Chapter Two

The Consciousness of Self

'Who Am I?'

The question, 'Who am I?' is formidable. Our attempted answers to it or, as the case may be, the perplexities to which it leads us possess more implications than we realize or care to admit. Who am I? I have not even a proper name for myself; the name which is given me is the property of strangers with which they refer to what they intend to be myself. My name sounds awkward when I recite it aloud. I am embarrassed to use it, since what I know of myself is so very different from what they mean when they call me by my name. The only reference to myself that does not embarrass me is the non-committal pronoun 'I' which says so little and implies so much. In the classical languages the action of the verb implies the agent, and a separate pronoun to designate him is superfluous. All verbs of action in the first person singular imply the existence of self. When the action is independent of contingent external circumstances, as for example in verbs of meditating, thinking, reflecting, or feeling, the existence of the subject is particularly forcefully implied. The Cartesian premise and conclusion, cogito ergo sum, is the most famous example of this manner of introducing the notion of self into the argument.

The component of our thought that implies the existence, the activity and sensitivity of self, we call consciousness. The relationship of consciousness and self is one of the most

perplexing problems of thought. On first consideration, it is difficult to see why this should be the case. The matter of self, clearly, is one about which each man is entitled to speak for himself, and no man can speak for another. Consciousness, of all phenomena the most immediate to our minds, should be the topic about which we are able to speak most authoritatively of all. On the contrary, it appears that the very closeness of this question to our intellect and to our emotions has made it difficult to view in a suitable perspective. Many an attempt to define self has missed its target by far. Whenever self is hypothesized as a potential member of an objective world, it will appear exaggerated. Among the discernible objects of the natural world, consciousness and self appear as phantoms magnified and distorted almost beyond recognition. The apparent answers to questions about self are often disturbingly grotesque, and it is perhaps more from embarrassment than from disinterest that the topic has been neglected. ¶ If the question about self may claim a certain logical priority, it is superfluous to the accomplishment of practical ends. There is no practical achievement and hardly a theoretical one which may not be attained by a man without ever wasting an introspective thought about the subjective quality of his own existence, of his power, or of his knowledge. Indeed, it is probable that whenever the question

about self arises, it tends to distract the stream of thought and to interrupt the progress of action. The concern about self and consciousness is singularly unfruitful; perhaps for this reason the study of individuality is generally held in contempt by modern thinkers. Many indeed are the scientists who ask what man is, but they are concerned with him as a demonstrable being. Their question 'What is man?' has the same logical import as the question 'What is a chicken?' or 'What is a donkey?' Investigations into the structure and qualities of the self, however, are few and far between, and their purposes as well as their conclusions have generally been much misunderstood.

We constantly refer to ourselves, but we entertain only a nebulous idea of what self might be. Hardly have we invented an hypothesis about self in its actuality, before we become discouraged by the evident discrepancies between the concept proposed and the testimony of experience. Few such attempts have even achieved an appearance of success. Evidently, however, it is of no consequence in practical affairs that the self should remain undefined. The definition of self is prerequisite neither to the ordinary tasks of life, nor for that matter, to the performance of the most heroic and extraordinary of actions. However, in the theoretical understanding of our

experience, the proper designation of self is of pivotal importance. There have been epochs in the history of thought, when misconceptions about self rigidly limited the effectiveness of thought. For example, many of the qualities that were once attributed to soul had the effect of intimidating the individual in his attempts to understand the circumstances of his daily life. Today the question about self is virtually forgotten as an analytical problem. We have become accustomed to ignore the uncertainty and vagueness of all our concepts of self. When pressed with the question, we are inclined to identify self with body, diffident as we are to assert the existence of the self as an entity remote from sensory perception. But, as we shall show, to identify self with the body is tantamount to denying it. The consequences of such denial are inapparent; for that reason they are readily underestimated. I think it would not be at all difficult to show that the denial of self as existing distinct from the objective world has profoundly affected our thought in many fields, in ethics, in esthetics, and particularly in the theory of knowledge. As we proceed to identify and to describe the various qualities of selfhood, the consequences of its denial or distortion will become more clearly apparent.

The ideas that we entertain about self may conveniently be divided into those that seek to answer the question what self is and those that attempt to answer the question what self does. The two paths of inquiry lead to very different notions of self. When we consider self as potential object we gain an entirely different picture from that which arises from the consideration of self as subject of action. In order to understand what we mean when we refer to self we must trace both approaches to the question.

The notion of self as entity condenses from our understanding of the world. It is a habit of our thought that identifies the reality of an object with the name that we attach to it. This identification is primarily justified because our many dealings with that particular object will invariably require our use of a single name and will evoke many of the concepts with which the particular object has become identified in our thought. In the practical affairs of our daily lives, this equation of symbol and reality works surprisingly well, largely because our relationship to the particular object designated is a reliable one. We are cautious and deliberate in bestowing such names. To give an example, we know what we mean when we say 'this chair,' because in all our experience the name chair has represented a peculiarly constant constellation of physical

apperceptions. Our error arises when we assume that other concepts of which we fail to have so strict and reliable perceptual knowledge should possess meaning and definition equally useful. We are too prone to assume that all concepts which our mind invents must correspond to an existence comparable to that chair or the table. We make this assumption in spite of the fact that our minds can multiply concepts without end, concepts of which we have no experience other than that accompanying their logical formulation. This misinterpretation of concepts has been one of the most consequential errors in the history of thought.

The numerous objective entities with which self is often identified may be considered under three topics: the biological self, specifically the human body; the theological self, traditionally called soul; and the historical self that, for lack of idiomatic designation, we will refer to as person or personality.

The Biological Self

In the course of the past two hundred years the identification of self with the human body has become somewhat of a celebrated cause. To deal fairly with the merits of this biological definition will require more than the usual historical detachment. The analysis and criticism of this identification of self and body have provided a recurrent theme for speculative thought. In general this discussion may be understood as the disputation between those who identify human nature entirely with the body and those who seek to project the quality of humanness primarily to a non-physical principle. Probably it was the extravagance of the traditional Christian denial not only of the virtues of the human body but even of its reality that provoked in recent centuries an extravagant contradiction of this fantasy, an equally fervent denial of the spirituality of the self and a passionate insistence upon the exclusive identification of human nature with the biological properties of the human body. Of all technical philosophical questions, this is one of the most widely publicised: hardly an educated man is to be found who does not presume to be able to supply it with a dogmatic answer. When the integrity, the health, and the vitality of the human body are evidently indispensable to the existence of human life, the denial and rejection of this body as an integral part of human

nature must be accounted a most remarkable achievement of thought, though not perhaps altogether in a laudable sense. It is all the more worthy of note that this systematic denial should have become the ethos not merely of an isolated sect of fanatics, but that it served for many centuries as a guiding precept to the most refined and educated and thoughtful of men. It was an almost perverse denial of one phase of universal experience, suggesting among other implications the bias that mind may bring to bear against an inimical idea. There is nothing difficult or obscure about the dependence of self upon body. Physiological and psychological observations of the most elementary sort suggest that we must identify ourselves with our bodies. There is, in the first place, the organic integrity of the body, its coherence, its physical continuity, and the biological interdependence of its parts. The body provides a permanent reference to all modalities of sensation, to vision, to hearing, to position sense, to touch and to pain. Whatever I feel, in the primary sense of this word, I feel in some portion of my body. We may call these arguments the morphologic and physiologic justifications for identifying self and body.

The identification of self and body, self-evident though it be from a naturalistic point of view, is unable to give satisfactory explanation to the phenomena of thought and consciousness.

More often than not the identification of self and body proves inadequate to our intellectual and emotional needs. Consequently this simple and naive doctrine is disconcerting and provocative to the responsible mind. Perhaps it is some primitive animal instinct for self-preservation that drives us to associate ourselves with the limitations of our bodies, inducing us to nourish and to protect them as our most vital possessions. The concern for the body, however, tends to remain an intention and a program. Many a chain of thought, relying upon the hypothesis that self and body are one, discovers this unity to be indefensible and leads to a contrary conclusion. Whatever incentives we may have to regard ourselves and our bodies as one, we are none the less prone to view the physical parts of ourselves with considerable detachment. The maturation and senescence, the growth and the wasting, the mutilation and the repair to which the body is subject never seem to compromise the identity of self as it remains the undisturbed substrate of all our experience of change. Whatever may happen to the body, the integrity of self is unimpaired. It is biologically and literally true that when we lose a finger or a hand, an arm or a leg, the vision of an eye, or the hearing of an ear; when we are surgically deprived of an internal organ such as a kidney, a lung, or some segment of the digestive tract, we are physically deprived of a part of the body. By the hypothesis that self and the body

are identical, by this hypothesis that is so difficult to sustain, ~~by~~ with deprivation of part of the body we should also lose part of the self. Yet like those lower animals who physically regenerate an amputated part, the healthy mind quickly repairs its concept of self. By nature we are unable to accept the loss of part of ourselves. So long as we live, we regard as expendable whatever we have lost. Not even when afflicted with a mortal wound or burdened with a fatal disease will the mind acknowledge its injury. In all deaths which I have observed, there is no more acceptance of the impending disintegration of self than is present at the moment of falling asleep.

The healthy mind will admit of no partition; it will contemplate no partial existence of itself proportional to the continuing existence of the mutilated body. These facts in themselves suggest some discrepancy in the identification of self and body. If this identification were sufficient, the body should not only be physically but also conceptually indispensable to self. Loss of part of the body would then imply the corresponding destruction of self, a deprivation progressive to the point where death of the body should imply death of the self. The fate of self after death is unknown to us, but its wasting during life or its non-existence after death is inconceivable. Our minds are capable of formulating logical

propositions to that effect, but such propositions are remote from experience and lack conviction. The many theories of immortality are eloquent reminders of mind's reluctance to accept its potential destruction. Mind does not care to cast its lot for integrity and survival with that of the evidently perishable physical constitution. The absence of consciousness, whether in sleep, in coma, or in biological death is never accompanied by a positive sensation. Individuals resuscitated from the earliest stages of biological death have no memories of that state. There is every reason to believe that the experience of death is purely negative, a mere cessation of mental activity.

The self never regards itself as anything but healthy, whole, and indestructible. It disowns whatever parts of itself may be afflicted with illness or death. There are instances in literature and occasionally in daily life when with much drama and usually with no less self-pity, a man proclaims that part of himself has been lost. The very vigor of such histrionic pronouncements refutes them and suggests that the self that so vigorously laments its losses is still very much in tact. Thus, even apart from historical, religious, or pseudo-ethical preconceptions, the disparity between self and body is not difficult to ascertain. The so-called materialism

that identifies self and body, fashionable though it has become, is actually explanatory of very little of our experience. I suspect that it would never have won the influence that it now possesses except in protest to the extravagant spiritualism that once reigned.

There is hope held out by many who have recognized this problem that it might ultimately be solved by some scientific investigation or other. The structure and the function of mind and body are indeed topics of numerous and diverse investigations. The list of disciplines that have some bearing on this question should have to include anatomy, physiology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history ~~and~~ in its various branches and even philosophy. One would like to assume that at least one of these disciplines, or perhaps a group of them, might be able to provide us with the answer we seek. It is not our task to decide how valuable the results of other investigations might or might not be. For reasons which we gave in the introductory chapter, it is not permissible for us to rely on the results of other studies. Even if we were able to survey them all, and to choose the most convincing, the result of such studies should be as inadmissible in the present undertaking as is hearsay evidence in a court of law. By the same token, our own investigation is but an isolated one, and it

cannot claim to supercede what responsible and conscientious authors have said concerning the problems of which we treat. It is the reader's privilege and his task to compare such theories as are offered him, to weigh each on its merits, and where the arguments seem to contradict each other, either to reconcile the contradiction or to make a choice.

