may be said of the universe and of man himself. These are all impulses, channeled through man's consciousness. They have no absolute qualities.

THE CONSCIOUS INTERLUDE

The most we can say is that there is *being* or the Cosmic, if you will. It has no constancy nor fixed nature. It engenders in the human consciousness, which is a part of it, a relative appreciation of its phases—temporary truths. The whole Cosmic is potential with truth, that which becomes relative truth to the mind of man. The laws of nature are those periods of Cosmic motion which have greater duration in the span of human experience. These changes, when measured by man's experience, are imperceptible. These periods, these laws, must be sought. They alone will afford that kind of stability which we attribute to the absolute and in which man finds solace.



Chapter V

HAS MAN FREE WILL?

HAS HUMANITY FREE will? Is the human truly a free agent in his decisions from which his conscious acts follow? With the notion of freedom there is the implied association of independence. A thing is not necessarily free if it has no external restraints or compulsions; it is but isolated in its relations to all else, separated as it were from all other reality. In the commonly accepted sense, *to be free* denotes considerably more than this separateness. It would have reference to choice of relationships. The free entity would be one that is not static, but rather one that avoids or seeks other attachments. Certainly, we would not refer to a people marooned on a desert island, isolated from all society elsewhere, as being a free people just because they were removed from the influences of the rest of humanity. They would be thought free in the usual sense of the word if it were in their capacity to choose a course of action having its initiative within themselves.

Freedom must be identified with *internal motivation*. The free entity must have a realization, a kind of consciousness of its being and a desire to either retain or alter the states of that consciousness. The free entity is motivated to choose ways and means so that a preferred state of consciousness may persevere. It is apparent that the so called free entity or agent is at all times impelled by preference; it cannot escape making a choice. An inanimate thing cannot exercise freedom; it has no consciousness by which to realize a preference. Man abounds in these preferences, for which a more apt word is “desires.” These desires, in turn, are urges and appetites which impel the body and the mind to

action. Only those inherent drives which cause sensations are realized as desires. These conscious urges are organically necessary because they bring about, in the main, the coordinated activity of the whole organism—mental and physical. The impelling search for sustenance is a prosaic but nevertheless an effective example of this activity.

Man either submits to the functional desires, as the appetites, or he ceases to live; or, at best, he endures an abnormal existence. No normal human is free of these urges in that he is independent of them. There are, however, other inclinations and impulses which man experiences that do not directly, at least, have their origin in the function of these organs and their appetites. There are those impulses which stem from the mental processes as from reason and imagination. We have *mental desires*, distinguished from physical ones. We choose to walk, to sit, to write, to read, or to pursue an ambition—or to sacrifice to a moral code. We may desire to suppress another desire. We may, for example, desire to stay awake long hours to execute a work and, by so doing, oppose the physical urge to sleep.

These impelling desires of the mind, its conclusions and judgments, which move us to action are termed *will*. In most humans they are the most efficacious of all desires because they have been able to successfully oppose and surmount all physical ones. Men will endure excruciating pain and sacrifice all comfort, even to losing their lives, in order to gratify a mental desire, some ideal, at the dictate of will.

Physical desires and urges are organic and partly psychological. The insufficiency of the body, when its requirements are not met, will create an abnormal or subnormal condition and thereby produce an aggravated state, or one of distress. From these aggravations arise certain sensations that the organic being comes to associate with external factors which will relieve it. Eventually, a pattern of scents, sounds, or tactile sensations is realized as the image of that thing or condition necessary to alleviate the distress—the desire. In our hunger, we have gradually learned to form a mental picture of food which has become associated with the satisfaction derived from the removal of the desire. The lesser animals have this instinct pattern by which they are drawn to seek out those conditions necessary for their satisfaction.

As the body develops acute urges and desires, so does the mind. One can conceive an ideal, an end to be attained, which to be accomplished engenders an emotional stress that is most provocative. There is no tranquillity of mind, then, until the ideal, the mental desire, is satisfied. The more intent the thought and the more complete the conception, the imaginative picture, the greater is the arousing of the emotions and the more the individual experiences a mental restlessness and an all-consuming urge which can exceed the compulsion of any passion having its seat in the organs.

Will, then, is not the implanting in the human of a special power or faculty as a direct extension of a divine source. Will is functional; it arises out of the combination of the mental processes—visualization, reasoning, judgment—and the emotional impetus that they beget. It is less direct than the lesser desires because of its complex nature but more dominant. Will is the desire that gives supremacy to man, for he can impose it upon other urges of his being. He can thus cause the body to be subservient to the mental life. The *will-desire*, because of this exalted function, has often been proclaimed, traditionally and classically, as a special, divine gift to mankind—rather than a naturally evolved function of the human. The function of will is also exhibited by lesser animals than man. Dogs that sacrifice themselves for their masters, that deliberately starve rather than leave the body of a dead master, are displaying a desire of the emotional self. It is a *preference*, a choice of desire which constitutes will.

Is the manifestation of will, the selection of desires which are to be gratified, to be taken as evidential of man's free agency? If one has the power to choose either A or B is he by that fact actually free? Not if by freedom we mean our being independent of any compulsion, internal or external. We are continually creatures of desires—physical or mental. We pass through a gamut of them hourly. One or the other is always commanding the focus of our powers toward its gratification.

Our choice, the exercise of will, is not a *supremacy* over all desire, but rather always a submission to one. We are never victorious wherever will is concerned. Will is but the dominant desire at the moment, the one that has captured our mind and commands our body to do its

bidding. If we chose A over B, it was because the former had the greatest efficacy, the all-embracing influence upon our consciousness and upon our thought processes at the time. It means that A will provide us with the greater satisfaction. We are thus more *enslaved* by A than by B. When A and B arise in common as desires, we are obliged to make a choice. We cannot escape their impelling urge. We may choose either of them, or synthesize them and create a C, which, to the mind, may have a greater satisfaction. This C may actually be a denial of both A and B, since it is, in itself, more gratifying than either of the other two.

A and B may be physical appetites, and I may concede that because of some ascetical idealism the abnegation of both A and B is preferable. In denying these two desires I derive a mental satisfaction, a kind of exaltation of the circumscription of my appetites. I think I am a victor, but am I? I have conquered one kind of desire to give way to the desire of will, the product of my rationalizing and of my moral idealism.

Some individuals have at times been so brash as to expound an absolute free agency of human will; they have by their polemics made it seem that man could interpose his will between the forces of nature and himself. It should be obvious that one bound to pursue a path as a general course, no matter what are his side excursions, has no real freedom of choice. Man is thus permitted only selections consistent with the direction he is compelled to follow by the necessity of his being. The revelations of modern science tend to confirm the earlier metaphysical and philosophical conclusions to the effect that man is dependent upon natural, immutable laws. One must conform to what he is and of what he consists, or he will not continue to be.

The suicide is not exercising free will. The alternatives have already been laid down for him by nature. He may cause his ambitions, his intellectual aspirations, to coincide with the harmony of his being, or he may choose not to be by selecting death. Choose, however, he *must*.

We may think of will as if it were a wagon wheel imbued with self-locomotion. It can revolve by its own power—forward or backward—either slow or fast, but it has no alternative other than to revolve in just one of those directions. It is attached to an axle. If it is separated

from such a support, then its balance is no longer possible nor are its revolutions. In a sense, we are imbued with a hierarchy of wills, a scale of impelling desires. Each cell, in conforming to its functions of irritability, metabolism and reproduction, for example, is adhering to *the will*, the inherent desire or consciousness of its nature. Each organ—as the heart, the lungs, the kidneys and endocrine glands—is expressing will, as Schopenhauer so aptly said. Will as man refers to it, or mental desire, is the synthesis of these lesser desires. It is the ability to cause the integrated instrument, the human organism, to function as a creative unit.

The will compels the whole man to accomplish in reality just as do the parts of his organism achieve ends unto themselves. A cell has the desire, the innate will, to create tissue, blood, and bone or to convey nerve impulses; and so, too, the whole human organism is a cell which can objectify its unified function as an expression of itself.

It is the function of *intelligence* to impose itself as a directing and impelling force upon other reality with which it comes in contact. Our intelligence and the impulses of environment acting upon us cause the exercise of will, the intentional inclination toward this or that satisfaction. We are thus free to choose, but our will is never independent of our organic being, the desires of our physical and mental selves or of the universe in which we exist.



Chapter VI

IS ABSOLUTE REALITY MIND?

OUR INQUIRY HERE calls for a personally satisfying conclusion as to whether the primary substance of all, which we may refer to as Absolute Being, is a *mind*. Does it, in other words, manifest the characteristics of mind? It is first presumed that each of us has the conception that there is such an underlying state or condition as Being in which all things participate. Such a conception would have certain definable qualities by which we recognize it. Most of us would probably assert that Being is that which is. By this we would imply that it is reality; it is that which has existence to us. Being is thus very definitely tied fast to the human consciousness. However, to restrict Being to but a notion of the human mind would be to make the mind the sole reality.

The sense organs may in part account for the form or image that Being assumes to the human consciousness, but they do not create the agencies, the forces, which act upon them. The fact that man is receptive and responsive to external agencies has been well established by modern science. We are thus not solely the Cosmic or Reality, but we are of it. Consequently, we can but conclude that, regardless of what form it may assume to the consciousness of man, or what of its nature may elude him, there is Being; there is that which is and it is not dependent alone upon human experience for its existence.

It is commonly known today that the particulars of our world, that which we call *matter*, are composite substances. They are reducible to simple elements having a place in the periodic table of chemical elements. Underlying these atoms are the various particles or charges of energy. Thus, at their bottom, all manifestations of Being known to man have a relevancy, a common quality. This quality is *radiant energy*. The *quanta* or quantities of this energy are said to move, to vibrate. But is there a medium in which this takes place? Is it, for example, space?

Perceptual space, that which, in common experience, we perceive as space, has only one determinative quality. This is its negativeness; it is the absence of all those qualities, with the exception of extension or dimension, which we associate with reality. Even this notion of the dimensions of space, then, is dependent upon something, for it arises from our perception of visual or tactile impressions, that is, what we do see or feel. When we see or feel some object, that experience may constitute the limits of space to us. In other words, when an object is realized, it becomes the boundary of what we call space. The realized object is, obviously, the end of any so-called space because, from the point of view of our perception, it occupies space.

From the foregoing, it is evident that space is conceived not because of a positive quality of its own, but rather from its engendering in our consciousness the idea that it is capable of giving occupancy to something else. Though the subject of space is considered more extensively elsewhere in this work, its relation to the content of this chapter requires the present remarks.

We ordinarily do not think of space in terms of what it is but rather what it is *not*. Therefore, even the term *absolute space* must not be taken to be a state of *no-thing*. Nothing is an idea which is first dependent upon the perception of something. Since absolute space has no positive quality, there is then the necessity of there being the opposite or positive state for its realization, such as Being. We may deduce, therefore, that Being could have neither a beginning nor an end. That which begins would need to emerge from nothing, the nonexistent. The end of Being would require the passing of it into that which likewise does not exist. We must then conclude that the known quanta

of radiant energy neither vibrates nor moves in any such medium as space but rather in a state of related Being.

We must next consider whether there is any distinction between particles of known Being—atoms and their subdivisions—and that medium or Being in which we have assumed they exist. To answer this, we must first arrive at some conception as to the basic nature of Being. Being requires activity. It is a positive activity, constituting the innate quality *to be*. This is an essential because inertia, rest or constancy of any kind, would not have the quality of Being—namely, *to be*. Inertia, like space, is a negative opposite of activity. There first must be that which *is* before it can be said to rest. Absolute inertia, consequently, is logically an impossibility. Wherever there is that which may appear to have a stable nature, there is underlying it the quality of *active Being*, which causes it to be what it is. For Being to have constancy of any kind, that is, an unchanging nature, it would need to be immured or arrested by certain conditions. These, then, would constitute limitations. But such confining factors would themselves be reality, that is Being.

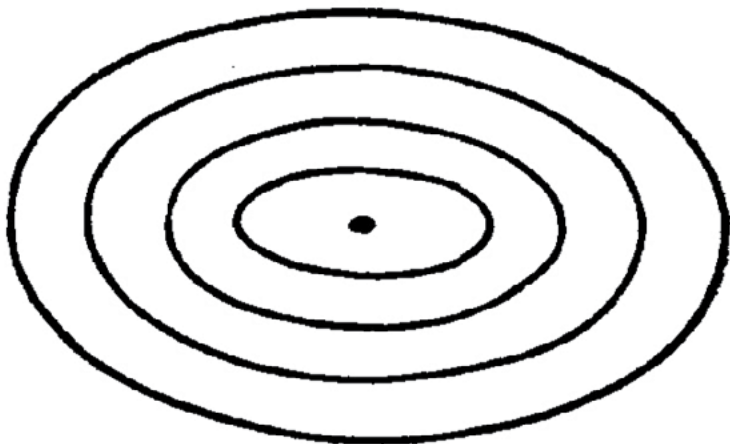


Fig. 4

See Illustration, Fig. 4, below. Assume that the dot shown is Being. There would be no space around it limiting it, as we see around the dot, because actually the dot, if it represents Absolute Being, *is all there is*.

Being is forever “becoming” as Heraclitus so wisely proclaimed. It never is a single determinative kind for that would be opposed to its necessary activity. Further, to conceive of Being as consisting of a series of wholly different realities is to return to the erroneous notion of an absolute space separating these particulars. Since all matter known to us is reducible to energy, we may adduce the cogent hypothesis that so-called space is likewise energy. To answer specifically the question originally posited, we, therefore, must assume that Absolute Being, like the forms of it we perceive, is *energy*.

To refer to Absolute Being as but energy is not sufficiently comprehensive. The question arises, What kind of energy? As energy, Absolute Being would embrace all phenomena classified as such. However, no known particular energy in itself would suffice as a definition of Being. This *primary energy* can only be thought of in a most abstract sense. It is a force with an inherent potential of all-inclusive creation. It is a power inexplicable except to say that it is kinetic. The action of this power can only be comprehended as a pulsation or vibration.

To be there must be action but this power of Being is not generated directionally. Likewise, it is not limited to specific functions, for then its nature would be constant throughout and not be attaining the variation necessary to action. As it is self-sufficient, Being must likewise be *self-acting*. It must produce a contra state, a relative opposition, within its own nature to be able to retain and to regenerate its power.

Can a thing which is of a single essence oppose itself? Whatever is always has as a potential the contrary of being something other than it is. We have deduced that Absolute Being is a force whose fundamental quality must be action. Therefore, the contrary state would be a potential non-Being or a relatively *decreased* state of activity. If activity is the positive nature of Being, then its negative phase is anything that is less than its capabilities. The activity of the whole of Being could not increase uniformly.

If a thing is to be continually accelerated in a state of motion, it must have conditions external to it which contribute to that acceleration. Since Absolute Being is all-inclusive, there are no external elements

to act upon it and to cause it to have an increasing activity. Neither can this activity of Being be a change of position, as we think of movement in space, for there is no other medium aside from itself. Being is the all. Its activity cannot be revolution as of a sphere or disk, for that would have finite limitations. Such would imply a particular quantity which revolves as a specific bundle of energy.

We may presume, therefore, that this activity of Being functions only as a *pulsation*. The pulsation consisting of the expansion and contraction of Being. Since Being of necessity must be self-generated, its thrust must be from its nucleus or center. We use center here in the relative sense, each such thrust or pulsation being of equal force. The activity of Being is, as a consequence, a spiral in its nature, if the idea of form adds to our comprehension of the phenomenon. With each outward thrust (using the term *outward* in a relative way), the nucleus would decrease in its concentration of force. (See Illustration, Fig. 5) It would become less active, less positive, in contrast to the expanded whole. Finally when a relatively contrary state is reached, and the nucleus becomes dominantly negative—that is, less active—a state of contraction occurs.

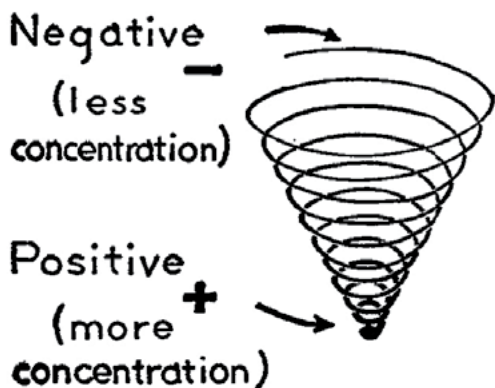


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

This transition into a contraction consists of the thrust "inward" again toward the former nucleus. It is the return to the relative center occurring like the introversion of a spiral. (See Illustration, Fig.6) This reversal of the activity of Being does imply any limiting external condition. Since Being is all-inclusive, there is nothing to limit it except

its own nature.

The continual oscillation of Being between the poles of greater concentration or activity and its lesser state of action comprises an infinite scale of vibratory energy. Certainly there is no reason to believe that this cosmic scale of energy has an internal relationship whose manner of function is wholly different from that which we know as light and electromagnetic phenomena generally. We may theorize that as the energy passes through its oscillations, it ascends and descends proportionately in its frequency. If this were not so, at least with a degree of consistency, there would not be that relative *repetition of phenomena* which occurs within human experience. A certain wave band of light, for example, would manifest once and its apparent color would never be realized again. Consequently, all phenomena or manifestations of Being which we perceive are but a portion of this cosmic vibratory energy. However, what we perceive are but relatively few of the octaves of this inconceivably vast oscillatory scale occurring between its positive and negative extremes. (See Illustration, Fig. 7)

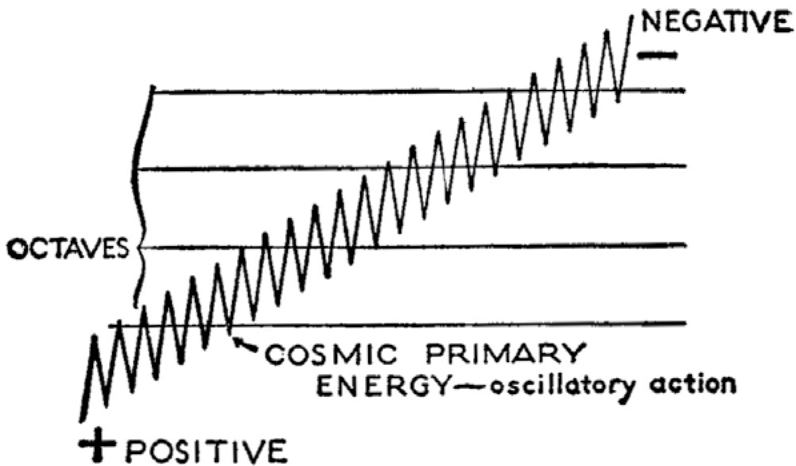


Fig.7

It is apparent, from the foregoing, that Absolute Being must have an inherent sensitivity and responsivity to its own nature. It opposes any condition in its function which would constitute a relative inertia or inactivity. Absolute Being attracts and repels the elements

of its own nature to sustain its basic quality of Being. Since Being is self-dependent, it must be sensitive to and respond to its integral characteristics. For analogy, we may use the repulsion and attraction properties of the poles of a magnet. Theoretical physics may offer various explanations of how such a phenomenon occurs. Yet each pole in attracting its contrary and in repelling one of similar polarity is exhibiting a sensitivity.

Upon first blush, to now confer the state of consciousness upon these characteristics of Being may seem incongruous. However, it may be recalled that, in our consideration of the nature of consciousness elsewhere in this work, we found that its fundamental qualities were *responsivity* and a kind of *realization*. A conscious thing is sensitive to certain factors. It responds to impulses which act upon it. This responsivity is an *awareness* of a thing or condition to which the conscious entity (even man) accordingly attempts to adjust itself.

Can we then say that the force of one object striking another, causing the former to rebound, is an example of responsivity and awareness? The answer must be “no,” because the activity of the rebound was not a quality of the object; it was wholly the result of factors external to it. Wherever there is a responsivity that constitutes the awareness of consciousness, that conscious thing has the ability to detect the very conditions to which it responds. Whether a thing is sensitive and detects by virtue of its organs or whether such characteristics are an inherent part of its nature, it nevertheless is *aware*. Responsivity is the simplest state of consciousness. Perception is a more advanced phase of consciousness, occurring when an organism is so developed as to localize particular stimuli. Absolute Being, then, we postulate is responsive; it is aware; it is *conscious*.

Mind and consciousness can never be separated. Where there is no consciousness, there is no mind. But even where certain qualities of mind do not exist, there yet can be mind. An organism, for example, may lack ego construct, that is, the awareness of self, and yet have mind. Where any characteristic of consciousness exists, there is an aspect of mind. If we reduce consciousness to the simplest function of which we have knowledge, we still find that quality of responsivity

to which we have referred. It can be postulated that any attribute of consciousness is representative of mind. The extent of the mind may vary, of course, with the development of the organism. It is, then, a corollary that mind and consciousness are synonymous.

The question immediately before us is whether this hypothesis can be applied to Absolute Reality; is it also mind? The highest function of human mind is *purpose*. Such requires the attributes of reason, imagination and will, all of which are a higher order of the mental processes. Is, then, the Absolute purposeful, as theism and pantheism, for example, would have us believe? The end of purpose or its objective is always external to man. It is not entirely of him. Further, what a thing does by the necessity of its nature as an immanent quality is not purpose. The roots of plants will reach for water. The leaves of plants will turn toward the sun. But these are not examples of purposeful causes in their true sense. The motivation is part of the inherent nature of plants. The chemical elements and vitality which plants seek in the water and sunlight are already of the vital force, the essential quality, of their being. What a thing has to do in order *to be* is not real purpose. It is an automatism, whether there is an awareness of the act or not.

The essence of purpose is the *values* which are associated with it. These values are that which it is thought will provide advantages and pleasures or secure those already had. The purposeful act, therefore, is not one executed only with an awareness of its performance, but also with the intention of providing certain anticipated effects. To have a purpose, particular things or conditions must stand in relation to the desires of the ego. Purpose must manifest a self-consciousness to the extent that the ego appears deficient or lacking in some factor or condition that would heighten its satisfaction. It is then obvious that, where there is purpose and its related values, there must be a *duality* of the function of consciousness; there must be a realization of the ego and also an awareness of something seemingly apart from it. In purpose we see that the ego (the self) is endeavoring to expand itself by accretion. This process of assimilation by the ego takes from its environment that which it feels—or imagines—it needs or desires.

Cosmic motion can admit of no fission in its absolute nature. At least man knows of no particle of Being which does not have a relationship to some other phenomenon of nature. It is then plausible to assume that responsivity or the consciousness, which is of Absolute Reality, is not centripetal but rather isotropic. In other words, the Absolute cannot draw its awareness partially into itself and also confer an externality upon all else of its nature. It is a corollary then that, in Absolute Reality, there could exist no such things as values. Simply put, there can be no aspect of the Absolute that can stand in a lesser degree of relationship to any other. There is no hierarchal order of importance, that which has more intrinsic value than any other aspect of the Absolute.

Turn this page upside down and look at Illustration, Fig. 8. You will notice that in whatever position the illustration is held, one end always points up. Actually, neither of the steps really constitutes a progression except in relation to the position in which it is held. So, too, the various phenomena of the Absolute Being have no special purpose or value except as related to the human viewpoint

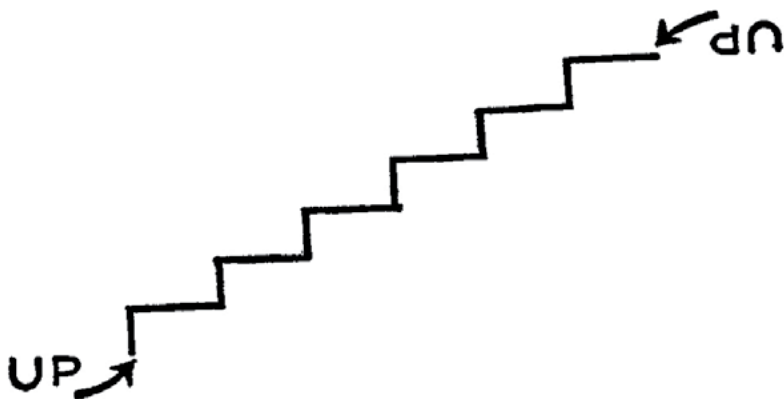


Fig. 8

The consciousness of the Absolute must be differentiated from the self-consciousness of man. In the human being the realization of self requires an introversion of the consciousness as has been considered more fully in another chapter. This is a kind of withdrawal from whatever else might engage man's awareness apart from his own being. The Absolute, likewise, is responsive to its own nature,

but such is an *all-inclusive* consciousness. Consequently, there is no contradistinctive state. There is no contrast of an indwelling quality with an externality. The Absolute, therefore, has no self. When man speaks of self, he immediately excludes all else which he does not consider in that category. Would it then be cogent reasoning to ascribe a similar condition to the Absolute? To ascribe self to the Absolute would be to conceive the Absolute as divorcing from its own nature that which it would need to contrast with it. Such an idea is rejected by our faculty of reason.

