

University of London.

Number 113.

M.A. Examination.

Internal M.A. Philosophy.

1911.

Suggestion in relation to the Moral Value of Ideas.

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CHAPTER I.

Sentiments in relation to moral judgment.

- Sect. 1. Westermarck's view of the emotional basis of moral judgment.
- .. 2. Truth and moral judgment.
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  - .. 4. Mr. Shand's definitions of sentiments.
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1. The place and importance of emotion in the moral life are becoming increasingly recognised and considered in the discussions on ethical questions by modern writers on these subjects.

The views of one writer, Westermarck, are of particular interest, because he states them so uncompromisingly and clearly.

In discussing the question of the primacy of reason or feeling in the origin of moral concepts Westermarck states that "Moral concepts are ultimately based on emotions either of approval or indignation." (The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas, vol. I., p. 4.)

He realises the fact that moral judgments may be applications of some accepted rule, and that conformity to the rule determines the judgment, but even in this case the moral consciousness recognises the rule as valid because it has an emotional sanction. On the whole Westermarck confines himself to refuting the intellectualist view and gives little positive account of his reasons for giving morality an emotional basis, perhaps because it is, as he says, self-evident.

When we consider the rise of moral judgment among primitive moral agents it would seem obvious that certain acts would arouse emotions of approval or disapproval, and that in consequence of such emotions the acts in question would tend to be ~~apprehended~~<sup>applauded</sup> and forbidden, that is to say, in consequence of the emotion aroused by a particular mode of conduct, such a mode of conduct would be enforced ~~and~~<sup>or</sup> forbidden and so become customary among

the members of the tribe. Of the origins of and reasons for such customs the individuals conforming to them could certainly give no rational account. This appears to be Westermarck's view.

2. But he proceeds to draw from it extreme and disturbing conclusions. He says. "There can be no moral truth. . . . The ultimate reason for this is, that the moral concepts are based upon moral emotions, and the contents of an emotion fall entirely outside the category of truth." (Ibid. p. 17.)

If this were so we should have to regard the emotional origin of morality as something quite inexplicable, implying in the constitution of man a kind of natural moral ~~sense~~<sup>sense</sup>. In discussing the question of ethical subjectivism Westermarck does seem to approach this view, but it appears to be merely a matter of expression.

There are, according to him, certain attributes which distinguish moral resentment and moral approval from non-moral emotions. Emotions of approval and resentment are only moral if they possess disinterestedness, impartiality and generality.

Westermarck gives a very clear and interesting account of the way in which these moral attributes arise in connection with emotions, and appears to show at the same time how general moral truths are possible. To some extent these general and impersonal qualities come to be attached to emotions of resentment and approval through sympathy. Sympathy by association and active sympathy which springs from natural affection exist and

develop because the individual is a social being. Even more important for the development of morality is the fact that custom itself possesses these general attributes and moral judgments develop in and through custom, of which indeed they are the offspring.

The customs and morality of primitive man are not distinguishable, custom is the condition of moral stability and progress. And it would seem that the moral predicate acquired through emotion would be true in relation to social ends.

The acts that aroused an immediate emotion on the part of the tribe did so, no doubt, because they tended to further or inhibit some instinctive tendency. The judgment dependent on such emotion would itself be almost instinctive. But every tendency has an end, and analysis might show a constant relation between moral predicates and the social and individual ends of man. Such analysis would demand a considerable degree of culture. But at the stage now reached we do actually discover a connection between moral judgments and various ends which appear good to man. In relation, then, to individual and social ends we do find general moral truths.

It is not, of course, denied that many of the customs of savage races appear to be irrelevant to any possible human end. For many of them would arise through association of the most irrational kind, one custom might in this way suggest others, and their inspiration would depend also to some extent on individual eccentricity, so that quite unnecessary and even

injurious customs might arise, (though the latter could hardly become permanent). Yet the fostering of social qualities and the self-control necessitated by custom still make for social progress.

Carveth Read in criticising Westermarck writes, "A man of refined emotions may have a strong instinctive approval of duelling (say) in some cases of family honour, and yet may bring himself to disapprove of it, if reflection convinces him that it is not the best way of securing the ends of social life."  
(Natural and Social Morals, p. 130.)

The use of the term "disapprove" here seems to justify Westermarck's view of the necessity of an emotional sanction for a moral judgment in that he admits that, "All higher emotions are determined by cognitions, . . . and moral enlightenment implies a true and comprehensive presentation of those objective conditions by which the moral emotions, according to their very nature, are determined." (Westermarck, op. cit. vol. I., p. 10.)

But also Professor Read's example shows that a moral judgment may be true or false. In the case cited the first judgment that duelling, in certain cases, is right would be false, and the reflective judgment forbidding duelling would be true.

Since all self-conscious beings work for more or less remote ends which appear to them good and moral, and this implies a recognised system of ideal conduct, the moral judgments within the system possess truth, and since also such ends are always

in part social there are general moral truths.

3. Nevertheless no end could appear good unless it had an emotional sanction. It must have value for our emotional dispositions. No purely rational judgment could make us accept any action or ideal as good apart from its value for our affective life. This appears to be as self-evident as Westermarck pronounces it.

It is unquestionable that moral progress is only possible through an increasingly clear understanding of the meaning of conduct and ideals, and so morality becomes rationalised and must continue to do so, but it is no less true that our affective dispositions become rationalised and organised, and that while they retain their affective character, they thus enter into new fields and follow new directions.

Our emotions are not arbitrary nor disconnected with the rest of our mental life. "The core of every emotion is an impulse or active tendency." (Carveth Read, op. cit. p. 73.)

It is reason that grasps the outcome of such tendencies, and brings them to a successful issue or inhibits them, for through understanding the results of an emotional impulse, new emotional dispositions whose tendency leads in another direction may be awakened. It is clear that our affective life must be organised for the requirements of moral progress. We cannot trust ourselves to the impulse of the moment, our impulses are too numerous and may be contradictory. Our emotions, being intense and active, would destroy the continuity and unity of mental life if left unsystematised.

As our purposes are many and some of greater permanence and wider scope than others our emotions become organised in connection with these. They come to further not our momentary impulses, but our more remote and constant purposes, and finally our ideals of life. That is, our emotions become rationalised, they change their character to some extent and become sentiments.

4. The following account given by Mr. Shand makes the nature of these clear.

"The fundamental distinction between emotion on the one hand and sentiments on the other, and the principle on which their organisation rests, is that the one are merely adjectival and attach themselves, or more correctly blend, as temporary qualifications in those more complex and persistent feelings which they both serve to develop and into which they are absorbed; while the others are the substantival and persistent sentiments which include them, and which in each particular case suffuse them with something of their own flavour the emotion which happens to be excited in them." And further, "The sentiment, as interpreted from outside, is the thought of an object as a permanent thing or quality. And this identity of thought which refers to the same object with its feeling tone and conative tendency, which persists through the emotional phases excited in it, is the sentiment." (Mind.N.S. vol V. Character and the Emotions.)

5. A sentiment thus always centres about an idea or group of ideas, and is relatively permanent. The emotions which the sentiment includes vary in intensity and in kind. It depends, for instance, on the circumstances of the central object whether anger, sorrow, or joy is awakened within such a sentiment as love.

Most individuals possess several sentiments, for they tend to grow up about all our interests if we have any opportunity for cultivating such interests.

The several sentiments may be fairly equal in strength, but as a rule one is more important than the rest, and these are subordinate sentiments. In some cases one sentiment may absorb practically the whole personality, and everything gives way to it. Napoleon's ruling sentiment was presumably ambition, and no other consideration could weigh against it.

Obviously sentiments are of first importance for conduct. They serve as a continual source of activity and judgment, if they are strong and permanent in an individual he tends to further the ideas which are their centre in every possible way, and these ideas determine his judgments of value. The individual whose sentiments are weak and relatively brief appears unstable in action, he can hardly be self-reliant or possess much initiative, he tends to be guided by those whose sentiments are strong, for he has little within him to oppose them.

An individual's different sentiments may or may not be

consistently organised with relation to each other. A man may exalt liberty and yet act tyrannically, or love humanity but dislike his fellow countrymen.

Again sentiments may be narrow or far-reaching. On this depends our judgment of a man's character. The good man must be capable of family affection, and perform family duties, be a good citizen, love his country and not be indifferent to the claims of the foreigner.

An individual's character is to a great extent his sentiments. It is true, as Mr. McDougall says, that a man may have a strong sentiment without having a strong character, since he may be strong only in a given direction. Character is, in fact, wider than any sentiment or group of sentiments. It is in part innate, since it may be inherited; this does not distinguish character from sentiments, for, though the latter are acquired, character includes them, and sentiments are probably based on innate dispositions. Tradition and education affect character in that they determine to a great extent what disposition shall develop, and prevent the development of many natural tendencies by denying them opportunity for expression. These undeveloped dispositions, however, are elements of character, they are probably always more than mere potentialities, they tend to become active, and in any case do so indirectly by affecting the more fully developed contents of character.

"The character of a man is that which characterises him, that which makes him what he is, not another." (Fr. Paulhan,

Les caractères, p.1.) And this depends not only on native capacity and experience on which that capacity works, but on the organisation of the mental contents in relation to experience and each other. The tendencies, feelings, and thoughts which form the contents of character can only organise about the objects of experience and in relation to each other as sentiments, by the development of these within it character attains stability and unity.

This organisation is never complete, the sentiments do not contain all the desires and tendencies of any given individual. So when our friends surprise us by acting, as we think, inconsistently, they may be expressing their characters as truly as when they fulfil our expectations. Further we find that we re-act to new occasions immediately and appropriately, though the mental attitude implied in such reaction lies outside our organised sentiments. In *Silas Marner* George Eliot tells the story of a miser who loses his hoard, and immediately after meets with a child, and the man whose ruling sentiment is avarice becomes the child's devoted guardian. This immediate response to the little one's presence implied actual qualities of character not contained in the dominant sentiment which in itself was opposed to such response, nor explicable through the loss of his wealth alone.