Soul

When natural scientists assiduously assert that the representation of self by the body is adequate and that the identification of the two is inevitable, they ignore circumstances that seem to have become apparent already to the human race in its intellectual infancy: our experience of body is incapable of sustaining the notion of self. From the dawn of recorded history, men have attempted to transfer the notion of self to some concept distinct from the body as a whole. They began by choosing some organ or some function of the body, indispensable for the continuation of life, and attributing to one of these the essence of self. In this way the heart, the pulse, and more often and pointedly the breath, the spirit, is equated with the carrier of life. Consequent to such transference the attempt to discover self in the objective world loses its realism and becomes symbolic. To the new vector of consciousness that was postulated one ascribed qualities and capacities that could not possibly be attributed to the body. The breath, for example, served as a bond between man and nature, representing the identity of the life within and the life without. The spirit was able to escape the death of the body. The spirit was endowed with a tenacity and with immunity to mortal danger that the body did not possess. The spirit remained itself, the essence of

personality, capable of surviving the mortal vicissitudes of physical life. In striking contrast to the haphazard and imperfect characteristics of the body, subject as it is to injury, insult, aging, and disease, this representation of the self became a symbol capable of sustaining the image of perfection and immortality. Its traditional name is soul.

This distinction between body and soul satisfies the apparently inborn human desire to discover a permanent and indestructible equivalent for the conceptual and emotional experience that is summarized in the pronoun 'I'. If we trace the spectrum of possible symbolic designations of such an equivalent, if we analyze our efforts to transform this indistinctly bounded overwhelmingly powerful experience, then the term soul in its obscurity will become less enigmatic to our rational minds. Then the paradoxes of theology, secular and orthodox, will become less offensive. We may then consider the desire for the objectivation of self to be expressive of human need, comparable perhaps to the desire for food or warmth. We must recognize this desire, although we may not wish to accord it the specific fulfillment it seems to demand. This desire remains active and effective even when we deny it; it manifests itself in a variety of religious and social conventions. The awareness of self is an indispensable

element of our mental structure; it is the basis of all rational activity. Subsequently we hope to show that the desire for knowledge and the consequent pursuit of science in themselves are to an unexpected measure dependent upon the desire of self to acquire identity. Indeed, even reason may prove to be contingent upon an intellectual structure which it does not comprehend and which, to some extent, may appear contradictory to its presumptions. If this were the case, our understanding of the limitations of reason would not necessarily confute the validity of rational thought or of science. It might, however, serve to introduce into rationalism an awareness of its limitations. The as yet undefined foundation upon which reason rests may prove to be significant in determining the quality and the limitations of thought.

The concept soul arises from the search for self and from the expectation of finding a discrete object. Experience itself seems to demand a concept such as soul; yet experience is unable even to indicate how or where the need is to be met. As a consequence, the imagination roams and fantasy reigns. In our intellectual tradition the concept soul is the vehicle by which a few gifted thinkers have expressed their insights into human nature. Inevitably it has also provided the occasion of much folly and much groundless speculation. In general,

what needs to be said about the self may be said without reference to soul. However, being made distinct in a conceptual formula such as soul, the experience of self receives the recognition that it requires and deserves. That is why those who pretend to doubt or to deny the reality of soul place upon themselves the burden of proving their sincerity. By the same token, the rude expropriation of the soul from this world in which we live and which is all we know is a caricature of our intellectual predicament. It is paradoxical to tear the nucleus of self from the fullness of experience. This error is also the source of many unnecessary problems.

Evidently we have little reason to expect a discovery of soul as a physical object, or for that matter, as any other sort of demonstrable entity. To postulate soul as an object of potential empirical experience is to indulge in useless speculation. Much of the difficulty surrounding our idea of soul is removed when we learn to interpret this concept as evidence and expression of our radical dissatisfaction with the limitations of our biological life. Few men, if any, are led by experience or reason or even by faith to anticipate a soul physically real, but some believe themselves faced with the dilemma of choosing between a physical soul or none at all. In other words, more often than not the assertion that soul

should be physical rests in the belief that only physical objects are real; or that if there are degrees of reality, that physical objects should stand at the summit. Once the idea of conceptual reality is introduced as a challenge to the givenness of physical objects, the need to assert a physical reality for soul disappears. If all that we are able to know of nature is a conceptual interpretation, then it should be counted no disgrace that soul might likewise possess no more than conceptual reality. A parallel argument is applicable to our concepts of deity. To him, likewise, may now be attributed a conceptual reality without disparaging his nature. It is one of the great advantages of our distinction between nature and the conceptual world, that it not only enables us to explain the ambiguities of our intellectual relationship to the physical world, but it is also capable of providing plausible and sufficient explanation for our invention of the so-called metaphysical realities. The distinction between nature and the conceptual world is far from providing definitive answers to all the problems upon which it sheds light, but it reclassifies them, it construes them in a new dimension, and in so doing it makes them accessible to new analysis and demonstration from entirely new aspects.

Personality

We proceed now to a definition of self more subtle and prevalent, more convincing and certainly more effective than either of the two definitions of self as body or as soul that we have discussed. It is an historical definition, in the sense that it requires the reconstruction of past events and to a lesser extent the anticipation of future ones. For lack of a more colloquial expression, we may refer to it as the interpretation of self as person. We might call it a scientific interpretation if we chose to apply the term science to the humanities as the Germans do when they speak of Geisteswissenschaften. The self frequently enters into our intellectual schemata as an historical image. When I think of myself as an individual, I imagine a person of certain physical characteristics, but even more, of a specific historical background. The historical answer to the question 'What am I?' is primarily a circumstantial answer. Avoiding generalizations, it contents itself with an aggregate of detail about the person concerned. It never pretends to define in a general way what man is, or his essence, or his spirit. It does not face the problem of selfhood so rigorously as do the other definitions, but it is all the more practical. It relies for the description of self on the facts that are known about the individual concerned.

Memory is systematically supplemented with recorded details. Implicitly, the historical conception of self assumes that the being of a man is adequately represented by the facts that can be known about him. The distinction between what a man can know about himself and what others may know about him is ignored.

The definition of the historical self differs from the former two in many significant respects. The representations of self as body or as soul are each in its own way programmatic: they describe what from their particular points of view ought to be adequate objectivation of self, though in the case of body it clearly does not suffice and in the case of soul it evidently is altogether beyond experience. The interpretation of self as person is far more realistic. Much more than the others, it is descriptive of the way in which an individual actually does refer to himself in his thought. The historical concept of self also differs significantly through its lack of conceptual finality. Those theories that identify self with body or soul are closed to new considerations. By definition they impose upon the experience of self the unequivocal meaning of a palpable body on the one hand and of an invisible, immaterial soul on the other. They preclude the discovery about self of anything that cannot be expressed

in terms of these concepts. By way of contrast, the concept of self as person is quite indefinite. If it is bounded at all, it is limited solely by the resources of language and imagination. The historical self is a functional interpretation that relies for meaning upon the cumulative experience of each individual. It is an open idea: its boundaries are the potentialities of our experience. It is also remarkably subjective and inconstant. Not only will the characterization of a man differ from week to week and from month to month according to the vagaries of his public and private life, but strictly speaking the definition that a man accords to himself will differ from that which other men entertain of him, and their definitions, also will differ among themselves. Hence any construction of personality common to two or more observers will be a compromise and to an extent greater or less an inadequate interpretation.

These imperfections notwithstanding, the construction of self from the phenomena of consciousness and the integration of self and consciousness into the idea of personality is one of the supreme achievements of mind. It is one of those accomplishments that we accept routinely, not recognizing the unique and remarkable synthesis that it represents. In view of the richness of our experience of self and in view of the

high degree to which this wealth is reflected in the concept of person, we recognize that the two prior theories that we have mentioned, namely that of the self as body and that of the self as soul, by implication deprive us of the most precious elements of our existence. The attempt to limit our experience of self to the notion of soul signifies a weakness both in ourselves as individuals and in the society that molds our way of life. The soul theory disparages the present experience as corrupt and trivial. It deprecates some of the most genuine pleasures and the only achievements that are discoverable within the realm of our experience. Theories of soul are incongruous; they are inadequate to the richness of experience from which 'soul' is by definition excluded. Their insistent reference to the life beyond is not an explanation but a disparagement of the here and now. Probably it is significant for the power which the concept of soul holds over our thought that in order to refute it we resort to an opposite extreme. The theories of materialism are every bit as remote from experience as the ideas they presume to refute.

The historical representation of self reflects clearly the ambiguous yet vital relationship between the individual and society. In the two prior attempts to define self, social relationships were excluded from the beginning. The biological

self-sufficiency of the organism and the spiritual egotism of soul, each in its own way precludes social interdependences. The concept of self as person manifestly implies relationships with other human beings, indeed it depends upon them. The self whose history I recount is ~~dependent upon~~ inseparable from the society of which it is a part. Society has shaped the structure of mind and has largely determined its content. More than any other factor, my relationships to fellow human beings have made me the sort of person that I am. Furthermore, society is the mirror in which I see myself. The image that I have of me is the potential view that others have. When I regard myself, I discover a personage appreciably distinct from my consciousness. Ambition is the name that we give to the desire of self for a personality adequate to its assertions. Shame is the discomfort caused by the recognition that personality is at this moment entirely inadequate to the assertion of self. This definition is applicable not only to the shame which overcomes the individual when he discovers himself involved in evil, i.e., in conduct which 'compromises' him. This definition of shame also explains the emotional discomfort of nakedness. Curiously, the apparel with which we clothe and conceal our bodies, and the privacy which we require for various bodily functions, come to constitute a screen that shields the

personality from the compromising nakedness of the animal body. Pride is the satisfaction that self derives from recognizing a personality adequate to its aspirations. This distinction between self and person requires to be made daily as I regard myself as a member of society. I attempt to obtain an 'objective' view of myself, comparable to my recognition and evaluation of my fellow men. Thus the concept of self as person is basic to any particular social relationship and to the social structure in general.

The notion of personality represents the dissolution of primeval selfishness and egotism. By the same token it serves to retrieve the integrity of self from the diffuseness and diversity of its social involvements. This most essential function of the historical interpretation of self is easy to overlook. The concept 'person' implies the synthesis of scattered, isolated experience. The individual's history represents the attempt to correlate and to combine his many momentary relationships both to the animate and to the inanimate environment into a single comprehensive image. The synthetic quality of personality constructed in this way is obscured by the seal of approval with which it is usually stamped by consciousness. Personality is contingent and to a high degree determined by external influences, the insistent claims of consciousness to independence and integrity notwithstanding.

When we attempt to describe the actuality of ourselves as persons, we encounter difficulties arising from our relationship to time. To say, as we did above, that the concept of person is historical, is to imply that its meaning depends upon the projection of present experience into a past time. We postulate that the past consisted of moments of reality comparable to that which we experience now. Furthermore, events and circumstances of the past are required to make the present real. We shall subsequently discuss the difficulties of identifying the 'present' of consciousness with any specific duration in time. But it seems to follow immediately from the notion of personality that the present moment of consciousness in which the self recognizes its identity does not suffice to its completeness. Time serves constructively to supplement the inadequacy of the moment. An historical chain of events is always presupposed, extending from the present to an indefinite point in the past, and projecting also from the present to a point likewise indeterminate in the future. The greater the historical element in our interpretation, the more the past is endowed with power and meaning at the expense of the present. A chronological biography, carried to its logical completeness, recognizes no instant qualitatively different from any other. Present consciousness is dissipated in favor of images of self in the past

and in the future. The historical scheme is anchored by two chief events, birth and death, occasions by which the physical life of the individual is bounded. Yet decisive as these two events appear to be, they will not sustain the absolute significance that we are accustomed to attribute to them. During infancy, for example, a man should hardly be considered to be 'himself'. This period in his life is reckoned to belong to him as an indispensable part of his personal history because though irrelevant in itself it is the necessary prelude to the existence of the mature individual. By the same logic, the period of gestation, the fact of conception, the circumstances of parentage and ancestry might likewise be invested with historical significance. With much reluctance we accept what reason must recognize to be the utter haphazardness of our physical existence. One of the chief functions of the historical interpretation of self is to remedy this contingency of self upon accident. We have seen that it is an incomplete remedy, more apparent than real.