“I am that I am” is an ancient, succinct defining of the Absolute and the universal consciousness. Literally it means that the Absolute consists of its functions and its functions are what it is. We may conclude that purpose, as desire or as an insufficiency or a needed objective, is incompatible with what we conceive the Absolute to be.

(See Illustration, Fig. 9) “A” represents the self. The concentric rings about it depict the world which man conceives as separate from himself. The little crosses allude to human purpose, that is, the objectives of man. Illustration “B” denotes the self-sufficiency of the Absolute. It is all and all is in it. There is in the Absolute no division as of self and of things which would be apart from self.

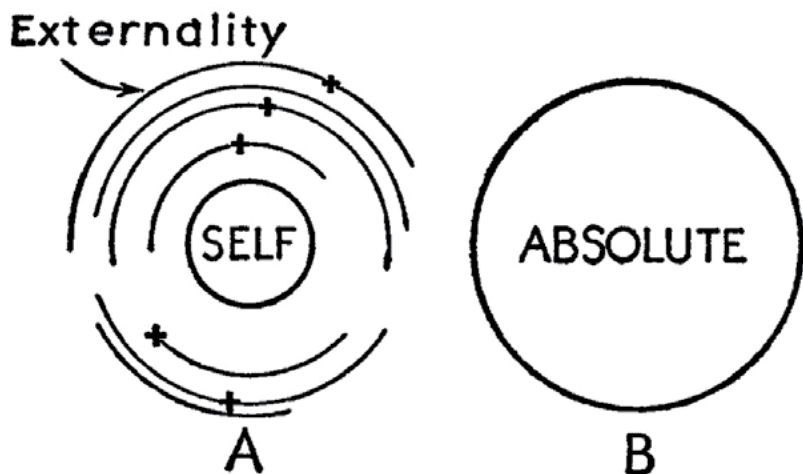


Fig. 9

In the Absolute there are no ideals, as predetermined forms or phenomena, to be attained. In the cosmic motion of the Absolute Reality, there are no points of rest or particulars to be ultimately realized. There are no purposes and values as man conceives them. The Absolute has no finite receptor organs and their sense faculties to provide sensations and mental images to become either illusions or ideals. Figuratively speaking, man is a bubble on this stream of cosmic motion, as are all other organisms. The living thing is a harmonious unity of certain of the particular forces of the energy of which the cosmic motion consists. This bubble (man), in other words, is an embrace of two energies—one that composes inanimate matter (A), and one that is attributed to animate matter (B). The phenomenon of life as a unity emerges from this embrace. (See Fig. 10) Each phase of this unity, however, is part of the conscious whole of which the Absolute Reality consists and yet, cosmically, it is formless.

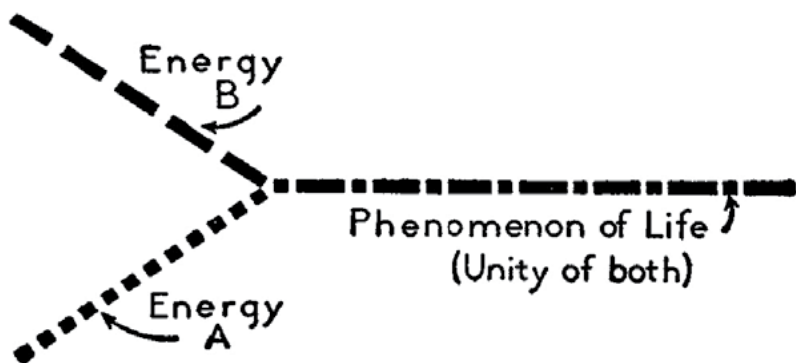


Fig. 10

Within this embrace of forces, or what we term the living cell, arises the finite consciousness of animate beings. It is a *confined consciousness*, because it is confined within the sea of the universal consciousness of Absolute Reality. In its more complex state, as in man, this confined consciousness or sensitivity responds to the unity of its own composite nature and to those other forces which it is able to perceive. This finite consciousness of the living organism is likewise continually activated by the inherent consciousness of Absolute Reality of which its own nature consists. There is always the subliminal prompting *to be*. In man,

then, purpose is nothing more than his aspiring to values relatively conducive to the innate urge *to be* and the gratifications which naturally follow.

In mysticism, purpose attains its most exalted state. There is a desire for consciousness of the One or unity with the whole. Actually, however, as long as there remains a realization of the personal self, there is in fact diversity. Such realization of self, as said, stems from the notion of contrast or duality. Since Absolute Reality is selfless, the consciousness of man is not wholly in harmony with it as long as it retains the idea of self.

Is Absolute Reality, though conscious, a chaotic state, since it possesses no specific purpose as do mortals? The function of Being is not chaos. It is supreme majesty in itself, and Absolute Reality is *pure Being*. The consciousness of Absolute Reality reaches into every phase of its ceaseless motion. Even those particles referred to as inanimate matter have consciousness of a kind in their internal responsivity to the nuclear forces of which they consist. The mind of man, in its direction of natural forces, in the imposing of will upon them, is but *superimposing changes* upon the eternally changing. The human mind, together with the intelligences of other living things that are contiguous to it, is the only purposeful cause. All else is a vibratory activity, a universal mind conscious only of the necessity of its own eternal being.



Chapter VII

ILLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

THE CRUX OF the whole belief in a teleological cause, a mind cause, in the universe lies in the assumed *law* and *order* of the universe. Law and order signify control and control implies intent. Orderliness or coherence existing in our lives is due to the control which we exercise in preventing certain conditions or circumstances from becoming otherwise. When we expend the effort to so direct or control anything—that is, to determine how it shall manifest—it is always done with *intention*, with some purpose, such as an end to be attained.

Let us return to the fact that a phenomenon that always conforms to a uniform standard under like conditions is considered to be a natural law. In fact, a classical text on physics defines a “physical law” as: “...the constant relation which exists between any phenomenon and its cause.” But what must be the extent of the *constancy* of some phenomenon before it becomes accepted as a law? Into this problem we now have introduced the element of *time*. Later, we shall consider time more extensively. For the present purpose we shall concede that time is but a product of the human consciousness. Is it then merely human mind that conceives law? Or do laws exist as such without the human consciousness?

If, for analogy, I come upon a man standing motionless beneath a tree and I watch him for an hour, during which time he never moves,

could I go away and declare that I had seen a motionless human being? I would be obliged to say that he was motionless for the duration of the interval that I had observed him. Whether he was always motionless I could not say, for I would not always observe him. Even if I were able to return numerous times and see the man still standing in the same position beneath the tree, I could not assume that he was eternally motionless. Further, I could not tell how long he would remain so. The constancy of law, therefore, is proportionate to the extent that we have perceived any change in a phenomenon.

The whole extent of history, the whole period of human consciousness, measured in time, in comparison to geological and astronomical periods, is infinitesimally small. Consequently, our so called natural laws, or constant and uniform phenomena, appear as such only in relation to the limited memory of man. The changes in these phenomena might be so minute that, in the whole of human experience, they would not be perceivable. A million or a hundred million years before man became conscious of what he now calls natural laws—or the same number of years hence—had they been or would they be the same? This, we cannot know. Until we do, *laws of nature* are but phenomena which are constant only in relationship to man's consciousness. Until we can prove that what we call laws of nature are unchangeable, and will continue so, we cannot logically deduce that they were determined by mind to be just as we now experience them.

What men please to term *order* in nature is accepted as proof of the existence of underlying absolute natural laws. If, however, there is an indication that law is but a psychological phenomenon, that is, the consequence of the human mind, then order, too, is also open to question. Let us begin by thinking of order in connection with objects in space. Ask yourself, Is the uniformity of the appearance of objects—that is, their seeming to be alike—essential to the idea of their order in space? Now, if it can be shown that uniformity is the cause of our having the idea of an order of objects in space, then immediately we might say that order is an inherent quality, that it resides within all objects which look alike. Further, if this were so, we could not fail to perceive order wherever uniform objects were to be seen.

It is necessary, however, to examine this problem of uniformity to see whether or not it actually does contribute to the idea of order of objects in space. (See Illustration, Fig. 11) We will presume that these checkers are all uniform in size, color, and design. However, they have been casually piled up without any concern for their arrangement. As we carefully look at this pile of checkers, do they suggest to us any arrangement of order in space? I think you will agree that they do not, that they appear merely as a haphazard pile, regardless of their uniformity of size and design.



Fig. 11

Now, examine Fig. 12, below. The checkers are all the same size but of *different* colors. Further, instead of being poured into a pile, these checkers have been indiscriminately scattered about. As we look at them, they, too, do not cause us to have any conception of order in space. So, from these two illustrations, we arrive at the conclusion that the uniformity of appearance of objects does not cause us to have any concept of order in space.



Fig. 12

Now, I shall ask you to examine a third arrangement of the checkers. (See Fig. 13) You will see that they have been placed in pairs and that these stacks of two checkers each have been put an equal distance apart. As we study this arrangement, we note that it immediately

suggests to our minds the idea of *order*. Now suppose we use alternate sizes of stacks of checkers. Further, this time we shall place the stacks so close that they touch each other.



Fig 13

See Fig. 14, below. Note that we continue to derive from this arrangement the notion that the checkers assume an order in space.

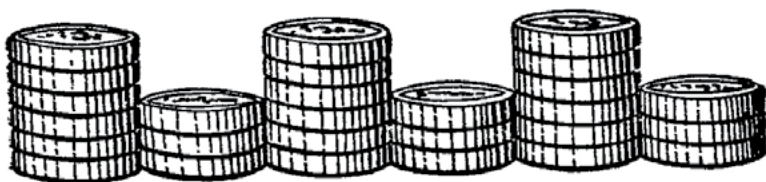


Fig 14

Why do these last two illustrations seem to suggest an order in space? Apparently our conception has something to do with spatial relations of objects. By spatial relations we mean the placing of the objects in relation to each other in space. By analyzing this statement further, it would seem that, if the spatial relationship causes us to have the idea of order, the reason must be that it assumes an arrangement to our minds—an arrangement which we can comprehend. In other words, the arrangement in space must have as much definition to us as have the particular objects or forms themselves.

An object has to us a very definite form or character; that is, it assumes a size, a shape, and perhaps a color. If at any time you cannot clearly perceive these elements—size, shape, color—in connection with an object, you become confused; you are not certain as to the identity of the object, not quite sure as to what you are seeing. Likewise, then, to realize an order of objects in space, it is necessary that we perceive a definite spatial characteristic. This characteristic is a *periodicity of change*. By the term *periodicity of change*, we mean a numbered or measured motion—a measure of change. For an example, let us refer again to

Illustration, Fig. 13, of the stacks of pairs of checkers spaced with an equal distance between them. This equal spacing of the stacks of checkers has engendered within our minds the idea of a *change*. It is a change from the fixed stacks of checkers to the space between the stacks, then again to another stack, and so on. We must not derive from this explanation the idea that the periodicity of change is nothing more than change from something to nothing. A period is whatever the mind considers as a cycle, that is, whatever, to us, appears to have a regularity of beginning and ending. We well know that objects must have a persistence in color, shape, and all the physical qualities, if we are always to recognize them. Obviously, if they were continually changing their color and form, we could not identify them. It is equally necessary that there must be a persistence in change, in periodicity—both in time and space—if we are to have the conception of order.

We are accustomed to think and say that order exists in nature because we perceive a periodicity of the changes in nature. The observation on our part of such periods is really due to the way we are constituted. It is due to the limitations of our objective faculties of perception and the very finiteness of our objective consciousness. For analogy, if you were to board a plane on the equator at high noon and were to travel westward on that plane at the speed of the earth's diurnal motion, or approximately one thousand miles per hour, to you as an observer, the sun would never set! It would always be high noon as long as you were on that plane. The periodicity of day and night with which you were familiar would be gone. The cycle of the daily rising and setting of the sun would no longer exist to you. There would be just high noon. Thus, we say that it is the mind that confers order on things, on circumstances and conditions, by perceiving a periodicity of change in them.

The fact that order is of the mind can be further illustrated by the experience that things which appear chaotic can eventually become orderly without any change in the things themselves. A chaotic arrangement of objects, when they have been merely scattered about, will assume order to us if their pattern, their particular contrast and arrangement, persists for a long enough time.

To better understand this, let us consider the Illustration, Fig. 11, again—with some checkers scattered indiscriminately upon a tabletop. Suppose they were scattered in just this manner on a table in your living-room. The first time you saw them, they would seem quite disarranged, the reason for that being that there would be to you no apparent periodicity of change. In other words, there would be no persistent sign of a beginning or of an ending in their arrangement. You would not know which checkers were the beginning of the arrangement or which were the end. Also there would be no equal alternating of their position in space.

However, if you were obliged to walk through this living-room many times a day and were to glance each time at the scattered checkers on the table, you would eventually find that they were constituting a familiar spatial relationship. You would know just exactly where to look for each checker. They would seem to organize into a comprehensible arrangement. The particular relationship of the checkers to each other and to space would have an identity. As a result, they would *become orderly to you*. As a demonstration of this principle, you could take the same checkers to another table, after so many days of having seen them, and arrange them in exactly the same pattern, knowing that they had become orderly to your mind.

We are also accustomed to think of the repetition of kind as an indication of order. This idea of order—things seemingly repeating themselves in kind—is based wholly on *similarity*. But similarity itself is not reliable. For analogy, horses and cows look alike at a distance. Also, all men, no matter what race or color, appear alike at a distance. A closer examination of these things shows them to be quite dissimilar. Thus, we can say that spatial relationships, such as distance, may alter the idea of similarity, and that, in turn, may affect our idea of order.

In fact, no two things can be truly identical. If two things were alike, they would be one. For example, to be alike, objects would need to occupy the same relative position in what we think of as time and space, and would need as well the same form. Consequently, we would then not perceive two objects but only one.

THE CONSCIOUS INTERLUDE

We may summarize the contents of this chapter by saying that so-called “natural laws” in their constant and uniform phenomena appear as such only in relation to the limited memory of man. Further, “order” is nothing more than what we understand as the persistent relationship between things. Another notion of reality that exerts a tremendous influence upon us is that of *causality*. The content of this notion we shall analyze in our next chapter.



CHAPTER VIII

CAUSALITY

FOR THE MOMENT, let us assume that a cause is that by reason of which some other thing occurs. As we look about us, as you look about the very room in which you are seated, can you see any one thing, any object which, in and by itself, is *cause*? In other words, look for something having no other determinative quality except that which you would say is *cause*. Also ask yourself the question: Has cause a distinct, physical classification by which it can always be recognized just as we would recognize a plant or a mineral or a kind of liquid? We can identify a chair, or a table, or an electric lamp by its form, but does cause have any separate identity to which we can point and say that *that is a cause* and nothing more? I think that you will agree that causes have no such separate identity.

Experience has shown us, if we will reflect about it for a moment, that a cause is always associated with some other thing or condition. At other times that same thing or condition which we have called *causative* may appear to be without cause, showing that the thing itself is not the cause.

Now, I am going to draw a word-picture for you so that you may better understand this point. Imagine a small scale of the type used for weighing letters to determine the amount of postage. You see the letter scale before you and it is in balance. First one end of the beam tips slightly, and then the other end; on one end of the beam is a little tray or platform on which are placed the envelopes to be weighed. We pick up an envelope, into which we have already inserted a letter,

and place it on the tray at one end of the beam. Immediately, we see that the envelope has caused the beam to tip at that end upon which it rests. We lift the envelope up, and once again the beam is in balance. Then, we place the envelope back on the tray, and the beam tips in that direction.

We are going to be very analytical, so once again, we remove the envelope. Upon examining it, we find that there is nothing unique about it. Certainly as we look at the envelope apart from the scale, we cannot say that cause is *an inherent quality* of the envelope. In other words, there is no thing known as cause wrapped up in the envelope; there is also no cause attached to it. Furthermore, when the envelope is away from the scale—not resting upon it—it no longer is a cause. Therefore, we may conclude that a cause is not to be perceived in objects as a part of them; rather, a cause is a relationship that comes to exist between objects insofar as our perception of this relationship is concerned.

As the philosopher, Hume, has said, this relationship of causation appears as a constant conjunction between objects—an object which we call cause, and an object which we call *effect*. Wherever one appears, the other must appear. We may put it this way: Because the nature of one object always seems to contribute to another, we call the former its *cause*.

We are accustomed to speak of cause and effect as though this relationship were a duality. It is thought that cause is one *aspect* of this duality, the effect being the other; of the two, we likewise think of cause as being the active aspect of the relationship. However, no single thing, or any single condition may be the whole cause of any effect. This may seem to contradict what we have said heretofore, but it really does not. In and by itself, each object which we experience—a chair, or the lamp in your room—appears to be at rest, even an object that may be moving across the room. If it continues to present to us the same appearance, it is at rest to our minds insofar as its form is concerned. If that were not so, if an object were quickly changing its form, it would not have a definite appearance to us. We would not be able to see what it is because its form would not be arrested long enough to allow us to give it identity.

Now, when any object which to us has a definite form assumes action, it is not acting on itself; when something is active it will be found to be acting upon something else. Its activity will be in relationship to some other thing. An object is active, therefore, when it appears to be producing a change in something other than itself. The change which it produces in the other thing, or condition, is what we experience as the *effect*. From this, then, we can see that we never have a single cause for any effect; rather, there are *two causes*—the active cause which acts upon something else, and the passive cause which is that “something else.” From these two there comes forth that which we call the *effect*.

So far we have taken the position that the relationship of cause and effect between objects is an established reality, that there are actually such things as causes and effects. In defense of this position some of us might say that we can recall experiencing many effects with their apparent causes; perhaps we could relate how each day, each hour, in numerous ways we have established certain causes for the purpose of realizing desired effects. On the other hand, at times each day, we do experience objects which have a definite existence to us and of which the cause is not apparent. By that I mean that we have not seen the cause, and as a consequence, these objects, to us, appear as detached realities, as having no particular relationship to anything else—as a stone we might find on the roadside. But we hold that all things are vibratory in essence and, therefore, there can be no detached realities.

We have contended that there is a continuous spectrum of energy, octaves of vibrations merging one into the other. There is in nature no separate phenomenon. There are no things that are absolutely independent of everything else. Every manifestation, everything which we can perceive, falls within one of the octaves, the divisions of a vast scale of energy. This cosmic, universal energy goes through a series of changes in its vibratory nature. The changes, the different vibratory rates, are those which we experience as the various realities, that is, the particulars of our everyday world.

Just as there exist no separate realities, we shall find, too, that the relationship of cause and effect between objects does not actually exist. What we conceive of as causes and effects are those realities, those

things of our existence, whose process of development is exposed to us; or, we might say, the notion of cause and effect comes as the result of our seeming to perceive the particular development by which the things had arrived at the form or nature which they appear to have to our objective senses.

This notion of cause and effect arises, then, by our experiencing the apparent relationship by which the particulars of our world exist to us. This relationship from which arise the ideas of cause and effect is a *sequence of phenomena*, the mind grouping the sequence into a whole. For analogy, the mind sees the numeral “3” not as a separate number or identity, but as embodying a progression of lesser factors which led to it, as $1+1+1$.

To further elucidate this point, I am going to refer you to a very simple symbol, the equilateral cross. (See Illustration, Fig. 15, below) As we study this symbol, it appears to be an object, a reality, which, to us, is quite complete in meaning.



Fig. 15

Let us now make a change. (See Illustration Fig. 16) We shall separate the parts that compose this symbol, this cross. We remove the horizontal arm from the vertical one. We now have two separate objects of exactly the same dimensions, there being no apparent relationship between them. Now, let us presume that we make another change; mentally, we pick up the horizontal arm of which the cross was composed and lay it across the vertical one so that the arms have their original form. In other words, we have once again combined the two separate objects. In doing so, one object became more active than the other. The horizontal arm that was picked up and laid across the other one, acted upon it by uniting with it—the result being, of course, the forming of the equilateral cross.

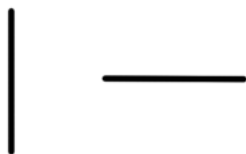


Fig. 16

However, the equilateral cross has now a little different significance to us because we can easily recollect that it consists of two apparently separate objects which have been combined. These two objects are the apparent causes of the cross. The equilateral cross, then, as a symbol to our minds, is no longer a single form; it is, instead, a constitutive form, that is, one constructed of elements. The sequence of changes by which the separate things became the one, we call causes. To the mind, it appears as if these causes have united to produce the effect, which, in this instance, is the symbol of the equilateral cross.

To understand this problem of causality, we must take another and important step further. Before anything can be realized as a sequence, that is, as a series of steps, we first must have in mind some effect toward which these steps appear to be leading. To put it differently, the effect must appear as the definite *end* of a process. We cannot conceive a process until we first have an idea of that to which the process contributes.

Let us further suppose that we experience a so-called effect as contributing to, or being related to, something beyond itself. In that event, then, the so-called effect immediately becomes only an intermediary step, a part of a sequence itself, leading up to a still further end or effect. Thus, there are some effects of which we have knowledge that may appear to us as being the end of a concatenation of causes. Actually, the causes are but a series of changes which we observe leading to the *arbitrary resting point*. It is our minds which have established these resting points—these effects.

For the sake of convenience and custom, we have the habit of referring to causes in nature. However, it is necessary to state that there is no causation in nature, as we are accustomed to believe. The myriad realities about us which we experience are not the result of

causes in nature. There are no fixed steps, no *effects* in nature, no special phenomena that nature is striving to attain. There are no ends for which she has instituted a series of causes. It is our human faculties alone, our finite minds, that conceive in nature, in her universal energy, points of rest which we call effects. Such points of rest we designate as this or that object of which we have knowledge. The changes we are able to perceive in the ceaseless motion of the cosmic energy, we think of as contributing to the points of rest, the effects which our minds have established for us. Consequently, the changes which appear to contribute to these arbitrary effects we designate as their causes.

To better understand this point, I would like you to look at Illustration, Fig. 17. The swinging of the pendulum to and fro represents the oscillating of cosmic energy. It represents *pure being*, which is energy in itself. The oscillation is continuous. There is no rest of any kind in this oscillation. *Being is always active*. In your mind's eye, see this pendulum swinging to and fro silently. Think of the cosmic energy which it represents as pervading everywhere and, in fact, being everything.

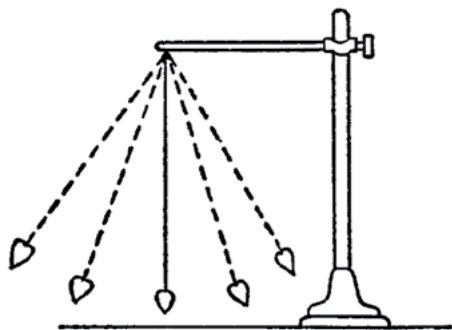


Fig. 17

Now, suppose we were to take a piece of paper and lay it beneath the arc, or the swing of the pendulum. We divide this piece of paper into seven sections, or any number of divisions, and we give numbers in consecutive order to each division. We shall say that we divided this paper into seven parts. We would then have a scale beneath the arc of the pendulum consisting of seven parts, or divisions. With this indicator beneath the swinging pendulum, its motion, or oscillation, would appear to be progressive and retrogressive. In other words,

the pendulum would swing through a series of intervals or divisions, from One on up to Seven, as arbitrarily marked by us. It would then regress, returning down through the intervals to One again; then, it would repeat its going upward once more to Seven, and so forth. We can liken the scale which we have placed beneath the pendulum to the phenomena produced by our senses. In other words, our objective senses make the cosmic motion appear to be divided into points of rest, into specific things, into a series of developments or sequences. Our minds produce *arbitrary* points of rest in the cosmic motion just as the numbers on the scale, which we have placed beneath the swinging pendulum, indicate arbitrary points of rest.

By placing the scale beneath the pendulum, we make its motion seem to be progression from the large to the smaller numbers, and then back again to the larger numbers, and so forth. If we look at the pendulum, it would seem as though each swing of the pendulum were, in itself, a cause leading to a higher numeral. It is as though in passing from division "One," the pendulum had caused division "Two" by entering, and the same when entering division "Three" and so on. What we have done with the scale is to divide its continuous motion into arbitrary points of rest—the numbers which we ourselves established.

The series of periods in the oscillation of the pendulum—namely, the various numbers which we assigned to its arc—are not actual parts of its swing. It is very easy to prove this to ourselves. Just imagine that the scale is removed and there is just the swing of the pendulum, to and fro. The intervals or periods, then, have also disappeared. The various numerals through which the pendulum had seemed to pass—that is, from "One" to "Seven," and from "Seven" to "One," and so forth—no longer exist. The arbitrarily established resting points are now gone. There is also no longer a progression and retrogression of the pendulum. It is neither advancing nor going back. There are, then, no causes or effects produced by its swing, insofar as our minds are concerned. All that is left is the continuous motion of the pendulum, which is representative here of the unceasing cosmic energy.