The elements of character are too numerous and complex for knowledge. We cannot therefore accurately define character in

terms of any system of its contents such as a sentiment.

Nevertheless, admitting the limitations of our knowledge, we do fairly judge a man's character by his habits of acting, feeling, and thinking, and these habits are sentiments. Character and sentiments dwindle and grow together. Narrow sentiments inevitably starve character, Ribot gives examples of curiously narrow sentiments in his "Essai sur les Passions". Curio hunting may absorb so much of a man's thought and energy, that he may be hardly capable of dealing with the more important claims of life. Well organised and permanent sentiments imply a well organised and permanent character.

Through experience and activity sentiments must inevitably develop and expand, and connect themselves with new experiences, and so take on new aspects. The better understanding of the central ideas, and their association with other ideas lead to growth and relative change. A complete change of sentiments is rare and overwhelming. They do change, but as a rule gradually, either in themselves, or in their relative prominence in an individual's consciousness, age and circumstances help to decide which sentiment shall be dominant.

When through loss or disillusionment the ideas with which our affective dispositions are organised cease to be, the loss appears to the individual, and in fact is, almost irreparable. For part of his very self has gone, not only the object of his thoughts, but the spring of his actions, part of his affective

life itself, he is in very truth less than he was. Nor can he find immediate consolation. Other ideas, no doubt, can and probably do take the place of the old ones, but there can be no mere substitution, the growth of sentiments is a slow process, and time and experience are necessary for the organisation of desires and emotions which is implied in the formation of a sentiment. It appears even from the few examples mentioned that almost any object of experience may serve as the dominant idea of a sentiment. Normally, however, the important interests of an individual's life, his work, his career, his family and social relationships, some ~~and~~ <sup>or</sup> all of ~~them~~ <sup>these</sup> are the centre of his sentiments.

It would seem also that sentiments, though invariably intellectualised, may be so in a varying degree, and that emotion may have little part to play in the development of some. A man may dwell in a state of calm satisfaction and yet possess strong sentiments, if his circumstances are happy he may hardly experience any strong emotion concerning the purposes of his life. And if this is so, are not the affective basis and content of such sentiments assumed? We may consider the attitude of Aristotle's philosopher towards the contemplative life in this connection. As Aristotle was himself a philosopher we have but to remember the impassioned language in which he exalts the philosophical life to realise that his sentiment for a life of pure reason was based on an affective disposition. And we may admit that sentiments, though they generally involve emotions, are not dependent on them. Our feelings may be satisfied through intense intellectual

activity, and reflection is always necessary for the systematisation of our feelings.

In the following extract Mr. Shand uses M. Ribot's word passion for sentiment which he himself prefers.

"Since ~~this~~<sup>then</sup> passion requires so much thought and reflection to organise its emotions and desires, and to accomplish and harmonise its ends, there will be recurrent phases of its history in which it is without emotion. But passionless as it then appears, it is still moved by one or other of its great controlling desires, it is still from beginning to end an organised succession of desires and emotions." (Mind. N. S. vol. 16, M. Ribot's Theory of the Passions.)

6. Sentiments are concrete, their centre is then actual individuals or objects; or abstract, when they are controlled by ideals of conduct, qualities and dispositions of character. This distinction has bearing in connection with moral sentiments..

All sentiments whose object has a social reference are moral, these sentiments are the sources of our judgments of value, and our judgments are moral in so far as they possess general validity with reference to action and disposition.

The concrete and abstract sentiments are closely connected, the former may suggest the latter. The judgments we pass on some individual may be the beginning of an abstract sentiment. Thus, the just behaviour of an admired character may teach us to love justice itself. The application of a sentiment is always concrete.

The universal quality necessary in moral judgment is more

essentially a feature of abstract sentiments. Devotion to an individual or a particular cause, though moral in itself, may render the pronouncement of judgments possessing universal validity difficult and even impossible, for we may wish to exclude the particular individual or cause.

We may, therefore, agree with Mr. McDougall that, "Sentiments for abstract objects, the various qualities of conduct and of character, are the specifically moral sentiments." (Social Psychology, p. 219.)

The moral value of a sentiment cannot depend on the nature of its object alone, the strength of the feelings towards the object are not less important than an enlightened understanding of the meaning of social life. Feeling within a sentiment must be real, continuous and intimately blended with the object and its implications. Otherwise a sentiment cannot be effective and consistent in conduct.

7. It has been shown that sentiments are constructions formed in the life history of an individual. We need not doubt that they are affected by inherited dispositions and temperament, still they are made to some extent by the individual himself, and that is why they seem so intimately his. Their construction, however, is still more dependent on the social tradition and environment into which the individual is born than upon his choice. We need not exaggerate these relatively external factors, custom tends to lose its power as social life grows more complex. So that in modern civilisation individuality as such has some

opportunity of development. The customs of primitive society are rigid and pervasive, there is little occasion for <sup>or</sup> a purpose in reflection and choice. Reflection and choice are, therefore, not exercised. In civilised societies codes of behaviour are not fixed, in the experience of individuals fashions spring up and die away, and concerning important modes of conduct the ideas not only of class and profession differ in some degree, but the views of individuals themselves vary, home, school and friends thus give a child several standards. There is, of course, sufficient unanimity to support legal justice, and even to improve it, and differences of opinion are rarely so extreme and real as to interfere with ~~social~~ <sup>social</sup> intercourse. Yet there is enough contrast and variety to awaken reflection among those capable of it. And just because an individual is a thinking, feeling being he comes to value certain modes of behaviour rather than others, just as he values some individuals and objects more than others. He thus judges, and abstracts qualities and dispositions from the individuals who possess them, in connection with such qualities the already active emotional tendencies develop and a sentiment begins to be formed. Custom and tradition weaken not only through the increasing complexity of life, but they yield to the influence of exceptional individuals. Society owes much to its great personalities. These are innovators, they make opportunity and mould circumstance. They are, however, the children of their age, for moral tradition speaks effectively enough in them, even if negatively. Their capacity and originality

exist not only in their ideas, though these are above the common level, they can defy custom, and break habits, they will not imitate, but act with the independence and indifference of leaders long before they have gained a hearing and support. It is these qualities that make them so formidable to the uninitiated whose convictions are strong but narrow. The unconscious isolation of the elect rouses resentment, their certainty and constancy of purpose may appear as alarming as the action of some impersonal, natural force. The majority of individuals, however, do not possess a compelling, inner strength which can offer resistance to the influence of the external world. They are moulded by tradition, environment and education through their imitativeness and suggestibility.

As social beings we tend to live in a crowd, and to acquire the qualities of the crowd so well described by Le Bon, irrationality, emotional excitability and suggestibility. At school his schoolfellows may influence a child in these directions which are strengthened by the imitativeness natural to normal individuals.

Principles of conduct may, therefore, be accepted for reasons other than their intrinsic value to the individual. Irrational associations are easily formed under the influences indicated above, minor principles deduced from wider ones with which they are not connected.

For instance, though Socialism has its own dangers, it is often criticised for features not peculiar to it, nor even

necessarily involved in it, sometimes it is even blamed for the weaknesses of human nature itself, though these must be present in every form of government.

We may form imitative judgments through ignorance, lack of critical power, through admiration for some individual who may have prestige due to his position, or because we admire him for certain qualities we may accept his ruling in all departments of life.

We are apt also to fall into the emotional attitude of those about us through mere contagion, we imitate their movements and expressions unconsciously, their mood thus becomes ours and we utter similar judgments.

If such influences are continuous, habitual dispositions are formed, the imitative judgments become our own and may operate as opposing forces to new ideas. It is clear that all this may work for good and ill.

Further many of our judgments are subconscious, we judge too constantly and rapidly for clear realisation of either our judgments or their motives.

And this is well, since reflection concerning every act of ourselves or others would render activity impossible. Le Bon maintains throughout his "Psychologie de l'education" that our motives and judgments must be subconscious for good moral character. However true this may be, there is a danger that dispositions that are not moral in their tendencies may grow up and attain strength in the absence of rational guidance.

A disintegration of consciousness may result with most undesirable effects on character, and render us incapable of judging ourselves. How complete the difference between what we are and what we are conscious of being is shown very clearly in Meredith's "Egoist". And even if the difference is brought home, the effect is as likely to arouse bitterness as to bring regeneration, for his subconscious sentiments may be too strong to allow an individual to forsake them.

We will discuss later the experience of conversion and that of the mystics, experiences which tend to bring about unity of desires and dispositions. But as reference has been made already to suggestion and subconsciousness, and these are important in connection with the experiences mentioned, it is well at this point to enquire more fully into their nature.

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CHAPTER II.

Suggestion and Subconsciousness.

- Sect. 1. The meaning of suggestion.
- .. 2. Characteristics of hypnosis.
  - .. 3. Hypnosis and other mental states.
  - .. 4. Dissociation of consciousness.
  - .. 5. The meaning of subconsciousness.
  - .. 6. Subconscious influences in intellectual life.
  - .. 7. Subconscious influences in feeling.
  - .. 8. Dissociation of sentiments.
  - .. 9. Suggestion and the growth of sentiments.
  - .. 10. Indirect suggestion and auto-suggestion.
  - .. 11. Ideals as affecting the development of sentiments.
-

1. Suggestion and hypnotism are terms which tend to be used in very close connection, and though suggestibility is a constant feature of consciousness its power in the state of hypnosis is more evident and less questionable than in a completely normal state. Less questionable because the conditions are simpler and on the whole better known, or at least may be more easily investigated than those present in the complex flow of ordinary consciousness.

"Suggestion is the narrowing of the association-activity to definite contents of consciousness, solely through the employment of memory and imagination in such a way that the influence of combinations of contrariant ideas is weakened or removed, as a result of which the intensity of the suggested content of consciousness rises above the normal." (Dr. von Schrenk-Notzing, quoted by M. W. Keatinge, Suggestion in Education, p. 11.)