Further difficulties arise with the attempt to project our notions of self as personality into the future. The future of our existence differs qualitatively both from its origins in the past and from its actuality in the present. In contrast to the studious description and the careful analysis with which

we comprehend events of the past and trace them to the present, only vague premonitions forewarn us of the future. When we view the circumstances of our historical selves with utter detachment, as indeed we seldom do, we realize how vulnerable all present attainments of personality become in the face of the future. The progress of the years is almost as likely to deny the contributions of this present actuality to the historical self as to confirm them. The end of life usually appears altogether different from the prospects at its beginning; the actual present of the self at any given time is usually far removed from both. There is a continuing evolution of the historical self from the beginning to the end of life. The historical self represents a conceptual synthesis of innumerable present moments into a continuous span of time. It is a noteworthy achievement that mind succeeds in completing the fragments of consciousness to invent the intellectual and emotional wholeness of the life of man both as an individual and as a social being.

Death we may consider the beginning of a new life totally unknown to us and for that reason inadmissible to an empirical investigation. In any event, inasmuch as death seems to be the end of consciousness as we know it, we might reasonably consider death to be the extinction of all the problems with

which we are concerned. If, however, we recognize personality as a social phenomenon, then we may, concurring with Aristotle consider a man's bliss to be contingent upon the virtues of his descendants. Aristotle says that an individual whose children succumb to misery after his death ought not to have his own life accounted a happy one; perhaps the triumphs of future generations also will vindicate the shortcomings of the present. Such imaginative considerations demonstrate the incongruity of the historical self. The notion of personality is most meaningful with respect to the present. The expansion of the historical self into the past or into the future, its sunderance from the actuality of consciousness invariably leads to contradiction. It is one thing to live from day to day, with intelligent understanding of the past and prudent anticipation of the future. It is presumptuous and of dubious value to attempt to comprehend ones own life or that of another man as a whole and to undertake to pass judgment upon it in its entirety. Such entirety, however esthetically pleasing it may be, proves fictitious. It is true that we are able to discover, to preserve, and to interpret records of the past. The more meticulous our efforts at preservation, the more precise and detailed our image of the past will become. An accurate account of what succeeded and what failed in the past is of great practical value in guiding

our present action. But it is nonetheless an illusion that the past in its reality can ever be recalled. What is past is lost to the present with a finality usually unrecognized. Our view of the past is based in the changing present; all attempts to recall it evoke a new present but never the same past. Thus whatever substantiality the notion of personality may give to consciousness is largely an illusion. The constancy of personality is more apparent than real. In practice, the image of the individual as a person remains quite flexible. Of necessity determined from moment to moment, personality is a concept that is contingent upon the social and psychological circumstances in which we find ourselves. Consequently there arises a conflict between the momentary limitation of consciousness, and the requirement of self for permanence and constancy. On the one hand, the idea of self as person demands its independence of the events of our momentary existence. At the same time it is inescapable that personality should be dependent both upon the support and upon the expression that momentary experience afford. Personality is unable to survive except through ~~the~~ continuing confirmation by the present. Consequently the fact that personality is dependent upon the vagaries of the instant, that it can be unmade in the twinkling of an eye is a source of great consternation. This recognition by the individual that

his personality is contingent upon circumstance, is the theme of classical tragedy. The irreparable harm that may come to the person in the instant is the source of great fear. Death is the greatest of those instances; its terror derives not from the extinction of consciousness, which is painless, but from the sudden dissolution of the living personality. That personality possesses in our eyes a grandeur and majesty to which monuments do but paltry justice.

Mind in its activity tends to forget its dependence upon the environment; it would ignore the power that society exercises over it. We are accustomed to consider social influences as being purely external to the individual; and when they conflict with his determination, we expect him to offer them a maximum of inertia and resistance. Preeminent among our heroes is the martyr whose persistence and tenacity in the face of an inimical society we consider one of the noblest expressions of character. We demand that the individual stand uncorrupted in his integrity, whatever natural or social calamities may befall him, asserting his personality as the uncompromising expression of a subjective principle. Yet undeniably, any sufficiently protracted alteration in the social environment, especially in early life, will lead to a profound alteration of the structure of personality. The brave presumptions of Stoicism notwithstanding, freedom or slavery, wealth or poverty, education or ignorance are not mere accidents irrelevant to the actuality of self.

The preservation and the protection of the historical self as it is elaborated by the individual in concert with society is one of the chief functions of government. As a rule, our social institutions are quite sufficient to this task; those exceptional occasions on which self is compromised by social circumstance clearly show the dependence of self upon the social order. When such a conflict arises between the individual and his society, then the historical self is subverted, surreptitiously and almost before it becomes aware of its misfortune. The individual then stands embattled to defend and to preserve his idea of himself. Such situations arise when men are enslaved or imprisoned, when they are put on trial on unexpected or unwarranted charges, when they are persecuted and suddenly find themselves bereft of the honor and protection that society had accorded them. The more intelligent, the more imaginative and refined the mind that is subjected to such persecution, the more remarkable is the exhibition of the human spirit that is then displayed. The individual is condemned by his society and cast out, as a criminal, witch, or as a traitor; yet through all these physical and spiritual indignities to which he is then subjected, he preserves the idea of personality that has grown with him. Often he rises to heroic stature in the face of his accusers and tormentors. He counters the perversion of

his person that is perpetrated upon him by his adversaries with an historical construction that justifies him and condemns those who would destroy him. In such a situation, and perhaps only then, the individual discovers the limitations intrinsic to all constructions of personality. He postulates and adjures a more perfect social order to distribute justice between him and his enemies. Thus, by an act of extreme intellectual power and heroism, he may create as the resources of his body and of his mind permit, an intellectual world that is the equal and perhaps the better of that which threatens him. There must be many such historical interpretations unspoken in the minds of many men, but seldom are the historical constructions of the victim expressed so eloquently as for example in the Apology of Socrates. As soon as an indictment is made, its accusation segregates the historical self of the defendant from his community. Undoubtedly in many cases he is unable to sustain his own view of himself and soon succumbs and endorses the ideas of his enemies and comes to consider himself punished if not justly then at any rate of necessity. At other times, the historical interpretation with which the defendant views himself is shared by his friends, distant or near, who sympathize with him. If he survives his ordeal and returns to their society, the friends of the persecuted will honor him for his suffering and will strengthen that image of self which sustained him through imprisonment and torture.

The construction of personality is a monumental achievement of mind. Given extraordinary environmental stresses or in the presence of emotional weakness or mental instability, this historical image of himself may be perverted or may entirely collapse. Inasmuch as the idea of person is an historical one, it relies upon historical presuppositions concerning time and it requires historical reasoning for its implementation. ~~As such~~, It possesses a reality which, ~~as we shall subsequently show~~, though valid in itself, is altogether distinct from the actualities of experience. It is invariably true that in the perceptions and actions of the present I can never entirely correspond with ~~the expectation~~ what is expected of me as an historical personage. In other words, there is a discrepancy and potentially a schism between the consciousness of self in the present and the historical interpretation of self. This discrepancy is frequently unobtrusive, but it disappears entirely only in rare moments, preeminent among which are occasions of heroic action. Reflecting upon myself and considering what I know of my past, I find the fantasy not at all inconceivable that my name, my profession and my station in life, that the personal biography with which I associate myself were alien to me. As in a dream it might belong to someone other than myself. Often my name and my person appear to me like a mask behind which the real,

anonymous self is hidden. That such reverie is not entirely fantastic may be gathered from the unusual accounts of personality transformations, of amnesias, fugues, and transferences of identity with which the psychological literature is replete. Whatever scientific explanation may be found for such curious phenomena, their very occurrence suggests that self, whatever it might be, should not be considered entirely synonymous with the historical person. Implicit in the notion of self is its identity. The presumption of self is that it should remain the same; but the historical self is continually in process of mutation.

Phenomena of religious observance likewise suggest that personality is not an altogether adequate vehicle for expressing the actuality of self. Religious ritual and doctrine characteristically refrain from accepting personality in its customary limitations. They give expression to a desire that the self should be more than what is capable of historical formulation. The self wishes to survive the vicissitudes of this earthly existence. It lives in hopeful anticipation of enduring beyond the physical confines of this world and beyond the temporal limits of this life. To this end, self postulates itself subservient to divine purpose and construes its disposition and actions as significant manifestations of a heavenly

plan. The various religious ceremonies such as baptism, confirmation, and communion are expressions of such postulates. As the individual participates in them, he presumes to transcend the limitations of an historical self. By implication, these ceremonies deny that self is historically limited. Religious experience, emphasizing the unity and integrity of self, disparages the historical personality. Divested of the encumbrances of historical fact, the self becomes an anonymous participant in a heavenly realm of reality. The desire for such depersonalization, whether realistic and convincing or not, must serve to suggest some of the intrinsic limitations of the historical self.

Self as Function

We have investigated the possibilities that self might refer either to a physical object or to a conceptual entity strictly defined. Our habits of thought strongly imply such an existence of self as a conceptual entity if not indeed as a physical object. Yet, however much we rely upon the supposition that self should be integral, upon examination we find no evidence whatever of a physical object corresponding to the self, and the conceptual formulas by which self is designated, though convincing and effective, are unable to sustain that rich multiplicity of experience of which self must be vector. We conclude that although the conceptual existence of self is a convenient logical construction, an exact equivalent to it is not to be found in experience. The inability to discover self as substance, being, body, person, soul, or any unequivocal concept at all, must not be taken to imply that self is a meaningless or contradictory term. It does suggest that we must be cautious in applying this concept and in relying upon its implications. Any inferences and deductions that we should like to make from it are likely to remain unsupported. The analysis of self will have primarily negative implications. The notion of self in which we would place such confidence may be unable to do justice

to the many theories and extrapolations that we are accustomed to impose upon it. To recognize the inadequacy of self as concept represents the first and perhaps the most important step in a critical analysis of the traditional logical framework not only of subjective experience but also of the objective constitution of world. Such an analysis is undertaken not with the view of discovering a new concept of self, but merely in an attempt to clarify the limitations of the old one. In an essay so brief as the present, there is, of course, no opportunity to present a comprehensive psychology. Self both as experience and as concept has many implications, to some of which the reader may wish to extend the analysis that we have begun. Our task is complete when we have designated the points at which the analyses of self must digress from established patterns of thought, and when we have indicated the methods by which such analyses may be successfully pursued.

We turn from the designation of self as entity to the description of self as function. Instead of asking what self is, we consider now what self does. However, merely superficial reflection on the history of this problem suggests that it is not easy to avoid postulating self as a conceptual entity even when we investigate only its function. From the time of Plato, it has been customary to attempt to understand the

working of soul by considering the hypothetical parts into which it might be divided. The virtue or the weakness of self in any particular instance would then be related to the adequate or faulty function of the isolated part or to the harmony or dissonance of all parts functioning in concert. The invention of subdivisions of self is in itself no less questionable than the hypothesis that soul should possess entity. To analyze self into presumptively discrete faculties is to enter into new fields of psychology. On occasion these fields prove so fruitful that the lack of primary justification of the division is forgotten. On the other hand, the process of division introduces a new element of uncertainty and error into psychological considerations such as can never be completely removed by subsequent emendation. The tradition that divides self in order to explain it continues to the present day. The psychoanalytic partition of self into ego, superego, and id must be interpreted in the light of this tradition. One must likewise recognize as belonging to this tradition the other modern attempts to divide soul, to isolate and to study as independent units the various presumptive functions of self, such as sensation, perception, memory, or emotion. Finally, it appears that divisions of intellectual function such as reason, understanding, apperception, and

intuition serve potentially the same purpose. The justifications for such division are invariably technical only; none is ultimately convincing or consistent. Congruent as such distinctions may appear within a very limited logical context, in all broader frames of reference they overlap and contradict one another. Critical examination of any of them will show the extent to which they fail to reflect our actual experience, and none will satisfy the criteria of strictly empirical investigation. Having become established in the intellectual tradition, such divisions persist after their usefulness has disappeared.