To the extent that man imagines causes to actually exist, to that extent is he relatively causative in his own life; but such causes in fact

do not exist in nature. Looking about us, we perceive what appears to be a great variety of particulars—all the things of everyday, and also we observe what we call *natural causes*. So, in our affairs, in our living, we organize these things and these ‘natural causes’; we bring them together into a sequence of movement of our own liking and into a state which we want to realize. We make this object, or that phenomenon, combine to produce an arbitrary resting point, an arbitrary finality. The resting points which our mind conceives for these things which we have combined are what we know in our daily affairs as *effects*.

Thus the whole idea of the causation of man’s acts—that he is causative—is but an illusion. What we think are the definite particulars of our existence and what we think are the causes in nature, which we combine to produce a series or sequence of our choice, are not as we imagine them to be. Man, therefore, in considering himself causative, is resorting to a grand illusion, an illusion built up from other illusions. In all of our presumed causes each day, each hour, we are actually causing *nothing to be*, in the purely metaphysical sense or the purely cosmic sense. We are merely *presuming* to use so-called natural causes and so-called particular things, which cosmically have really no existence.

As mortals, we are so constituted that we cannot in our living escape the notion that causes do exist in nature. Our very receptor senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, and so on, contribute to such ideas as things being at rest, or as having actual ends. So long as we are as we are, it is necessary to carry out the illusion of being causative, if we are to live on this plane. But, in being causative, from our point of view, let us at least confine ourselves to the use of natural illusory causes. In other words, let us confine ourselves as much as possible to what seem to be the causes in nature. In that way we will deceive ourselves less, and we will at least be placing the value upon our lives that is consistent with the kind of beings we are.

Time and space seem to be specific causes; their nature produces, or apparently brings about, various conditions in our lives. Have they a dependable reality? We shall now inquire into their content.



Chapter IX

MYSTERIES OF SPACE AND TIME

UPON FIRST CONSIDERATION, it might seem that space and time are very self-evident realities, needing little or no explanation. There seems to be no mystery about them because they are so commonplace in our lives. Space and time, it would appear, arise out of our daily observations, just as do such other common realities as the sun, the moon, and the stars. Consequently, the best approach for an analysis of space and time is the empirical one, that is, an analysis of our sense experience of them. What do we mean by space and time? Let us first omit all the abstract definitions of the subject of which we have knowledge. We shall start with space as we ordinarily discern it, that is, *perceptual* space as it appears in common experience.

As we look about us, do we detect in the room what we understand is space? I am going to presume that each of us perceives in the respective rooms in which we are situated our understanding of space; in other words, each one experiences in the room such conditions as give rise in his mind to the idea of space. As we move about, for example, we see a number of objects quite familiar to us: the light fixtures, certain articles of furniture, and of course ourselves. We perceive these things as substance; they have specific form to us, a definite shape, color and texture. We further note that the nature of the objects apparently extends along three planes; that is, the objects seem to have width, height, and length. We cannot question the existence of such objects

as we perceive in the room; especially is this so if our perceptions or experiences have been confirmed by others, if they seem to see the same objects as we do.

Now, do we perceive any other conditions within the room with the same certainty as we do the objects which surround us? We must answer that we do perceive a series of hiatuses, or gaps, between the objects in the room—a state which we shall call, for the moment, *nothing*. That state or area is really a condition into which, it seems to us, various objects, such as are in the room, could be moved or could have their existence. From this, then, it appears that space has a very positive content—just as positive as objects. By “positive” we mean that what seems to be nothing equals something, or that which is. Our ordinary perceptions or experiences confer a kind of reality upon space, making it just as real to us as the chair, the light fixtures, or the rug upon the floor.

Let us prepare for some abstractions. We shall begin by asking a question. Can we see space if no objects are simultaneously perceived with it? In other words, were we to look about and not see such familiar things as the closet door, our bookshelf, or even ourselves, would we then be able to realize space? The answer must be No.

To prove this, we close our eyes a few seconds. With our eyes closed, we do not experience space. True, we experience a state of nothing, but we will note that it lacks the quality of dimension. There does not seem to be any length or height or depth, and ordinary space seems to have such qualities. Space, therefore, appears to require dimension in order to be realized. These dimensions are determined by the comparison of objects with what we call *space*. To determine distance between the objects, it is necessary to arrive at the so-called dimensions of space.

Actually, then, space is not positive, it is a negative contrast to what appears as the positive reality of matter. Most certainly, perceptual space depends upon matter for our realization of it, rather than having any existence of its own. What we call *space*, then, really is just the absence of what we perceive as matter; therefore, it is really a negative contrast with reality. To use an analogy, we do not say that we hear silence, because silence does not exist in itself. Silence is simply our

not hearing sound; so, too, perceptual space is just our not perceiving matter. It has no content in itself.

There is also what is known as *conceptual* space. This has a wholly conceptual existence. It lies entirely within the province of the mind. An example of it is abstract geometry. In abstract geometry, one may have two or as many dimensions as the mind can conceive. When man stops creating such conceptions of space, when he ceases thinking about them, then they cease to exist.

Modern physics has designated four distinct conceptions of space. Two of these we have considered—the *perceptual* and the *conceptual*. The third kind is known as physical space. It was formerly the space of physics. It was conceived as that state or condition in which objects were thought to float or move. The fourth kind of space is known as *absolute*. This space was declared by Newton to explain the motion of planetary bodies. It was declared to hold masses at fixed points from which distances could be measured.

It must be noted that the first two kinds of space are wholly individual. They depend upon the conceptions of the individual, the ideas which he has or, as in the case of perceptual space, the actual participation of the individual—what he sees or what he feels as constituting space. On the other hand, the physical and the absolute space may be called *collective*, since they were believed to apply to everyone, whether he conceives them or whether he actually perceives them.

For a moment, let us analyze the general acceptance of the idea of time—that is, as time appears to us as one of the common experiences. We declare that time has three states—*past*, *present*, and *future*. Ordinarily, the state of our immediate consciousness is referred to as the *present*. As you read these words, you would say that they are of the *present*, because it seems you are immediately conscious of them. That which precedes the immediate consciousness, or the present moment, we refer to as the *past*. Further, that which we will be conscious of beyond the present moment is referred to as the *future*. These three states seem very, very simple to us; they are common experiences of each conscious moment. But is it as simple as it seems? Has time any objectivity? Does

time exist as a reality outside of ourselves in the same way as it would appear that matter or objects exist?

From our experience it is quite evident that time is not made up of images; it is not definitely related to objects. We cannot particularly associate time with any constant group of impressions which register on our consciousness and which originate externally. Time, then, is concerned more with *consciousness* itself. The extent of time is not due to the various sense qualities. Time is a period of awareness, a state of realization. What then gives consciousness its dimensions, those factors which we refer to as past, present, and future? We say that an event which precedes the present, the immediate state of consciousness, is of the past. Where was *consciousness* when it engaged the past? Certainly consciousness at that time was not disassociated from the body. When we are conscious of the past, there is also a state of awareness. So we can say that awareness prevails equally for a past event as for a present one.

As stated in a previous chapter, ideas or thoughts arise from sensations in our consciousness, the sensation having been produced by impressions received in the consciousness. If this is so, then sensations which cause the idea of the past event in our consciousness are just as *current*, as an active agent, as those which cause us to have the idea of the present.

Consciousness is not continuous during the conscious state even though it may seem to be. We experience consciousness like the flow of a river before us. To use the analogy of a river: there may be many objects floating upon it. We shall call these objects *events*. Some of the events are ahead, and others are behind. Whether they are ahead or behind depends upon the sequence which they seem to assume to us, upon the order which they have to our perception. Obviously, if all the objects floating in the river were united, they would appear to be one; there would be no *conception* of anything being ahead or behind. Ideas in the flow of consciousness assume such a sequence. This assumption is due to minute gaps in the sensations of consciousness, gaps of which we are not aware but which are sufficient to interrupt what would be an otherwise continuous flow. These gaps cause a sequence; and the

sequence, in turn, constitutes our conception of past, present, and future.

A first principle of space and time to be realized is that neither of them is wholly perceptual. In other words, neither of them is wholly dependent upon our senses for its realization. Time and space are also products of conception—of notions. They arise, as well, out of our evaluation of the experiences of our senses. Since we do not objectively see time and since space has no positive existence (or if we presume that they have no reality externally), obviously then the notions we have of them must be in part a product of the mind. This conceptual aspect of space and time is not realized by many persons. They do not realize that their mind is one of the principal factors in creating space and time, and also in creating the numerous limitations which we have come to associate with them. We will now endeavor to consider how misconceptions of the nature of space and time distort our estimate of existence.

The problem of space and time is not recent in history. The ancients ruminated upon it for centuries. Many of their ideas with respect to this subject remain in effect today. They continue to contribute to our understanding of these mysteries. Aristotle states that time is generally thought to be movement and change. Each thing has movement and change within itself in whatever place it may be; but time, he points out, is alike everywhere with all things. There is no variation of time. Change, as we know from experience, can be faster with some things, and slower with others; time cannot vary—because time itself determines fastness and slowness. That which moves but little in much time is *slow*; that which moves much in a short time is *fast*.

It is consequently evident, Aristotle continues, that time itself, then, is not movement. Though it is not movement, it nevertheless cannot exist apart from change. When the state of mind (consciousness) does not change, or when we do not notice the change of consciousness, then it is not possible for us to realize a lapse of time. The reason for this is that we have connected the earlier *now* with the later one, and we fail to perceive the intervals between these *nows*.

Though time is not movement and is not change, yet it is not independent of them. For example, when it is dark, Aristotle tells us, even if we experience nothing through the body—that is, no external impressions—if we, however, experience the movement of the soul, or the impressions of self, we then think of time because we have that realization of movement. We recognize time only by distinguishing movement. This distinction is but a *before* and an *after*. Time lapses when we perceive the *before* and the *after* of movement, in other words—intervals. This movement is conceived as two different kinds of *now*, and the mind distinguishes between the *nows* by movement. Time is not movement; it is the *number* of movement, the intervals of it. More or less, Aristotle continues, number is time. We refer you to Illustration, Fig. 18, for a schematic diagram of the Aristotelian conception.

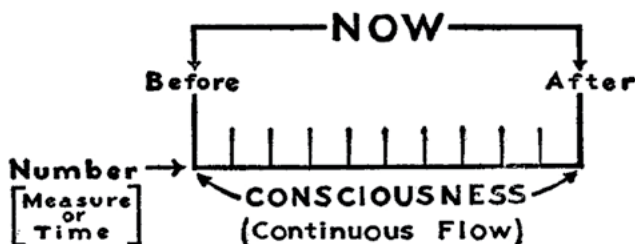


Fig. 18

The first challenging thoughts on the subject of non-being, or space, were presented by Parmenides, a Greek philosopher born in the 5th century B.C. of a noble and wealthy family. He was of the Eleatic school, a school named after the region Elea from which sprang a group of thinkers proclaiming the unity of the universe. His ideas were for centuries the incentive for speculation upon the subject of being and reality. Parmenides said that we must assume that being is, that it has a basic reality throughout. It is improper for being not to be. It is incredible, he contended, that nonbeing could have any kind of existence. He proclaimed that being is without beginning, that it is indestructible, universal and ubiquitous, existing alone and immovable. He held that being could never be otherwise than what it is, for it is continuous.

Though we do not fully agree with him, we see that he anticipated the modern conception of the indestructibility of matter. Parmenides said that he will not “permit thee to say that being came from non-being.” He took the position that, first, it is impossible for the human mind to think of non-being or of nothing. After all, even thought itself has certain definite qualities. Second, what would have started non-being, a state of nothing, to produce that which *is*, or being? He held that being can only emerge from itself.

Parmenides further tells us that being cannot be divided, for there is nothing which can come between and destroy its cohesion. There is no such thing as space by which being could be separated. Being is in contact everywhere with its own nature. Being is not scattered universally; it is not compounded of parts. Parts would imply separation, and if it were separated, there would need to be space, and space would need to be non-being, and the whole premise of Parmenides’ argument is the denial of non-being. He further relates that thought, and that by which thought exists—namely, the mind and the body—are one and the same, that is, basically they are *being*. Therefore, even if one imagines such a condition as non-being, the very thought by which he comes to such a conclusion is being itself. Being is like a sphere, equally distant from the center at every point. Being cannot decrease in one area of a sphere any more than it can increase in another area of it. Again, Parmenides anticipated a modern conception which we shall consider later.

Saint Augustine, Christian church father and philosopher, discoursed upon the subject of time in the eleventh book of his renowned work, *The Confessions*. Time, he contends, has real significance only for the function of the inner experience. It is merely a measure and comparison of the experiences of the world. It is, therefore, according to Saint Augustine, a conception of the mind. We, however, transfer this measure or this notion from the mind to objective things, and confer upon it a reality which it actually does not have. Saint Augustine further relates that in the divine sense, there is but eternity; there is no such thing as divine time. In eternity there are not those changes which men have come to designate *past*, *present*, and *future*.

“In God all things are ordered and fixed, nor doth He anything suddenly counsel. All events from eternity being pre-known.” We discern this to mean that time is changeable, but that eternity is unchangeable. Therefore, time could not have existence in the divine realm.

Thus, for thousands of years, men have philosophized upon their experiences with space and time. In the beginning, they deductively proceeded to seek out particular theories of explanation. With the development of science, emphasis was placed upon inductive reasoning—the proceeding from the particular, the fact, to general conceptions. Science at first would only accept, with respect to space and time, the fact that the human mind apparently cannot escape having the notions of space and time. Science, then, sought to enlarge upon such particulars by adding others to them, hoping to demonstrate them as they proceeded. In other words, what are the factual contributions to space and to time? What causes humans to have such conceptions?

Since it seemed that space and time had at least some perceptual nature, the matter was referred to that realm of science known as *psychology*, with the cooperation of physiology, of course. Psychology asked: What are the causes that produce those sensations which, in turn, are formed into the perceptions and conceptions of space which we have? Are we so constituted as human beings that the concept of space follows as a necessity of what we are? William James, classical psychologist, in his early work in that field, stated that certain sensations of the body suggested, in themselves, spatial qualities. For example, feelings of emptiness or suffocation seem to change the volume of our being, as though we had actually diminished in volume. We know from experience that a pulsating headache causes our head to feel as though it had actually expanded.

Our sensations also include the element of *intensity*. By that we mean that some sensations are more emphatic than others. There is a variation in their emphasis. In sound, this is noticeable as loud and soft; in light, as brilliance; in smell, as a delicate or a strong odor. There is also in sensations the element of *extensity*. Extensity is experienced as

volume in sensations. Thus, for example, loud sounds have an enormity of feeling. It seems to us, as James points out, almost impossible that a cannon explosion could occur in a small room; it seems to have too great an extensity. Then, again, when sounds do not appear directional, they seem to be so extensive as to fill all space. Glowing surfaces likewise suggest roominess, or more volume, than non-glowing ones. A glowing iron seems to be voluminous throughout, and seems to expand itself to the eye.

Sensations are cumulous; they build up their effect. A number of sensations are so combined as to give the suggestion of space. Thus we look at a shady corner, one in which the shadows are perhaps actually present only on one of the walls of the corner and on the floor. However, the whole area between the walls and all of the floor area takes on the same sensations and suggests the idea of shadows.

Ewald Hering, German psychologist and physiologist, was of the opinion that sensations within the head itself involved dimension. If we change the direction of our attention with our eyes closed, we then have the sensation of dimensions. Previously, we stated that with our eyes closed, we did not realize dimensions. There is a distinction to be made here. To engender the idea of dimensions with the eyes closed, we must think in the terms of direction. If we think of the top of a house, visualizing it with the eyes closed, and then suddenly think of the cellar of that house, and then think of the extreme right, and next of the extreme left of the house, and then think of a distance far in front of the house, we will feel slight sensations of moving, says Professor Hering.

It is theorized that this is due to the semicircular canals in the ear, which are, for analogy, like the carpenter's spirit level. The fluid in this canal is exceptionally sensitive to any minute muscular movement. When we think of directions with our eyes closed, there is a slight stimulation of the semicircular canals which, in turn, produce these sensations of movement and the corresponding idea of dimensions.

There is also a subjective translation of the sensations of spatial feeling. In other words, the feelings we have of space at times vary, not

because of any external source, but because of the mechanism of our own beings. This variation depends upon where objects, as external agents, may happen to be brought into contact with our senses. To illustrate this: If you move the tip of your tongue around in your mouth, the cavity of your mouth seems quite large. But, if you look at the cavity of your mouth in a mirror, it is quite small. Again, we know that the movement of a loose tooth seems enormous.

The proximity or distance between the pressure points on the cutaneous surface of the body also accounts for varying sensations of spatial feeling. This is proved by the following little experiment. Spread the points of a compass to a distance of about a half-inch. Then, bare the arm, and draw the compass points across the flesh from the palm of the hand downward and inside the arm. If you close your eyes while this is done, you will experience what appear to be variations of distance between the points of the compass. It is as though the points were at times closer together than at others. Actually, the points will be equally distant at all times. This difference in feeling is due to the variations of the pressure points, causing the sensations of varying spatial feeling. The pressure points on the tongue are very close together; accordingly, a small object in the mouth, such as a seed, is brought in contact with several pressure points at one time, causing an accumulation of sensations, and adding to the *extensity* of feeling.

What we call space has stimuli which may vary in three regards. First, there is the direction from which the stimulus is received. It is either up or down, or right or left. Second, there is the extent, the size of the stimulus at right angles to its direction. For instance, something is coming from a distance ahead of us. The extent of it is determined by how far at right angles to the direction it may be realized. Third, the distance or depth of the stimulus becomes another dimension.

To better understand the perception of space, we must understand the perception of dimension. The retina of the eye is essentially a two-dimensional curved surface—concave or dislike. In theory, then, any object which is seen should not cause the sensation of distance, or the third dimension, since the retina itself has only two dimensions!

How can a two-dimensional object produce the sensation of a third dimension? Furthermore, it is a physiological fact that if an object is far or near, it nevertheless stimulates the *same area* on the retina. For a clearer understanding, see Fig. 19. The O2 represents a far object; O1 represents a near object. However, you will notice that on the retina, indicated by the letter R, the same area is stimulated. Consequently, from the point of view of the structure of the eye, we should not be able to perceive depth.

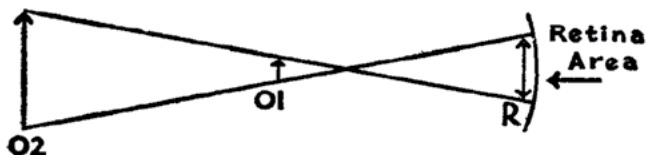


Fig. 19

It is theorized that the perceptions of far or near objects are learned through reaching and the consequent muscular responses which eventually become cues to suggest depth. Gradually, visual cues are acquired until they become habitual. It is agreed that there are seven principal cues which convey the conception of depth and solidity.

First Cue—relative height. A familiar figure standing before an unfamiliar figure will help us to have a conception as to whether the unfamiliar one is tall or short, far or near. How this constitutes a visual cue is shown in Illustration, Fig. 20. If you cover the right-hand side of the illustration (the figure of the man with the pole before him), it will appear that the fish is exceptionally small because you are measuring it by the hand, which is a familiar thing. However, if you uncover the figure of the man, the fish, then, becomes exceptionally large because the human figure is a familiar one.

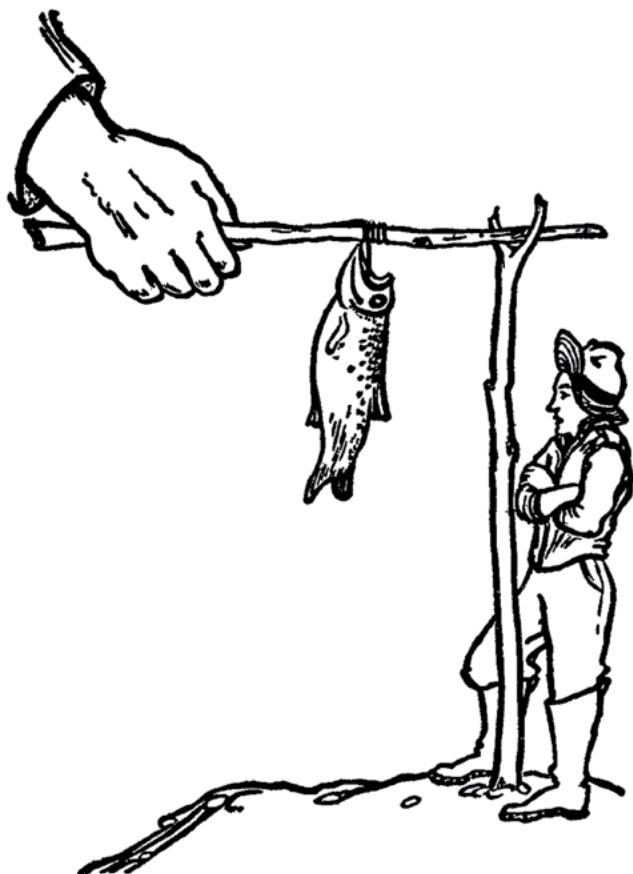


Fig. 20

Second Cue—*interposition*. This is similar to the first cue. It involves the placing of a familiar object before several other objects, or before one.

Third Cue—*apparent size*. This, too, has a relation to the first cue.

Fourth Cue—*clearness*. A dim or vague mass suggests distance. Conversely, that which is distinct seems near. We all are familiar with the apparent nearness of mountains at a high altitude, where they seem very sharp and distinct.

Fifth Cue—*color*. Light waves may become distorted and thus cause an alteration in the size and depth of an object.

Sixth Cue—*light and shadows*. This principle is used in drawing to suggest a sphere, an oval, a depth, etc.

Seventh Cue—*apparent motion*. Changing the direction from which the stimulus comes may change the appearance of the object and its relation to us, that is, cause it to seem to be near or distant. An example of this is an eye moving through space, such as our viewing of objects from a moving train. The flatness, the unnatural appearance of Egyptian art, especially during the early dynasties, is due to the lack of understanding of these seven principles of perspective. One of the greatest contributors to our knowledge of this principle was the celebrated artist, Leonardo daVinci. He spent considerable time on a study of the physiology of the eyes and the science of optics, and his various findings are quoted even in modern texts on psychology. The two eyes present two different pictures to our consciousness. One picture of the object is a little to the left; the other is a little to the right. Thus, this binocular vision aids our cues to depth.

Modern psychology believes that the conception of time arises out of internal rhythm—such as is provided by the respiration, the digestion, and the heartbeat. If one stimulus follows another too closely, then the two of them are accepted just as one; we cannot distinguish between them. On the other hand, if the sequence of the stimuli is delayed, we sense a difference, an interval between them. We then are conscious of what we call a “period of time.”

Now, it is held that we sense the rhythmic beats of certain of the systems of our own being. We are conscious of this interval between these various beats and they are grouped together subconsciously; they serve to give us a sense of *period*, or elapsed time. We know how accurately some persons, and, indeed, most people to some extent, can tell time without mechanical devices such as clocks. This ability is due, in part, to the rhythm of one's own being. Visceral anesthesia is advanced as a proof of this. When the organs in the abdominal region are anesthetized, the subject has no sensation of hunger; there is general apathy and not much fatigue. When the subject does not

experience these visceral sensations, he has an absolute loss of natural sense of time.

Physicists and astronomers of recent years have come to alter the conventional conception of space and time. They have added new versions. First, they have bound space and time into a *four-dimensional* continuum. This means that the two are said to be continuously related, having a common relationship. Space has three dimensions—length, breadth, depth—and a fourth dimension which is time itself. Science claims that the latter can be no longer separated from the other dimensions. We shall consider the fourth dimension in our next chapter. The following remarks, however, touch but lightly upon the ideas of modern scientists such as Eddington and Jeans, who have dealt extensively with this subject.

Let us assume that two men meet twice. In the interval between their first and second meeting, one of the men has traveled out into the universe—into interstellar space. Was the time between the meetings the same for *both* men? Our first conclusion might be that it was. But, according to the new scientific conception of space and time, the answer must be *No*.

This explanation is given: We know from the laws of physics that a body traveling at great velocity in interstellar space increases its mass; and, at the same time, there is produced an internal inertia, or a slowing down of its inner nature. Thus, the man who did not travel during the interval between their two visits would have the quicker consciousness of the two. His consciousness would not have been altered. The one who traveled at great velocity, according to this law of physics, would have had his thoughts, his mental processes, his whole consciousness slowed down considerably. Therefore, his conception of time would be considerably less. Consequently, the time for each man would not be the same. This is one indication of the effect of space upon time.