"Susceptibility to suggestion is the chief phenomenon of hypnosis," according to Dr. Moll. (Hypnotism, p. 205.) When we consider his definition of hypnosis this susceptibility is to some extent explained.

"Every hypnosis is a state in which the normal course of ideas is inhibited. . . . In particular the subject is unable to control the external ideas or to put forward his own, the external dominate his consciousness." (Ibid. p. 258.)

The methods of inducing the state of hypnosis vary with the operator, what alone seems essential and common to all methods is the concentrating of the subject's attention on a single object.

"In general any method which fixes the attention to a single stimulus long enough is probably sufficient to produce hypnosis. . . . In view of this it is probable that any person in normal health can be hypnotised, provided he is not too sceptical of the operator's knowledge and powers."

(J.M. Baldwin, Mental Development, p. 153.)

2. The general facts concerning the hypnotic state are well known. The subject passes into a condition in which he is abnormally suggestible.

There is also a peculiar rapport between subject and operator. For instance, it may be possible for one particular individual alone to hypnotise a certain subject. In any case the subject is not amenable in the hypnotic state to all suggestions, but only to those of the operator. But the operator may by suggestion pass the rapport on to someone else, the subject then obeys the latter.

It is claimed that the mental faculties are exalted in the hypnotic state. (Osgood Mason, Hypnotism and Suggestion.)

This is disputed, but it would certainly appear that the subject is often extremely observant, gaining suggestions from mere movements and the unexpressed expectations of the operator. The former shows too distinct ability in acting out the suggestions

given, and his memory is generally unusually full and complete.

The effect of the hypnotic state on memory is deserving of notice. In lighter hypnosis the patient remembers afterwards what occurred during this state, as he might remember a dream on waking. In deeper hypnosis, and this is more frequently described, he remembers nothing of what has occurred afterwards, though he remembers all that happened when hypnotised again. So that there seems a complete break between hypnosis and the normal state. Further in hypnosis events and memories may be revived, which the individual in an ordinary condition has utterly forgotten, and cannot recognise even when described. Sometimes the hypnotised subject fills in details of which in the waking condition he is unconscious. As a rule the patient remembers his normal life, but will willingly play quite a different part at suggestion. A secondary personality is at times disclosed in the hypnotic state. The primary, that is the ordinary personality is completely unaware of the secondary. The secondary as a rule knows the primary, and remembers all it does and knows its thoughts, but refuses to be identified with the primary personality, and indeed shows different characteristics. Authentic cases of third and fourth personalities, all with individual claims and characteristics, are cited. (Morton Prince, *The Alteration of a Personality*; Alfred Binet, *The Alterations of Personality*.)

The suggestibility of the subject covers a wide range of facts. Within somewhat disputed limits the subject is completely

obedient to the operator. The former moves, speaks, and goes through a whole sequence of actions at the suggestion of the latter. For example, he will act the part of a real or imaginary person, and change from one character to another, visit distant countries and describe what he sees with a great deal of ability and some accuracy. The accuracy depends, naturally enough, on the general knowledge and memory of the subject. For instance, one subject acts the part of Frederic the Great, and is ignorant of railways, another acts the same part and travels readily in a train. Even more striking phenomena of suggestion are apparent in the positive and negative delusions of the senses that may be induced. The subject sees objects that are not present, and behaves in accordance with the delusions, e.g. he gets out of the way of an elephant. In negative delusions he fails to perceive objects that actually are present. If it is suggested to him that a certain person present has gone away no efforts on the part of that person to attract the attention of the subject are successful.

The subject when in the state of hypnosis is sometimes given suggestions to be carried out during his normal condition. And he frequently obeys such suggestions after some interval of time. It must be admitted that the majority of post-hypnotic suggestions are obeyed shortly after waking from the hypnotic state, though examples of intervals of days and even months occurring between the giving of the suggestion and its realisation are cited. But it is not always certain in such cases that the suggestion may

not be repeated in some way and revived in the circumstances of normal life.

Physiological suggestion is almost equally effective. The subject feels pain at suggestion. The operator may cause blisters, render the patient unable to move a limb and so on. On the other hand he may by suggestion restore power in certain cases of paralysis, and do away with various nervous disorders.

3. Dr. Moll, who regards the state of hypnosis not as pathological, but as a state analogous to other normal mental states, attempts to explain the facts of the hypnotic condition in accordance with two principles.

(a) "Men have a certain proneness to allow themselves to be influenced by others through their ideas, and in particular to believe much without making conscious logical deductions.

(b) A psychological and physiological effect tends to appear in a man if he is expecting it." (A. Moll, op. cit. p. 221.)

These principles are <sup>so</sup> obviously active in normal consciousness that we need not here dwell on them.

The general characteristics of the hypnotic state already described certainly are analogous to those of other states, and though such similarity does not explain these features of consciousness, it does at least relate them to ordinary experience.

The rapport between operator and patient is paralleled in waking life by what we describe as personal influence, the influence of a peculiarly intimate and powerful kind which a

which a given individual is able to exert over another or others, so that the individual possessing such influence is able to profoundly affect and in a measure direct the opinions and sentiments of others. In the state of hypnosis it is less inexplicable if one considers that in all probability the rapport is suggested at the very outset of the state, and that it would certainly appear from the conditions of hypnotic experiment that the suggestion of rapport is being given by the operator to the patient continuously.

The exaltation of the faculties of the hypnotic subject already mentioned may be due to the fact that he lacks spontaneity and yet his consciousness is active, so that there is greater opportunity for past memories to enter into focus, and for impressions however slight to gain attention. The skill he so frequently shows in acting suggested characters may be accounted for by the absence of self-consciousness, the subject is able to let himself go undisturbed by reflections concerning his own ability and the opinion of those around him. We will consider the question of the different sets of memories revealed in the hypnotic and waking state, and dissociation of personality later.

The suggestibility of the hypnotic patient and of the individual in a normal state seem to differ, however greatly, in degree rather than in kind.

In a normal conscious state we tend to believe what we are told, and to do what we are asked apart from antagonistic ideas.

If our senses or reflection contradict any statement it fails, of course, to gain acceptance. But in a slight degree we are the victims of hallucination, we may often see an object which is not present merely because we expect it.

Negative delusions are hardly to be paralleled in waking life. We have the beginning of a negative delusion when we fail to interpret sensations actually present. For instance, we turn back for the note book which is in our hands. Expectation affects our judgment here too, we fail to find an object though it is before our eyes if we are persuaded it is not there.

The dream consciousness and particularly somnambulism offer better analogies than waking consciousness. The somnambulist ignores whatever is not connected with his dream, and he carries out the ideas derived therefrom with the same apparent automatism as the hypnotised subject, making no response to suggestions that do not enter into his dream consciousness.

But it is more to the purpose to consider what view of the nature of consciousness will at least in part explain the phenomena of the hypnotic state.

The view that tends to regard hypnosis as unconscious, and to compare the process of breathing and the action of the heart to the phenomena of suggestion does not seem to account for the facts. (Ibid. p. 267.)

It will certainly not account for the alteration of personality in the hypnotic condition. It also separates the state of hypnosis from a normal state too sharply. A suggestive idea

is one that renders ineffective critical and resistant ideas. An idea acts suggestively in this sense in a normal as well as in a hypnotic condition. What is remarkable in the latter state is that almost any idea seems to be suggestive, whereas in a normal condition character and circumstances help to decide which ideas shall be suggestive.

Nor is the view that regards hypnosis as revealing a higher and separate form of consciousness, (Osgood Mason, Hypnotism and Suggestion) or a lower and brutal self (Boris Sidis, The Psychology of Suggestion) more satisfactory.

For the claim of an upper and subliminal self seems arbitrary and unnecessary and must also be extended to surprising dimensions on occasion, for more than one subliminal self may be disclosed in hypnotic experiment. And the facts that each brings forward to support the view that the subliminal self is higher or lower contradict each other. Yet there is ground for both sets of facts, and quite explicable ground if we regard hypnosis not as disclosing a separate and distinct self, but as a dissociation of consciousness.

4. Dissociation of a completer kind than is usual in normal life might explain the phenomena, in that case the multiplicity of normal consciousness must be admitted. Where we meet with double personality, of course, association has been at work with dissociation, sets of images, ideas and emotional tendencies have been integrated and formed into a consistent and coherent mass which, if dissociated from the rest of consciousness, may

form a new personality. Failure of memory, due to a shock or injury, might serve to set a portion of the conscious stream relatively free of the rest. That the secondary personality is only relatively free is shown by the fact that the distinct personalities of one consciousness may be sometimes united through suggestion given to the subject in hypnosis. When such suggestion is successful the memories of the different personalities flow together and become one, and the patient in his normal condition recognises them as his own.

When we consider the nature of normal consciousness we find that it too reveals different levels in its flow and the effects of dissociation.

"Multiple consciousness is not the exception but the law. For mind is a synthesis of many systems. . . . One great principle must be at the foundation of psychology, and that is the synthesis of multiple consciousness in normal, and its disintegration in abnormal mental life." (Multiple Personality, Boris Sidis and S. P. Goodheart, p. 364.)

If we regard consciousness as a stream, we must regard it as one in which there are innumerable eddies and currents, and one which widens and narrows continually.

Our purposes and our mental attitudes determine the stream of consciousness. Its contents differ according to the end in view and according to our mental condition, the latter is very different in work, play, reverie and sleep. The varying contents and the currents that contain them may be relatively dissociated

or intermingle closely. For dissociation is as much an active principle of mental life as association.

"Dissociation stands for divided mental alertness, a practical type of procedure combining activity in one realm with quiescence or disqualification of what in a normal attitude would be associatively active." (J. Jastrow, *The Subconscious.*, p. 522.)

In the present connection we might substitute the term "different" for "normal", for such practical dissociation is not other than normal.