These observations should serve as a warning. A functional interpretation of self must steer clear of the errors of inappropriate and unwarranted conceptual division and definition. We must beware of over-interpreting our concepts; we must refrain from attaching to them more constancy and identity than they in fact possess. When we attempt to interpret and to understand self by attention to what self does, we are faced with entirely new problems and with new opportunities. We no longer need to rely on the tenuous equation between a name and its real equivalent whatever that might be. We are able to refer more directly to the experience in question. The functioning

self can everywhere and at all times be accessible to us; a mere reflection of thought shall suffice to evoke its actuality. Then the purported object of our investigation need never be remote from us, nor ought it ever be necessary for us to rely upon a conceptual model or a logical substitute. Whatever doubt or uncertainty may arise concerning a specific function of self, there will always be available to the individual mind the immediate opportunity of examining the self in action and of testing new theories by applying them to the original phenomenon.

Such optimistic considerations might suggest that with the translation of the question what self is into the question what self does, the problems of psychology, theoretical and applied, should be all but solved. Unfortunately this is not the case. To abandon concepts of being or concepts of function is productive and fruitful, but it is by no means a panacea for all problems of logical analysis. Concepts of being also serve a valid purpose, all risks of misinterpretation notwithstanding. It seems, furthermore, far easier to criticise the concept of being than to replace it with an acceptable substitute. As we investigate the various functions of self it will become apparent that the postulate of their conceptual being arises from the very structure of our thought and can be avoided only

through deliberate logical restraint. Whatever the faults of such notions of substance may be, the description of self as function will appear as a not altogether adequate replacement. Functional interpretation represents primarily a negative accomplishment: our ability to construe intellectual experience without resorting to formulas of substance or being. Whether a functional analysis of self or of any of its activities may be carried through without the surreptitious reinstatement of ontological presuppositions remains to be seen.

The traditional analyses of self illustrate the competition that is always ready to arise between functional and conceptual patterns of explanation. Plato divided soul into rational, spirited, and appetitive faculties; Kant's trichotomy consisted of reason, understanding, and intuition. All of these divisions designate presumptive functions of self; in each case functional interpretation is seen to lapse into a conceptual and, by implication, ontological construction. It is very difficult if not impossible for us to think without inventing concepts and relying upon them. Whether we intend it or not, the concept once invented demands its being. If functional analysis succeeds in deliberately circumventing the ontological implication of concepts, it voluntarily eschews one of the most reliable and useful structural components of theory. To the extent

that such attempts succeed, functional analysis may avoid some of the pitfalls of conceptual realism. The form of its conclusions in general will be more conducive to practical application; therefore functional analysis will appear to have more pragmatic value. It remains to be seen however whether in circumventing the inherent difficulties of conceptualization, a functional description will necessarily prove itself more profound or more valid.

Consciousness

That activity of mind by virtue of which I know that I am is called consciousness, and all attempts to describe the function of self encounter as their primary task ~~the~~ its explication, ~~of consciousness~~. None of the other functions of self, whatever they may be, can be known except through consciousness. We use such phrases as 'to enter into consciousness', or 'to participate in consciousness', or 'to become conscious', interchangeably. Although we encounter many difficulties in defining consciousness, almost everyone will understand what we mean by it. Consciousness is probably the one phenomenon among all others most accessible to empirical analysis. It is present literally to all men at all moments of their waking lives. Whatever judgments one might make concerning consciousness may be immediately tested in experience. Scientific attempts to define consciousness, however, are remote from the immediacy of experience. It is debatable whether we should identify that consciousness which the psychologist demonstrates in his laboratory with the introspective cohesive awareness that we recognize to be the concomitant of all mental activity, consciousness in the sense that each man discovers it for himself. Is it possible that consciousness might be scientifically defined with reference to demonstrable objective phenomena? We must keep our minds open to the possibility, but it seems unlikely.

Although scientific attempts to define consciousness hold little promise, they seem to reflect upon the problem before us, and for the sake of completeness we should briefly consider them. The psychologist always presumes to be concerned not with his own consciousness but with that of the experimental subject before him. Although initially he too must have discovered the notion of consciousness in his own introspective experience, he now believes that he may separate the fruits of introspection from those of observation and that observation shall ultimately confirm or refute the discoveries of subjective experience. However it is a dubious assumption that consciousness as subjective experience and consciousness as a demonstrable phenomenon should be strictly comparable. In the midst of ambitious efforts to accumulate data, this original uncertainty of the hypothesis that identifies objective and subjective consciousness is usually forgotten. Concerning demonstrable consciousness the psychologist indeed succeeds in discovering many interesting and useful facts, but however complete he may make his descriptions, the demonstrated qualities of so-called objective consciousness tell nothing about the consciousness that is the primary function of self. The mere designation of two disparate experiences with a single name does not in fact unite them.

Attempts to determine the quality of consciousness by observation of other human beings rely upon pre-established interpersonal relationships that the observer is always reluctant and often unable to recognize. The physician who attempts to determine his patients state of consciousness will, when in doubt, pinch the skin or press the eyeballs or forcefully bend a finger in an attempt to produce pain and to observe the reaction to it. He may also call the patient by name, or he may make of him ~~some~~ a simple demand in the effort to elicit some reaction to these accustomed stimuli. It is however a logical error to identify the reaction to pain or to commands with the existence of consciousness. Observation suggests that sufficiently forceful stimuli to the conscious mind will produce a ~~directional~~ directive purposeful response. As a rule the conscious human being will react to questions and to commands in a predictable fashion. What is elicited by such examinations is not a demonstration of the quality of consciousness, but a response to stimulation. These are not at all synonymous. Anyone who has had more than a cursory acquaintance with such problems will remember a patient who failed to respond to the usual stimulus, yet who by his own subsequent account of events must be considered to have been conscious. Conversely responses may be elicited in dreamlike or hypnotic states, even

though consciousness was either absent or drastically altered. Even if it were possible to determine the existence of consciousness by some such objective method, its quality and structure would still remain very much unknown. The quality of consciousness in such pathological states as hypnosis, hysteria, catatonia and somnambulism, in sleep and in dreams, remains undescribed, and no one who has not experienced such states himself will know the aberration of consciousness that brings them about. Thus all descriptions of consciousness as an objective phenomenon are far from complete and convincing; from the subjective experience of consciousness to which we refer they are qualitatively absolutely distinct.

Although consciousness is not demonstrable as a subjective phenomenon, the assumption that our fellow human beings should possess thoughts, feelings, states of mind, in short consciousness, strictly comparable to our own is the fundamental logical presupposition of all our social relationships. It is worthy of note that this transference of consciousness to other human beings, though natural and usually effortless, varies in degree. In many practical situations we find it incompletely developed or partially supressed. A pathological state of mind is conceivable in which the transference of consciousness would be entirely extinguished; a man so afflicted should be quite incapable of

imagining that anyone ever felt just as he did. There appears to be, in point of fact, an intermediate stage in which we project consciousness in part to all men, but to a marked degree only to a selected few. We do not suffer with all humanity; we genuinely sympathize only with our friends. The ethical rule that instructs us to treat our fellow man as we would have him treat us implies such a transference of consciousness. The dictum 'that all men are created equal' is a generalization derived from the same equation between self and other. The felicity of these formulas must not conceal the fact that their premise is the transference of my own consciousness to other human beings. Such transference is never complete; its implications and its problems have not been sufficiently studied. From what has been said it appears already that the definition and the description of consciousness are no mere academic exercise. The quality of selfhood and its actual or potential transference in the social relationship is a key to the understanding not only of ourselves but of the society that makes a civilized existence possible.

An allied question concerns the distinction that might be made between the consciousness of men and of animals. To what extent should the transference of consciousness that is responsible for my relationship to my fellow men control my attitude toward other living beings as well? By a process of expansion

the respect that I owe primarily only to my immediate associates is extended, first to all members of my community, then to all fellow citizens, to all members of my race, to all human beings, and then, in modified but nonetheless compelling fashion even to other higher animals. Where will it end? Not only mammals but other vertebrates, even invertebrates, indeed virtually all forms of life exhibit responses that make it possible if not imperative to attribute consciousness to them all. Among higher animals there appears to be much feeling similar to human emotion and some reflection comparable to human thought. To the extent that animals visibly exhibit love, fear, anger, or affection, for example, can we avoid the assumption that they possess consciousness as well? If they are conscious, do they possess selves comparable to ours? Birds respond to each other's calls, bees and ants are thought to have methods of communication among themselves. What right have we arbitrarily to limit the existence of consciousness to human life? Can we avoid attributing to social animals consciousness and self analogous to our own? In that case, would not our contact with animals imply moral issues comparable to those that arise from our relationships with other human beings? We shall take occasion to analyse these problems in a different context. At this point we are concerned only to show that the problems of consciousness are real and that some of them at least remain unsolved.

The description of consciousness is impeded by lack of precision in the conventional use of the term. In a general sense we say that a thought enters consciousness, using the word virtually synonymous with mind. According to this definition, any action of mind is conscious when it is recognized; even the dream should have to be considered conscious to the extent that we have memory of it upon awakening. In a second and more restricted sense, consciousness is applied to those actions of which we imagine ourselves deliberately aware while we are performing them. In this sense it might be said that I was conscious when signing my name, but unconscious or unaware of stepping into a puddle of water. All those actions would be considered conscious that were performed in contemplation of their effects. But those actions that were performed without contemplation of their effects, actions to which for that matter only their effects would bring attention, should be considered unconscious. An analogous definition of conscious and unconscious perception might be given. The majority of perceptions fail to make an unequivocal impression on consciousness. For example, when driving my car, I pay no heed to objects by the side of the road, until I recognize some of them as signifying danger. A child playing by the side of the road, for example, will attract my attention, from apprehension that

it might run onto the highway. I have formed a habit of anticipating just such dangerous situations. It is likely that the totality of my perceptions, evidently a very large number, is selectively appraised and limited by the mind, and only those perceptions become conscious that fill some function in a pre-existing network of intellectual expectations. It is our preparation for potential experience that makes us susceptible to it, and differing degrees and kinds of education make different men sensitive and cognizant of diverse experiences.

The term consciousness exhibits many shades of meaning. In the strictest sense, it is used to refer only to the consciousness of self. Then consciousness implies the identification of the active or perceptive experience at hand with the awareness that such experience is the property of myself as a unique individual. As such awareness is heightened, the characteristics of the experience in question are overshadowed by the complex of memories in which the awareness of self is veiled. When self-consciousness is pressed to an extreme, the very ability to act decisively or to perceive distinctly is compromised by the overbearing awareness of self.

The various implications of consciousness require further consideration, for it is not a concept equally or consistently applied. Primarily we rely upon 'consciousness' to designate

our awareness of ourselves. We are able at times, reflecting upon our thought, to prove to ourselves the actuality of our being through the certainties of our consciousness. This is the implication of the Cartesian meditation. By taking thought we assure ourselves of the reality of our mind as the thinking agent. It is neither practical nor desirable for us to maintain a continuing awareness of such consciousness, but we are able to reconstruct the existence of ourselves from the memory of past actions and past perceptions when we identify these as our own. Accordingly we may postulate a second definition of consciousness. Apart from the deliberate and specific reflections that convince us of our being, there are the far more frequent moments in our lives when we act consciously, knowing who we are and what we are doing, even though these facts are not at the same time objects of our attention. This application of the term consciousness is more frequent. It is also more significant since this potential identification of all actions and of all perceptions with the self is a universal ability of the human mind. The logical identification of self, on the other hand, is a theoretical achievement of which only a minority of men are capable.

We are accustomed to apply the term consciousness to the entirety of our waking mental state. To be conscious implies the ability at any moment of our waking lives to remember both

the recent and the distant past, to anticipate the future, and to refer all of these reflections to ourselves as substrates of experience. To be sure, such reflections are seldom explicit; they are never all-inclusive. Yet the consequence is that all periods of time in which we describe ourselves as conscious is unified by a logical and imaginative coherence. It is possible for us reflecting back upon events of any given period of consciousness to relate them as prior and posterior. Episodes of unconsciousness, on the contrary, are characterized by the fact that we discover ourselves in them only circumstantially, but they themselves are inaccessible to our memory. Characteristically our concept consciousness might designate a man acting and knowing that he is acting, or a man perceiving and knowing that he is perceiving. It is conceivable, by way of contrast, for a man to be doing something and yet not to know what he is doing or that he is doing it. Under such circumstances we call his action unconscious. Probably we should consider his unconsciousness only relative, because shortly thereafter, when the action that he has just done is brought to his attention, he may remember having performed it, and he may claim it for his own. Then we should have to regroup this action among his conscious ones. Thus, while the quality of consciousness is single and there is strictly speaking only one consciousness, the degree and the manner in which this consciousness inheres in different actions is quite variable.