Eddington says that, in relation to space, we say that *we are here*; and, then, all else is elsewhere. In relation to time, we are accustomed to say that we perceive the instant as *Now*. Beyond the Now is the future, and before the Now, as we have said, is the past. Roemer, Danish astronomer, discovered in the seventeenth century that light travels

at great velocity. His discovery upset our assumptions of the Now, that is, that an event occurs at the instant we see it. Light takes time to travel! Events perceived as Now, actually occurred at a different Now, elsewhere. We look up to see a star explode, causing what is known astronomically as a *nova*. The light that we see in our Now, left the star perhaps three hundred light-years ago. There is, therefore, no absolute Now in relation to any event. There always must be a calculation of the interval needed between the Now of the event and the Now of our consciousness.

Are space and time infinite? It was once held by scientists—and not many years ago—that space was unlimited. At the same time they conceded that it was impossible to conceive of an unlimited space. The Einstein theory, which is yet under attack from several sources, offers a new concept of space. It affirms that space is *finite*, but that it has no end. Space is called: “finite and unbounded.” This seems to be an incongruity. How can that which is finite be unbounded at the same time? We ordinarily think of that which is infinite as being unlimited.

To comprehend this better, let us think of a line forming a circle. A line in this sense is finite, for the circle it forms has certain limits; however, on the other hand, the line is endless inasmuch as it forms a circle, and has neither beginning nor end. Next, let us think of a sphere. It, too, is finite; that is, it has certain limits. Yet that sphere is unbounded, for it has no boundaries. This sphere is the conception of our universe, but with certain important additional ideas. We now remove a dimension; we think that there is nothing within this sphere, that it is just a skin—that is, it is surface. It is concluded, then, that space has no boundaries. What is cannot be bounded by what *is not*. We say that a baseball crosses the baseball diamond, or field, in so many seconds; in so doing, it has traversed a certain number of yards. To the motion of the baseball there are neither yards nor seconds in relation to the field. These are really products of the human mind.

It is interesting here to relate the Rosicrucian metaphysics with regard to time and space. In general, Rosicrucians postulate that there are three universal principles which affect all things in the universe, that is, the universe which we are able to perceive. These three

principles are time, space, and mind. Time is held to be a duration of consciousness, the interval of awareness; Rosicrucians do not accept it as having any external reality whatsoever. Dreams are given as an analogy. An event in a dream that may be realized in three or four seconds might take many minutes or even hours to experience in the wakened state, showing that the experience is one of *consciousness*. Time is the measurement or the extent of consciousness. The measurement of time is accomplished by assigning arbitrary statistical units to the flow of consciousness. The hand of a clock passes numerals which signify seconds or minutes. Each of these are arbitrary stops which we apply to the apparent continuous flowing of consciousness. To interpret the flow, we count these interruptions and call them “units of time.”

Space, say the Rosicrucians, appears as an area between the objects which we perceive and ourselves; it falsely conveys the notion of having a very definite reality. On the other hand, as the Rosicrucian metaphysics points out, if we look at a distant object through a telescope, what then happens to space? It appears to be annihilated because the object is brought immediately to the fore of our consciousness, and the perception of space between ourselves and the object does not exist. This experience shows that space is not a reality, but is related to our sense of perception and is purely an illusion. In fact, the Rosicrucian looks upon time and space as being illusions of the objective mind—but yet not to be denied, for they are essential. They serve us, but we must always keep their true nature in mind so that we will not be enslaved by them. The Rosicrucian metaphysics stresses that illusions have no existence in the Cosmic.

We would like to conclude this chapter with a few personal views upon the subject. We conceive that consciousness is the absolute nature of time and space. They spring from consciousness. The concepts of self, of externality, or matter, begin with, and depend upon, perception and the sensitivity of the consciousness. What we call extension, or the dimensions of matter, are but the extent of the character of our sense impressions. We visually perceive what seems to be a certain substance. When we have reached the limits of our ability to perceive such impressions, then, of course, it appears as though that object has

changed, or its form has ended. That, then, is likewise the end of the dimensions of the object. Space is a formless perception; it has no particular qualification of the senses; yet, it seems to have dimension. The measure of space is a measure of the state of our non-perception, that is, the measure of that condition between objects or the things which we are capable of perceiving as having a mass or substance.

Time is the applying of change to the state of consciousness. You may divide the duration of consciousness into separate mechanical changes by such mechanical devices as the clock. You can divide it, if you will, into intervals. A number of intervals is the amount of time. A really long life is not the one measured in years, but rather it is one having many changes of consciousness, a variety of experiences. We have said that time consists of the changing of consciousness. Therefore, the more experiences and the more changes, the longer is a person's life. To live long, then, is to be observant, to study, to have concepts and experiences—these are natural changes of consciousness. A life is not to be determined by the number of years, but by whether there have been few changes of consciousness, a modicum of experience, or whether there have been frequent changes of consciousness. Numerous experiences, the result of observation and thought, expand the universe to us; they crowd it with things, with realities. They give us more to perceive and more to conceive.

It is appropriate that we next consider that mysterious realm, with which self has to contend, the fourth dimension.



Chapter X

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

IN A PRECEDING chapter we gave consideration to the nature of space. What did we find that the three common dimensions represent to the mind? They signify (do they not?) the extent to which an object, which we perceive, fills space—or the extent of space itself. I see an object. It has a certain unity to my mind, that unity is the result of determining the limits of its qualities. The object may be a certain hue of green. Where that hue begins and ends is the direction in which it extends; the green outlines its limits, the limits of its spatial dimensions.

Spatial dimensions exist to only two of our senses, sight and touch. In touch, spatial dimension is likewise the result of perceiving the limits of certain sensations which an object has to our sense of feeling. The spatial dimensions of a piece of ice to the touch end where we cease to feel the ice—at the point that the change occurs to our sense of feeling.

The common dimensions, then, such as inches, feet and yards, are merely arbitrary units of measurement. We have said that they are the measurement of the space that an object occupies. However, we have assumed that space itself is a reality. I look across my desk and I say that there, beyond my desk, is space. How would I describe such space? I could say that it is a state of nothing. Such is purely negative, however, for nothing derives its existence only from the absence of a positive condition. Nothing is the absence of something. So we must first have something by which to determine that space exists.

We can agree on an absence of space as that of an area which is completely filled with some kind of substance. As we have previously said, we cannot perceive space without its relationship to some reality, or to some notion of an object to which it can be compared. We measure space as well as objects. We measure by determining the extent of those sensations which we call *space*—it is limited by our seeing or feeling something that appears to have a substance.

Even substances or the realities which we measure, and which have dimensions to our sight and touch, are purely relative. We know that the qualities of things, as their color or texture, do not exist externally as we perceive them. The color *red* is but a particular wave length of the solar spectrum that produces the sensation of red to our consciousness. What we feel as a rough surface is a mass of energy that, to our tactile sense, conveys impressions which we interpret as rough. Space and the dimensions are actually but limits of our consciousness. At least they are such insofar as we are accustomed to relating them to the mass of an object. In fact, we know that there are no voids in nature or a continuum of space. Various energies pass through and are detected in what, to sight and the sense of touch, appears as space.

Dimensions and space are convenient illusions which we have come to accept almost as realities. They serve us in that they make realistic certain phenomena arising out of the structure of our eyes and of our senses of sight and touch generally.

Is the fourth dimension an illusion, as well as the other three dimensions, or is it a reality? Since the earliest conception of the term, various definitions have been given to it. Many are from quite different premises. Some are highly occult and visionary, others are philosophical and mystical, and still others are presented from the wholly materialistic and scientific point of view. Einstein's theory of relativity and mass-energy relationship laid the foundation for the scientific explanation of the fourth dimension.

The moment we begin to consider events, the factor of the fourth dimension begins to emerge. This factor is time. Happenings or events, most certainly, appear at least to have as much reality or existence to us as the things of which they are composed. However, we cannot wholly

distinguish events apart from space—that is, location or vice versa. For example, two automobiles collide in an accident at four o'clock on Wednesday morning. Such information is hardly complete without incorporating the facts of the place where the accident occurred, as at the intersection of First and Main Streets. If we designate a location, we are immediately concerned with the common dimensions, for each location or place must have them if it can be perceived by us.

The opposite is, of course, likewise true. In describing the occurrence of an event, the time of its happening must be given to complete it. Thus, there is a space-time factor. Time becomes the fourth dimension. Ordinarily, we are accustomed to assign three-dimensional sections to time itself. These are past, present (the now), and future. It is difficult for us to conceive of any circumstances where two of these sections of dimensions of time could not exist, that is, where there could only be, for example, now. However, such is possible.

It was the German mathematician of Russian birth, Dr. H. Minkowski, who first demonstrated the remarkable relation between the four-dimensional space-time unit as suggested by relativity and the three dimensions commonly given in geometry. It had long been the practice even of physicists to consider space and time, for all practical purposes, as being separate, as most of us do today. It was Dr. Minkowski who brought out the fact that what we ordinarily refer to as space or distance is affected by time factors and time is likewise affected by space.

To make this a little more comprehensible, I think we will agree that we cannot speak of left or right except in relation to the instant of the observer in space. As you look at a person opposite you, his left is in a different position from your left side. If you change places with that individual, then your left side is in a different direction from what it was an instant before. If you lived on Mars, then the earth would appear upward and above you. On the earth, Mars is in an upward direction from you. You speak of Australia as being the "land down under" and yet the native of Australia looks up to his sky and you look up to yours. But you are looking in a different direction. Up and down, then, are in relation to the instant of the observer in space. The instant is the

time factor and the unit of space-time. Time and space no longer can be thought of as each having an independent existence. Rather, they are depending one upon the other, and also depending upon the point of the observer. That observer can be either a man or an instrument.

Each individual's perception of space depends upon the speed at which he is moving at that instant. Objects give the appearance of diminishing, of actually contracting in size, when moving fast. If you are seated in a train that is stationary and you are facing a window while an express train passes at high speed, that train, even though it may be longer than the train in which you are seated, will appear much shorter because the speed at which it moves seems to contract it.

Time is tied fast to our observation of light reaching us from objects in so-called space. The premise of this scientific theory is the constancy of the speed of light. In relative vacuums established in a laboratory, it has been demonstrated that light does not vary its velocity of 186,000 miles per second. By the use of the word now, we mean that of which we are immediately conscious, or the present state. Let us imagine a star ten light-years distant from the earth. A light-year is the distance light travels in one year at 186,000 miles per second. We look into the heavens and see that star suddenly flare into great brilliance for a few seconds. To us the event is now—but time, as we have said, is related to space. It took that flash, which we see, ten years to reach earth. The event actually happened ten years ago!

The time of the event, the now, is therefore related to our position in so-called space. Whether we are on earth or are located on the same star will determine the factor of present or past.

Now, let us imagine that there are intelligences on another star which is twelve light-years away from the one on which the explosion occurred. To beings on this other star, the event will be two years in the future after we on the earth had seen the flash. Thus, the event will be *past* on the star where it occurred, *present* on earth, and *future* to one where the light has not yet reached.

Einstein said, "Every reference body has its own particular time—unless we are told the reference body to which the statement of time

refers, there is no meaning in the statement of the time of an event.” This means that the time of a thing’s occurring is dependent upon our position in space and the interval that it takes for us to become aware of the thing.

Past and future would not exist, insofar as events in space are concerned, if our reference body were moving as fast as light. Let us further imagine our being in a solar system moving through astronomical space at a velocity of light, 186,000 miles per second. Whatever might happen anywhere in that system and which would be dependent upon light for our perception of it, would be of the now to us. There would be no time factor, no delays. All bodies would be moving at the same speed as light.

Time, however, must also be related strictly to the functions of consciousness. What we conceive as time or the relation of events to ourselves can likewise be explained in relation to the duration of a period of consciousness. If there were a constant flow of consciousness, all would be the present or the now to us, regardless of where the event occurred. However, there are hiatuses of consciousness, momentary blackouts. Further there is the oscillation of consciousness, a change from one conception to another, from one idea to another. Time is the measurement of these periods of our consciousness of anything. Just as feet and yards are arbitrary measurements of our perceiving of an object in space, so seconds and minutes are the determination of the duration of our consciousness of an experience.

If it were not for memory and imagination we would not be able to divide consciousness into sections of past, present, and future. We would experience something and it would be of the now. Then our consciousness would perceive something else which might merge with it and likewise be the now at that moment. It is memory and imagination which makes it possible to alternate between the impressions that are being newly received and those being recalled and reassembled. They allow for the evaluation of the difference. Memory impressions, while being realized, are of course of the now also. However, there is the psychological process—not wholly as yet understood—by which the normal mind can distinguish between the now of memory impressions

and those immediately perceived through the senses. The interval of *now* is purely relative to units of time which man has invented. A dream, as we have had occasion to say, of a minute's duration may be of an event that actually took an hour to occur in a waking state.

From the previous statement that the three dimensions were utilized to ascertain the extent of the form of matter or space, we can now understand that the dimensions but measure the range of consciousness of particular sensations. They do not give identity to the sensations, for the consciousness may be aware of various sensations of matter or "forms" that when measured would have like dimension.

The Rosicrucian philosophy points out that the three dimensions do not give us knowledge of reality of matter because for that we are dependent upon the fourth dimension, or *consciousness*. All matter is a reality. But its essence and the impulses it imparts are dependent upon consciousness for a realization of their existence. In other words, they do not become realities to man until the sensations generated by the impulses are realized by the consciousness. When the consciousness has the "idea" of a certain sensation, or a combination of them as composing an idea, and that idea is "form" or "identity," then whenever it realizes sensations which concur with this "idea," they become reality to man.

This process is, perhaps, more easily illustrated by the arts of conversation and writing. In an attempt to convey to the mind of another that which will equal the realization we have of some physical thing, we describe the identity given by our consciousness to the sensations of matter. It is not easy—and in most instances it is impossible—to transmit the actual sensations; so we use words which, as symbols, describe the idea of the reality. These word symbols then release from the memory of our communicant those sensations which participate in the idea and he becomes cognizant of the reality.

If someone speaks the word *sun*, for example, what is it that immediately arises in our consciousness? Is it not the memory of all those sensations which we have grouped together and given the identity of "sun"? Do we not think of heat, light, color, shape, position in the heavens—everything of which the idea of reality of "sun" is

composed? If we have experienced similar sensations but have formed them into a different idea of reality, then by approximation we recall this identity that compares in sensation but differs in idea.

As we have noted in a previous chapter, these sensations of matter are referred to as “empirical knowledge”—knowledge of the senses. Many philosophical doctrines state that they are unlasting, changing, illusionary, not true knowledge. The sensations of matter, however, are not false; they are, as we have seen, realities. The individual reasoning, however, applied when the consciousness is aware of the sensations, is apt to engender an idea of form which will come to be discarded in the future because of a subsequent change in reasoning and the evolution of consciousness. For this reason alone it has been said that knowledge of the senses is unreliable. The only things that are absolute to man are sensations, for through this medium he knows only the world outside of himself and the world within. While there is consciousness there is cognizance of sensations; more than this, man cannot prove as absolute.

Of the four dimensions, the fourth alone is reality because it is *consciousness*. As consciousness stands in immediate relationship to sensations of matter which are reality, the fourth dimension—the idea of reality—therefore, is reality, because it is composed of the sensations. We are not conscious when we are not aware of sensation. When we are, then our consciousness is reality because of what it consists is real. This does not contradict our statement that reason may give a wrong identity to sensation. Reason may give any name to sensation and the name may change, but as long as the particular sensations remain, they are reality. In other words, it is the interpretation of the sensations which changes.

For example: Two men looking at a small object at a distance in the sky may disagree as to its nature. One may declare it to be an airplane; and the other, a bird. Both the visional sensations received are identical and are realities. The realization the men have of these sensations is also actual. The identity given to that realization differs because reason differs. When the object comes closer and is found to be an airplane, this merely proves that the one who thought it a bird classified wrongly with his reason the sensations.

That which is not real cannot be realized. For the consciousness to give fourth dimension, or the idea of reality, to that which had no existence of any kind even in essence, would mean that the consciousness would be capable of contributing to existence. This would be a declaration that the universe is not absolute. The three dimensions—length, breadth, and depth—cannot be realized apart from the fourth consciousness of reality, because they have no reality of their own. Try to visualize the “form” that is the identity of length, breadth, and depth. What, for example, does 12’ x 8’ x 3’ convey to you? These dimensions do not measure matter but consciousness, as said before.

As man realizes all matter with consciousness, the three dimensions alone would only give sameness to all matter—give no identity to the sensations had. In other words, all the sensations of matter that we can perceive, are realized by the consciousness. The extent of our consciousness of them is measured by the dimensions of length, breadth, and depth, and other arbitrary standards. A Redwood or a pine tree could not be distinguished by us as reality of different sensations if it were to be described by the dimensions of consciousness . . . that is, length, breadth, and depth. We find, therefore, that the first three dimensions are subordinate to the fourth, the idea of reality.

The *Rosicrucian Manual* states, “The Fourth Dimension is nothing more nor less than the rate of electronic vibration. From another point of view, the Fourth Dimension should really be the First. It is the projection from Cosmic space, into the worldly, material plane of manifestation, of all material things . . . The coming together of electrons into atoms, and from this into molecular formation, constitutes the first phase of creation into the material world of objectivity. The next step or phase is that of limitation, or form, caused by natural laws or by man’s desires and handiwork.”

From the above, the *fourth* dimension should really be called the *first*. It is the cosmic vibratory essence. In perceiving it, our consciousness gives it certain limitations and these constitute the forms and proportions of the other three dimensions.



Chapter XI

INQUIRY INTO IMMORTALITY

CERTAIN HOPES, ASPIRATIONS and beliefs, endure throughout the centuries. Their persistence may often be attributed to the mental and physical constitution of man. There are urges and inclinations within man, as a thinking being, which give rise to particular ideas. It may be said that man cannot escape having such notions. The fact is that these ideas are not innate in human nature but the causes of them are. As a consequence, these notions seem quite natural to man. They appear to him as *self-evident* truths.

Time has often dignified the legends and traditions which man has come to associate with his notions. Unfortunately, however, this dignity of time is often out of proportion to the worth of these notions. Most men are not disposed to question this heritage of traditional beliefs. One of these age-old beliefs, shrouded in mystery and awe, is that of *immortality*.

The origin of the idea of immortality is psychological. It goes back much farther for its roots than the earliest religions known to man and which incorporate ideas of immortality. It begins with man's inquiry into his own complex nature. The idea of deathlessness has its starting point with man's emotional reaction to the phenomena of life and of death. A study of primitive customs reveals two primary factors

which have caused man to conceive immortality for himself. The first of these factors is negative; it consists of fear, that is, fear of death.

Why should man fear death? All death is not violent. It is not always painful or even horrible in its appearance. Death, however, is obviously the cessation of the attributes which are associated with life. It is instinctive for man to desire to live. Life has its persistent desire to perpetuate its functions. Life is continually striving to be the kind of reality which it is. The simplest mentalities of the earliest cultures were able to associate, in their experiences, certain attributes with human life.

Aside from the obvious organic functions, there is the display of independent action—man can act according to his choice or will. The human being has also the ability to communicate ideas to other intelligences. Death, then, appears as something mysterious that robs man of these powers which he cherishes. The dead man is the helpless one. He is beyond the wrath of his enemies and likewise beyond the aid of his friends. Such an experience strikes terror to the hearts of savages and it continues to do the same to millions of civilized men and women today. It inculcates in these persons a sense of helplessness and of futility.

From the impressive experience of death, primitive society conceived a *dualism*. The vital life force and all those functions associated with it were thought to be quite a separate entity from the material or physical man whom life animates. In fact, the many contraries or opposites in nature, as light and darkness, good fortune and misfortune, suggested to the early mind a dual principle in nature. The dream state contributed also to the idea of duality. Man would awaken to find that physically he had not journeyed afar, as he had dreamed, or had not committed the acts which were so vivid to him during sleep. Not knowing of dreams, this gave rise in the primitive mind to the belief in a duality of self, a belief that, during sleep, another part of himself went forth to do the things he dreamed.

With the concept of duality began the *positive* phase of the belief in immortality. Duality was the germ for almost all the religious and philosophical ideas which are now associated with the doctrine of,

and belief in, immortality. Just what is meant by immortality? What is the popular notion? It is the belief that there is a continuity of life after this one. It has not been generally thought that this constituted a continuation of the existence of the earthly physical body after death. The decay and dissolution of the material body were evident even to the people of early cultures. Consequently, the survival was attributed to the intangible realities of man's being. That which was thought to keep on living was the spirit or energy which animates the body.

It was reasonable to believe that that which appeared to enter the body and to depart from it at will was not destroyed with it. The spirit, then, was conceived to be as indestructible as the air breathed by the living. Thus the continuity of life after death was assumed. That which cannot be destroyed is manifestly assumed to have a continuation of existence.

If man desired to live, it was plausible that he would attribute his mortal, his human, qualities to the immortal self. After all, it is logical to think that I do not live if what I consider is a part of me does not also continue. It is not enough for the intangible being to survive death; rather, it is essential for this being to inherit also certain qualities of the earthly body. If it did not, man would not think that he survived death. The body remained, but many of its functions and qualities of mind were thought to endure with the indestructible part of man.

The human imagination was next intrigued with the problem of eschatology. This concerns the doctrine of last things or the problem of the end of existence. Primarily, the imagination was concerned with the kind of existence following this one. In other words, how are the dead who are to survive this life to live in the next one? What is the future world to be like? These questions followed a logical continuity of thought about the subject of immortality. If something of man survives death, where does this future life carry on and how? Men set their minds, as a consequence, to speculating on a comparison between this world and its conditions and the next one.

Man judges all of his experiences in terms of the qualities he experiences in this life. They become his yardsticks for conceiving the conditions of any other existence. Life here is a varying scale of good

and evil. Each of us knows it as a variation of happiness and suffering or a fluctuation between the two. Life after death, then, was presumed to be a counterpart of these conditions or else it was an extreme emphasis on either happiness or suffering. When we stop to think about it, is there a state of being that the mortal mind can conceive of without including the idea of self and those qualities associated with it? To be conscious of self is to have some degree of awareness concerning these human qualities. After all, we are never conscious of self without having a realization of the ego being cloaked in feelings and moods fluctuating from happiness to suffering.

Among many savage peoples, cowardice is morally deplorable. It is thought to debar one from paradise, that is, the assumed life after this one. The coward is thought to incur actual punishment in the next world. Courage, conversely, to a savage is a virtue which is thought to be rewarded in the next life. This conception is primarily based on the experience of the rewarding of virtues in this life. We find, therefore, not merely the continuation of the body and the mental functions in the next life. It is also expected that man will there receive godly rewards and just punishment also. What men like best or what they abhor here they will also like or abhor in the life beyond.

Psychologically, then, the next life is thought to constitute an extension beyond the grave of the finite experiences of this one. What man knows of this life is his only knowledge, and he transfers it to an assumed other existence. Taboo conduct, such as murder, theft, and lying, which is detrimental to human society, would consequently be punished in the life to come. In the course of human events, mortals must at times determine the conduct of their fellows, that is, judge them in this life. So it seemed plausible that there would be a similar judgment after death.

The first of the ancient concepts of judgment after death is the *Egyptian*. It is, as well, the most elaborate and impressive of such ancient views that we have the opportunity to examine today. According to the Egyptian version, the soul after death was brought by Anubis, the jackal-headed god, into the presence of the god Osiris. This presentation occurred in the great chamber which the Egyptians referred to as the

Judgment Hall. In this hall, according to the paintings and inscriptions we find on their monuments and in their tombs, was a large balance scale. In one of its trays was a symbol called the *ab*. The *ab* was the heart of the deceased. It was weighed against a feather which was in the opposite tray. The feather to the Egyptians symbolized *maat* or truth.



Fig 21

Around this hall are always depicted forty-two divine assessors or judges and it was to them that the “negative confession” was to be made. It is called *negative* because it consists of a series of affirmations which the soul must make and which affirmations condemn improper conduct on earth. If the soul satisfactorily passes this ordeal of being weighed against truth, it is then rewarded by the god Osiris. Conversely, if it fails, it is perhaps annihilated as were the other enemies of Osiris. How much these early views have influenced later concepts of what occurs after death is not difficult to determine.

The early Greeks had their Elysian Plains. This was a mythical realm beyond the west margin of the earth. In other words, it was beyond the Pillars of Hercules or what we know as Gibraltar. It was the Isle of the Blessed for those who had lived godly lives. The wicked, however, were consigned to Tartarus, a place of punishment far beneath the earth. The experiences which the soul was to have in each of these realms were the exaggerations of what man experiences here—that is, ecstasy as one extreme, and torment as the other.

The Orphic mystery schools and the Pythagoreans taught that the soul reincarnates again and again for a period of ten thousand years. They thought that that length of time was necessary for the soul’s final purification. The soul would be reborn in either the body of a human being or that of an animal, it was thought, so that it could evolve as a result of the experiences it had in that particular body. Eventually, however, the soul would be freed from the necessity of rebirth and would then dwell in eternal bliss.