Because of the relative dissociation brought about by the circumstances of an individual's experience and his different aims, we sometimes describe him as possessing more than one self. The self of working hours is not the same in his mental content and practical attitude as the self at leisure, or the self engaged in social duties. When one self is uppermost, the others tend to be more or less submerged, to fall into the subconscious flow of mental life. But given opportunity the selves become one. For instance the self of serious interests may or may not be active in social intercourse, in any case its presence affects such intercourse, by it, though it is submerged, we measure the mental capacity of the individuals with whom we come into contact.

Such dissociation as that indicated above is, of course, slight, the varying trends of consciousness connected with the normal interests of life are never far apart.

5. We have spoken of the "subconscious flow of mental life" and we know that outside the field of attention there is always present

a background of impressions which lie within the margin of attention. We become aware of the existence of such subconscious contents when these change or become intense and so come into focus.

Hypnotic experiment has extended our knowledge of the subconscious regions of the mind. Through such experiment we realise that there are submerged streams of consciousness containing memories of the individual's past and capable of intelligent activity. In hypnosis the submerged contents are dissociated from the subject's normal states. Normally, we need not doubt, they influence clear consciousness and come into focus when relevant. The hypnotised subject remembers his experience on waking if it is suggested that he should do so, or some associated object may revive all the events of the hypnotic state.

Subconsciousness is also the guardian and director of our habits. It takes over those reactions which exercise has rendered more or less perfect, and for which full consciousness is unnecessary, guiding and adapting these reactions for the most part without the intervention of conscious attention.

The limits of subconsciousness are not fixed. The conscious centre widens and narrows, and sometimes shifts altogether, so that what is subconscious at one time may be within the focus of consciousness at another.

In any case the submerged contents continuously feed and colour the conscious stream. From the outlying regions come

ideas which may enrich the central flow, or divert it from its course, numerous relevant and irrelevant fancies are constantly entering consciousness. Again consciousness ignores the impressions which subconsciousness accepts, and transmits when it can gain attention. For example, we hear the remark of another in moments of concentration some time after it is actually made, and an impulse whose meaning is not grasped sets us moving about some task which we discover we have in fact been asked to perform. We cease striving and the forgotten word rises spontaneously into consciousness. We find again and again that what is disregarded and forgotten is not lost.

But subconsciousness takes more complex tasks in hand than these.

6. Our intelligence and our knowledge are greater than can be realised in any temporary effort of concentration. In moments of strenuous work we reap the fruit of much subconscious elaboration. Much of our thought we receive, we may say, in a final stage, its actual working out having never reached full consciousness. We are aware of this subconscious capacity, no doubt, and that is why in getting up any information or working at some given problem we read as widely and deeply as we can. For the same reason we dislike to be hurried in any intellectual task, we need time for all kinds of elaboration, and we find in introspection that the time spent in active mental effort is not so great. In reading and discussion how little seems relevant to selective attention to the work in hand, how much more is

apparent in the accomplished task!

So we find enlightenment on unsolved problems and abandoned tasks after intervals of what was apparently mere revery <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ relaxation.

The inspirations of genius are examples, doubtless, of such subconscious working. According to the accounts of many creative artists their creations appear objectively before them, and they themselves are relatively passive. Thus, Dante's great poem is the narration of a vision. Mozart describes his musical creations as coming to him as a whole, which he hears altogether and has merely to write down. Georges Sand, Schiller and Dumas all watched and waited for the evolution of the characters they had created.

The purpose and value of mental concentration remain, however these may be assisted by subconsciousness. The conscious aim of mental endeavour guides and controls the processes concerned in it, without active consciousness the results of subconscious selection and association would be useless because unorganised. The contents of subconsciousness are valuable only in their relation to full consciousness. As so related subconsciousness makes for economy of mental activity. It supplies contents connected with the contents of upper consciousness, working out much of these in a less accessible region, it keeps us in touch during periods of concentrated thought with the external world, it serves as a continual storehouse of ideas, the foundations of our knowledge being thus invariably broader and deeper than its conscious products.

7. If subconsciousness plays an important part in intellectual life as we have maintained, its role in our affective life is even more far-reaching and fundamental.

We will not consider here the effect of the organic feelings, the general feeling tone derived from the bodily sensations, profound as it probably is in determining temperament, and therefore to a great extent our general outlook on life.

We will consider subconscious working in relation to the sentiments.

Our sentiments, as we have seen, are systems of feelings bound up with some controlling idea, they are essential elements of character and the origin of our judgments of worth.

The work of our sentiments is in a great measure subconscious, they pervade our habits, contain our motives and issue inevitably in conduct, but we obey them rather than analyse them. For they baffle analysis to a great extent because of their affective character. It is not implied by this statement that feelings are only subjective and cannot be an object of thought, as certain psychologists have maintained, but only that they are more obscure than other contents of consciousness. Nor is full consciousness necessary to their activity. For the most part we attempt no examination of our desires and motives, we can hardly doubt that we are guided and controlled by them. Their constant presence in consciousness would interfere with activity, and their affective elements tend to find an outlet in impulsive acts which, though satisfying for the moment, would have no bearing on consciousness

as a whole. Our sentiments cannot be grasped by any conscious act, for they are not static and their content is too full. Our motives and judgments of value which have their roots in our sentiments are also too numerous and continuous for conscious investigation. A series of impressions may call forth such subconscious judgments whose result is a conscious and fixed attitude towards some individual or question, the growth of which consciousness had never been the witness.

Our sentiments come into focus more prominently on occasions of some important decision, we may realise clearly then that our sympathies are too deeply involved in some given direction to make a suggested course possible to us.

For the most part they arise in consciousness in the shape of hopes, which are perhaps but complex desires, and ideals. How completely these are bound up with our deeper emotional life we may realise when we consider how vigorous they are in spite of the actual issue of events. Our hopes centre about every contemplated act and situation and, deferred and even shattered in the outcome, they arise with an irresistible want of logic and flourish anew. They cannot die, for they are the conscious demands of our very selves. Their final vindication depends on the strength and coherence of the sentiments of which they are the offspring. If these are sufficiently strong and well organised our hopes and ideals will in the end transform and find some satisfaction in actualities.

8. Because our sentiments are in part subconscious they are open to suggestions which the critical centre of consciousness if active would exclude. The danger is increased if the ideas which are the intellectual side of our sentiments are vaguely conceived. So pride may ape humility, and purely selfish considerations appear as altruistic motives.

The organisation of our sentiments with regard to each other is equally important for moral character. In hypnosis the dissociation of the consciousness of the subject makes him extremely suggestible. And if our sentiments are dissociated, one sentiment may accept suggestions which are opposed to a not less important side of character. The party politician under the influence of party interests may thus complacently and unconsciously part with his honour by betraying the confidence of the people he represents. The dissociation indicated explains many anomalies and inconsistencies of character, and no character is completely related and unified, but it may be so to a very great degree, and harmonious character and conduct are only possible where there is considerable unity.

The meaning of the dominant ideas of our sentiments, therefore, should be understood before they are accepted. And not only should the dominant ideas be the object of conscious selection, but they should be consciously associated with other mental contents. Through reflection feeling itself becomes enlightened, it follows the analysis of intelligence and

affective dispositions grow up not only in connection with the dominant idea itself, but with its associated ideas and tendencies and if such an association is rational the emotional dispositions and desires issue in consistent action, and so subconscious dispositions work in the direction indicated by consciousness.

9. The problem for education here is the less difficult in that the educator has opportunities not only for continually influencing the affective life of children, but because he may in a great measure actually form their sentiments.

For the child has had neither the time nor the capacity to acquire these stable forms of feelings and ideas that we have described as sentiments. We have seen that an idea is suggestive in so far as it inhibits contrariant ideas. The child has too few ideas and these are too fluid and illogical for them to offer resistance to new ones even if the former were antagonistic. Further he is through his imitativeness being continually brought into a passive, suggestible frame of mind. At school he imitates the movements and behaviour of the other children, and so is continually attending to the teacher and obeying his commands. Suggestions of many kinds are daily pouring in upon him, these accepted unconsciously for the most part become habits of thought and conduct, Thus the tone of the school becomes as natural to him as the air he breathes, the manners of the other scholars their attitude towards the teachers, each other and their neighbours, at first merely imitated, and hardly heeded, grow to be

part of his very being, and form the bases of the social habits of later life.

10. The older child is less suggestible, because he possesses numerous ideas, and his sentiments are in part organised. With him and with adults indirect suggestion is more effective. A suggestion is indirect when its purpose is not stated and not, therefore, consciously realised by the recipient of the suggestion. Direct suggestion is apt to appear obtrusive, it then rouses resentment, due perhaps to outraged dignity. In this case even if in accord with actual feelings it has little chance of reaching them and being incorporated with them.

An indirect suggestion if in sympathy with actual sentiments gains admittance within the mental contents that can be associated with it, and the indirect suggestion has generally more possibility of association than the direct and so can make a wider and stronger appeal.

The futility of drawing morals in instruction becomes apparent. Apart from personality and circumstances how barren is the noble deed, and what an alien countenance virtue wears bereft of fancy and the glow of life. The ideal presented, not as a banal platitude, but in a rich context, has many points of appeal, it gives not only ideas, but stirs imagination and feeling, and is therefore, almost bound to come into contact with our sentiments. This is, perhaps, why the poets are such suggestive moral teachers.

The claims upon our mental life from without are infinitely

various and unceasing, the bulk of impressions, fortunately for our mental capacity and endurance are ignored or forgotten. Only suggestions which succeed in flowing with the current of our organised affective life gain sufficient support and permanence within consciousness to influence character. That is to say, only suggestions which become auto-suggestions are morally valuable.

11. There are, however, ideas which may dominate the whole personality by awakening strong sentiments. If these ideas cover a sufficiently wide field of possible endeavour they make for harmony and consistency of character.

An aesthetic ideal combined with capacity to express it satisfies the conditions.