In another, ~~different~~ sense, all actions themselves are relatively unconscious because our awareness of them is delayed. This awareness is recognized to be qualitatively different from the action itself. We are accustomed to reflect upon our actions, and as we do so they become conscious, but only in some of their aspects. Certain actions are more likely to become conscious than others. Deliberate speech, for example, requires a continuing reflection about our words; hence the very process of speaking usually demands a relatively high degree of consciousness. Another example of a very highly conscious action is one which requires all our attention lest it result in failure or accident. For someone not used to it threading a needle might be a highly conscious action. For a quite different example, when we cross a stream on a narrow bridge, lightly balancing ourselves in fear of falling, we discover ourselves highly conscious. With every step we take care that we should not lose our equilibrium and fall. On the other hand, when walking on a level and unobstructed path, we are likely to become quite oblivious of our progress. We may fairly say that we become unconscious of ourselves walking. The degree of consciousness at any given moment in the past is determinable only through memory. Therefore our ability to remember perceptions and acts provides an absolute distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness. That which

we cannot remember must now be attributed to unconsciousness, although it might at one time in the past, and for that matter it may again at some time in the future be remembered, and once more be discovered to have been conscious. Memory would seem to play a predominant role in the definition of consciousness. Our intellectual limitations preclude that the consciousness of action should be simultaneous with it. To reflect upon an action that we have performed even recently, is a second action successive to the prior one. In this sense all of our actions are done unconsciously. When, for example, we play a difficult piece of music on the piano, we cannot reflect upon ourselves as playing a given note at the time we play it; else we should bog down in numerous errors. In attempting to play such a musical composition, we have learned to assume certain intellectual attitudes wherein we can no longer permit each individual note that we play to become the object of deliberate reflection. It is only when we make an error that a particular note stands out in our memories. Only by inference can we assume that we have played each individual note as it is written. We know that we have correctly played the piece in its entirety, and we conclude that this achievement required the correct and meticulous performance of each individual note.

The mind's awareness of itself is in continuing fluctuation, even during the interval during which we call ourselves conscious. Except in a deep sleep or in a coma we are never totally unaware of ourselves. During our waking lives we are always susceptible to experiences that evoke a high degree of consciousness. Whether or not a given event will be remembered and will come to constitute a significant portion of our experience depends on many factors, both intrinsic to mind, reflecting upon its disposition at the time, and external to mind, related to the quality of the experience. Usually what is unexpected or startling, an unanticipated explosion for example, will engrave itself upon our memories. So will an unaccustomed or difficult task. Activities that are carefully planned, especially when they are objects of intensive reflection at the time, impress the mind deeply. Various ceremonies, greetings and departures, an embrace, a kiss, a benediction or a curse, are all symbolic actions that are summaries of anticipated or bygone experience. As such they are most likely to be woven indelibly into the web of consciousness.

It becomes apparent that the only distinction between what is remembered and what is forgotten, and hence the only distinction between what is conscious and unconscious is subsequently empirically determined by the actual recall of events. We cannot

predict with certainty what circumstances shall be remembered and what shall be forgotten; we do not know until we in fact exercise our memories in the process of recollection. Furthermore, the memories of today may be forgotten tomorrow, and events that seem irretrievably lost to the mind at one moment may subsequently be recovered. We must recognize a scale of memorable events; strictly speaking, all things that have ever occupied our minds belong to it. The psychoanalysts have made it their task to recover long lost, apparently unconscious memories of remote events. Of some happenings we may confidently predict that they shall almost surely be forgotten. Yet these, insignificant though they be, may surreptitiously reappear before the mind's eye. Of other events we may assume that they must surely be remembered, yet we may never again have occasion to notice them. The pattern of memory is unpredictable; it is exhibited only in the actual exercise of mental function. The manifest memories of even a single individual are in continuing process of change. It follows that consciousness likewise is not an absolute term. An action that may even now have been consciously performed subsequently will be forgotten, and unless we were to be reminded of it by some external circumstance, it would then for all practical purposes belong to our unconscious actions. Similarly, an action that is now performed

unconsciously, may subsequently be remembered, and will then become conscious. Finally, from our description it follows that as events become progressively more remote from us in time, the memory of them is lost and to all purposes they become unconscious. Thus it is correct to say that virtually the entirety of our childhood which at one time was surely an object of our acutest awareness is now buried in oblivion. Accordingly consciousness appears not as an absolute characteristic of certain of our actions or perceptions; on the contrary, and this point appears highly significant, it is a criterion applied retroactively to our historical selves. Perhaps then it is relatively meaningless to speak of consciousness or unconsciousness as we might describe the sun disappearing and reappearing behind clouds on a summer day. The concept of consciousness is much more pertinent when we consider it as the phenomenon of the continuing present. It is not an event in the past, but an ability here and now. Consciousness is, as it were, a vital, living inventory of our mental content.

Of particular interest to us is the concentration of consciousness produced by esthetic and ethical experience. Suggesting as it does a specific relationship between the problems of psychology and those of ethics and esthetics, this intensification of consciousness is a circumstance of much theoretical

importance. The ethical moment calls upon us to decide what we must do in the instant; then we become highly conscious of the circumstances of our actions, of their consequences, and above all of the self that is expressed in the determination and decision of the moment. Esthetic experience may provoke a similar if less dramatic crisis of consciousness. The object that we recognize as beautiful enters into conscious experience in an extraordinary and unforgettable manner. The esthetic excellence of the valued object sets it apart from and above the other objects among which it exists. The forcefulness with which it impresses us causes its image to linger in our minds long after other memories have become extinguished. At the same time we discover in ethical and esthetic experience an unaccustomed assertion and demonstration of the strength and of the capacity of self. We prize ethical and esthetic experience at least in part for their reassurance of our subjective actuality.

Consciousness inheres in action and in perception without self becoming an object of thought. The thinking about ourselves or the thinking about our consciousness is a separate act: we call it self-consciousness, and to a large extent it precludes other action. When we are absorbed in a task, we say that we forget ourselves. In other words, the more highly

conscious we become, the more self-conscious we become, and the more limited we are in what we can do. Self-consciousness may paralyze us when we are on a stage and the attention of others embarrasses us and diverts us from our intended role. In order to be able to do our task well, we learn not to think about ourselves, indeed we learn not to think about the tasks as being done by us, since our concern with our action and our concern with ourselves will limit our effectiveness in performing our tasks. Pure consciousness is an abstraction and is not extrapolated except in conjunction with some perception or some action. When I am conscious I am always conscious of some action, of some perception, or of some thought. Self-consciousness is my consciousness of the thought of consciousness: quite literally it is the awareness of the implications of consciousness; it is the consciousness of consciousness. Clearly consciousness might be compounded without end, but such compounding would be trivial and vacuous. To understand consciousness we must study not it, but the actions and the perceptions in which it inevitably inheres.

Action

The preceding discussion has suggested that the distinction between consciousness on the one hand and action and perception on the other is not free of ambiguity. Although we speak of consciousness as independent, yet in experience consciousness is invariably attended either by perception or action. As a matter of fact, it is always attended by both, because if we were not embarrassed by superficial verbal contradiction, we should declare that consciousness, perception, and action are but three different aspects of the living self, and where one of them is found to be present, the other two can be found to accompany it. Furthermore it has become evident that consciousness is invariably conjoined with memory: this is the case even where consciousness appears to be of the present, because even the present requires time to be appreciated and understood. Thus consciousness is always consciousness of the past, although as a rule the past that occupies consciousness is very recent. Strictly speaking, my reflection on this present action is a reflection upon the memory of that action. It would appear that thought itself might be designated as the locus of consciousness, but when we introduce the notion of thought to explain consciousness, we raise the question whether thought may properly be distinguished from perception and action. The most

consistent interpretation of thought holds that thought being an intrinsic activity of mind, shares the property both of action and of perception. Thought may be understood as a special kind of action and perception, namely as the action of mind upon itself and as the perception by mind of its own content. Moreover the distinction between thought on the one hand and action and perception on the other is of limited value, because while thought is a useful and effective means of clarifying our understanding, it is unable to provide us with genuinely new ideas. Its usefulness is limited to prior contact that we might have had with nature, and deprived of such stimulation thought would be altogether meaningless.

As we proceed with such bold and firm definitions of concepts that have troubled authors far more acute than ourselves, we owe both explanation and apology. As we have previously intimated, it is the purpose of our definition neither to limit the actuality of nature nor to expand or improve upon it. Our concepts are like tools for understanding ourselves and our relationship to nature. We design our concepts in order that they might facilitate our task. From this point of view, it is not at all incongruous that although we define concepts ~~for~~ to our particular ends, we leave room for the possibility that for different purposes different

definitions might be more suitable. The closer our considerations approach actual experience, the more tentative and suggestive they will appear, the less decisive and the less arbitrary we can afford to make them.

Action shall be defined as the transitive relationship of consciousness to reality, existing primarily in the dimension of time. Perception, on the other hand, is the passive relationship of mind to reality, primarily in a spatial dimension. Subsequent elaboration will show how advantageous such a division is in providing an adequate description of the relationship between self and reality, and at the same time giving a reliable foundation for the interpretation of action and perception as independent phenomena. As soon as one distinguishes consciousness into action and perception, the relative limitation of this separation becomes apparent. Perception is not entirely devoid of action; to some extent it must be construed as an active process also, not only because it involves the formation of concept and images, but because it implies intention, expectation and the active apperceptive fulfillment of an interval in time. By the same token, the separation of action from perception cannot be carried to its logical extreme. Independent of perception, action should remain forever inaccessible to our minds. Moreover, we shall subsequently show that the planning

of action is the task of the cognitive power of mind, which relies not only upon an understanding of our own abilities, but also on an interpretation of the complex circumstances that preceded the action as preliminaries and that follow it as consequences. Finally, neither perception nor action have meaning except in association with consciousness as that power of mind which relates them both to a single subjective self. In other words, a perception or an action must always be the property of personality. Primarily such personality is subjective: the necessary relationship between perception and action on the one hand and consciousness on the other is a phenomenon recognized by the individual in his own experience and is not demonstrable directly to his fellow men. The experience of consciousness, implying as it does action and perception, is the core of our understanding not only of ourselves but of the world that we are able to know. One might indeed argue that this consciousness was the only genuine and primary experience accessible to us, and that all our knowledge of world was a mere extrapolation from it. The understanding of world as projection and transference of consciousness is one of the most interesting implications of the psychology we have outlined. This is a problem of particular importance with which we shall deal in more detail in a different context.