The Buddhists have their doctrine of *karma*. This doctrine requires the immediate rebirth of the soul. It is born in a body where it can best adjust to the effects of its previous acts and deeds. In other words, the soul is in a body where it can learn the lessons it had failed to learn previously. To the Buddhists, heaven and hell, or the eventual reward and punishment, are made principally the state of mortal consciousness. They are realized here and now.

The ancient Hebrews proclaimed what they called a *Sheol*. To them this was a region of absolute darkness or a fiery abyss. The wicked

were consigned to Sheol for punishment and torment so that they might suffer as they had caused others to do. As Schopenhauer said, "Whence did Dante take the materials for his hell but from this our actual world?" Sheol was later conceived as an intermediary place between the two extremes, that is, a kind of purgatory. After one was purged, then he went to the Hebrew Messianic kingdom, the kingdom of God. Again, in these ancient concepts, we see the influence on later doctrines of immortality.

What is important to us, in the consideration of these facts, is the psychological transference of man's moral idealism, the ends he has set for himself in the next life. The notions that conscience has inspired in man, as well as what social customs have dictated as being right in this life, would constitute the integral qualities and conditions of immortality.

Another step in the development of the concept of immortality is what we shall term the *divine extension*. This is the belief that a supreme being or a divine substance reaches down and impregnates man in some mysterious or complex way. From the realization by man of his own limitations, as well as from his growing inclination to believe in and to search for the unity of all existence, still came another belief. This was the concept of theism, that is, that there existed a god or gods. The gods, as supreme beings, were usually thought to dwell in the world beyond this one. The gods were also presumed to be immortal beings. However, many of the early religions, as that of the Greeks, conceived the gods as once having been heroic mortals, and the virtues attributed to them were those characteristics we admire in human beings.

In the early cosmogonies, gods were conceived not only as having preceded man but were likewise held to have created him and all of reality. The world and the firmament were the creation of the gods. At this point some confusion occurred in the thinking of man. Evil and corruption are common to earthly and to mortal existence. It is very apparent that the material or physical side of man is subject to temptations and to foibles. What, then, is man's relation to the gods? If the physical part of him is corrupt and weak, what part of man has a true connection with the nature of the gods?

It was reasoned that it must be the soul, the spirit, the intangible and indestructible part of the human being, that has this divine relationship. This extension of the divine, which reached down into mortals, was thought to be related only to the everlasting or surviving part of man, his physical side being disqualified as earthy and thus harboring evil.

Though it was believed that God reached into man, the divine extension of Him was not always thought to remain pure, once it had come in contact with the material part of the human being. The divine elements in man could be corrupted by his behavior. The ancient gnostic teachings once rivaled in popularity those of Christianity.

The Gnostics taught that there were two extremes of reality: at the top of all reality was a transcendent deity and at the lower extreme, was emptiness, a void. Between these two extremes was a series of divine beings called aeons. They were, in fact, emanations from the deity or the First Cause, and they emanated from their source in pairs. The farther they emanated, the farther they departed from their source, and the more their powers diminished, it was believed. Each of these pairs of aeons accounted for various manifestations of reality. In fact, all of the aeons together were said to be a *pleroma* or divine fullness. Collectively, they stood over and against the *kenoma* or the great void.

These emanations or aeons were both positive and negative in their qualities; and such pairs of them were, for example, mind and truth, reason and life. At the bottom of the whole scale was one of the weakest, an aeon known as *sophia*. It was said that *sophia* tried to climb back to the source of all emanation. This action upset the whole equilibrium of existence. As a result, *sophia* was plunged again to the very bottom. There it became the material or physical part of man, imprisoning his spiritual nature. According to the Gnostics, the only salvation for man would come through wisdom. This wisdom consisted of learning the esoteric order, the true relationship of the various aeons to each other, or the divine emanations; and their function was not to be opposed.

In Neoplatonism, the divine emanation is also offered as a means of explaining the soul's confinement in a physical body. In many respects this concept is like that of the Gnostics. The divine power was said

to emanate down to the earth like rays from the sun. The farther the emanation from its source, the less divine and perfect it became. At the very bottom of the emanations is to be found the material world and the physical nature of man. The soul of man, it is contended, was once perfect and in harmony with the divine. However, it descended from its high estate and was caught fast in material existence. Salvation, to the Neoplatonist, consisted of evolving in one's personal consciousness so that he would ascend in the emanation to eventually merge with God. It would be like going up one of the rays of the sun to enter the sun itself.

Also in the writings attributed to Dionysius, the Areopagite, we see the concept of divine emanation again. Dionysius refers to the celestial ladder which leads downward from God. The rungs of this ladder are a series of divine intelligences. They are in groups of three, each group farther away from its source. Man, that is, the soul, is led upward through these divine intelligences by means of their various manifestations to an eventual mystical union or *oneness* with God. In Roman Catholicism, which is eclectic in its doctrines, the soul is said to have salvation only through the hierarchy of the church which leads it upward to Christ.

In a further consideration of immortality, one must briefly examine the manner in which man has come to identify his soul. In the Hebrew and Christian theology, for example, the soul is given no conscious reality; that is, there is conferred upon it no ego or personality before birth. In other words, the soul has no self-awareness prior to its mortal embodiment. According to such views, the soul is a formless reality before birth. It is assumed that it acquires its distinction or self-consciousness only when in the body. Men speak of the soul as being their divine self. On the other hand, they define it in the terms of its mortal attributes.

In most religions, the soul has no substance or definable character. In fact, it has no identity until it becomes, in its mortal confinement, associated with the emotions, feelings, and moral idealism. Thus we note that man attributes soul to the divine but he identifies it with the values of mortal existence.

We find that, although to most men soul has no comprehensible nature before birth, it has after death quite a specific nature. After this life the self-consciousness of the soul is quite definite. It would appear that man is not content to be but a formless divine essence after leaving the earth life. When he thinks of himself as an immortal being, he attributes to that immortal being or his soul the emotional, the moral and intellectual, values he has established here. These inconsistencies in man's thinking have often caused science to refute the doctrine of immortality. This scientific opposition takes the position that a strong desire for the survival of self, as we conceive self, is no proof that it does survive. Further, the fact that man aspires to do good or has a sense of rectitude does not confirm the existence of a summum bonum, a supreme good, outside the realm of man's own mind.

The same material polemics contend that there is no proof in nature that the human animal is the preferred living being. There is, therefore, no evidence that the identity which man assigns to his emotional and vital self will actually survive in a changing universe. In general, this contention of science is that the doctrine of immortality is not consistent with other cosmic phenomena of which man has immediate knowledge. It is said to be only a reflection of the human's personal vanity.

It is appropriate that we propound a question at this juncture. Is man justified in expecting the immortality of his consciousness of self? Should we, as human beings, want to think that that which we call "I" will survive death? For analogy, let us assume that the body is like a harp. The vital life force that animates us, we shall say, is like the wind. As the breeze passes through the strings of the harp, sounds are emitted from them. These sounds have a quality. They are, in fact, we may say, the personality (the self) of the harp, its ego. What has caused the phenomenon of sound? It is a combination of two elements, the harp and the active air or wind. The manifestation, *the sound*, has no independent existence without these two causes. If we destroy the relative unity of the harp and the wind, then the manifestation, the sound which comes from that unity, ceases to be. It would be romantic to think of the sound indefinitely continuing after the harp has ceased

to be and the wind no longer plays upon the strings. Would it, however, be consistent with other phenomena observable in nature?

The philosophical mind will accept the law of the triangle. Each of us demonstrates this law in various ways in our daily lives. We know, for example, that every effect is dependent upon two points of the triangle. There are two causes, as we may call them—one active and one relatively passive. We speak of the third point of the triangle as being the point of manifestation. When there is any change in the unity of these two points or if they are separated, then the effect which followed from the unity is either changed or it ceases to be.

That self does not survive death in the manner or form we ordinarily conceive it, does not prevent our unity with the Cosmic. It is generally contended that God, as absolute reality, is universal, all-pervading. This being so, then man has a greater opportunity for the realization of this unity while mortal, while existing here and now. The very law of contrast would make this realization possible. Here on earth, as finite beings, we are conscious of our relationship to the Cosmic as a whole. After all, only a fool would think of himself as self-sufficient and representative of all reality. The intelligent person is impressed with the omnipotent infinity of that existence which is apart from himself.

Let us suppose that the “I” could be completely merged with Cosmic Reality. Under such circumstances, the mortal would lose realization of self. The contrast between self and that which transcends it would cease. It is only by the apparent absence of light that we realize light. As man has realization of his own existence as a mortal, so, too, the divine then has self-realization in man because of man’s reverential respect for it. The two points of the triangle of man’s being, the vital life substance and his molecular substance, cause his realization of self. They produce consciousness, as we have related in a previous chapter. The same two points, the same two conditions, if you will, by means of consciousness cause a realization of that greater reality, the Cosmic. When these two points, these two qualities of man’s nature, separate, their realization ceases. However, the body and the life force, the essential qualities, as two kinds of energy, if you will, do not cease to be.

Are we shorn, then, of all proofs of immortality? Frankly, let us ask ourselves—why the deep concern and speculation about our immortality to come? Let us first observe that which is eternal around us. There is that persistence of being, that reality, about which philosophy has expounded for centuries. There is also the indestructibility of matter, demonstrated by modern science. Perceivable things each have an underlying energy from which myriads of things have been born and *will be*. In each thing, too, there is a continuity of will, as Schopenhauer said. It is the motivating desire by which the energy becomes objectified, that is, assumes a form discernible by our senses. This *consciousness* of being itself, the desire to be, is not this immortality? It is the fundamental essence of all things.

There is, then, a consciousness that survives but it has no allegiance or affinity to any particular form. It is not confined or arrested in a substance. The coal bursts into flame. It then emits smoke. From the coal also comes heat, gas, and finally impalpable ash. The consciousness *to be* persists in each of the various expressions but it is never immortal in any single form or expression. All form is transient, even the human ego and the identity of self. It is futile to expect anything to survive *in form* and to oppose the function of its very Cosmic nature.

That life and consciousness may be immortal, in the sense that they are part of a pattern greater than is experienced here on earth, is a concept that is entertained in spheres of the most advanced modern science. Such an idea shows a growing concord with Rosicrucian metaphysics and with the modern metaphysics of Samuel Alexander. Sir James Jeans recently said: “When we view ourselves in space and time, our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle picture. But when we pass beyond space and time, they may form ingredients of the single continuous stream of life. As with light and electricity, so it may be with life. Individually we carry on existences in time and space. In the deeper reality beyond space and time, we may all be members of one body.”

Let us ever be mindful of the fact that here on earth the human ego and personality should be immortalized and this is a power that lies within man's province. The intelligence is a product of the unity of

man's conscious being. It should and it can be immortalized on earth by progressive achievements. Every noble aspiration, every human advance that has broadened man's vision, lifted humanity from savagery, is an immortalization of the expression of man. Every philosopher or moralist who has enlightened man has immortalized mankind on earth by his thoughts. Any idealism that persists and by which man hopes to progress, mentally, spiritually, and physically, though its forms may change through the centuries, constitutes man's immortality here. It is the fruit of self.

We are inclined by our nature to think mostly in terms of human individuality. Immortality, however, may also be construed in the collective sense, man as a species being more important than any individual. From this conception the individual self is submerged in the collective effort and development of the whole species. One continues to live, not in individual consciousness or as a separate entity, but in whatever motivation he and millions of others during his lifetime imparted to the whole stream of human life. Death, in this sense, shears off the individual consciousness, that which we call the personal self. The thoughts, the influence, of the individual, no matter how meager as a part of society, have contributed to the united consciousness, the collective self of mankind. The personality of society is a construct and an immortalization of the multitudes of separate selves of which it has been composed through the ages.

For analogy, we do not mourn the loss of the separate intelligence of each cell of the untold millions that die each year in giving existence and function to our integrated physical and mental being. We realize that they have completed their work. They are immortalized by what they have imparted in their particular moment toward the survival of our whole being. The desire, then, to perpetuate the individual self, we must realize, is the desire to glorify the particular rather than that development of life of which the single self is but a part.



Chapter XII

ON CONSCIENCE AND MORALS

MAN ROAMED THE earth five hundred thousand years ago! So it is estimated by paleontologists. This conclusion has been reached from an examination of fossilized skulls and thigh bones which are purported to be of human origin. From these has been reconstructed what is represented to be the skeletal structure of ancient man. Anthropologists called this specimen *pithecanthropus erectus*, which literally means the apelike man that walks erect.

Did this apelike man have moral discernment? Did he possess a moral sense? Was he capable of such determinatives as right and wrong, good and evil, by which he judged his own conduct and that of others? The earliest evidences we have of *conscience* are comparatively recent. They are as recent as *history* which is far later than the period of the earliest man. If conscience is as innate or as much a part of man as the life force itself, then man, no matter how primitive, no matter how far back he existed in point of time, must have always possessed conscience. On the other hand, if conscience is a later acquisition, something that evolved or suddenly came into being within man, then he must have dwelt, for a long period, in moral darkness.

In other words, between the time when such a being as early man roamed the face of the earth and the time that conscience finally came into existence within him, man must have lived not unlike the beasts of the field insofar as any sense of morals is concerned. Only as we

inquire into the nature of conscience, only as we determine of what conscience consists, can we hope to find a solution to these mysteries—namely, to determine whether man always possessed conscience or whether it was a later acquisition.

It is related that an Egyptologist, directing excavations on an expedition in Egypt became interested in the activities of a native. This particular native was using a peculiar black stone to grind grain for flour. There was nothing unusual about this primitive method of milling flour, but the Egyptologist was, no doubt, attracted by the oddity of the stone used. It was unlike those commonly employed. Upon examining it he found to his amazement, that it contained *hieroglyphics*, the picture writing of the ancient Egyptians. Much of it was undecipherable. The writing was disjointed—for example, like letters of the alphabet scrambled into an unintelligible disorder. The stone intrigued the Egyptologist so much that it was sent to the British Museum. Because so little was known of its origin and since, at the time, the inscriptions were not decipherable, the stone was placed in an obscure comer where the lighting was crepuscular. This occurred before the time of flashlights, and it was difficult for the writing to be conveniently examined.

A generation ago, Dr. James H. Breasted, a scholar of Egyptology, was attracted to the stone and decided to make an intensive study of it. Eventually, he discovered that a phrase in the hieroglyphic writing at the bottom of one of the columns had to be continued by reading the column to the right instead of the one to the left as appeared to be the arrangement. Since this part had not been facing in the customary direction, the reading of the signs had therefore hitherto been attempted in inverted order. This made the inscription disjointed and not intelligible. By being read in the proper order, these columns of hieroglyphics revealed a remarkable story. Many scholars have now worked on the translation.

The story includes sections that represent utterances of various gods in conversation. At the beginning of such divisions are found the hieroglyphs for the names of two gods, so arranged that the signs face each other, and the writing which follows constitutes a sort of dialogue between these gods.

In its present form, the inscription on the black stone was by Shabaka, an Ethiopian Pharaoh of the eight century B.C. He relates in this inscription that he had found a work of his *ancestors* which had been eaten away by worms, and that he had sought to preserve this work. It must have been a papyrus manuscript which Shabaka had found or else, it is speculated, it could not have been eaten by worms. Shabaka recognized the beauty of the contents of the papyrus manuscript. Therefore, he must have been a man of wisdom. We must also admit that he was a man of foresight because, by transcribing it into stone, he has preserved for us today, as Dr. Breasted says, "the oldest philosophical discourse known to man."

From its archaisms, its more or less obsolete words and phrases, Egyptologists and archaeologists are of the opinion that the original papyrus from which the inscription is copied must have been exceedingly old. In all probability, it must have dated back to the founding of the First Dynasty of Egypt by Menes, in the middle of the Fourth Millennium B.C., or some six thousand years ago! The inscription, therefore, constitutes the oldest thoughts of man in written form. Yet it was used as a millstone by simple Egyptian villagers of modern times. This misuse unfortunately obliterated a good portion of its inscriptions.

Actually, the inscription depicts a drama. It relates that all things in the universe, everything that exists, had its origin in Ptah, one of the gods of the prevailing polytheism of ancient Egypt. Ptah is said to have been the master craftsman of the universe, the *supreme architect*, if you will, who designed and conceived and created all things. This little black stone also tells us that Ptah was the *heart* and the *tongue* of the gods—in other words, that he was the principal deity. At this time in Egypt, the heart was conceived to be synonymous with mind. In other words, the heart was the seat of intelligence.

We today connect the word *heart* with the idea of emotion. We say that someone has a good heart, meaning that he is sympathetic and understanding, or that he has a bad heart, meaning that he is evil. To the ancients during this period, the heart was the place of ideas. The tongue was symbolic of the *word*. The tongue was held to be, even in

this remote period, the instrument of thought. Speech is the power, it was held, that gives thoughts their objective reality, brings ideas into form. The heart or mind is the cause of all thought; the tongue, or the spoken word, is what materializes thoughts. This conception existed hundreds of years before the Book of Genesis and its references to the Word of God, and also before the Greek philosophic doctrines of the Logos, the law of God in Word.

The ancient inscription on the stone says that he who does what is loved is given a peaceful life. Likewise, he who does what is hated is given death. Here death does not just mean the cessation of this life, but that one who does what is hated will possibly not experience immortality. The moral ideas here expressed are perhaps the earliest known to mankind. They are not called *good* and *evil*; rather, they are called *love* and *hate*. To do what is hated, to do what will incur hatred in the hearts and minds of others, is to do wrong. To do that which will engender love on the part of one's fellows is the good. Judgments are rendered. He who does that which is loved, is doing the right; he will receive the reward of a peaceful life. He who does that which is hateful and, consequently, wrong, will experience death. The terms *right* and *wrong* are of more modern usage, and are herein given merely as a matter of further interpretation.

There is a mandate, written by Ptah-Hotep centuries later, that explains *just what man should do* in order to be loved by his fellow men. These ancient rules of right conduct may therefore be considered to represent the second stage of the moral evolution of man. Ptah-Hotep, of the Fifth (Memphite) Dynasty of Egypt, was a sage and royal scribe. He left these mandates as a moral teaching for his son to follow as a guide, not realizing that these precepts would be preserved even for our generation. In this guide a father is counseling his son, admonishing him to do this and to do that, and to take to heart certain principles for his own future welfare and happiness.

Ptah-Hotep advises his son, in this mandate, to avoid avarice, love of material things and possessions, for they will cause him to be envious. He explains that this produces hatred and strife and that which produces hatred is wrong and that he, the son, may expect the

penalties thereof. He also proclaims that the greatest power of all is truth, because truth is permanent, dependable. Some of his advice is to the effect that, when with common people, one should be like a peasant. In other words, associate yourself in a proper way with those in your environment. Be not arrogant, but humble.

The important point for us to remember, in connection with these ancient teachings and the inscriptions on the little black stone, is that *love* and *hate* are the determinatives of human conduct. Love and hate are emotions. They are inwardly felt and outwardly expressed. They are not products of reason. They are not fixed standards of behavior. Our good and our wrong conduct following from love and hate arouses the inner feelings of others, the emotions of those about us. Right conduct on our part is that which causes us to be loved. Therefore, that which causes us to be loved should be followed, whether or not it constitutes a moral law or a code of ethics.

During this remote period, conscience was more or less synonymous with the vital life force which animates man. These early Egyptians definitely related conscience to that intangible essence which makes man a living being. To them conscience was a *double*, another self. It was a protective spirit that followed man about, an invisible part of himself. Wherever man went, this double, this invisible self, went also and guided and protected him. In inscriptions on sarcophagi and walls of temples and tombs, as well as in *The Book of the Dead*, we are shown figures of men and, immediately preceding them, very small identical figures costumed the same. The little figures represent self or conscience, which the Egyptians called Ka. Some such images are on display in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum at San Jose, California.

Ka, or conscience, had the obligation—it was incumbent upon it—to continuously direct the moral conduct of the individual. Ptah-Hotep gives us an excellent example of how this was to be accomplished, just as we think of the influence of conscience today. He states that a great man will give to those persons whom he can reach, but *Ka* makes him *stretch* out his hands to those beyond. In other words, a great man ordinarily might not put himself out or might not make any particular sacrifice, or go out of his way to assist others, but Ka, his conscience,

obliges him to make sacrifices, to stretch out his hands beyond his ordinary reach to do charitable deeds.

Let us move on in our search to determine the nature of conscience. We come to Socrates, the first man to organize a *system* of moral philosophy. He expounded the belief that each man seeks the best means of furthering his ends, his particular interests, whatever they may be. The end of a trade or profession, for example, is its perfection, its excellence, the best way of doing it. A perfect trade or a perfect profession requires knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is necessary for our good employment, whatever it may be. Socrates contended that the end of life, however, is a *summum bonum*, the highest good we may obtain from it. According to his interpretation, this highest good in life consists in collaborating with our fellows, with the state. The best possible state or government, according to this reasoning, makes for greater freedom for the individual. It frees him from many limitations which he, as an individual, must otherwise necessarily have. In attaining this end of life, this good society, knowledge is also necessary, and so is virtue.

According to Socrates, *virtue is knowledge*, because virtue requires the restraining of our pleasures, the relegating of appetites to their proper place, and the discipline of our minds. One who does not realize the necessity of these things cannot be virtuous. This knowledge, of which virtue consists, he contended, is of the soul. It is implanted in the soul. It exists there at birth. It is a heritage of the soul's former existence, brought over possibly from former lives. Since it exists in every soul, it needs only to be awakened, to be aroused by the individual himself, to be recollected. It is like listening to a voice within the self. This knowledge of the soul, according to Socrates, is not evanescent. It does not easily change or disappear. It is real, it is dependable, the only real thing of man's being.

So, to Socrates, conscience consists of moral restraint, of the governing of the attributes of our being. It is an intuitive knowledge which dictates the course of our actions. It is a gratifying intuitive sense from which we derive pleasure. Conscience contributes to the highest good, which is an impersonal end, not just to our own

immediate welfare, but that of the state or society, the welfare of all men. In making *the good society* our objective in life, we are causing ourselves to become circumspect and disciplined. This end makes for collective happiness, a happiness transcending that which would be acquired individually and selfishly. This is good reasoning, for no man maybe individually happy in a society in which there prevails, as today, turmoil, war, or economic oppression. We are too closely knit together. The pains of one part of society are bound to affect us all, just as the pain of one of our organs affects the harmony of our whole being.

Plato, the renowned disciple of Socrates, held that morality, the moral sense, arises from the idea of good. We are moral to the extent of what we conceive good to be. He proclaimed that the summum bonum is the good of the soul, the ideas which the soul possesses, the *universals*. Implanted in every soul are certain Divine ideas which all men universally possess, regardless of station in life, birth, education or lack of it. Such ideas or universals, for example, are the ideas of beauty and the ideas of justice. If man has knowledge of self, if he experiences these innate ideas and has a clear conception of these precepts of the soul, then his conduct must be exemplary. Man will not deviate from what is the best, because man wants the best. No man, Plato contends, wants to do wrong.

Now, as we think of this, it may seem to be inconsistent with experience. We know persons who seem to enjoy doing wrong, find particular pleasure in their nefarious acts. But Plato holds that such sin, or vice, or evil, really is ignorance of the good of the soul. Men do these things because they have no inner knowledge of the opposite conduct, the good. This ignorance lacks the experiencing of the universals, the impulses of the Divine which exist in the soul of all men.

To Aristotle, the disciple—or at least the student—of Plato, virtue becomes a combination of a psychological process and the metaphysical influences of the soul. The body is continually tempted by sensuous acts, by things which have great appeal and are very pleasing to the appetites, gratifying to the desires. Our senses are continually thus assailed. We are, therefore, continually inclined either to an *excessive* or a *deficient* act; that is, we are inclined to do either something more than

we should or something less than we should because of these appeals to our senses. However, when the will of man is interposed between these two extremes, between the excessive act and the deficient act in human conduct, the golden mean or balance is reached. This mean, therefore, this balance of conduct, Aristotle says, is *virtue*.

The interposing of will, however, according to Aristotle, is not entirely a rational process. Man cannot flatter his reasoning and believe that that accounts for his virtue. He has not *learned* the content of virtue. Virtue cannot be taught. Aristotle explains that, when we are aroused to act, the will then serves the higher judgment, if the consequences of our acts are virtuous. Thus, conscience, to Aristotle, becomes the judgment of the soul, the soul judging the contemplated acts and interposing *will* to see that these acts conform to the Divine. Further, according to Aristotle, virtue manifests in action at all times. Virtue cannot be apart from action. He means by this that every virtuous act must of necessity be a compulsion or a restraint.

According to this reasoning, an ethical or moral code which does not inspire us to *act* in accordance with it, is not truly virtuous. If it does not compel us to restrain certain conduct or compel us to do something, then it finds no response within us and is not a true code of virtue.