Schumann says, "I feel myself affected by all that goes on in the world . . . men, politics, literature; I reflect on all that in my own way and it issues outwards in the form of music." (Ribot, *The Creative Imagination*, p.215.)

Similarly a moral or religious ideal may gather about it unified and permanent sentiments, for these ideals can enter into almost every aspect of life and attitude of consciousness. And though naturally any development or change in our deeper interests is apt to be a slow process, under the influence of moral and religious ideals apparently abrupt and complete changes of character do occur. In such cases the individual responds to the ideal with all the forces within him, these subconscious elements so emotionlly tinged rise up and claim the individual as their own. Such a change makes for unity of sentiments and

purposes, and when the centralising idea is a religious one we call it conversion.

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CHAPTER III.The Influence of Suggestion in Conversion.

- Sect. 1. The nature of conversion.
- .. 2. Conversion and adolescence.
- .. 3. Internal motives for the change.
- .. 4. External motives.
- .. 5. Examples of conversion. References to  
subconscious working.
-

1. When we try to consider in what after all the change implied in conversion consists, it would seem that we may answer in the words of Ribot, "On peut en conclure que toute conversion est une alteration partielle de la personnalité dans ses éléments affectifs." (La Logique des Sentiments, p. 85.) For the intellectual equipment of the converted individual is very much what it was before the beginning of the new life, he remembers his past, he uses the old knowledge and ideas, the change is in the connection and direction of certain of his ideas, they have now a different emotional setting, and therefore carry him to new purposes. The change goes deeper than the intellect, it is a change in character. Many of the old ideas are, therefore, repudiated; the difference lies not in them as ideas, but in the individual's attitude towards them, what was attractive now repels, what was indifferent is now delightful.

"To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold on religious realities." (W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 189.)

The interest of this definition lies in the fact that it emphasises not merely the change brought about by conversion,

but the unity of the self which is the result of the change.

2. Dr. Stanley Hall and Dr. Starbuck in their treatment of conversion show that it is a phenomenon of adolescence. If we consider the meaning of this experience it becomes clear that young children lack the constancy of purpose and mental capacity necessary for a new and thorough-going outlook on life. Nor has conversion anything to do for them. Change is itself a too constant and valuable feature of their lives for it to set in one direction and allow them to close accounts with any one aspect of life.

On the other hand conversion is less an experience of individuals of maturer years than of adolescents because the latter are more unstable, impressionable and enthusiastic than their elders. The convictions of adults are apt to be too settled and rigid to suffer change. The experience of conversion is, however, not confined to adolescents, and seems to have occurred in the case of famous converts when they were very near maturity.

3. Adolescence is naturally enough a period for the awakening of new interests. These may be intellectual, artistic, practical and social. Such interests are not necessarily permanent, unless the child has some real capacity in a given direction, they are probably not. The child rather takes them up, and throws himself into one or more of them for a time, and then drops it for others. Such lines of development are frequently not important in themselves, but make clear the fact that the boy or girl is seeking

some activity that will absorb his energies and give satisfaction to the new sense of his own individuality. It is quite possible, then, that for the first time a religious ideal may fascinate and excite his imagination, and thereafter exert a permanent influence. Or he may turn to religion for comfort. The adolescent, in endeavouring to bring into relation with actualities his dreams and untried ideals, inevitably suffers disappointment with himself and his world, and religion not only probably gives opportunity to play an active and interesting part in life, but promises a lasting consolation for his real and imagined troubles.

Religion offers a centre from which he can survey himself and the universe with composure and good faith, for it is concerned with the Eternal Reality which contains the individual and the universe. If the religious ideal can be accepted it ~~seems~~<sup>serves</sup> to steady and utilise the new emotional and intellectual capacity of the adolescent, hastening the maturing of character that years must in any case bring. It has, therefore, an economical value apart from its further results.

"There are forces in human life and its surroundings," writes Starbuck, "which tend to break the unity and harmony of consciousness; and its unity once destroyed, the contrast between what is, and what might be, gives birth to ideals and sets two selves in sharp opposition to each other." (The Psychology of Religion, p. 155.)

The sharp opposition we may regard as the immediate cause of conversion, and some of the forces leading up to it have

already been indicated.

It would appear perhaps surprising, that since such forces must be present in almost every life, conversion is not a more common experience. But though the majority of individuals are aware of two selves, a real and an ideal, the opposition between them is not sharp but faint, the ideal self is too pale a shadow in comparison with the real to be an effective stimulus to change, and the real self is too full and satisfying a personality to be given up.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that "conversion is a process of struggling away from sin, rather than of striving towards righteousness." (Ibid., p. 64.)

The sense of sin is the driving force that makes the individual heal the division between the two selves, for its pressure on consciousness is too great, its presence too continuous for any possible satisfaction with the real self.

The sense of sin had no necessary connection with definite wrong-doing, the causes are to a great extent subconscious. The loss of illusions and an accumulation of disappointments may be very gradual and not consciously realised. Their effects, however, are real, and leave their mark on consciousness, in the shape perhaps of a general depression and loss of a hopeful attitude of mind. In time the individual is bound to become aware of his own discouraged outlook, but he is not able to trace its growth and causes, and cannot refer these to their real source, for he has never been fully conscious of them.

He may refer his unhappiness entirely to inner sources, if he uses theological terms he probably describes it as a sense of sin. It is inevitable that the ideal of a happier, more satisfactory self must arise, and that all suggestions connected with such a self will gain acceptance.

The form which that self will take is decided by his training and surroundings. If these are religious, or if religious influences reach him in any way now a religious self becomes the ideal self.

4. Indeed the force of an exemplary religious life may initiate the whole experience. The contrast between one individual and another may serve as the spring of an ideal self. In this case, too, the ideal is the result of many subconscious judgments which emerge suddenly and clearly in consciousness. Thus the process of conversion is probably much less abrupt than it appears, and when the change is real and permanent we can hardly doubt that it is largely the gradual work of subconscious influences.

Emotional disturbance of a striking kind may be the exciting cause of a conversion it is true. And it is not necessarily less real for that, since the process once started may work itself out in regeneration. But as a rule strong emotional excitement is not an affective stimulus. For it cannot last, and if its object has no attraction for the individual in his normal condition, it fades with the emotion. Thus revival meetings may reduce a congregation to what is practically a state of hypnosis. They

are, then, of course, in a state of extreme suggestibility, and may be completely swayed by the preacher. A strong appeal is made to the emotions which when excited inhibit intellectual activity, at the same time the attention of the congregation is turned expectantly upon the preacher who may thus give any suggestions in line with the emotions aroused. The effect is greatly increased by the behaviour of the crowd, the individuals who compose it imitate each other, their emotions are thus heightened, if one individual makes a confession of faith, the most suggestible tend to follow his example. The rhythm of music may add a further hypnotic influence by lulling the congregation into acquiescence. If conversion, due to the work of imitation, suggestion and emotional excitement, follows, it can hardly have much bearing on the inner needs of an individual, and is very likely not permanent in its results. For the value attached to a religious life under such influences is lacking when viewed in a calmer mood, since it has no real connection with his ordinary consciousness.

Yet, as many people have little critical power, they may continue to attach profound importance to the emotional stir of a revival meeting, and maintain what is apparently a sincere interest in religion in the hope of reviving the exciting experience until habit has made religion a necessary part of their lives. It is interesting to consider such well known examples of conversion as those of Bunyan, Fox and Wesley.

5. Bunyan and Fox show us ideas arising in subconsciousness and issuing in auto-suggestion.

Bunyan had apparently always an exaggerated view of his own shortcomings, even in childhood. He was given up to folly, lying and blasphemy according to his own account, and was aware of his iniquity. He is very early, then, a divided self. How strongly the ideal self was working in subconsciousness we may see in the incidents he relates. For instance he is struck to the heart by some remarks made by an old woman of his acquaintance on his habit of swearing, though he has little respect for the character of his critic. Then he hears by chance some religious women talking together, and comes into contact with a godly man. He is profoundly interested and instructed by their conversation, and begins to study the Bible and attend Church, not having yet grasped the weaknesses of the Church, nor as he tells us, changed in heart. The change of heart is a long and painful process. When the ideal self gains the field, Bunyan is tormented by suggestions from the old self. Thus a suggestion that he is not saved may suddenly occur. The method of attack and defence is curious. Evil suggestions sometimes arise as and are generally refuted by spontaneous utterances from the Scriptures. Bunyan made a very thorough study of the Bible, so this is explicable. Having passed through a stage of Believing that he has committed the unpardonable sin he finds extraordinary comfort in the words, "Thy righteousness is in heaven" (I Cor., 1., 30.)

"Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed," he writes, "I

was loosed from affliction and irons; my temptations also fled away; so from that time, those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me, now went I home rejoicing for the Grace and love of God." (Grace Abounding.)

But in spite of this triumph Bunyan never attains complete unity, from subconscious regions whisperings arise suggesting temptations and doubts, and he closes his confession on a gloomy note with the words. "I find to this day seven abominations in my heart."

George Fox's experience has a happier tone. He was of a serious turn of mind from a child. In early manhood he became dissatisfied with the religious teaching of his time. He visited clergymen in order to discuss religious matters and learn from them. The result was quite barren for himself. Indeed he assisted one priest who preached on Sunday what Fox had said to him on a weekday. "For this," says Fox with some simplicity, "I did not like him." As those to whom he appealed completely failed him, Fox was thrown back upon himself, and naturally, when we consider his desire for understanding and his constant preoccupation with religion, found comfort.

"When all my hopes in them (priests) and all men were gone, so that I had none outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, O! then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition," and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." (Fox's Journal). The spontaneous comfort and direction he experienced were no doubt

subconscious elaborations of the dominant idea of his mental life, but were regarded by him as "~~inner~~<sup>pure</sup> openings" of God.

Finally he is impelled to take up the work of saving others.