The explanation of action that is most plausible to the contemporary mind is a mechanical one. We tend to be prejudiced in favor of mechanical theories because the flowering of modern science is grounded in a mechanistic interpretation of nature. In a mechanical scheme, action appears as a mere motion of a part of the human body. We desire to understand the world as consisting of a finite number of physical objects of larger or smaller size, exerting and impelled by discrete physical forces, interacting with one another at appropriate points. No wonder then that the typical action represents itself as a motion, such as kicking a ball, rolling a rock, striking a match, or pulling the trigger of a gun. One should like to explain action solely as the motion, simple or complex of the body and of its parts. A mechanical theory is inadequate because it is unable to explain the specific relationship of a particular motion to the environmental circumstances which make the action meaningful and identify it as such. How are we to distinguish the motion that is presumably explanatory of action from the many trivial, inconsequential, incoherent, unconscious motions of which our lives consist? Actions appear to be distinguished from other, quite similar motions only by the intention that produces them and by the consequences that follow. This fact in itself suggests the inadequacy of a mechanical theory of

action. Furthermore the intention and the consequences of action are never independent; they rely for their meaning upon a conceptual interpretation of world. In other words, an indispensable quality of action is its relationship to the circumstance that accompanies it. For example, in the course of a single day we may make many motions such as the one with which we light a match; but it is only one specific movement as it kindles the fire that deserves the name of action. We are always moving part of our body, but only when movements are performed for a conscious purpose do we consider them action. In order for our steps, for example, to be called actions, the origin and the destination of our paths must be taken into account. We anticipate and we remember actions not nearly so much in terms of the physical movement that we made; we value and we classify them as events that become integral parts of our conceptual world. Clearly the definition of action as mere motion is inadequate. Reflection upon this circumstance leads us to ask whether motion should ever be considered primarily given? We are inclined to forget that the idea of motion itself is an abstraction from experience. All actions that we in fact recognize are specific, they occur in a particular place and at a specific time. But the very implication of the concept motion as a physical term is its abstractness and indefiniteness.

This indefiniteness is clearly contradictory to the necessary specificity of the action. In other words, whenever one attempts to define action as motion one implicitly denies the distinguishing characteristics of action. There would be no criterion intrinsic to motion that would separate trivial movements of which we make so many from those of consequence that alone deserve the name of action.

There are as a matter of fact many significant actions of which the mere physical motion gives little or no explanation. To be sure, many of our actions do involve motion, some more and some less. Writing for example involves motion of the fingers; speech requires motion of the vocal chords and of the tongue. Yet the effect of these motions is quite remote and can hardly explain the specific qualities of the intended actions. It is virtually impossible to relate the quality of action with the quality of motion, except when the two are distinctly associated with one another in experience, and then only in a very superficial way. Moreover, motion fails to shed light on the process of decision which is frequently the most important aspect of action. Our assent or denial of a specific proposition is frequently devoid of all movement. Silence at a crucial instant may be action of the most momentous kind. We perform many significant deeds with a simple yes or no, or

with a few strokes of the pen. Such observations as these suggest that physical motion is far too simple and too general an abstraction to serve as a suitable definition of action.

We shall be more successful in our attempt to define the quality of action if we approach this problem without our customary prejudices concerning the structure of reality. If we undertake to make an inventory of all circumstances to which we may justly apply the name action, we would find ourselves with a very long list. Action would include not only those apparently fateful decisions by which the course of our own existence and that of our fellow men would be drastically affected, but it would include also all random movement that bore even the faintest analogy to significant ones, it would include all relevant thoughts, and even all deliberate perceptions. All these actions would have primarily two qualities in common. They would all be actions of an individual; they would be essentially expressive of the self. We understand actions only to the extent to which we are able to suppose ourselves as their subjects. The other quality of all actions is the circumstance that they refer to an object distinct from self. All actions take place in or upon a world of nature. This circumstance obtains even with thoughts. Evanescent though they seem to be, they must be construed to leave behind

them either as conceptual entity or as impression upon the parent mind some objective vestige of their being. Having designated the two most pervasive characteristics of action, we may turn to examine their implications.

We consider first the characteristics of actions in their relationships to the world of nature. Here they appear as events and the individual responsible for them as an historical personality. They must then compete for significance with all the other events of which knowledge is possible. At the same time our awareness of them has changed. When our actions appear to us as part of the world, we are no longer so pointedly aware of the subjective necessity that once impelled us. The awareness of personal involvement is attenuated when actions become elements in the conceptual world. As actions lose their immediacy, they become alienated from the self that was once responsible for them.

It is inevitable that the actions that are now in process of performance and now dominate our consciousness should after days, weeks, or years have elapsed, lose the better part of the significance that we now attribute to them. For that matter, our own actions are usually trivial in comparison with events of which we have conceptual knowledge. What I can do

here and now is as nothing compared with the actions of the mightiest of men; and even the actions of the great are inconsequential in comparison with the events and ordinances of nature. This discrepancy has traditionally been a source of religious bewilderment. It has also provided an impetus for ambitious and determined men to increase the power and significance of their own actions at the expense of those of their fellow men. When we are able to feel ourselves superior in our actions to some of our neighbors, the acuteness of our disillusionment with our own insignificance is somewhat assuaged.

We are accustomed to interpret our actions as events within a framework limited in scope. Such limitation is indispensable if our actions as events are not to lose all their meaning. A paralysis of insignificance would befall us if we were to construe our deeds in a cosmic dimension. On the other hand, in order to be able to act purposefully, we must establish and maintain a frame of reference in which our actions may compare favorably with other events. I compare today's work with what I did yesterday or what I plan to do next week. I measure my achievements with those of other men whom I consider my peers. My action becomes an event within a framework such as the life of my family, or within the contemporary history of my town, perhaps even of my country. It may be that

one of the chief benefits of society is that it provides for men a background against which their actions obtain objective significance.

As we review the various historical schemes in which our selves and our actions appear, we recognize that there is a progression from that history most intimate to us and most peculiarly our own through the various interpretations that our family, friends, and associates must have of us, to far broader frames of reference within which the self and its actions are reduced to mere number until they vanish entirely. This scale of devaluation that accompanies a conceptual expansion of our world is the background against which our description of action must be visualized.

We cannot escape the cosmic dimensions of which our conceptual inferences provide us knowledge. Only a superficial acquaintance with history, only a glance at the starry sky serves to convince us of the discrepancy between our trivial actions and the endlessness of the world of which we have knowledge. This discrepancy was probably the earliest source of religious inspiration, and religion characteristically attempts to compensate for it. Religious experience admits us to a realm of reality from which we are otherwise excluded by the physical limitations of our biological existence. The

compensation for the weakness of the flesh that religious experience strives to provide is illustrated by the symbolism of action to which it encourages us. This symbolism reconciles the disparity between our limited capacities and the apparent infinity of nature. It is the extraordinary achievement of religious thought to provide the individual with a method for expanding this limited action and for surmounting the confines of his conceptual apprehension of reality. It is easy to disparage the religious solution to the inadequacy of action as superficial or even deceptive. Many a modern man presumes to require no such mediation. On the other hand, when we become aware of that discrepancy in its actuality and realize the absolute qualitative difference between the presumptions of self and the limitless dimensions of the conceptual world of our knowledge, then on the contrary it seems more deceptive to deny the discrepancy than to admit it by accepting the symbolism of religion.

The problems of action will assume an entirely different form when we regard them no longer as potential events in the real world of nature, but when we consider them as specific and necessary expressions of consciousness in a conceptual

world. From this altered viewpoint the traditional problems concerning necessity and free will as determinants to action as well as the ethical questions about right and wrong become uniquely accessible to examination.

So long as we view our actions as a series of incidents extending from a distant past into a remote future, they remain ~~remote~~ removed from us as do the events of nature of which we have only a conceptual understanding. In order to be able to give a more meaningful analysis of action we must limit our considerations to the present. Such limitation does not necessarily simplify our problem, perhaps it even makes it more difficult. The action that I anticipate is not identical with the action that I perform; nor is the action that I remember wholly adequate to the involvement of self with reality that constitutes the present action. The difference between the anticipated action and action in process of performance must not be glossed over. When the anticipated action becomes actual, there is a transference of potentiality to necessity. When the anticipated action becomes real, the ~~circumstance~~ involvement to be objectively described is transmuted into a matter of direct, immediate, subjective importance. The

quality of this transmutation escapes us even as does the merging of the future and present. That an action which only minutes or hours ago I anticipated should now be upon me is as perplexing for me to understand as is the fact that future time is now here. In this transition the distinction between an objective event anticipated and a now inescapable function fulfilled becomes obscure.

Concealed by this obscurity is the anomalous proposition that I presume to determine my action according to the plan of my anticipation. Moreover, to an undefined extent the action itself inevitably exceeds all possible expectation that I might have of it. Traditionally the solution to this problem is sought in the notion of causality, as we firmly assert our will to be the cause of our action. The difficulty of so simple a solution is that it has no predictive value whatever. The consciousness of will, assuming there was such a thing, would never be able to predict with any degree of certainty the actions we should ultimately perform. For there are many actions that we 'will', which we never have power or opportunity to bring about, and conversely there are many significant actions that we do on the spur of the moment of which we have no reasonable anticipation. Finally, there is virtually nothing that we do which in its complexity does not greatly exceed even the most careful possible

voluntary anticipation of it. It appears then that the postulate of will to explain the determination and the certainty of action is a poor and unrewarding hypothesis. We shall seek a different approach to this problem.

The postulate of will is ~~indistinctly poorly~~ defined. We are always content to refer to ~~it~~ will as existing; we are always at a loss to state what it might be. If we sought a description of will as it appears in our consciousness, we might call it the silent or spoken reflection upon a proposition indicating our determination to act in a certain way. If will is more than this, what it might be escapes our definition. The statement that we are about to perform an action must be regarded either as an integral part of that action or as a second, independent and separate act. If it is regarded as an integral part of the action, the problem vanishes; if it is regarded as a separate act, then the problem of will is merely a duplicate of the problem of action, and in order to understand how action might be anticipated by will we should have to inquire into the relationship between the two actions. If will were understood as a prior, wholly separable, independent action from that other action to which it is presumed cause, entirely new difficulties appear. Construed in this way, will as separate action no longer appears to anticipate adequately that action

to which it points. By the same token, the constellation of actions evidently inter-related assumes new significance. This present action expressed by our 'will', is a meaningful and relatively reliable indication of actions that we shall probably perform in the future. The present action, whether it be a dynamic or a merely decisional one, is a substantial manifestation of the quality of self at that moment and in the forseeable future as well. Inevitably, also, all our actions serve to determine the quality of self. The sort of person that I am is both expressed and immediately determined by the action that I do. Thus if I take occasion explicitly to 'act out' my determination, I thereby reveal my will, I show what sort of person I am, and I make it possible both for myself and for my fellow men to predict with greater certainty what I am likely to do in the future. If, however, I remain unpracticed in exercising my mind, then neither I nor my fellow men will know what to expect of me ~~both~~ in respect to both the quality of my actions and their forcefulness.

This explanation has made it possible to define the relationship of actions to one another and to explain the apparent cogency of will. If will and action are indeed separate and logically coordinate one with another, we need not be surprised that the two frequently fail to coincide. Probably such coincidence

as we observe, as well as the reliability of will that makes our anticipation of action of practical value, should be considered a mere biological constancy and perseverance. We tend to continue in a pattern of action that we have begun. As our language, our facial expression, our manual dexterity remain relatively constant, so do the potentialities of our personality that are indicated by will and that are exhibited in action.

However successfully theoretical considerations may be satisfied by our exposition, there remain nonetheless many practical aspects of the relationship between will and action that deserve further elaboration. Throughout our waking lives our minds are filled with images of events in the objective world. In these events we participate and we are able to predict from experience what effect such events will have upon our person and upon our interests. We realize also the effectiveness of our own dispositions and motions in determining and modifying the events in this conceptual scheme. In observing our own behavior we have empirically recognized that our actions and attitudes correspond to the anticipations that our mind previously entertained. We believe ourselves to be guided by choice because we have anticipated our actions and recognized them to be consequences of our premeditations. Our minds are always open to the possibility that contrary considerations

might enter into the pattern of our thought and might divert us from plans well laid. Such digression would never be considered a denial of will, but merely its deliberate abrogation, because whatever we do deliberately, we do willfully. Indeed, whenever we act consciously we act according to our will, and it is quite inconceivable that will should be overruled by any other influences.

At the moment of involvement, action appears inevitable and necessary. It is a paradox worth some consideration that whereas in anticipation and in retrospect we can readily conceive of ourselves as having acted differently than we in fact did, yet at the time we performed the action in question we have ~~had~~ no alternative. This fact is more real than it is apparent, largely because our thought dwells extensively on conceptual schemes in which action is indeed contingent. It is not easy to observe our actions as phenomena. We have difficulty in understanding our actions for what they are at the instant of performance. When, however, we become particularly concerned about the quality of our actions, when we meditate not only about what we ought to do but about what we can do, then we recognize that although the quality of future action appears open and undetermined,

subject to our deliberation ~~and determination~~ now, the quality of present action, of that which I now recognize myself in the act of doing, is utterly beyond my power to change. The reason for this inability is the circumstance that my action exhausts at this moment all that I am. There is not on the one hand a self and on the other hand an action which the self performs; the self and the action are identical at the moment of action. Deprived of that action, self is annihilated. This is the implication of our thesis that action is an unavoidable and necessary expression of self.