What does psychology offer us in explanation of the nature of conscience? Let us look at the cold, calculating conclusion of science. We will take the opinions of McDougall, one of the earlier classical psychologists. His writings live in the most recent works because he is often used as reference. In a few words, we can define McDougall's opinion of conscience. He says that it is the awakening of a combination of sentiments which surround the *self-regard*. Simply put, this means that the self, the ego, the *you*, is regarded in various ways. The self to some is humble; to others, it is proud and arrogant or vain.

Our self-regard is framed in various ways. These conceptions which we have of self, the way in which we regard ourselves, are developed according to our powers of self-perception, to the extent that we are able to set self apart from other things. It all depends upon how we appear to ourselves. Each of us frames self in his ideals. That is

understandable. There is something that seems to be the best, that is very good or excellent as a way of conduct, as a way of life, or as an end to be reached. We like to frame ourselves in such an ideal. We do not like to be separated from what we think is the good.

These ideals are the result of our social influences, people we contact, things we experience in our daily living. We come to certain conclusions about the good and we want ourselves to be part of it. How we act so far as self is concerned depends on what we think of as being good. None of us wants to appear as an ugly picture to himself. If we are honest, we will admit that we like to think of ourselves as being what we believe is the highest or the best of anything. When man's moral sense opposes society, as it often does, it does not necessarily mean that the individual is anti-social or recalcitrant. It may mean, says McDougall, that his personal experiences transcend the mass good; that is, they seem to be more important to him. In his opinion, his ideals may be preferable to the ones which society has established and, naturally, he wants to be part of the best.

McDougall cites the example of the conscientious objector. Such a person may really be sincere. He believes that his ideal, his view of war is more deserving, more altruistic, more noble than those which society has adopted; and, naturally, he places self in the ideal that seems best to him. The same may be said of the person who is accused of heresy. He is not necessarily opposed to religion because he is a heretic, but because the ideals of his ego are different and he wants self to be consistent with what he thinks is the best. Therefore, though motivated by a moral sense, many men may be inclined to defy the law only because to them the law is not consistent with the highest good to which they want to attach self.

What is the mystical and metaphysical conception of conscience? The following borrows greatly from the Rosicrucian viewpoint. Conscience, it is contended, is the guardian that continually stands upon the threshold of life. It is the guardian that protects us against adversity, not by granting us any immunity, but by warning us of the possible violation of Cosmic or natural laws which might bring dire consequences. It cautions; it guides continually. Each inclination, each

desire we have from moment to moment, is a threshold upon which we stand, upon which self is poised. When we submit to such inclinations, make a change in our present status, do something different from what we were doing, we are changing our conscious existence. We are different in thought and act from what we were the moment before. We have really crossed a threshold into a new mental state.

Each desire, each temptation, causes us to assume new obligations. It changes, even though slightly, our relations with others and the things about us. If, then, we are faced with a decision each moment, we must be certain that in making this decision we do not degrade ourselves, dwarf our own moral growth or development as a being—that is, that we do not in any way retard our advancement. Since each second of our consciousness is a threshold of decision which we must cross, we can never go back. We must make the best of that decision.

Having crossed the threshold in our mind, ultimately we experience either a feeling of righteousness or a feeling of remorse and regret. If we feel regret, then in all probability we did not heed conscience that stood upon the threshold of our consciousness at the time we were about to act or to decide. Therefore, on each such threshold of our consciousness, conscience stands as a sentinel of the subconscious mind, of the *inner intelligence* that permeates our being. It does not command us; it is not an insuperable force that we cannot escape. In fact, we know too well that we often can and do oppose conscience. It is, however, the creative, positive influence of the Divine Mind within us.

The Divine intelligence has a certain progression as it manifests throughout all things. This progression functions as a cycle of evolution and devolution, simplicity to complexity, complexity to simplicity. This cycle of progression is rhythmically harmonious. Opposition to it produces negative reactions which are experienced as an inharmony. For example, the life force itself, that which makes us animate beings, is part of the energies or forces of which the Cosmic is composed. Any action on our part which has a tendency to disturb the equilibrium of the life force within us or which would cause its cessation, produces, as we well know, a sensation of pain. When we are in conflict with things

of our environment or if our acts are such that they tend to interfere with the natural course of life within us, we are warned by pain that we are producing an inharmony in our body.

Likewise, such acts of ours which oppose the Cosmic order generally throughout our whole being, or are inconsistent with it, are reflected in the so-called pangs or pain of conscience. When we are about to oppose the Cosmic order, we experience a sense of wrong. This sensation we frame in words, the inner words of conscience. Actually we provide the words to fit our feelings. Conduct, on our part, which does not elicit conscience produces within us a keen sense of righteousness. If what we are doing or intend to do is not in opposition to the Cosmic intelligence in our being, we do not experience conscience but, conversely, an *inner satisfaction*.

We may summarize the *Rosicrucian* viewpoint by saying that conscience is the positive influence of the Divine essence within us, propelling us in certain directions. This does not mean that we are fatalistically guided but that our choices should be consistent with the positive influence of the Divine. When we tend to deviate from this influence, a stress is produced. This stress causes a disturbance. Our acts, then, are inharmonious with the Divine Mind, and we experience the effects of conscience.

Can we preserve these mystical elements of conscience which we have just outlined and yet relate them to the philosophical and psychological concepts previously considered, and which also cannot be denied? We cannot close our eyes to the truth which exists in each of these three different fields of human endeavor and experience. Yet, to bring all three of them into agreement, when they seem so diverse at times, is admittedly a challenge. But this we shall now attempt.

We shall begin by admitting that the human is quite gregarious. He is a social animal. He thoroughly enjoys living with groups of his own kind. His selfish interests, those things that he feels essential to his well-being, he is inclined to extend so as to include the conditions and circumstances of his group. In other words, self does not necessarily include only our intimate being. It also includes those things in and around us which we enjoy, which we feel are essential, and which we

want. For analogy, suppose we believe that a given number of people living with us in a certain area or vicinity is necessary in order to assure us security. Consequently, the acts of anyone in that group, of which we are a part, which cause people to stay together, which help to keep the number intact and which we think necessary for our security, seem to have merit to us. Such acts would, naturally, promote our own self-interests and peace of mind. Thus, therefore, such acts become good acts. They seem to have a certain *moral* value to us. We know they are furthering our instinct of self-preservation.

Now, we also know that the human feels quite helpless at times in the presence of inscrutable and uncontrollable phenomena, when things are happening which he does not understand and cannot direct. He has a consciousness of his own helplessness and this has a tendency to precipitate a fear of what seems to be the supernatural. Obviously, to such individuals, defying the supernatural would seem to invite disaster. It would seem to be an evoking of those powers which the individual fears. Consequently, any acts by members of his family or his tribe which defy the supernatural, that which he fears, become taboo. They are thought to be detrimental to his self-interests. Such acts constitute *wrong* conduct. They ultimately become morally wrong and it becomes habitual for the individual to think of them as such.

Now, these crude restrictions and inclinations which are given as an example are really at the bottom of morals. They are modified by our instincts and our sentiments. Objective conditions, the factors of our environment, as pointed out, stimulate these instincts, arouse them within us.

Through refinement, that culture which we attribute to higher civilization, the individual acquires a hypersensitivity. He becomes much more conscious of his self, and self-interest to him is much more inclusive than it is to the primitive man. It does not merely include sustenance and the welfare of his body, or his own physical security. The refined individual experiences hurt of pride, hurt to the ego itself. For this reason, the personal resentment which he feels toward the hurt to his pride, he sympathetically extends to other persons in his environment. He experiences a sense of moral wrong, if his acts injure the pride or ego of another.

We have reasoned in this process the causes of the moral sense. Actually, however, there is usually no rational element associated with conscience. Conscience is just an *impulse* which we receive. It is not something that has been reasoned about. We react to something that appears almost intuitive, but the elements which have caused this impulse within us and precipitated it, which have established this inner moral sense, may have been inculcated by our objective experiences and associations during childhood or through the inherited sensitivity of refined parents.

Self, in one sense of the word, is an aggregate of many things—the psychic, the mental, and certain physical properties. All of these are integrated into what we call *self*. What offends any aspect of self, the mental, psychic, or physical, is obviously repugnant to us. In primitive society, the offenses against self are very gross, as has been explained. They are not regarded as conscience, they are whatever constitutes an infliction of physical pain or the denial of things absolutely essential to sustenance. Thus, the lower the level of consciousness, the more gross it is, the lower is the moral sense. Consequently, we cannot expect a savage or a primitive being to have the moral sense that we do.

In the *evolved* consciousness, where we are more aware of self, the offenses against self become more extensive. In other words, self-esteem does not just include our body and its needs. It includes honor, reputation, achievement. Any conduct which adversely affects these qualities in others is felt by us as well. We can readily understand that such is not desirable to others and we, therefore, concede it as wrong. All men are united by the common nature of their being, the Cosmic elements of which they are composed. Therefore, the more we are individually aware of self, the more we express self; the more our conscience comes to include others, the more we harmonize with the selves of others, the more we will restrain ourselves from doing to another what we would not want him to do to us.

There cannot be any universal moral sense, it should now be apparent, for there exists no universal environment in which men live. As a consequence, the interests which self includes vary considerably. We may accept the idea that there is a sensitivity of our being which

can be evolved and developed as self. This sensitivity can extend itself to include many things. We must also accept the fact that the objective faculties, the environment, the physical world itself, all have to do with the development of that self-consciousness of which the moral sense consists. This being so, we shall always have humans with different manifestations of the moral sense. For example, conscience may prevent the average American, as well as the European, from committing bigamy because, from his experience, his training and social contacts, it would be offensive to his self-esteem. Elsewhere, if persons have been brought up in a different social environment, bigamy might not be considered offensive to morals.

We can only say that those who have the most evolved conscience must, to a certain extent, be their brother's keeper. Also, they must not censure others too severely if these others have not been subject to the same environment and are acting according to a different moral perspective. *Conscience, or the moral sense, constitutes the way in which we regard the relation of self to our environment.* The more inclusive the self-regard, the greater the number of acts and things that seem essential to it, the more developed becomes the moral sense.

If the happiness of others affords you happiness, you are certain, therefore, to regard as morally wrong any conduct which jeopardizes another's happiness.

Consequently, the only aspect of conscience that is rooted in the nature of man is the awareness of self. All else of conscience is a later acquisition from one's surroundings and experiences during the course of life.



Chapter XIII

WHAT VALUE FAITH?

THE WORD *FAITH* has an aura of reverence surrounding it. It is used as a mysterious element of encouragement and moral buoyancy for the discouraged and depressed. To many persons it has actually assumed the quality of a phylactery, become a kind of mental amulet. Faith, to have value, must be understood. It is not a thing in itself, but rather a state of mind. There are words which are used as synonyms of faith, such as hope, belief, and confidence. They are not, however, entirely parallel in their significance. Actually, faith can have a deterrent effect upon the life of an individual if it has the wrong connotation to him.

Faith is the reliance upon certain qualities which appear to be exhibited by a thing or condition. The quality is not self-evident; it does not actually reveal its nature. If it did and this was perceived, that experience would not be one of faith but of *knowledge*. To use an analogy, if I have heard someone discourse, logically and eloquently, upon a certain technical subject, I then do not have faith in his ability; rather, I have knowledge of it. Let us presume that there is a certain popular cause being sponsored. The principles of the cause may appeal to me. I want it to succeed. The cause, however, is as yet an untried one. I have no personal knowledge that it will succeed in fact. The qualities of the cause, what it represents itself to be and what it eventually is to accomplish, can only inspire my faith.

Let us consider faith from its commonest application, that of religion. A religious devotee has faith in the various pronouncements

and promises of his church and its clergy. The church and the clergy both imply a spiritual bond and an authoritative divine insight and relationship. Much of that which is expounded by both are, obviously, unsupported statements from a purely objective or empirical point of view. In other words, the majority of theological promises, made as a part of religious doctrine, cannot be verified by tangible proofs. The religious devotee must have faith in them. He must accept an *implied quality*, that of authoritative spiritual connection. This implication, to the faithful, becomes a substitution for knowledge. Faith, then, we repeat, is reliance upon the implied quality of things and conditions.

All faith is not necessarily devoid of rationalization or of empirical experience. There are at times contributory circumstances which are very strong in their implication and which, though not knowledge, nevertheless justify reliance upon them. There is the faith that a child has in its parents. The father may seem omniscient to the little boy or girl because he is able to solve most of the child's problems. Because of what the father has been able to do for the child, there is the obvious suggestion that he is potentially able to cope with other problems brought to his attention. Then, there is the faith that is exhibited by one who, for the first time, consults a specialist, as a physician, architect, or attorney. This specialist has the quality of authority as to his capabilities. This evokes reliance upon his advice, constituting a faith in his remarks.

The danger associated with faith is the tendency of many persons to let it supplant actual and related knowledge. Some religious sects have made faith in itself dogmatic, that is, an element of their doctrines. They insist and demand that the individual have but faith in their religious matters. They erroneously present faith and truth as being of one nature. Consequently, such religious adherents will, as a conceived moral duty, renounce all facts—refuse even to consider them if they oppose their faith in any way. There is, for instance, the particular individual who has faith in the literal meaning of the Bible. He is more popularly known as a *Fundamentalist*. He adamantly rejects all scientific evidence that reveals the error of certain literal interpretations of the Bible.

An example of this is acceptance of the notation in the earlier version of the Old Testament that genesis occurred in 4004 B.C.! The blind reliance upon implied authority, which is faith at its worst, causes an individual to close his mind. He will not question the source of his information under any circumstances. He will even deny that there is improbability associated with anything offered by the source of his faith.

This misapplication of faith, reliance upon implied quality, puts men's minds at the mercy of unscrupulous powers. It makes it possible for selfish interests to utilize the credulity of such persons to keep them in ignorance and bondage. The very superstitious person is usually one of strong faith. His superstitions are groundless; they are the assumptions of nonexistent causes and effects. Nevertheless, the individual has faith in them. He relies upon their implied authority, that is, the legends and tales in which they abound. Faith should only arise from circumstances of strong probability. For analogy, current developments in a particular enterprise suggest their future continuation. So far as can be determined by observation and thought about them, this probability for the future seems assured. Such a circumstance, then, warrants that reliance which constitutes faith. Without this kind of faith all progress, obviously, would be arrested. Confusion and chaos would ensue instead.

Justified faith, based on probability, such as we have just considered, should, however, be but a temporary measure. The faithful should constantly be alert to replace faith with knowledge. The true mystic, for example, subordinates a faith in God to a knowledge of Him. The most renowned mystics have conceded that it is impossible for the human mind to embrace absolute knowledge of divine reality. However, they expound that it, the human mind, can experience that union with divine reality which constitutes knowledge.

Though hope is commonly interchanged in definition with faith, there is a definite distinction. Psychologically, hope falls into the category of wishful thinking. It is an *anticipatory desire* for some thing or condition. I hope it will not rain tomorrow, but I do not necessarily have faith that it will not do so nor do I know that it will not. One may

hope that his economic status will improve in the future, but he may not have faith in his ability to achieve that end.

It is to be noted that hope is always related to a future time. We do not hope for the present but always for the future. Conversely, faith may be of the past, the present, or the future. One may have faith in certain events of the past and that they will influence, in some particular way, his present or future status. He may have faith or the implied reliance upon the ability of one of the present. Likewise he may have faith in the probability of a future occurrence. Of the two, faith and hope, the former is (with qualifications) the more commendable.

In most instances hope is devoid of any actual or implied facts. Faith, on the other hand, if founded upon reasonable probability, as previously stated, justifies our retention of it as a motivating force in our lives. Hope, however, relies upon a caprice of events to bring about the desired end. In other words, the individual who has hope is placing his dependence upon indefinite factors to fulfill his desires. The one whose faith is related to probability, in lieu of available knowledge, has centered his attention upon reality. This reality is the particular object of his faith.

Everyone who has faith has confidence in the object of his faith, even though it may be misplaced. But everyone who has confidence is not necessarily displaying faith. Confidence, too, is a reliance upon a thing or condition. Such confidence, however, can be engendered by *actual knowledge* quite apart from the implied reliance of faith. I have confidence that a tool, which I use, will produce like results under like conditions. I have observed its functioning. I know from experience its manner of operation. It is true that it might break but, aside from such an event, I know how it should and will operate.

The operation of the tool is not a matter of faith to me. I am not relying upon any qualities which it may imply or upon the authority of anyone's statement as to its efficiency. I might have faith in someone's sales presentation about a new tool only to discover by experience that it was inadequate.

THE CONSCIOUS INTERLUDE

It is advisable to look objectively and rationally on those faiths which we cherish and cling to. Are they obsolete in the light of newly acquired knowledge? Will they stand this test of analysis? Have we the courage to frankly scrutinize them?



Chapter XIV

THE DILEMMA OF RELIGION

PERHAPS THE MOST difficult problem toward establishing a unity of religions has been the *intangible elements* with which religion concerns itself. First, there is the ontological element. This concerns the nature of the first cause, a creative principle, mind, or deity, to which everything that man perceives may be tied fast. The assumption that such a cause exists, as we have previously depicted, is innate in the human's reactions to his environment. Then there is the element of his attributing purpose to such a cause. What is the governing principle? Why does the cause function as it does? What are its ends?

These elements of religion lead to the question of *good* and *evil*. Having assumed a purpose for the cause, or an end for God's function, the religionist finds it quite facile to call *good* that which conforms to the purpose. Conversely, that which seems contrary to conceived divine purpose is held to be evil. Man, of course, is not conceived as entirely outside of the bounds of divine purpose, no matter how frequently his conduct is evil, that is, does not conform to *goodness*. Consequently, the next element of religion is to try to explain this divine state of man, and how it is bound to God or the First Cause. This element of binding man to God is a perplexing one for the religionist. What is the nature of this Divine Nexus or Soul? The question offers an inexhaustible number of opportunities for polemic discussion—and conflict.

Finally, then, there is that religious element which is technically known as eschatology, or the doctrine of *final ends*. This includes the fact of the end of mortal existence. It likewise concerns the problem of *immortality*, a subject with which we have just concerned ourselves in a preceding chapter.

All of these elements have no objectivity. They do not have the same tangibleness as physical man himself. The God of the religionist does not have that substance, like a tree, for example, which can be critically examined by a group of people simultaneously. There are no objective qualities to God, which may be commonly perceived and agreed upon by all men. The religionist may adduce quotations from liturgies, or bring forth a corpus of traditions and legends as sacred literature, to support his contentions. Such, however, is only *referable* matter. Though in itself it is objective, that to which it refers—the religious elements—still remains intangible. Therefore, the subject matter of sacred literature, from the evidential point of view, is often far less directly related to what it refers, than are the artifacts, pieces of pottery and flints, to their assumed makers.

The religionist may reply that even though God has no objective reality to be perceived by man, yet God and the elements of religion are a *personal experience*. If God and the various elements of religion have a positive, definite nature, even though they are not objective, should they not be experienced to a great extent alike by all men? The religionist's answer to this is that men inwardly perceive these elements differently because of their own dissimilarity. If this is so, then what is the *true* or absolute nature of the basic elements of religion. If the fundamentals of religion are entirely an individual experience, then it is improper for any religious group or sect to contend that only their experiences are the true ones.

Let us use the analogy of two men standing on the threshold of an absolutely dark room. Nothing can be objectively seen or heard in the room by the men. If there is something within the room, and it cannot be objectively perceived by the men and yet they are to realize it, they will then need to experience it *subjectively*. It would have to be an individual subjective experience. It would be impossible for either

of the two men to confirm or refute each other's experiences of the contents of the dark room. There is nothing that they can point at in the room and say, this is what I saw. If we assume that each man has a *different* experience of what is in the room, then which man is right and which man is wrong? Further, would the content of the room actually be like that which either of them had experienced?

Since the men do not agree and neither one can disprove the other, the validity is strictly a matter of personal experience. Both of the men may be right or wrong. If the content of the room is different from what each experiences, then obviously both are wrong. However, since it is impossible for either of the men to establish objectively the truth of his experience, then they both are *subjectively right*. Both have the subjective experience that something exists within the dark room. What they experience has no physical, no tangible objective nature. The objective qualities they attribute to their experiences are *unreal*. The only thing real is the intangible subjective experience which they have alike, namely, that something is in the room. The feeling and experience in itself is real.

A sensation is more real than the defining of that of which it consists. Therefore, in this analogy, the two men standing on the threshold are both right, even though each has a different understanding of his experience. Applying this viewpoint to the elements of religion, we can say that until they can become so objective that men can have the same agreement upon them as they would upon the view of a countryside, the elements must remain *individual subjective experiences*. From this, the conclusion must be reached that the religious experiences of no man are false.

The religionist has been more inclined to put emphasis on the qualities of his experiences, his interpretations, than on the fact of his experiences. For further analogy, the religionist's position is like that of one who is inclined to say that the gray suit and red tie worn by a man are more the man than the human himself, only because he has experienced a man wearing such clothes. In other words, it is an attempt to show that man is something that wears a gray suit and a red tie.

The religionist has tried to rationalize, to philosophize, his subjective experiences. He will, however, not concede that those whose experiences are different might likewise be as right as he presumes to be. He evolves or adopts philosophical concepts as dogmatic arguments to support his personal experiences. He has, for example, experienced God as having certain characteristics. He cannot obviously prove these qualities he ascribes to his experience, but he tries by reason to show how all other conceptions must be false. The more he builds a case for himself, attempting by dialectics to give reality to the details of his experience, the more he offends those who differ with him. Thus the conflict of religion does not exist in subjective experience, but in theology, "the system" which attempts to prove the particulars of the religious experience.

The true philosophical attitude of mind differs from the religious one. The philosopher is searching for knowledge. He realizes that much which has the appearance of truth to him is but an abstraction, impossible of manifesting outside the bounds of his own reason. He knows that many of his ideas have been rationalized and are not the direct result of experience. The philosopher may believe that an opinion different from his own constitutes inadequate reasoning. However, he does not pretend that his own conceptions are divine revelations to be accepted without question.

Let us accept the proposition that religion is a subjective experience, an emotional and psychic one. Men have ecstatic experiences. They seem to transcend in consciousness the limitations of their ordinary mundane existence. In such moments of exaltation they are conscious of a different and a desirable extreme of awareness. They may have consciously brought this upon themselves, or it may have involuntarily come about. The sensations of the experience seem unearthly. Consequently, it becomes a desired state, an *ideal*. It is understandable, then, that man should believe that such a state was induced within him by a superior force or intelligence.

With this begins the moral conflict. It is one that even the most primitive being has experienced. It is a struggle between two kinds of desires: the somatic and the idealistic. The somatic desires are very

easily identified with appetites and passions; the ideals, the aspirations, are the inclinations of the more all-inclusive self. All animals display appetites. Man alone displays many of the virtues attributed to the all-inclusive self. This distinction suggests that the higher or more exalted self has been implanted within man.

These urges, these transcendental desires, which are the impetus behind the religious disposition of mind, result in highly commendable acts. If man could blindly act in response to these religious impulses, religious controversy and its attendant evils would not exist. The individual, however, begins to analyze the sensations he has and to cloak them in ideals. His attitude of rectitude, his disinclination to do one thing or to prefer another, is shaped by the *reason* into forms of intellectual justification. The individual moral sense makes a certain act, for example, repugnant to him. The content of the act, however, may not be such as to cause others to have the same repugnance. The act is rationalized. It is assumed that the content is evil in itself because of the feeling it induces. The act, then, is *moralized* and *dogmatized*. It is proscribed for all others, without regard for their individual subjective reaction to it.

If, therefore, the act is not injurious to organized society and to a particular individual, the latter resents being prohibited from performing it just because of another's experiences and reasons therefor. Since the one who expounds against the act has intimately and subjectively experienced the repugnance, it is very real to him. It seems to be of *divine* origin. The refusal of others to accept his interpretation of the experience, he construes as an attack not only upon his religious view, but also upon a divine decree.

It is this attempt to philosophize or to find meaning for the religious experience, to crystallize it into dogmatic terms, that brings about religious strife. If men would first realize that the explanations which they ascribe to their subjective or religious experiences were not divinely inspired, they would not attempt to impose them. Presuming that the religious experience is a direct consequence of a divine impulse, the conception of its meaning and purpose would have to arise from the individual, not from God. If, as said previously, the explanation of

the religious experience, the objective qualities of it, were prompted by God, then all men capable of the experience should have the same realization of it. Since, however, two men can have an afflatus of the soul and yet conceive its meaning differently, it is obvious that the qualities attributed to the religious experience have no impersonal existence.

The human is so constituted that he cannot fail to intellectualize his experiences. Psychologically, every sensation takes the form of an idea. As we have noted in a previous chapter, either the quality of a sensation, as a sound or smell, creates an idea in the consciousness, as an immediate result, or it develops into one by association. Our experiences are mainly in the nature of pictures. We do not question that beyond ourselves are those vibrations or wave lengths of light, which, for example, when assembled in consciousness produce the image of a tree.