"I was commanded to go abroad into the world to bring people into the way of truth."

Wesley's conversion is an instance of what Ribot describes as the logic of the feelings.

"Dans la logique des sentiments . . . la conclusion est toujours déterminée d'avance, au moins virtuellement."

(Ribot, La Logique des Sentiments, p. 67.)

Wesley, a priest for many years and engaged in the duties of his office, became convicted of unbelief owing to the conversation of a Moravian named Peter Böhler. Wesley doubted if he could continue to preach while he himself was unconvinced of the doctrine of faith.

Böhler replied, "Preach faith till you have it, and then because you have it you will preach faith." (Wesley's Journal.)

It is clear that Wesley was already a believer in the doctrine, but it was too new for him to grasp the fact. He followed Böhler's advice, preached all over the country, and attracted large crowds. We then find him pointing to the results of his own preaching as proofs of the doctrine he had preached.

We may, then, regard conversion as an experience which results in a relative harmony of character. The mystics attain a more complete unity of life by a method in which emotion and

auto-suggestion play a more obvious part, and in particular by means of a peculiar and deeply affective experience which they term union, through which the centre of consciousness shifts, and there is an apparent dying to self and uprising of God.

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CHAPTER IV.Suggestion in Mysticism.

- Sect. 1. Nature of mysticism.
- .. 2. Characteristics of mystics.
  - .. 3. Psychological analysis of mystical ecstasy.
  - .. 4. Theories as to the nature of mysticism.
  - .. 5. Writer's theory.
  - .. 6. Intuition, a product of subconscious processes.
  - .. 7. Mysticism and religion.
  - .. 8. The mystics as moral reformers.
  - .. 9. The transitory character of ecstasy as a state, the permanence of the dominant idea and its expression in works.
  - .. 10. The similarity of aesthetic contemplation and mystical experience.
  - .. 11. Conclusion.
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1. Schopenhauer speaks of the surprising agreement in the thought of the mystics, surprising in consideration of the differences of their time, race, and creed. They express one meaning, and their thought and even their language is echoed by the poets. Indeed it would not perhaps be difficult to show that mystical truths have never failed "to touch a chord and wake a sigh" in the heart of every individual who can even faintly grasp them, and to say with Maeterlinck, that the truths of mysticism can neither grow old nor die, and that a book lives in so far as it is mystical.

In attempting to analyse the writings of any mystic the reader feels that the mystic's truths are almost inexpressible, in part by the writer, still more so by the observer; for such writings describe an individual experience whose nature and reality are not to be fully expressed in words, and further the expression may not only veil the experience, but for the outsider may misrepresent<sup>it</sup>, for neither the experience nor language is his. In comparison with what the mystics themselves say certainly any definition of their doctrine must appear inadequate and bald. That doctrine asserts the unity of being and ultimate reality, the reality of inner experience, and the fact that the individual can become possessed of reality. Yet this phrase possessed of reality does not describe the mystical state. For as a modern

mystic says, "it is not enough to possess the truth, but the truth must possess us." In this experience the antithesis between subject and object fades, knowledge and faith vanish, as it were, into sight. The immediacy of the experience is too the hall-mark of its truth and reality. The mystics do not know truth and reality, they realise them directly.

The oneness of reality, and the reality of the individual, not as such but as an expression of the unified being, are stated clearly enough by the mystics themselves in such sayings as "Thou art Thou" of the Upanishads, and in the teaching of Buddha that Nirvana, the highest possible state of truth and bliss, could be attained by the individual in this present life. Plato speaks the same mystical language concerning the Beautiful and the Good in the Phaedrus and the Republic. Plotinus, in describing the knowledge of the One, says, "There were not two things, but the perceiver was one with the thing perceived, as not being vision but union."

Christian mystics express the same thought, though their mysticism is perhaps less sympathetic because more dogmatic. They too are what they know and know what they are.

The state in which mystics realise the truth has been described as ecstasy, a word which appears to have unfortunate pathological associations.

It must be admitted that mysticism also has pathological associations. The experiences described by the mystics are abnormal, their abnormality we can hardly doubt is in part due

to a loss of mental control. Their frequently artificially produced weakness did, perhaps at times, give rise to the state of ecstasy to which they ascribed such worth. For those who were ascetics their asceticism, no doubt, tinged all their experiences. But these undertones and overtones of suffering are not what is essential and universal in mysticism. Not all the mystics were neurotic or sickly. And if they were so the normal individual would have to admit that in abnormal states truths may be felt that the normal individual cannot fail to reverence and cherish. But in actual fact those who have uttered mystical truths were not all ascetics, unless a relative indifference to material goods imply ascetism .

It is to the purpose to examine the state of mystical ecstasy, and to consider how it is related to other states and rather to conscious life as a whole.

2. Mr Leuba states that an important characteristic of the mystics is their inwardmindedness. They are more sensitive than most individuals to sensations, ideas and feelings of subjective origin. (On the Psychology of a Group of Christian Mystics, Mind, N.S., vol 14.)

This statement is interesting not only because it is borne out by the descriptions of the mystics themselves, but also because it is in itself a partial explanation of their experience.

Thus the mystic appears as a host in himself, doubts and difficulties do not exist for him as for others, he dwells in certainty and peace.

All mystics do not, of course, admit that their experiences are of subjective origin, but modern mystics tend to do so, and find their experience not less valuable on that account. On the contrary, the idea of Richard Jeffries' life was to pray for the fullest soul life, and by prayer he means intense soul emotion, intense aspiration. "So great is the value of the soul that it seems to me, if the soul lived and received its aspirations it would not matter if the material universe melted away as snow." (The Story of my Heart, p. 192)

A further striking characteristic of the mystic is his demand for inner unity, and for complete understanding of his relations with the infinite. It is the part of mysticism, according to Récéjac, to make a mental synthesis. (The Mystic Basis of Knowledge.)

It is not, of course, claimed that the mystics alone demand inner unity, and endeavour to make a mental synthesis. All individuals make some effort to arrive at unity with and understanding of their world. But in the mystics this demand is unusually strong. It is its strength which gives them some creative power, and is in many cases their sole claim to originality.

For this desire to possess truth and the ability to achieve in some sense its fulfilment are marks of all original minds. But all do not seek their goal in the same direction. Some find it in the external world, others in some form of self-expression, the mystic looks within. And like the latter, all must form a synthesis in part by elimination and exclusion.

It is important to emphasise one undeniable fact, that the mystic is well prepared for what he describes as a union with, a fuller knowledge of God or the Real apart from any peculiarities of his mental constitution.

For the mystic does not turn in upon himself without aim or motive, he seeks within him an object of supreme worth whose value he has learned through tradition, education and reflection, apart from any mystical revelations. He knows, however indefinitely, what he seeks and what he shall find. The objective centre of the mystical experience of individuals of different faiths is never the same, though the processes through which they realise it are very similar. The Buddhist seeks Nirvana, the Christian mystic the God of his faith, Plotinus the One. This object, being of supreme value to the mystic, is never completely absent from his thoughts. When not the direct object of thought and devotion, it is in the background, colouring all his ideas, feelings and actions. It gives importance and meaning to every moment of his life.

The mystic because of his inwardmindedness looks within himself for the solution of his difficulties. The certainty of finding the truth, and of finding it within, and some of the psychological conditions of attaining it are plainly stated in the following passage.

"It would be monstrous to believe for a moment that the mind was unable to perceive ideal truth exactly as it is, and that we had not certainty and knowledge of the world of

intelligence. It follows, therefore, that this region of truth is not to be investigated as a thing external to us, and so only imperfectly known. It is within us. . . . .  
 The wise man recognises the idea of good within him. This he develops by withdrawal into the holy place of his own soul. He who does not understand how the soul contains the beautiful within itself, seeks to realise beauty without by laborious production. His aim should rather be to concentrate and simplify, and so to expand his being; instead of going out into the manifold, to forsake it for the One, and so to float upwards towards the divine fount of being whose stream flows within him." (Plotinus to Flaccus, Vaughan, Hours with the Mystics, vol. 1.)

3. With this end in view the mystic passes into a state of ecstatic contemplation of the divine reality, all other objects, sensible and ideal, fade from his field of consciousness. As the stream of consciousness narrows, the object looms larger, the subject makes no effort, he lets his states bear him where they will. His state is one of repose, striving and discursive thought cease, the object is beyond argument and beyond action, the mystic rests in it, the self is in abeyance, driven out by the object.

The subject does not feel that his consciousness is narrowed. On the contrary, to him there is a generous flow, an unusual expansion. And this is natural, for his mental processes succeed one another without obstacle on the objective side, and without inhibition on the subjective side. To the subject the state is

almost completely satisfying. The affective state is highly pleasurable. The effortless ease with which his consciousness flows is greatly enhanced by the fact that the object is one of love and reverence to the mystic, and it is obvious that it must assume immense proportions if striving, reason, consciousness of self are inactive. It does so, it fills the mystic's whole horizon, he is lost in it, his familiar self vanishes, and he feels that he has become one with the object, God has entered into him.

The object in this experience does not remain completely static. Otherwise the subject would lose consciousness. This he sometimes does, but it is not during periods of unconsciousness that he has experiences interesting to himself or anyone else.

The object shifts and changes with the current of the mystic's consciousness. It speaks to the subject, flashes more definite glimpses of itself upon him. So he hears voices and sees visions at times in the state of ecstasy. For in this state as in all associations, however fugitive and slight, are formed, the mental contents of one process awaken ideas which form the mental contents of subsequent processes.

What is peculiar to the mystical experience is that the subject does not recognise the ideas suggested as his own, but regards them as due to the divine object of his state. All the satisfactory aspects of his state are also considered as in some way attributes of the object or its effects. The subject is

conscious of his own passivity, the occurrences are quite irrespective of his thought and will, moreover they are unusual and unfamiliar. We may attempt to sum up from this description the characteristic features of the state of mystical ecstasy.