The necessity of action is usually ignored because our minds are focused and our attention is absorbed by the conceptual relationships that occupy our thinking. We are unwilling to accept the apparent compulsion of action in itself, and for that reason we refer the necessity of action to the conceptual relationship between intention and action. We say that the action follows from the intention, and we accept a binding relationship between intention and action as the cause of the necessity of the latter. As we have stated, however, this explanation only transforms the problem and does not solve it, because the intention is either an integral part of the same action, in which case the distinction is tautologous, or the intention must be construed as a separate action, in which case the problem is

duplicated. The truth of the matter, however is that the hypothesis of intention is a conceptual rather than an ~~immedi-~~ empirical ~~ate~~ one. In the immediacy of action, intention and action coincide. The distinction between intention and action represents a conceptual device by means of which we attempt to explain for ourselves the necessity of action. Here we regard action as an event, as something we have done in the past or something we may do in the future, but not as anything we are doing now. We regard the action of others as analogous to our own: we consider the action of human beings comparable ~~to~~ ~~with~~ the action of animals, and for that matter comparable to natural events in general. The action that I intend is an event, and represents itself to my mind as an event no less than the action performed by a third person, no less than for example the flight of the bird or the thunder of the storm. Thus we derive no elucidation of our problem from such a conceptual representation of action. It is true that we may derive from them much useful information about the range of human activity; nonetheless it is doubtful that they will ever be able to give an adequate answer to the question of action as an immediate expression of consciousness. While the conceptual scheme ~~of action as even~~ is unable to shed light on the immediate reality of action, yet conversely it is altogether possible that

the phenomenological analysis of action may lead to some understanding of the conceptual relationships that have hitherto eluded explanation.

Perhaps there is no more exacting and compelling test of any theory of action than the explanation that it is able to provide for the age-old dilemma of necessity or free will. We shall see what kind of account we are able to give of this uncertainty from the point of view that we have chosen as our own. So long as we are willing to view our action in the context of immediate experience, that is, so long as we view them from a phenomenological point of view, no problem concerning freedom or necessity arises. It is only when we attempt to describe the self and its activity as elements in an objective series of events that the ambiguity concerning freedom and necessity becomes pressing. We postulate then that action is merely a species of event; we assume that this event, like other events in nature should follow necessarily from its cause. But we have been caught in a circular argument. Our notion of event was derived, as we have indicated and as we shall subsequently show in greater detail, from our notion of action in the first place; yet our idea of action is an immediate expression of primary experience. The compulsive quality of

action was projected into the objective world where it appeared to us as the necessary relationship between cause and effect. Event and action are but two aspects of a single phenomenon. We recognize that the event is a projection of our experience of action into the conceptual world ~~of our experience of action.~~ Therefore the notion of event has no implications that are not already presumed in the concept of action; it is illogical that the experience of action which has given us the concept of event should in turn be explicable by the very concept derived from it.

Freedom of action is given in the immediacy of action; it is the assertion by self of its integrity, primacy, and independence. The freedom of action appears as a fundamental psychic phenomenon, as a powerful and vivid assertion by the self of its own existence. It is true that this freedom disappears when self and its actions are viewed as elements of an objective world. However, we have shown such an objective world to be a conceptual product of our minds, and in as much as the very quality of action is projected into the conceptual world as the necessary relationship between cause and effect, it is incongruous to utilize whatever cogency the cause and effect relationship might possess for the purpose of criticizing action. Thus from a purely theoretical point of view, we may be confident that the cause-effect relationship, however indis-

pensable to our view of nature, cannot invalidate that primary experience of which it is a reflection. It is contradictory that a conceptual interpretation should attempt to supplant the freedom of action with the logic of causality. The necessity of the cause-effect relationship in the conceptual world is not the denial of freedom of self, but its derivative and as such in a sense its confirmation.

The notion of action is derived immediately from experience. Like all other knowledge ~~derived from experience;~~ it is fitted into a conceptual pattern. But to the extent that action is an immediate manifestation of experience, it will remain distinct from the conceptual world. Action is a quality of consciousness and must be explained as such, and it is distorted when it is viewed primarily as an event. At the same time the mechanism of action and its results, as well as the specific characteristics of the relationship between the self and reality, are comprehensible by us only with the instruments and within the framework of the conceptual world. No analogies of ours, however devious or skillful they may be, however intricate or suggestive, will be able to escape from this circle of our conceptual limitations. Our inability to arrive at a precise designation of action is a problem of the same order as our inability to arrive at such a designation for self.

Perhaps it is inevitable, and surely it is not surprising that the characteristics of immediate experience become distorted and on occasion paradoxically interlocked when they are translated into conceptual formulas. We recognize once more an intrinsic limitation of the conceptual formulation of experience, a limitation that we have encountered before and which we shall have occasion to describe subsequently in greater detail. A phenomenological description of experience will carry us somewhat further. We may designate action as the transitive relationship between self and nature. The self is absolutely dependent upon action; action is the realization of self in time.

Perception

Pure consciousness is an abstraction from experience and does not exist as such. Consciousness is invariably colored by feeling and perception, but the mutual relations between consciousness, feeling, and perception are unclear and require to be explored. The description of these faculties has been impeded by the prejudice which logic as the purveyor of reason entertains against everything that tends to impugn its primacy. Consequently reason denies the substantiality of feeling and has invariably attempted to describe perception as a purely rational process. Evidently a reexamination of these problems from an unbiased point of view might prove of great value.

When we regard the human being as a psychological organism, we recognize ~~three~~ several gradations of sensitivity. Most general are feelings or states of consciousness unassociated with any particular part of the body, emotions designated with vague terms such as happiness, sadness, tiredness or exultation. Other sensations, such as thirst, hunger, nausea or desire may or may not be linked with particular parts of the body. ~~The~~ Another ~~second~~ group of sensations are those which are more or less distinctly referred to a particular portion of the body, particularly sensations of pain, touch, temperature, and position sense. Evidently these ~~two~~ classes of feelings are interrelated;

a pain in one part of the body will frequently precipitate a generalized state of anxiety or sadness. Many such examples might be given. Finally we note that certain of our sensations possess the specific capacity regularly and reliably to indicate the existence of objects distinct from ourselves. It is this ability of sensation to distinguish self and not-self to which we refer as perception.

To speak of perception is to invite consideration of the traditional list of the five senses: vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Elementary observation suggests that this list is neither consistent nor complete. The faculty of vision, for example, comprises a set of abilities differing appreciably among different individuals. In some men the ability to distinguish colors is deficient; in others, it is entirely absent. While visual apperceptions are obviously mediated through corresponding anatomic structures in all men, wide variations are observed in the acuity and functional usefulness of vision. To be sure, this faculty may be improved by training, but there is also a limit to the effectiveness of such training. Some men's eyes are more trainable than others. Hence for some men the sense of vision is appreciably more revealing than for others. Moreover, in the interpretation of the visual object there may well be gradations far more subtle than we realize.

The same geometrical image may conceivably elicit divergent responses from different individuals. Such differences are effectively concealed by the unproved and probably unwarranted assumption that two 'normal' individuals faced with the same object will have identical visual apperceptions of it. Surely, the artist in front of his canvas, the naturalist in the field, the pathologist at his microscope, will recognize many phenomena that would be inapparent to the untrained eye.

Discrepancies in the ability to hear must similarly be recognized. Differences in auditory acuity must be construed as more than quantitative. The individual who for example can designate pitch perfectly is in all likelihood able to hear far more than the individual who cannot even carry a tune. It is commonly known that the senses of smell and of taste are intimately related, so much so as to permit no functional distinction. The sense of touch, by way of contrast, has been grossly over-simplified; it includes not only sensations of pressure, but of pain, temperature, and position sense as well. In addition, consideration must be given to the sense of equilibrium, as to such diverse specific sensations as itching, tingling, and burning, vertigo and nausea. Moreover, the specific sensations will be found to merge into emotional dispositions to which no specific objective reference would be

attributable. Once more we recognize the distinction, at times subtle, between those sensations that are projected outward so as to have some presumptive cause in nature, and those other sensibilities which are not projected to the outside world and from which therefore self is unable to dissociate itself. The distinction is often unclear and always variable. For example, if my finger is bruised, I am likely to assume the attitude that the finger pains me, but that I am otherwise well, thus distinguishing the painful injury to the finger from a self otherwise whole. When, however, I am overcome with a feeling of nausea, for example, of tiredness or exultation, I say that I feel or am nauseated, tired, or happy as the case might be. In these circumstances I am unable to dissociate my present feeling from my consciousness of self, and I am also unable to designate as its occasional cause any particular object in my environment. It is valuable to survey the spectrum of feelings and perceptions and to recognize that at one end of the spectrum the awareness tends to be identified entirely with the self, while at the other end the awareness is identified entirely with an object recognized to be distinct from self. It is also pertinent to note that the pure termini of the spectrum are experienced rarely if at all; by far the majority of experiences combine an awareness of self with a reference to some object in the environment.

The traditional analysis of perception is a stereotyped affair. It presupposes the existence of man as a sensitive and intelligent being; it assumes opposite to him the real existence of the world and its objects. Perception is, accordingly, considered as the process by which the individual obtains images of the objects that surround him. The acquisition of such perceptual images is usually treated as a function of the sensory organs, of nervous pathways, and of localized areas of the brain that mediate sensory stimuli. The customary account of perception presupposes that the structure of both self and of world should be common knowledge. Whether self and world are known, and to what extent, need not be disputed here, but if they be known, such knowledge is derived from perception. Since self and world become known through perception, perception should be prior to them and should be explicable without reliance upon definitions of self or of world. Perhaps the processes of perception have proved enigmatic and impervious to our understanding to the same degree that world and mind respectively appear intelligible.

Perception must be explained through itself, without reference to dogmatic notions of self or of world. Indeed, if neither world nor self were as intelligible as they appear on first consideration, the processes of perception might be regarded in an entirely different light. Perceptions are immediate; the self that sustains them and the world that they presume to reflect

are more remote. It is possible that the uncertainties of both self and world have traditionally been projected into the processes of perception that bind them. If then we deny the assumption that self or world should be primarily known to us, the process of perception itself will assume a new importance, directly accessible as it is to our examination. Our intricate ~~complex~~ ideas of self and world are intelligible only as consequences of the process of perception. If self and world in their complexity are but derivatives of the perceptual experience it will be incongruous to presume to define perception in terms of them. On the contrary, a strictly logical approach would appear to demand that the relationship be reversed and that self and world respectively be defined in terms of the perceptual experience. In postulating such a reversal of customary procedure we advocate no radical departure from intellectual tradition. In so doing we remain faithful to the sceptical method of Descartes, who recognized as primary not the reality of self or world but only the actuality of perception which seemed to reflect them both. Perception is immediately given, linked inseparably as it is with consciousness. We recognize perception as one of the original phenomena of experience from which we are led to deduce the existence both of self and of world.

Thus the position of perception in our analysis of experience is strictly comparable to that of action. Perception and action are the twin expressions of consciousness. They are primary in the sense that other dispositions of consciousness may conveniently be defined in terms of them. Both action and perception express a relationship between self and world. Both of them are more immediate to us in experience than either self or world. Consequently it is remarkable to observe that in our eyes nature acquires certain of the characteristics of action. To wit, the succession of events and the construction of the relationship between them as causal can best be understood as a projection of the subjective experiences of will and action into the objective world. Similarly, the self covets such entity for itself as perception projects upon objects in space. Impressed as it is by nature, the perceiving self identifies itself with the world that it recognizes and demands for itself such entity and being as it believes to perceive in nature. The recurrent attempts to describe self as an existing being patterned after the reality of objects ~~in perception~~ perceived is proof of this assertion. Thus perception and action each furnish valuable logical points of beginning for the exploration of both self and of world.