An intelligent, educated person today would not, however, argue that the *visual image* of the tree actually exists beyond his being as he perceives it. Why, then, should man insist that his conceptions of the subjective experiences have an actuality beyond his mind? Why should he try to impose such images upon others? Especially is such attitude objectionable when one realizes that the degree of subjective perception varies considerably more than does the objective. Two men may visually perceive something almost identically, but no two men will have identically the same religious experience.

The proper religious life would be to respond only to religious experiences, to be guided by one's impulses which seem to represent the Divine, or the dictates of the highest moral self. One should make such guidance to be a personal response, one of individual action, just as the experience was an individual one. The formation of ideas which voluntarily or involuntarily follow from the experience should be considered in the light of philosophical abstraction. The experience of God is a religious impulse.

The conception of the nature of God, the defining of the qualities of the experience, falls entirely within the realm of philosophy. Every

man has the right of religious experience, but no man has the right to impose his philosophical conceptions, as religious experiences, upon another or even to expound them as such. For analogy, I will readily agree with you that there is such a sensation as *coldness*. We will have no disagreement upon such an experience. On the other hand, you might quite emphatically disagree with me on my description of this sensation of coldness.

There is still another way to look upon this matter. A study of religious literature, I think it will be agreed, is not the equivalent of personal religious experience. There is a vast distinction between the theophanic experience of God and the reading of a religious tract on the nature of God. If theological dogma or philosophical discourses are not the equivalent of religious experience, then why should one who has a religious experience try to identify his philosophical speculations with it?

There is nothing so damning to religion as the invectives hurled by men at one another in its name, with all of the emotional intensity which follows from the religious experience. If every religious experience is kept as individual as it is had, and the interpretations of it are vested in philosophy, without imposition, then religious conflict will disappear. Men are already united psychologically, in their innate capacity, to have religious experiences to some degree. They become disunited only when in the name of religion they seek to impose their philosophical interpretations of these experiences upon others.

True *mysticism* perhaps comes closest to providing a unity of religions. The nature of what is referred to as the mystical consciousness will, therefore, receive our next consideration.



Chapter XV

THE MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

WE HAVE SAID that man's perception of his being, and his forming of notions about it in relationship to externality, resulted in the ideas of self. But man eventually discovered that self is rather an all-inclusive term. We have already discussed several states of that personal consciousness which we call *self*. The commonest, of course, is the physical self. It is the awareness of our own objective form, such as our ability to perceive our hands and feet and to distinguish them from other physical realities, as the chair in the room, the carpet under our feet. Then there is also the ego, the "I," the consciousness which seems to exist by itself apart from the body. This is the realization that we are not a part of any substance or of somatic sensations such as the functioning of our viscera. You may close your eyes so as not to see yourself and, even without any internal disturbances or functional sensations, you nevertheless realize that you are *you*.

Then there are those states in which you have the experience of self seeming to expand. We do not mean that self is actually extending itself in form, that we are adding to our weight or stature. In fact, there is no feeling of body enlargement. Rather the self is merely expanding in qualities of space and time. The individual feels that he is ubiquitous, that he is everywhere at once. Furthermore, he feels as if

his consciousness is increasing to absorb both the past and the future, as though the *now* were spreading infinitely backward and forward.

During such occasions, the perceptions of the individual are quite unique. He experiences a phenomenon which to him has a definite reality and yet cannot be related to his physical senses. It does not, for example, have such sense qualities as sight or hearing. The mind seems to acquire a noetic quality, as though an extensive knowledge were suddenly implanted within it. These latter kinds of consciousness have become known as the *mystical states*. They are not aberrations of mind, as they were once thought. Under certain stimuli, they are as natural to man as that consciousness of self which is common to him. Jung says that the mystical consciousness is a borderline between experiencing and cognizing. At such a point, experience and understanding are immediately integrated and there is no laboring over the interpretation of sensations.

The mystical consciousness is a sublimation, a refined sensation, by which we have an understanding of self without resort to the objective senses and the reasoning faculties. Some of the most prominent scientists, renowned for their research in the physical sciences, instead of criticizing mysticism, have looked on it honestly and paid it the respect which is its due.

Eddington, renowned astrophysicist, in one of his works concerning the physical phenomena of our universe, devotes a whole chapter to speaking boldly in defense of the mystical consciousness. He relates that, from a purely scientific point of view, from the materialistic attitude of mind, all the experiences which we have, all the things of which we are conscious, can be reduced to some physical agencies, to some form of reality. From the scientific point of view, they are electrons, atoms, quanta of energy, wave lengths, vibrations, or sensations.

But even these things do not give us a true picture of the physical world, for the physical world is an abstract one. It is not as we actually perceive it. We are really deluded by our physical senses as every materialist will need to agree. But, as Eddington says, shall we then pluck out our eyes, because things are not as they seem to us? Not at all. We are more or less content with the illusions of our senses.

Why then deny the mystical experience which, after all, is the result of sensations of our organism, just as our ideas are the result of the physical universe?

The mystical consciousness is a symbolizing of the psychical phenomena which we realize. We are more than a rational being. We are also an *emotional being*—a *feeling being*. What we perceive produces certain feelings within us which are a definite part of our existence. Eddington further points out that, from the scientific point of view, the rainbow is but a band of ethereal vibrations arranged according to their wave lengths. Yet to say that the rainbow is merely wave lengths, so far as we human beings are concerned, is a distortion of the truth, for as we look upon it, it has to us still another existence. The rainbow produces effects in our consciousness which are part of what we call the rainbow. If this were not so, then we should experience the same effects by merely looking upon a mathematical table of wave lengths. Consequently, the mystical consciousness is one of the natural states of mind.

The five senses of man delineate what we know or what we accept as the external world. They contribute to man's consciousness of it. The vibrations of an organism—that is, those had within itself—which actuate the brain, set up parallel sensations to those which actuate the organism from outside. In other words, we have two sets of sensations: those within and those without. At times these internal impulses cause us to do more than realize our body, to feel the functions of our organism or its systems, as that of respiration. They have a far deeper origin. They seem to reach down, into the very pulsations of the life force permeating every cell of our being. When we experience such sensations, they are formless. They are without the usual sense qualities. They are sensations of being, but with a non-dimensional existence. These strange, shall we say, sensations are of the *mystical consciousness*.

The mystical consciousness is the nearest approach to unity with the Cosmic that man can have. When we attain mystical consciousness, even though momentarily, it is like switching from a party line of a telephone circuit to the main trunk. All of the individual conversations

and communications are subordinated to the whole pulsation, as an integrated sound. Since the mystical consciousness is free from perceptive qualities or those qualities associated with our sense organism, it is difficult to develop ideation from such a mystical experience, that is, particular ideas which have an objective meaning.

An Islamic mystic said: "When knowledge is elevated above earthly things, when it begins to try itself in the things hidden from eyesight, when it stretches upward, then the inner sense wakes to spiritual service." We can presume that he meant that, by introspection and turning our sensitivity inward, we respond to the finer impulses of the vital life force. We then experience the mystical state.

What does the mystical evolverment of consciousness do for us in life? Aside from the mystical content and the inspirational value that may come to us from a consideration of these principles, how do they serve us here and now in a mundane existence?

The Rosicrucian philosophy delineates that there are two points of knowledge which arise as a result of the practice of the evolving of consciousness. Both of these are personally beneficial in our everyday life. The first point of knowledge which we may gain is an understanding of the *hierarchy of selves* of which we consist. We come to know, through evolverment of consciousness, that there is no fixed self which we must assume and which remains the same all through life, with its fixed point of view or objective. The self depends upon points of reference to what is related, just as our concepts of the world vary according to the extent that we study, read, travel, and meet people.

If we tie our consciousness to the world of the senses, relying exclusively on them, we shall, then, manifest one kind of self, a purely mundane objective self. On the other hand, if the self is related to the rational side of our being, to contemplation, to the evaluation of experience, then we have still another of the selves of this hierarchy. If the self is referred to the emotional inner responses, to a wondering about our behavior and why we are motivated as we are, we come to a different type of self. Also, if the self is referred to intuition, to the subtle sensations of our own being, to a responding to them, we have a further enlargement of self. The self, then, is an aggregate of the

scale of personal consciousness. The whole self is a hierarchy of this variable consciousness of our own being.

We cannot jump from the limited objective self, which concerns itself only with worldly things, to the extended mystical self. There is too great a gap between the two. To cross this gap quickly would be like an attempt to leap from the lowest rung of a high ladder to the top one. To attempt such a jump, as many do, produces religious fanatics, disillusioned individuals, and those unfortunates with mental aberrations. Each self has its own particular value; otherwise, we would not have consciousness of it. No mechanic uses one tool for all purposes. No surgeon uses one instrument for all operations. No one who has had the experience and the realization, through evolving his consciousness, that there is a hierarchy of selves will ever attempt to build his own life on one self and its relationships. This point of the hierarchy of selves, it must be evident, provides an opportunity for the fullness of life.

The second practical point of knowledge which emerges from the evolvment of consciousness is the acquiring of an infinite conception. The more you evolve your consciousness, the greater becomes the extent of your experience, the vaster the potentialities of knowledge. The aggregate of experiences becomes your concept and this grows into infinity. With this infinite conception, you come to learn not to place limits upon anything. There are no limitations except the ability of the mind to comprehend at any given time. This point develops in the aspirant a liberal view, a tolerant attitude.

We know that no single stroke of the artist's brush, in itself, depicts the content of his painting; it is the aggregate of such strokes related to each other that gives form to the painting. So, too, the one who evolves his consciousness knows that no single point, no single attitude of mind, can constitute the whole scope of any subject. He knows that there are no absolutes in all of life. There are only relative conditions.

We at times do accept things as they appear. When we do, it is only because, at that moment, we have not the ability to see beyond them. But even though we are momentarily limited, we must not crystallize our minds on such temporary limitations. We must be prepared for

ultimate variations which will come, if we permit them. This view, then, arising out of the evolvment of consciousness, dispels racial and religious prejudice on the part of the individual. Our evolvment, as well, does away with the finiteness of such ideas as heaven and hell.

Some may say that the points of knowledge of the hierarchy of selves and an infinite conception are strictly individual attainments. No matter what benefits the individual may derive from them, the question is, how do such individual attainments benefit humanity at large? We well know how humanity or society has created general finalities, certain goals, which it has labeled *fame, power, wealth*, and the like, and has urged, in numerous ways, that men pursue. Persons are forced into these channels whether they find satisfaction in these ends or not.

The hierarchy of selves makes it possible for each individual to have a *personal satisfaction* in accordance with his own evolving consciousness, that is, in relation to his own being and unfoldment. He will not be tempted to concentrate upon one aspect of himself and destroy the balance of society, leaving it too mundane or too utilitarian. If an individual conforms to the self of his hierarchy to which he is closest in understanding and realizes that there are variations of self, he will be inclined to understand the inclinations of others to pursue different interests. He will not insist that his inclination is the only one and he will be tolerant of the pursuits of others, just as a parent is tolerant of the interests of a child. The parent has had those experiences; they no longer appeal to him, but he will not compel the child to abandon those interests just because he himself has outgrown them.

The mystic who expounds the evolvment of consciousness wants humanity, by this teaching, to experience the fullness of life. Through each individual perceiving the variations of self, man will learn that he himself makes his own boundaries, that such cannot exist except in the limits of his own consciousness. Man will come to know, for example, that success is not a matter of Divine intervention, that a God does not act for or on behalf of man or any group of men. Mastery in life is not the result of a patronizing being.



Chapter XVI

A PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY

A HUMAN'S RELATION to beauty is twofold: first, the beauty which one seeks, or desires to acquire; second, the individual himself may become beautiful. When one seeks beauty in the world, he is responding to a desire to acquire something or a condition which is pleasurable to his senses. Therefore, beauty of the world is whatever engenders within us pleasurable sensations. A rose may be beautiful to the olfactory sense, if it is fragrant. Likewise, a sunset may be beautiful to the visual sense because of the refraction and dispersion of the sun's rays. A sapid liquid, or a concordant sound, may be beautiful to the particular sense which discerns it. In fact, there are many words which are synonymous with *beautiful*, depending upon our experiences, such as, for example, fragrant, delicious, or harmonious. All of these expressions mean, in effect, *beautiful*. The search for beauty in nature, then, is the endeavor to surround oneself with things which are conducive to one's objective well-being.

Each human is more than a corporeal being; he is more than an aggregate of visual appearances. The human is also a potentiality of thoughts, which result in certain behavior and which can and do influence man's external world. Consequently, beauty cannot be limited to personal physical attraction. For the human being, it must as well include man's potentialities—the things which he, as an individual, can come to manifest.

The physical beauty of a mortal consists of varying ideals. After all, if beauty were an inherent quality, if it were an ingredient, a substance that actually existed in the objects which are said to be beautiful, then it would be perceived and recognized alike by all people. All humans crave that which gratifies the qualities of one or more of their senses. Each sense, as we know, has its quality, and we clothe the qualities of these senses in ideals. These ideals are commensurate with the varying experiences of each human life.

As the years march by, there are certain things which we have come to perceive as representing to us the greatest enjoyment that can be derived for each of the senses. An ideal of beauty possessed by a mechanical engineer, we may say, could be a complex machine, magnificently engineered, precise, accurate in its functioning. Such an ideal would most certainly be different from the one held by the poet or the musician. A young woman's ideals of beauty are often quite different from the older woman's concepts which are the result of her experiences and contacts with life.

This brings us to the question of what constitutes beauty of face. We all frequently speak of a beautiful face, but just what do we mean? What is our standard or gauge for determining this beauty? Commonly, a beautiful face is one that has no prominent features. In other words, neither the eyes, the nose, nor the mouth stands out conspicuously. When the elements of the physiognomy are uniform, the attention value of the face then has a passivity. The observer is not moved to critical analysis of any one facial element or feature. The face gives the impression of beauty because it is restful or harmonious in its uniformity.

Some men are called *handsome*, a synonym of *beautiful*, because of their physique, that is, their height and the breadth of their shoulders. This concept of beauty arises from the feminine ideal of what constitutes masculine attractiveness. It is probably founded upon the diametrical opposite of feminine characteristics. As we have said, experience causes a change in our ideals of beauty. Later in life, one may call *handsome* the face that is rugged and strong, possibly because it suggests a contact and conflict with the vicissitudes of life. When we

run the gamut of the emotions, such as fear, love, hatred, these play upon the facial muscles and leave their stamp on the face.

Charles Darwin, noted anthropologist, in his renowned work, *The Origin of Species*, declared that the facial movements are signs of three principal emotional expressions. He contended that the facial movements are but a continuation of practical movements, that is, a continuation of the movements of our bodies, hands, or legs. The movements of the muscles of the face are toned reactions of a previous violent muscular action. A person who is melancholy or seemingly depressed will often have depressed muscles around the corner of the mouth. These are held to be remnants of vocal grief. In his more primitive state, when man was less inclined to control his emotions, he would open his mouth wide and give forth a cry.

Furthermore, the closing of the mouth tightly and the gritting of the teeth is a sign of mental determination. It is a remnant, an adjunct, of some physical strain, when the gritting of the teeth and the tightness of the lips were in accord with the more violent physical muscular strain.

T. Piderit, German anatomist of a few years before Darwin's time, held that facial movements are an adjunct of the sense organs, the movements assisting or impeding the sense stimuli. For example, we open our eyes wide to see better or we partially close our eyes to shut out something. Certain positions of the nostrils, as well, facilitate or impede the sense of smell. The individual with unpleasant thoughts will often be observed to partially close his eyes and to pucker up his mouth as if to shut out bitter tastes and unwanted sights. Conversely, with pleasant thoughts one will open his eyes wide in order to be more responsive to a corresponding pleasant sight. The pleasant thought will cause the mouth to be sweeter, the nose more mobile or relaxed. The illustrations accompanying this text will make better understood this point about facial movements, as corresponding to our emotions. (See Fig. 22)

Through observing and watching the persons with whom we come in daily contact, we have become accustomed to these patterns in facial movements. We consider them as examples of the expressed emotions

of the individual, each facial movement being a sign of certain emotions; these patterns have helped to form ideals of beauty. In other words, we accept as beautiful certain patterns of facial expression. A face seeming about to break into a smile is called *pleasant*, *charming*, *handsome*.

Real human beauty consists of characteristics which are acceptable to all normal adults of any age and do not appreciably change with time.

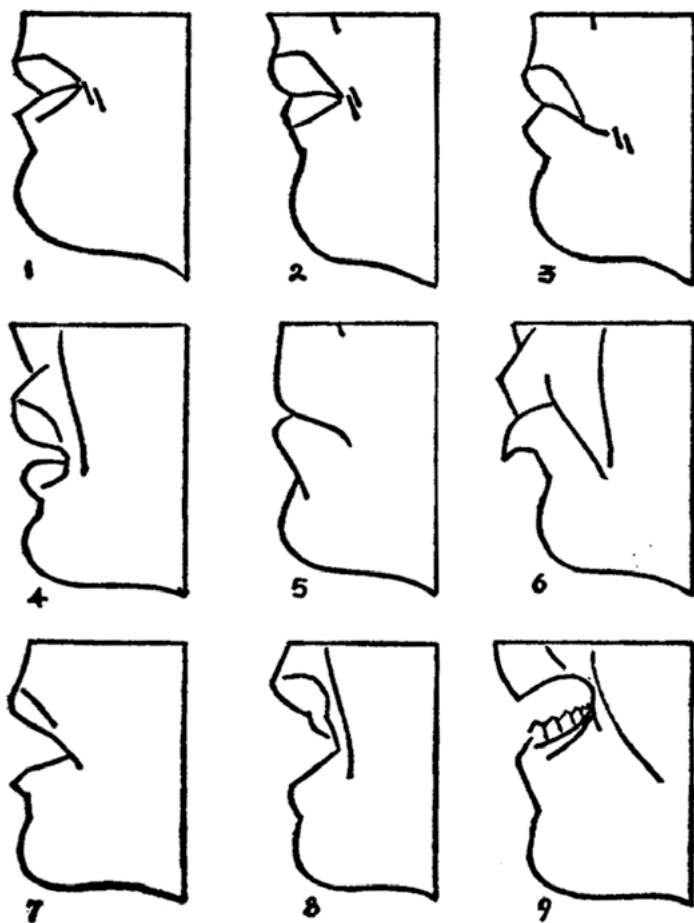


Fig. 22

Fig. 1, normal; Fig. 2, sweet; Fig. 3, bitter; Fig. 4, very pleasant; Fig. 5, stubborn; Fig. 6, stubborn and unpleasant; Fig. 7, attentive; Fig. 8, unpleasant and attentive; Fig. 9, snarl and sneer.

This beauty *within oneself* must be developed esoterically. However, it does manifest to others, exoterically or outwardly. We have said that beauty is that which brings pleasure to us. We may behold our own esoteric or inner beauty with pleasure. However, unlike physical beauty, it engenders no personal conceit or arrogance. In fact, vanity and conceit in themselves would be a behavior quite inconsistent with esoteric attractiveness and would be rejected as ugly by one who is esoterically beautiful.

What are factors of esoteric or inner beauty? How does one develop them? When one tries to cultivate physical beauty, that of the body, he or she usually strives to conform to the prevailing social ideals of what constitutes that beauty. The Caucasian, for example, will resort to the curling of naturally straight hair. The fluffiness of the curled hair suggests softness commensurate with the ideals of feminine beauty.

Many of the Negro race who, by nature, have curly hair will attempt to straighten it, because they believe that the contrast or distinction will make them more attractive in the sight of others. African aborigines, by the use of certain mechanical devices from birth or early childhood will begin the elongation of the neck to conform to their ideal of beauty. In Gautama Buddha's time, it was customary to wear heavy ear ornaments fastened to the lobe of the ear, and this resulted in the elongation of the ear lobe. Eventually this elongation became the sign or ideal of beauty in those times. Artists and sculptors, in executing figures of that time, which we see today in paintings and in remnants of Buddhist temples, show this exaggerated length of the ear lobe to express the ideal of beauty.

For esoteric beauty, there are two factors or substances which one must develop: the *mind* substance; and the *moral* substance. Like physical beauty, these factors must likewise conform to certain ideals. However, the ideal of esoteric beauty must be corresponsive; it must meet the needs of social and Cosmic laws as well. For an analogy, let us suppose that self-discipline, the control of our emotions and behavior, is one of the elements of esoteric beauty constituting an ideal. The ideal would fall short, however, if it prevented us from supporting the advancement of society which necessitates a display of such feeling as

compassion or fortitude.

Esoteric beauty is not static; in fact, it is dynamic. Esoteric beauty is forever compelling the individual to organize the things of his objective world so as to be in harmony with the ideals which he possesses—and such ideals never retrogress. They proceed along in one direction. They continually ascend toward perfection. Thus, in each generation, that which conforms to esoteric beauty, unlike many of the ideals of physical beauty, is more beautiful than it was in the preceding generation.

Let us now consider *mind substance*, the first of the two factors of esoteric beauty which one must develop. The substance of which mind consists is *consciousness*. As we have said in a chapter on this subject, consciousness cannot in itself be realized as an absolute state. In fact, consciousness must always be identified with one of two general characteristics; that is, it is always associated with experience or motive. Experience is the passive characteristic of mind substance, of consciousness. We perceive extended impulses, vibrations of the forces and energies around us. Light waves, for example, cause us to have visual images, to see forms and colors. Vibrations of the air cause us to perceive sound.

These various impulses act upon the mind. They are the experiences which the mind has. The mind, of course, is not the prime mover in these experiences. It is being acted upon. Let us think of consciousness, the mind substance, as the surface of a pond. Then, let us think of this pond as agitated by a stone falling or being thrown into it. Immediately, with the impact of the stone, ripples or concentric lines are formed upon the surface and spread out. These waves, with their crests and their valleys, we may liken to the experiences of the external world which we have. Concisely, the impact of vibrations from the world outside ourselves upon our brain, and related sense organs, causes what we call *consciousness* and its sensations.

The pond cannot escape having waves, the result of the stone striking its surface. These waves must form due to immutable laws. The human mind, likewise, cannot escape perceiving the forces and energies about it. When these forces impinge upon consciousness,

we have experiences. The mind's reaction to the world, its response to these impulses, is its passive characteristic. All phenomenal knowledge—that is, the knowledge that comes to us through our senses—is but the passive characteristic of mind. Consequently, the saturation of the mind with learning, the pouring into our minds of the facts of our objective experience, is not in itself wholly satisfying. The accumulation of facts does provide that pleasure, as we have said, which amounts to esoteric beauty.

To use a homely analogy, no accumulation of building materials, such as lumber, cement, steel, and brick, provides the same satisfaction as does the assembly of those materials into some specific form. The plan for building is the ideal; the materials, the objective things, must participate in the plan, conform to it so that the plan may be realized, if it is to bring satisfaction. The beauty of a house is the creative attainment—the building of it, the fulfillment of the conception of the house itself.

Perception, the use of our objective receptor faculties, is like a delivery service to the mind. It only provides our consciousness with materials, and is not sufficient for intellectual beauty.

Motive is the active characteristic of mind substance, or consciousness. It is the opposite of experience, which is the passive aspect.

We have likened consciousness to a pond or a pool. At times a pool may be agitated within itself, independent of any external force or movement. The surface of the pool may be seen to lower or rise, or it may seem to move in one direction or another. Deep springs have probably affected it, springs deep within its own nature. Objects upon the surface of the pool may move together or move slightly apart and form various geometric patterns. They may indicate by their movement the direction of internal forces.

The objects on the surface of the pool may be likened to our experiences of the external world, to the sensations in consciousness of that which exists outside ourselves. The springs deep within the pool we may liken to the causes of our motives. The principal causes

of our motives are the faculties of *reason* and *imagination*. These faculties spring from a combination of our organic being, our physical self, and the vital life force which animates us and makes us living beings. It is upon these two that consciousness also depends.

Now, let us consider *reason* as one of the two causes of motive, or one of the two springs that internally move consciousness. As has been previously explained, the functions of reason are of two general kinds: inductive and deductive. By inductive reasoning we progress from the simple, from the particular experience, to others, and thereby to the complex. This reasoning enables us to discover the relationship between single things so that from such relationship certain conclusions may be had.

Suppose the parts of a jigsaw puzzle, a heterogeneous collection of pieces, were dumped upon a table before us, and we had no idea of the picture or design which these parts were to form. Since we could not anticipate the whole relationship of these parts, obviously the assembly of them would be much more laborious. We could not be certain of the relationship of any of the parts, if the whole design were unknown to us. At times we might be obliged to discard some of the assemblies, because we would realize that they were not consistent or were not contributing to any definite end.