It at once appears that the mystic follows the directions of Plotinus. The former does concentrate and simplify, and, at least to his own consciousness, expand his being.

Further we may say: -

The mystic's consciousness is concentrated on a single idea, that of the infinite or eternal. Absorbed in this idea, he arrives at an immediate contact and union with the infinite.

The powers of discrimination weaken and become almost inoperative.

Conative tendencies are almost completely absent. The subject feels himself passive, his sense of individuality is lost.

The affective states grow and expand, and may range from a feeling of repose and happiness to keen pleasure. (See appendix.)

4. Ribot regards the state of mystical ecstasy as a disease of the will. There is an extreme narrowing of the field of consciousness, a single presentation possesses it and becomes increasingly intense. The will disappears, there is some intellectual intensity with conative nullity. There is nothing that can will or be willed because of the narrowing of consciousness. Feeling at the same time intensifies to the point of rapture. (*Maladies de la Volonté*, ch. V.)

Godfernaux defines this state as a form of dissociation between

thought and feeling. The affective state grows and intensifies, thought disappears. Further he describes ecstasy as a direct intuition of the not me. (Sodfernaux, *Le Sentiment et la Pensée*, ch. IV.) This is hard to reconcile with the disappearance of thought, and it is also difficult to understand how the mystic could acquire such an intuition when absorbed in his own states.

Delacroix and Boutroux give a more sympathetic analysis of the psychology of the mystics. They consider mystical experience not only in its beginnings, but its effects. Ecstasy is not final, but a stage, though the one of supreme importance, in a progressive development of character. Both writers take account of the part played by subconsciousness in this state.

The mystic, for Boutroux as for Ribot, is dominated by a single idea. It is, says the former, the idea of the infinite, the eternal as the superior object of desires which rises from the subconsciousness to consciousness. The problem for the mystic is to transform this idea into a sentiment, a principle of action. This endeavour is realised in ecstasy, which is the union of the soul with its object. The mystic has an intuition of the greatly desired object, the result is happiness, for his yearnings are satisfied. The transformation of idea through feeling into an intuition of the infinite has permanent effects. The idea becomes a sentiment of compelling power, through which a redirection is given to judgment and conduct, and the everyday life of the mystic is transfigured, partly by means of this newly developed sentiment, partly through his powers of contemplation.

For Boutroux suggests that there is a superior, universal existence and that the individual may share it by developing his intuitive powers. (*La Psychologie du Mysticism*, *Revue Bleue*, March, 1902.)

The whole series of processes is explained by Boutroux through the dominance of the single idea of the eternal and auto-suggestion. It is through the latter that the dominant idea becomes the active principle of the mystic's life.

Delacroix's analysis of the mystic's psychology is more detailed and complete, but it is similar in some important features already indicated to that of Boutroux. The mysticism of the cases Delacroix studies is, he says, a method of the transformation of the personality. The natures that possess a rich subconscious life and are disposed towards passivity can lose themselves in an intuition of the divine which awakens in them a strongly affective state, and finally invades their whole life. (*Études du Mysticisme*.)

The last two writers give a more satisfactory account of the relation of the ecstatic experience to the mystic's conscious life as a whole. But we must admit that this experience is the result of a dissociation of consciousness, and with Ribot that it is the active tendencies that are, therefore, inhibited. We are thus able to explain the characteristic features of ecstasy already noted.

5. We need not suppose that the mystic does discover the reality and union with that reality that he claims. He has in seeking the divine found himself. But it is a strange and unfamiliar self, for he has reached a different level of consciousness, the subconscious level. The ideas and images that arise are indeed his own, he does not recognise them because they come from depths unknown, unstirred before. And because the contents of the mystical state have not the habitual familiar appearance of the ordinary stream of consciousness he refers them to an external cause.

The feeling of union of which the mystic speaks is not altogether an illusion. He becomes one with his subconsciousness. It is not strange, perhaps, that the ideas that belong to subconsciousness should possess an affinity with himself.

It is to be noted that for the most part the mystics bring back little that can be definitely expressed and described from their ecstatic condition. They have had an illuminating, remarkable and supremely valuable experience, of that they are sure, but they give no clear account of its contents. The mystic is ready enough to admit this, silence speaks better than words for him, the experience is inexpressible and concerned with the inexpressible.

It is possible to find another explanation of this silence. On the whole the mystic in this state has very limited objective contents, his mind is turned upon his inner life, he follows

the movements of his own processes, these processes must have content, sometimes that content is the mystic's own condition, he realises his own passivity, peace and satisfaction, at times the content changes, some obscure idea emerges and grows clearer. He then has flashes of insight which do not seem due to himself. But these contents are much less full and clear than normal ones. There is, therefore, neither room for, nor purpose in the activity of association and conation. Feeling, thus set free and heightened by the mystic's illusion as to the divine nature of his condition, intensifies and may become overwhelming. The mystic floating on a wider, stronger current of feeling than he has ever known is rendered more and more incapable of distinguishing his mental contents from himself, all is merged in a rapturous unity.

The experience leaves its mark upon the mystic. He has become in a sense infinite himself. He may ~~regard~~<sup>regard</sup> himself as the instrument of the divine will which acts through him, and the divine wisdom which speaks through him. This is auto-suggestion. The mystic acts according to his own direction, carries out his own behests, and resists interference with his own plans, but because he feels as though he acts passively, because ideas arise in him spontaneously and he cannot trace their connection, he does not appear to himself to be their author. He feels himself to be living an impersonal life. This is an illusion, but the change in the mystic is real. The self is reorganised through having come into relation with subconsciousness, the ideas and suggestions of which are suffered to guide his conscious life.

The mystic thus brings into unity his conscious and subconscious states. This unity is not, of course, complete, since he regards the suggestions of subconsciousness as external to himself.

6. It is an interesting and exceedingly difficult question to enquire into the nature of mystic "intuition", a term which so many psychologists use in this connection.

In a moment of ecstasy the mystic has an illumination, an intuition of the nature of the real, at the same time he enters into union and becomes one with it. This intuition is not knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term, it is not reached by intellectual processes. On the other hand it cannot be a state of feeling itself though accompanied by great exaltation of feeling. And it is probably the fulness of the accompanying affective states which makes the intuition so glowing and illuminative to the mystic.

The mystics sometimes explain intuition as a peculiar kind of knowledge by which alone we can know the absolute. So Plotinus writes:-

"You ask me how we can know the infinite? I answer, not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The infinite, therefore, cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer, in which the divine essence is communicated to you. This is ecstasy." (Plotinus to Flaccus, Vaughan, op. cit., vol I)

It seems arbitrary to introduce a special kind of knowledge.

Yet the existence of intuitions is a fact of ordinary experience, and knowledge of this instantaneous, incontrovertible kind is mentioned by others than mystics.

It appears that these intuitions must be of an intellectual character, it is impossible to imagine that a purely affective state without relation to instinct ~~and intellect~~ <sup>or intelligence</sup> could guide and illuminate any consciousness. If the intuition is intellectual it is certainly not discursive and logical, it appears on its own merits, static and immediate.

It is quite possible, however, that its conditions are existent, and merely obscured or subconscious. Intuitions may thus be the unrecognised product of intellectual processes.

The fact that such ideas and promptings are absent from the habitual field of consciousness does not imply their miraculous nature, nor their intellectual futility. They have been, perhaps, crowded out by other contents, too alien to them for the usual stream of consciousness to grasp and incorporate them; or perhaps they have been formed in the margin of consciousness and never had an opportunity of coming into its focus. Such contents suffer through competition from others, but this competition with its resulting suppression of many ideas need not be taken to prove the worthlessness of such ideas. It merely implies that at any given moment these ideas were inopportune, would, perhaps, have claimed too much attention and so thrust out more immediately interesting and active ones. If then such failures arise in ~~moments of~~ ecstasy or other enlightened moments, their

pronouncement may be more valid and vital than that of more habitual mental contents.

"The centre of consciousness, because it is primarily an adjusting apparatus, is often inadequate as an index to the entirety of life. The view of things from this point must of necessity be partial. Thus, at times, it may be worth while for this central point to disintegrate, or its movement to be held in suspension, that the outlying regions, in so far as they represent one's life in a truer perspective, may assert themselves. The religious ~~drive~~<sup>notion</sup> of dying to one's self and obtaining thereby a fuller or divine self is not at all without meaning, even though we may reject any mystical interpretation of the process." (Irving King, The Development of Religion, p. 327.)

We may thus escape sometimes from mental stress and strain, and, coming in touch with a wider self and store of experience, take a clearer "prospect o'er our being's whole."

7. Mysticism has had important effects on the development of religion. Religious reformers seem to have possessed more or less the mystical spirit. The statement of St. Paul. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," expresses this spirit which enables them to insist on reforms, and to give new interpretations to the faith of their fathers with an apparently absolute authority.

There is another aspect of religious development which is connected with mysticism.

The intimate relation between morality and religion which

exists in all developed religions must be regarded as an evolution of religion. Primitive man's relations with supernatural forces did not imply a moral attitude in him. His gods demanded obedience, and inspired awe and fear, but did not speak to the hearts of men, and serve as a moral source and guide of their actions.

Religion in its early stages has at least indirectly moral effects, no doubt. For it is a social force, its gods are worshipped by the tribe, and it enters into all forms of tribal activity. Religion thus makes for social harmony and tends to check strife.

It is also an exceedingly conservative influence, it tends to give stability to the individuals among whom it is active, and to preserve the stability attained. This is the natural result, not only of the sublime nature of its own sanctions, but of the generally close connection between religion and state authority. In early times we frequently find that king and priest are one, and where their duties are performed by different individuals, the king, or other state authority, is assisted and supported by the priesthood.

But all religions have their mystics, and it appears that the example and influence of these may have been important factors in the development of religion from an external to an internal moral force.