Perception mediates between the self and a reality apart from and outside of self. Consequently two elements in perception may be recognized, first, that which is determined by reality outside of the self, which we shall call the givenness of perception. The second is that element which is imposed upon perception by the limitations of self; this we shall call the concept or the form of perception. Perception and knowledge may be considered but as two aspects of a single process. Knowledge is the interpretation of perceptual phenomena from their conceptual aspect. We shall analyze knowledge in a subsequent chapter, and we shall say no more at this time about the formal quality of the cognitive process. A theory of perception, on the other hand, must interpret the cognitive process as the response of a sensitive consciousness to the givenness of objects. In actuality concept and datum cannot be divorced, only for the purposes of argument, and when our analysis appears on the verge of absurdity, remembrance of this fact may serve to rescue it.

Probably it is a result of the great importance of conceptual knowledge for us that the givenness of perception should be eclipsed ~~by it~~ and characteristically undervalued. Indeed, the primary task of an exposition of the perceptual process proves to be an explanation of its givenness. Before the analysis

of perception progresses very far there will be found elements that are explicable only in terms of themselves. It is these elements of which we say that they are given, and the characteristic of perception by virtue of which they are given we call its givenness. For example, we consider the quality of the color green as given; unless and until we perceive it, we have no intimation of what green might be. The man who is color-blind will profit little from a physical description of light or of color until he is able to correlate these with his own perceptual experiences. Likewise, no amount of acoustical analysis will explain to a man the sound of a flute or of a harpsichord unless and until he hears one. All descriptions, for example, of oil will remain superfluous until one has seen and felt such a liquid of high viscosity. These qualities, and innumerable others like them, we call given because they cannot be replaced by conceptual rationalizations of any sort. At the same time, the notion of givenness in perception introduces a number of serious problems. Upon first thought we might consider it possible to isolate a set of primary qualities existing independent of conceptualization. By compounding such primary qualities reason might be expected to reproduce a synthetic image of the entire world. Such an assumption however proves untenable, because if as in our example the color green required to be immediately given and

was incapable of being explained by conceptual substitution, likewise this green tree must be primarily apprehended perceptually; no definitions or rationalizations will substitute for that apperception. In other words, the quality of givenness accompanies all our perceptions. In everything that we hear and particularly in everything that we see there is an element of uniqueness which is not reduceable to conceptual rationalizations no matter how useful or effective they might prove to be.

The givenness of perception, however, invariably coincides with its conceptual formulation, and it is in the complementary and antagonistic interplay of perception and concept that the apprehension of nature consists. As we shall subsequently show, perception itself issues immediately into the formation of concepts. No sooner are we confronted with the givenness of something distinct from us than we seek to define it as an entity, and such an entity, as we shall show, is already a conceptual product. We recognize then that although the givenness of perception is irrevocably a part of all intellectual experience, yet it is characteristic of our minds that we are unable to sustain perception without conceptualizing it. And this is the circumstance that has made the analysis of perception so difficult, namely that all our perceptual activity

is directed and determined if not indeed overshadowed by the conceptual scheme into which it becomes integrated and which it appears to serve.

The difficulties of a theory of perception are magnified by the circumstance that perception is susceptible to such radical instrumental modification. The instruments that alter perception include not only optical systems such as those of the microscope and the telescope but the processes of photography and the electronic transmission of sound and image. Thus are made accessible to our sight not only a new set of perceptual experiences, but the regularity, order, and consistency which such images exhibit make available to our minds a new range of judgment. In each case there has been opened up to us an entirely new discipline of science, astronomy for example, pathology, or microbiology.

We may distinguish instruments which magnify or extend our perceptual powers, where processes of vision or of hearing are made possible over long distances or improved in acuity but are not qualitatively altered, from those other instrumental elaborations of our perceptual activity by which entirely new phenomena of nature are brought to our attention. Our eyes appear to be sensitive to a certain frequency of electromagnetic

radiation; we are capable of perceiving physical objects of a certain size, comparable to the dimension of the eye itself. All instrumentation which radically alters the realm of objects perceived will appear to be of paramount theoretical importance. The perceptual transformation seems to prove the primacy of the logical system by which the transformation was accomplished. The alteration brought about in the perceptual processes then seems to compare in importance with the primary processes themselves and one is led to the conclusion, albeit erroneous, that the processes of perception are explicable by arguments analogous to ~~that~~ those, used in the construction of instruments.

We must recognize that in all expansions of our perceptual sensitivity the final common pathway of perception remains unaltered. The view of ion tracks in a cloud chamber or the fluorescence produced by a cathode ray are images qualitatively identical with all the other perceptions in which my waking life consists. The difference between such perceptions lies in the complexity of the explanatory rationalizations which make each image meaningful in its own way. Such conceptual inferences, important though they may be, must be kept distinct from the simpler process of perception. The perceptions themselves are all homologous, and the conceptual constructions upon them are the result of entirely different functions of

mind that must be investigated in a different context. We need anticipate no limit to the intricacy and effectiveness of our conceptual rationalizations. At the same time we will never obtain a more intimate relationship to reality on account of them than can be established through the simple and naive process of perception.

It is usually thought that in the study of perception modern scientific methods might be most profitably applied to ancient philosophical problems. It is reasoned that the sensory organs are of all parts of the mind most accessible to scientific investigation. The propagation of light and sound, for example are proper problems for physics. It would seem both possible and desirable that the vexing questions of perception should be settled once and for all by an extension of physical methods. Consciousness would then be equated with some function of the brain. World would be understood as the totality of objects existing outside the body. Perception would be construed as the imaginative and logical apprehension of the natural world by the organism. Such acquisition of knowledge of the physical world is usually considered a mere information gathering process of the nervous receptors and pathways of the human body. Light waves from various physical objects are thought to penetrate the cornea

and the chambers of the eye, then to impinge upon the retina, where they are transformed into electrical impulses. These, like telegraphic messages are transmitted by the optic nerve and the optic radiation to various parts of the brain. There they are analyzed, interpreted, and correlated. Moreover it is generally agreed that further anatomic and micro-anatomic study of the brain itself should yield answers and provide explanations for the qualities of perception that are as yet incomprehensible.

Characteristic of this theory and of others like it is the belief that perception as an experience might be translated into physical and physiological events, that a study of light, optics, and neuro-physiology would give an ultimate explanation to the process of perception. The application of these disciplines to the study of perception is indeed of value, insofar as such constructions have materially increased our technical facility in controlling the conditions of the perceptual process. The more technically complex such correlations become, the more useful they will be in practice, but they remain theoretically unrewarding. The notion that geometrical, physical, or mathematical analysis should be able to provide a primary resolution to the problems of perception is based upon the belief that geometry, mathematics, or physics should in some way be prior

to the perceptual experience, and that understanding of perception should become possible only as it is analyzed into mathematical or physical facts. The theoretical justification of such an attitude is open to debate, and in the absence of convincing proof it is a matter of discretion whether or not we accept the primacy of mathematical or physical analysis. The inducement to accepting a mathematical basis is heuristic. From a pragmatic viewpoint the assumption that our knowledge of the physical world should have a mathematical basis has proved quite sound. (~~The explanation for the effectiveness of the mathematical treatment of nature is complex and will be considered elsewhere.~~) On the other hand, intuitively pure mathematical analyses remain remote from the fullness of experience. The physical analogies and models of experience that avail themselves of mathematical methods are frequently unconvincing. In scientific analyses of perception the phenomenon itself is usually displaced by a multitude of technical considerations, and the intellectual application required to understand the techniques spares little interest and no energy for the original problem.

The attempt to correlate the content of perception with the structure of the sense organs is likewise useful, but its validity also is limited. One can find anatomic and physiological parallels between perception and its pathways. It is

readily demonstrated how anatomical and physiological defects limit perception. It is impressive to be shown how images are formed on the retina, how the rods and cones transmit impulses through the optic nerve to the visual cortex. In such descriptions, the organs of sense perception themselves come to assume the properties of objects; they are themselves perceived like the other physical objects among which they take their place. The intrinsic quality of sensation remains unexplained. This quality is projected to the so-called higher centers of the brain, and it is predicted that new refinements of physiological technique might there designate as ~~an effective~~ a specific process the qualities of perception that previous physiological analyses were unable to explain. There is, however, no convincing reason to assume that new physiological investigations will be any more successful than old ones in explaining this phenomenon.

When, on the contrary, we free ourselves of logical and conceptual prejudices, we find no reason to distinguish between the activity of the sense organ and the activity of mind itself. We recognize then no essential qualitative difference between vision and thought or between hearing and thought. We have no cause to assume that there should be a separate faculty such as reason sitting judgment over sensory perception. Vision and hearing themselves are functions of mind as fundamental and as authentic as those of reason. Memory, imagination, and judgment enter into sensation no less strongly and no less definitively

than they enter into the functioning of reason. It is an arbitrary geometrical interpretation of the perceptual process that leads us to believe that our perception should be of points, lines, and surfaces, merely because we assume that these should be the primary physical characteristics of objects. Both the premise and the conclusion of this argument are in error. Points and lines and surfaces are not elements of the object, and when we see the object, we see it as a whole, not as a composition of lines and points. When we analyze those images that we possess of objects, we then discover lines and points, but this discovery is subsequent to the perceptual process itself, and will not serve to explain it. Our sensation is of the shapes of the objects themselves and our apprehension is of their appearance, not of geometrical abstractions that we may subsequently make.

Our perceptions are brief. We remain in the same place to view an unchanging object for any length of time only under unusual circumstances. As a rule the world that we perceive is changing, and we who perceive it are in motion. There is a constant evolution of perceptual images in our minds. It is a striking and effective function of mind to reconcile these changing images one with another and to preserve throughout all the change the awareness both of an object of perception that

remains constant and of a percipient who remains identical with himself. This transformation of a changing, moving image into a static view is the remarkable achievement of the perceptual process. It is a direct consequence of this synthetic activity that the perceptual process should be on the one hand as influential in determining our view of world as it is, and on the other hand that ~~the perceptive~~ this process should be shrouded in such ambiguity, uncertainty, and deception. Although the perceptual images are constantly changing, we assume the object responsible for those images to be constant. We also hypothesize the constancy of the perceiving self. Then, relying solely upon this fleeting perception, we presume to construct both a self and a world that are integral and independent. Whether or not such a construction should be justified on a different basis need not concern us here: we know however that it greatly exceeds any assurances that may properly be derived from the perceptual process itself.

If on the other hand we limit our consideration to the perception itself at the moment in which it occupies consciousness, we recognize that apart from the perceptual image we have no evidence of self whatsoever. If, as we may choose to interpret it, there should be at the moment of perception an identification between self and the object that it perceives, then self is

completely absorbed in that identification, and furthermore, self would appear to have no other realization of that moment except the perception of which it is conscious. Consequently, if we reflect that our days, our years, indeed our whole lives consist of nothing other than a series of such perceptions, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the 'world' which is perceived by the self must be understood as one of its most vital manifestations and expressions. To understand perception in this way is to recognize how indispensable this function is to the integrity of self. The self which we know is wholly dependent upon perception, and deprived of perception, that self would vanish. This recognition is in dramatic contrast to the usual hypotheses of self which assume it to be an entity independent of all its relationships in the world. Our interpretation of perception suggests to how great an extent the self is entwined with world, and from this recognition of perception for what it is, there must arise a new concern about the integrity of self. If self were indeed so dependent upon this perceptual relationship, should its existence not be considered a mere illusion? The answer to this question is quite beyond the scope of our present investigation. Suffice it to be said here that the recognition of the true quality of perception opens an entirely new function for esthetic valuation. For,

as we shall show, esthetic valuation is the projection into nature and the recognition in nature of certain of the structures and qualities peculiar to self. It is the esthetic valuation of these qualities that provides self with the occasion for asserting its integrity.

* * * * *