Therefore, if some things are not beautiful in themselves but become beautiful only by their participating in some ideal, by being fitted into a picture or plan, then, obviously, inductive reasoning could not in itself be a pleasurable experience because by such reasoning we would not be moving toward an anticipated end. Many of the things selected would have to be discarded.

Inductive reasoning is always provocative and challenging to the mind. It provides new but often incomplete experiences. However, something may be incomplete and yet, if it is perceived as contributing to a whole, it is satisfactory. We may pick up a part of a jigsaw puzzle and, if we know what the whole design is intended to be, that piece is satisfying by virtue of the fact that its relationship is known to us. Inductive reasoning is frequently employed by science to unearth and arrange a multitude of particulars.

Inductive reasoning has its value in the examination and analysis of the particular. The part becomes identified and, as an experience, it is classified. Thus the various discoveries are grouped and explanations offered for them. It is because of this that we have been able to distinguish between animate and inanimate, or organic and inorganic, elements. These classifications are useful to the mind. They help us to determine the qualitative and quantitative nature of materials which the mind must use in the fulfillment of ideals and plans.

In the second kind of reasoning, the deductive, the mind has a general concept which, to the mind at least, is intellectually sufficient. In this reasoning the mind proceeds from the general concept to those particular ideals or things of which it appears to be composed. Deductive reasoning is a progression from the abstract, the subjective, to the objective. It is a search for that which will materialize the ideal.

Suppose you conceive of a home. You do not stop with the conception, because it would have no actuality to you. Nothing seems actual unless it has an independent existence, the equivalent of our own, that is, unless something is perceived by us as apart from ourselves. We most certainly realize our concept or ideal as being strictly of us—in our minds. When the elements of our ideals can be objectively perceived, then we hold that the concept, the ideal, has become actualized. Its existence is as actual as our own. To resort again to our analogy, when we can see or feel the elements of the house we plan, it is then actual to us.

Deductive reasoning seeks in the world those particulars, those experiences, which will fit into the plan or the concept which the mind embraces. Deductive reasoning attempts to evolve these particulars into the whole. Each piece, each element objectively perceived, brings its satisfaction to the one who reasons deductively, because its relation is appreciated by him; and, since he can see it fitting into the plan, it identifies or makes more vivid the whole subjective ideal. When the concept is actualized, it is esoterically *beautiful* to us because we have the realization of achievement. We have created something having an existence equal to our own, that is, equal as a state of being.

It may be asked, Does not actualization often fall short of an ideal which we may have had? We must answer, Yes. On the other hand, this does not contradict the principle that the realization of an ideal is beautiful. If actuality or an objective experience falls short, that means that our particular ideal has not been fully realized. If actuality does not conform to an ideal, then it is not of that ideal. If we have the ideal of a six-room house and we can only objectify or bring into actuality a four-room house, the ideal has not failed. The actualization has just not conformed to it. Here we find a distinction between fancy and imagination.

The Rosicrucian philosophy states that fancy but plays. Fancy is a combination of ideas providing a momentary realization of their relationship. On the other hand, imagination compels, commands, and creates. Imagination is satisfying to us in that it transforms the external world at our will and action. It makes things or what may appear as things, beyond or outside us, take shape and conform to our ideals. Thus imagination is highly important to motive and, as we have said, motive is one of the characteristics of mind substance or consciousness contributing to the attainment of intellectual beauty.

The tense of imagination is the *future*. Imagination formulates an ideal which has no place objectively. In other words, what we imagine is something that we have never objectively experienced or realized. Therefore, to us as individuals, if the imagined thing is to be realized, it must be of the future. No matter how quickly an ideal may be realized, the realization is always of the future. Its reality is of the future, in contrast to the ideal itself. However, the elements, the parts of the imaginative ideal, are of experience. They are something which the mind has experienced in the past, apart from itself. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive anything that is absolutely free of all elements of experience.

Imagination gives new value, new direction, to the actual entities which the mind has realized. It lays down the course along which the realities of the world, as experienced, must move or must gather. Let us think of a checker game. The checkers appearing before us on the board are actualities in the sense that we objectively perceive them. The plays which we have in mind, however, the arrangements in which

we are going to place those checkers, are of the future. They are the imaginative value which we assign to the checkers. Only when we have made the plays, when we have rearranged the checkers on the board to conform to the ideal we have in mind, do the particular plays we have thought out become as actual as the checkers themselves. When the play has been made, it can then be objectively perceived.

Each thing perceived—that is, what we see, hear, feel, taste, or smell—has some value. It bears some relation to ourselves. So far as we are concerned, it is helpful, it is good, it is useful, and so forth. If all things perceived have a relationship to our minds, wherein, then, does imagination derive the new value it attaches to our ideas or experiences? It is aspiration which motivates the creative imagination and assigns it the new value. Aspiration is the compelling force which imagination cannot escape. We may define aspiration as *the desire to attain what the mind conceives to be the most satisfying experience*. Now, things which are seen or heard, for example, or even our thoughts, may give us certain satisfactions. But aspiration is the desire to exceed an enjoyable experience.

Our talents, for instance, in relation to our experiences, may serve as an aspiration. Thus, one who has a talent for painting will, upon seeing a painting, feel the urge to paint. One who is mechanically inclined will upon seeing a machine shop, with its various lathes and automatic tools, desire to step inside and make some device. Such reactions are the result of our conceiving a similar but fuller experience to the one which we have had already. The lover of music may want to be a musician, because he conceives a greater satisfaction in becoming a performer. The lover of travel may desire to be an adventurer because it means a fuller experience of something he holds to be pleasurable. Thus, under the influence of aspiration, the desire for a more satisfying experience, our imagination combines the elements of our knowledge, the things of our experience, to fit the conceived end. Aspiration ever impels; imagination responds by creating objectively, and thereby pleasure is realized through the sense experience.

Are there imaginative circumstances which we have experienced and which were not impelled by aspiration and did not become a motive?

Yes, there are such circumstances. However, such are not the result of creative imagination. They may be defined as that function of mind known as *imaging*. The Rosicrucian philosophy explains that imaging is but the visualization of the whole of something without relating to it the essential elements of which it is composed, a mere picture without any appreciation of its integral parts.

Therefore, it may not be possible to duplicate the picture objectively. Imaging is not the intentional co-ordinating of the elements to give the idea actuality. Imaging is fancy and passes quickly. Epictetus, Stoic philosopher, said that those who follow fancy are madmen. When, in our thinking and in our reasoning, we are motivated by aspiration, this aspiration is dynamically expressed as things done, as deeds accomplished. Aspiration furnishes the key to action. *Intellectual beauty*, then, the greatest satisfaction of mind, is the transferring of the motion of thought to matter.

This brings us to the other substance of esoteric beauty, namely, *moral substance*. Moral substance has been commonly defined in many ways, as conscience, the dictates of the soul, and divine influence. We do not believe that these are wholly adequate for an understanding, especially in connection with esoteric beauty. We prefer to call moral substance *the behavior of self*, and we are ever conscious of certain organic or bodily drives, if you will, which compel us to action. The commonest of these are hunger, sex, and temperature maintenance. It is temperature maintenance which causes us to avoid the excesses of heat and cold and to find or construct shelters.

Now, these drives are common to all animals. They are the natural behavior of organic beings. Of course, ethics may compel us at times to impede them, but ethical restrictions are often nothing more than the enforcement of man-made rules, which he frequently willingly escapes. However, when we voluntarily restrict our drives, we have an example of the behavior of self.

Aristotle defined virtue as the golden mean between deficient and excessive acts, as the middle course—in other words, between under-conduct and over-conduct. Certainly some acts of omission, the failing to do something, are as great an evil as acts of commission. The

virtues, then, are means for the disciplining of the body and reason, keeping our physical actions and thoughts on a middle course. For example, the virtue of justice keeps the personal drives, which are part of our animal nature, from going to such an extreme as would deprive another of his own natural rights. The virtue of temperance keeps the body from going to those destructive excesses which would destroy it. The virtue of charity keeps the self from being constricted, that is, from being limited to a concern for its own physical being. Charity causes the satisfaction of self to be extended to include the welfare of others.

Plotinus, Neoplatonic philosopher and great mystic, said that virtue is in action when the soul throws off the body. He stated that virtue causes the body to function according to the soul's higher intellection. It brings the soul into association with God. As Rosicrucians would say, it results in self being absorbed into the Cosmic, or in tune with it.

Consequently, moral beauty is to be found in virtuous action. It is, therefore, a beauty that never diminishes with time or age. Such beauty is not only pleasurable to us but it is also pleasurable to others. It is founded upon the unchanging essence in all humanity, the nature of self. Plotinus further said that, if we were to know more about the beauty of good souls, we must know more of virtue. In other words, to know the real behavior of self, we draw into self, introvert the consciousness and look within.

He also said that, if you still do not see beauty, then do as the sculptor does. Strike off a part here and a part there. Make this and that smooth. Add this or that. He meant to strike off the excesses of one's character, vanity, ego, and perhaps to add tolerance, service, and humility, as the sculptor must add to complete his work. Then you will see the image of inner beauty and with that you will manifest this beauty as virtuous conduct.

To summarize:

Physical beauty is harmony of the senses.

Intellectual beauty is attainment of motive.

Moral beauty is discipline of the body and mind.

Chapter XVII

PSYCHOLOGY OF CONFLICT

WHETHER STRIFE EXISTS among individuals, groups, or nations, the invariable cause is a *conflict of interests*. It is natural that man should exert himself. All of Absolute Being, the whole reality of the universe, is continually *striving to be*; that is, as we have postulated, its inherent nature. It is not to be expected that man should do less. The ego seeks also to preserve itself as does the physical body. These inherent drives or interests of the ego, however, if not directed, if not brought into harmony with each other, eventually cause strife. The resultant friction causes man to torture his own kind—an effect which is commonly evident in war. The lower animals are not in a position to analyze their own behavior and note the causes. But man's personal mastery lies in his accomplishment of this particular feat.

All conflicting interests, no matter how manifested, may be reduced to three fundamental kinds:

The first consists of a situation where A and B both want to possess C. Now, A and B may be individuals, groups, or states. C is that which A and B want to possess. It may be a substance, an object, or it may be a distinction. By a substance or object we mean some material thing which both A and B want as a personal possession. If C is a distinction, it consists of a title, honor or fame, or a position over which the conflict occurs.

Now, the second fundamental conflict of interests results when A and B disagree on the nature of C. Here, C is the *quality* of a thing, or the *value* of a condition. Thus, A and B cannot agree as to what a thing may consist of, as to whether it is of one kind, size, age, ownership, or as to those qualities which may be associated with it. As said, this disagreement may also concern the value of a condition. There may be some circumstance which exists, and its importance—that is, whether it is good, evil, unworthy—may appear differently to A than to B.

Then, there is a third kind of conflict of interests, as when A and B want to create a separate C. In this case, the C element alludes to the different *concepts or opinions* which are had by A and B. For analogy, A may believe in and want a single world government. B, conversely, may advocate a federation of autonomous nations. We see in this that C, as an opinion or concept, may actually have no reality; it may be nothing more than the *ideas* that A and B each have separately. Each, however, wants his particular concept to become a fact. The attempt may result in eventual conflict.

There are, therefore, three major causes of the conflict of interests: *possession, appraisal, and conception.*

Is there any way in which to reconcile or bring about an adjustment of these divergent interests? Is there any way in which they can be prevented from hurting other individuals or bringing hurt to society collectively? Let us consider the first example, where A and B wish to possess C. At first, we should not be concerned with the individual character or inherent rights (if they have such) of A or B. It is natural that each should be moved by the impulse of possession, and in this regard, they are equal. The only philosophical factor to consider is the consummation of the act, the effect of the possession on others. Will the possession by either A or B be to the benefit or to the detriment of others?

Let us assume that B is a thief. His theft of C, whatever it may be, disrupts human relations and is a menace to society. Therefore, it is not sufficient to consider whether A and B have a right to possess C. In the matter of strife or the conflict of interests, D, also, must be considered. In this case, D is the *common good of society*. The teaching efforts of

schools, religious organizations, and of mystical and philosophical societies must concern themselves, then, with the common good, the result of the actions of A and B, that is, the actual possession of C.

It is also not sufficient to tell an individual that he should not possess this or that because of moral reasons alone. It is necessary that his *social consciousness* be first developed. With such development, he will not be so inclined to possess wrongly that which might be detrimental to D, the general welfare of society. Through an evolving social consciousness, then, A and B come to realize that by wrongly possessing C they injure society, from which they individually can obtain greater if not more immediate benefits than from that which they had desired to possess. Men will not knowingly act against their own best interests. Therefore, with the growth of social consciousness, what constitutes their best interests is extended to include the interests of society.

Today there are too many prohibitions expounded by society which are left unrelated and unexplained insofar as their importance to the individual's welfare is concerned. Such prohibitions, to many individuals, seem to be nothing more than a meaningless obstruction of their personal rights. It is essential to impress more strongly upon the public that man is society, rather than to emphasize man *and* society which puts man and state in conflict with each other. To a great extent throughout the world, the state has now become a machine of domination instead of an extension of the personal interests of the individual. This condition has often resulted in an individual's hostility to the state and indifference to its demands.

Now we will consider the second example of these conflicts, or the different appraisals of things and conditions which A and B may have. Where a thing or condition exists, and where we know it does, an objective test of it may be made. A careful examination will usually determine the quality or value of whatever is under consideration. In this way we can often bring to a rational conclusion any issue concerning the object or thing. If, however, the appraisal concerns something that is not material, then the standard of judgment must be based on the contribution being made to the welfare of the majority. Here again, the common good of all of society becomes the test and

the rule; it is one which the disagreeing parties abide by or else disclose themselves as being antisocial.

As for the final example of conflict of interests, or the difference in conceptions of men, it must be realized that men can never think alike upon all things. Principally, this is due to the difference in experiences that men have, and from which their sense of values is drawn. Also, men's mental powers and psychic development vary. The test of a conception is not whether it is in conflict with the ideas of others. Conceptions must be judged by whether they conflict with *reality*. Will the Cosmic or natural law be opposed by what the individual wants, or what he thinks, or what he hopes to create? Ideas that oppose natural or Cosmic law are in reality in opposition to ourselves also because we are part of the whole Cosmic. It should be apparent, then, that such conceptions should be abandoned whether they conflict with the ideas of another or not.

There are also other realities which must be taken into consideration; these are the basic and proved economic and social laws. If what the individual wants, or what he believes, tends to destroy the good of such realities without replacing them with those of equal value, obviously then his thoughts and desires are fundamentally wrong. Consequently, our concepts to be right must extend at all times beyond the immediate self, beyond the relationship to our immediate physical and mental well-being. Our concepts must be in harmony with the greater Self, which Self is related to the common good of mankind. There is need for society to teach its members this essence of good society—a good society always is free from sectarian and political discrimination. This is a practical study which requires that our idealism be subject to critical examination. Such an examination, even though of brief extent, we shall next undertake.



Chapter XVIII

THE HUMAN INCENTIVE

IT IS COMMON psychological terminology to speak of human drives or motivations. The biological or organic causes of such drives are now quite as comprehensible to the intelligent layman as they are to the psychologist. There is a related field of inquiry, however, equally as important, which has not been so generally surveyed. It concerns those concepts that arise as a result of our impelling drives. In other words, what ends does the human intellect conceive as the ultimate which man should attain? In every age, some men have thought of future progress. What have been the criteria that have guided them in determining what would constitute supreme human achievement?

Human obstacles are those things and conditions which restrain or obstruct human inclinations. A natural human *objective* is, consequently, the removal of a block to an actual or conceived necessity. The natural objective of a hungry man, for example, is food; of a cold man, warmth and shelter. It is obvious that the ideal state would be freedom from any conflict with such objectives. It would also be a state providing complete satisfaction of human inclinations.

The inclinations are far more inclusive than are the appetites and passions. The intellectual and moral person also has ends to which he aspires but he likewise confronts obstructions in realizing them. Though these ends, in their particulars, seem almost as numerous as the minds that conceive them, they are, in fact, all determined by certain limitations of man's own being. These limitations he often but vaguely realizes. There is, however, a consciousness of a *psychic*

drive to excel one's own common powers and functions. There is the desire to expand self, meaning self, of course, in the physical as well as the psychological sense. Regardless of any religious or philosophical connotations, the intelligent person feels and believes that he has a potentiality of becoming a greater being than he is. We might say that he sincerely believes he can re-create himself—that is, assimilate powers, attributes, and functions which are not organically natural to him.

To a great extent, this desire of man to excel his natural or common functions has been inspired by comparison with other living forms about him. The human ego finds a challenge in every experience which restrains and frustrates it. The commonest example is the extension of the *striking* power of man. It is the attempt to amplify the physical force that he can bring to bear. For example, the throwing of a stone is an extension of the blow of the fist so that man may reach out beyond the limitations of the range of his arm. The war club was an incorporation of the idea of extension combined with the desire to add greater weight in delivering a blow than would be possible with just the arm and fist. The throwing of a stick, spear, or arrow was to add acceleration and greater speed to the basic idea of extending personal force into space.

The modern explosive weapons have the same fundamental principle. They intend to increase the striking power of the individual, both in force and extension, so that he might reach out beyond his physical limitation. These explosives intend, as well, to avoid the necessity, wherever possible, of bringing the individual into immediate contact with that which he wishes to destroy. In this factor there is apparent the paradoxical desire of man to be in two places simultaneously. The limitation of confining one's power to the place of his person has long been a psychological aggravation to the human mind. Thus, in killing at a distance by means of propelled missiles, the intent is made manifest beyond the mind and the mortal body. Here, then, was an ideal, a human incentive, to assimilate the element of space into the sphere of the human will—in other words, to make the will dominate space.

To propel one's self merely by means of walking and running has not been satisfying to the human ego. The realization of limitation was ever-present and dominant. The inferiority of human locomotion, in comparison to other kinds of animal life and birds in flight, was very apparent. The necessity of acquiring food by the pursuit of animals was not the only motivation in man's desiring to accelerate the speed of his body through space. The inclination stemmed from deeper psychological motives. There was the impelling urge to extend the consciousness, to compel a vaster reality to pass in review before the human senses and mind. There was a desire to bring into the focus of consciousness a larger area of reality—in fact, to be able to circumscribe it with the mind.

By propelling ourselves more rapidly, reality, on the one hand, becomes more extensive. We experience more of it, as we traverse space. On the other hand, the spatial quality seems to constrict with increased speed or locomotion of the body. It becomes more compact because it is brought into the limited range of our senses.

Rapid locomotion also seems to reduce the consciousness of gravitational influence upon the individual. It inculcates a sense of personal liberation. The more rapidly we move, the greater is the sensation of freedom from gravitational attraction. The evolution of the wheel from skids or runners is perhaps the consequence of man's observation of the easy movement of a heavy object having a smooth round surface.

Another challenge to the human mind, resulting in *incentive to progress*, has been the apparent immutability of many objects. All about man were things which seemed to resist change. Throughout his life there were objects which more or less presented the same appearance or quality to man. They seemed to defy any influence which he could bring to bear upon them. There was thus engendered the desire to cause the objects to serve the human will, to shape or fashion them in a manner to fulfill personal needs or wants. Inherent in this desire to change environmental factors was the ever-present fact of insufficiency. Why should there be a plenitude of some things and a paucity of what man needed—or thought he did? Mastery would consist of converting that which was plentiful into that which was scarce.

The independence of creation was also a provocation of human incentive. Realities, innumerable particulars, came into existence independent of human direction. Here, then, was a restriction of man's personal power. If man could but exert an influence over the process of natural development to bring into existence what he wanted and when, nature then, to a great extent, would no longer be independent of the human will. For something to function independently of human powers implies the inferiority of man. The normal self has always rebelled against inferiority. There should be no permanent limitations to human powers—so man has believed. There must be, according to the human concept, a conversion, even if gradual, of the unknown into the known and of independent natural forces into the realm of mortal direction.

This spirit caused the Greek philosophers to contemplate the first causes of the physical world. It likewise caused the search of the alchemists for the *prima materia* by which it was believed man would have the key to the transmutation of all matter and the control of its development. The human mind has continually refused to be isolated by any limitations, even those which are said to be natural to mankind.

Prognostication, the urge to reveal future events, is not wholly prompted by the desire for the security which such revelations might provide. It is again the challenge of limitation. The future is a restriction because it is a period of time in which realities will occur, but knowledge of which is denied man as of *now*. The self is of the present. It is the active consciousness. There is the urge that the past and future become immediate impressions of this active consciousness. An unknown past and future cause the self to feel immured and repressed.

This condition has prompted man to conceive ways and means of penetrating the intangible future. His various forms of prognostication, no matter how primitive and superstitious they may appear to the modern mind, have always provided satisfaction to the self. The consciousness, by means of them, was projected into the factor of time, just as the throwing of a spear extended the force of the arm into space. Prediction, no matter how false it has subsequently been proved to be, has always given man confidence that he had surmounted still another obstacle which had been put before him.

Paradoxically, there are changes which man resists as vigorously as those others which he seeks to bring about. The self rebels against the loss of expression. The self is only to the extent that it manifests its characteristics. Just as man resents suppression of thought or will or the limitation of the powers of person, so, too, he wants a continuous survival of self. This consciousness of one's being which constitutes self must survive.

Here, then, is a kind of change, the transition or death, which the human mind defies. The realities of this change are everywhere apparent, but man accepts the change only, so far as form is concerned, as the alteration of substance, the dissolution of the physical being. The self, the *intimate* element of existence, he wants to be eternal. This concept of changeless self is another example of man's conflict with limitation. In defense against it, man has conceived the doctrine of *immortality* of self as the nucleus of almost all his religious theories and many of his philosophical systems.

In summary, then, what is the human incentive? *It is the desire for personal universality.* It is the urge for omnipotence and omniscience, the desire for activity which would include one's whole being. To realize a limitation is to reach a boundary. One becomes arrested and inert. Inertia is monotony. It provokes dullness and results in deterioration. To the force of life there appears to be a progressive development, not as an ideal to be attained but as something coming from the very necessity of the ever-active nature of life. The highly evolved consciousness, as that of the human, becomes aware of this progressive development or complexity. Man is capable of making a comparison between the forces of life's progress about him and the various stages of his own development. He can thus visualize an extension beyond any point that he has personally reached.

We are always able, for example, to think of improvement in terms of quantity—that is, more of something we have. We are likewise able to think of improvement in terms of quality or increased satisfaction from any experience. There is thus always the incentive to *excel*. God, as a human concept, arises from the impossibility of man's conceding a limitation to the whole of reality. God is the conception of infinite accomplishment personalized and otherwise expressed.

We have expanded the range of our sense faculties. It is because of our incentive to oppose limitation that we have come to lessen the influence of space and time upon our lives. We have likewise made our consciousness more ubiquitous by metaphysical application and by physical means. It is possible for our intelligence to be where we want it, even though our physical person may be elsewhere. If you want to know what is the advance that man will make in the future, first ask what are his limitations today. Tomorrow his progress will be in that direction. Human incentive always follows the path of apparent restriction.



CONCLUSION

THERE IS NO distinction in living. The world is teeming with life. A drop of water beneath a microscope reveals a universe as alive with beings as the thicket of a jungle. To strive to continue to live puts man in competition with all things that creep, fly, swim, or walk. There is no personal merit in conforming to such an urge; man, in fact, is impelled to conform. The individual who devotes himself entirely just to living has accomplished no more than the blade of grass he crushes under his feet.

Today thousands upon thousands of persons thrill to the small pocket-size novels devoted almost exclusively to murder mysteries. Instinctively, the desire to live is very strong within such persons. The horror of life being suddenly snuffed out fascinates them. Yet having life, how many conscious moments do these persons devote to understanding life, or to using it for any means other than to further its continuance?

With all things, except man, the end of life is merely *to be*. The consciousness of man, however, is able to survey itself and apply living to an end. Man can realize the economy of nature and know there is no waste of effort or substance in nature. Each thing is related to something else. There are no gaps in the universe. One thing merges or passes into another. The complete and permanent absence of a phenomenon or its cause would produce chaos. Therefore, for man to live and not to employ his reason to the fullest extent of which he is capable is a sin against nature. To live and not exercise every faculty of perception and apperception which he possesses is to defy the attributes of his being. The rose does not withhold its perfume, nor does the sun its heat and light. What one does with his life constitutes the purpose of his existence. Not to live intelligently is a withholding of one's potentialities.

THE CONSCIOUS INTERLUDE

It is not sufficient for one to know himself. It is also incumbent upon him to use himself. It is his duty to vanish every mystery, to substitute understanding for doubt. It is his duty to fashion, create, and form—not merely to respond to nature but to direct the forces of nature of which he is aware. It is man's duty to establish a theocracy upon earth, an existence patterned as nearly as possible after what he conceives the Divine to be. In man's consciousness is mirrored the universe. It is a spectacle which he alone of all living earthly things is permitted to gaze upon. To look intently upon it with understanding brings supreme happiness.



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Purpose and Work of the Order

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