Indeed it is possible that the trances and ecstasies to which certain individuals are liable may have initiated religious

ceremonies and practices, and even the religious attitude itself in themselves and others. In any case such an occurrence as an ecstatic trance would be an interesting and exciting event, and attention would be given to the probable resulting prophecy or claim of possession by spirits, and indeed all the utterances of the gifted individual to whom it occurred. His utterances, though perhaps of little value, would emphasise the possibly intimate relation between the divine power and man, and would suggest the probable efficacy of individual prayer and communion, and so tend to give the devotee an inner strength and a respect for individuals as such.

The mystics themselves, generally possessed by a sense of their mission as instruments of the divine will, are apt to adopt a mode of life which gives them opportunities of developing self-reliance and powers of contemplation which are impressive to their fellows. If we may take as an example the Jewish prophets, it becomes obvious that their wisdom and integrity must have profoundly affected the religious and moral life of their compatriots.

8. When we consider the lives of great mystics we find them working for the salvation of souls with remarkable energy and singleness of purpose.

The founder of Buddhism, whose mysticism leads to the annihilation of all consciousness, yet quitted the pomp and circumstance of his state in order to find the way of truth, and after his efforts were crowned with success in his enlightenment under the Bo-tree, went forth to a life of active and continuous

teaching.

Plato and Plotinus direct the philosopher, not only to contemplate the Good and the Beautiful, but to share their wisdom with others in a socially active life. The Christian mystics have reached great positions in the Church, become influential preachers and practical workers and founders of religious houses. James seems to regard their work as somewhat futile. While appreciating the capacity of St. Teresa and her devotion to her religious ideals, he writes: "Yet so <sup>halting</sup> ~~halting~~ were these, according to our present way of thinking, that I confess my only feeling in reading her has been pity that so much vitality of soul should have found such poor employment." (The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 346.) St. Teresa employed herself in founding monasteries, and was successful in getting them planned and erected in the face of great difficulty.

We need not take a gloomy estimate of her labours if we consider the ideals of the times to which the saint belonged. She had been less practical and saintly if such works had not appeared to her of supreme importance.

Yet James's criticism of the mystics is generous and sympathetic. Even the "daft saints," are superior, he thinks, to the intellectually dead of another type.

We must certainly admit that mystics may differ in intellect and moral capacity. Mystical inspirations are not all of equal value. Maeterlinck gives an extreme example of this fact when

he reminds us that Joan of Arc and Macbeth heard the same voices.

Works seem so essential a part of Christianity that the practical activity of Christian mystics is, perhaps, not surprising. That such activity is persistent in the face of difficulties, that we find mystics of other creeds "practising the virtues," as St. Teresa describes it, are also not surprising if we return to the psychology of their states.

It is a psychological truism that ideas tend to work themselves out. "Our works fulfil our aspirations and our promises," to quote St. Teresa again.

9. The mystic is under the control of one idea, or at most a group of closely connected ideas, which is the object of his desires, and becomes not merely the ideal, but the real in the period of ecstasy. The illumination and the affective excitement of this state changes the idea to a sentiment, a passion, the principle by which the mystic lives. For it is clear that ecstasy must be a transitory experience, it is equally clear that the central idea of that experience does not vanish with it. The idea is not new to the mystic, the habits of years of thought and feeling are bound up with it, it is in part the spring of that transcendent experience which gives it an unquestionable meaning and worth.

The light and warmth of ecstasy may fade, but the experience is not forgotten, nor its attributes of love and authority. In his normal state the mystic treats the object of that experience as he does all his ideas, he associates it with other mental contents, he elaborates it and works it out, it becomes less wonderful

and more imperative. He must inevitably connect it with all those activities that custom and habit have taught him to think moral and necessary. Such a dominant idea must find outlets and expression. The mystic expresses it in whatever directions his capacity lies, and in whatever measure he possesses such capacity.

The dominant idea controlling the mystic's consciousness makes for consistency and strength of character, and for moral character. For the idea that enwraps the mystic is the highest one he knows and his ideal is nearer attainment than that of most individuals because it is nearer to him, it is a permanent and insistent force. And the mystic too has a sure ground for reverencing his fellow creatures, since for him finite and infinite so intimately mingle. All this seems to be implied in Leuba's statement that with the mystics the ought is backed by a compelling motor force.

Further, the mystic has a fuller store, a wider source of inspiration on which to draw than more conventional individuals. He does not come into contact with the eternal, but he does have intuitions which transfigure his life. He is not the instrument of God, but spontaneous wisdom breathes in him as it does not in others. He gives himself leisure to possess his soul and to acquire self-reliance and strength. He looks within, his hidden wisdom speaks in intuitions that are clear and valuable. This hidden wisdom is no miracle, it is an acquired and tempered group of ideas and images which arise from a level lower than that of clear consciousness.

The mystic may thus develop a fuller personality, since he brings into some relation and harmony consciousness and subconsciousness. He is thus far less the creature of habit and circumstance than the ordinary individual who, though certainly not so obvious a case of auto-suggestion, is more suggestible to the external world, nor are these suggestions particularly well organised and effective, for on the whole he possesses less constancy of purpose than the mystic to deal with either his inner or his outer life.

The mystical consciousness, as we have endeavoured to interpret it, is found in other individuals of superior gifts.

Ecstasy may have degrees, it may be overwhelming or slight, but intuition, and illumination and the strong desire for unity that makes it a necessity to interpret the world in terms of one ideal, are not peculiar to the mystics. They are creative and active in the moral sphere, other creative minds possess in some measure a like spirit.

10. Thus the artist is akin to the mystic. The descriptions of mystical experience in art and in the working of creative inspiration are too numerous and well known for quotation. Emerson in his essay "Inspiration" says, "All the poets have signalled their consciousness of rare moments when they were superior to themselves, . . . when a light, a freedom, a power came to them, which lifted them to performances far better than they could reach at other times."

The artist receives flashes of insight, instantaneous knowledge whose source is in himself, but which he cannot trace. Such spontaneous understanding is in him more or less permanent and fertile, and so finds expression. For he dwells responsive to his intuitions, and gladly suffers their guidance. "For the creative imagination the inner world is the regulator; there is a preponderance of the inner over the outer." (Ribot, *The Creative Imagination*, p.10.) In this lies the point of the comparison of the artist with the mystic.

Like the mystic the artist is governed by one idea which controls all other ideas, the realising of beauty in some form. Everything in his life tends to be subordinated to this. And he shows something of the zealous spirit of the mystic in the sincerity and devotion with which he pursues his aim.

All approach ~~the~~ state of mystical ecstasy in moments of aesthetic contemplation.

An object of art claimed from the change and flow of our familiar world presents silent and unchanging some aspect of life. It is at once familiar and yet strange. It gives no invitation to activity, the object is real yet ideal, its image is without us and within, we are transported for the moment into its own static world where movement and discursive thought are irrelevant. There is no end to be attained, our attitude can only be one of acquiescence and repose. So Richard Jeffries writes of statuary, "These statues were like myself full of a

thought, forever about to burst forth as a bud, yet silent in the same attitude."

The object of art brings the observer into something of its own silence. And since the striving elements are lulled within him, he feels more in tune with his experience than at any ordinary moment. Distinctions fade, the thoughts and images which arise seem hardly distinguishable from the object, as if indeed they were but its echoes.

This effect of union between subject and object is increased by the strongly affective character of the experience. The object at the outset arouses pleasurable feelings which increase as the experience develops, again the suggested images and ideas have their own affective colouring, feelings and ideas intermingle, this blending renders the experience extraordinarily vivid and intense.

Bergson puts the matter thus:-

"The object of art is to put to sleep the active or rather resistant powers of our personality, and thus to bring us into a state of perfect responsiveness in which we realise the idea which is suggested to us and sympathise with the feeling that is expressed. In the processes of art one finds in an attenuated refined and somewhat spiritualised form, the processes by which one usually obtains the hypnotic state." (Time and Free Will, p. 14 )

The interest on the mental side of the experience lies in part in the realising of the idea suggested, in part in the mystery of the unity between inner experience and the object which this

realising brings about. The mystery seems ever about to unfold itself, the secret of the beauty of the object and its intimate meaning for us are almost clear, we are upon the point of understanding once for all not only the expression of the artist's thought, but far beyond that the inspiration from which that expression sprang. Beauty, it need hardly be said, keeps its secret, but this brings no dissatisfaction into the aesthetic state, for that state is not conscious of a denial, and does not work to gain or loss.

Of all arts it would seem that music gives the deeper and more emotional experience. The very strangeness of its language is an exciting factor in the feeling and wonder it arouses.

Music sways us so profoundly partly because it has a less obviously objective medium of expression than any other art. Again it is so continuous. We have no time to recover, to turn away. Music flows inevitably, without a break, and bears us with it. There is no escape, we are swung in an inexorable rhythm. And because it has a unique language music is the least expressible of arts in any terms but its own, it cannot be adequately translated. Mendelssohn says, "Music is more definite than speech and to want to explain it by means of words is to make the meaning obscure. . . . There are people who accuse music of being ambiguous, who allege that words are always understood: for me it is just the other way; words seem to me to be vague, ambiguous, unintelligible if we compare them with

the true music which fills the soul with a thousand things better than words. What the music I like expresses to me seems to me too definite rather than too indefinite for anyone to be able to match words to it. " (Ribot, *The Creative Imagination*, p.213.)

This quotation seems to bear witness to the supreme reality and satisfaction of the aesthetic experience. The ideas suggested have so much meaning, are backed by such emotional stir that they may appear more definite than any mental content that can be expressed in words. In this case feeling is taken for knowledge.

There are obvious similarities between the state of aesthetic contemplation and mystical ecstasy. In the former, however, the subject can hardly be uncertain as to the source of his state. An external object is the starting point of his attitude, and its presence keeps him in that attitude, when the object falls into the background of his mental content, he emerges from the state of contemplation. Because of this controlling, external factor he is under no illusion as to the nature of his experience.

The mystic lacking a definite external object has a far more moving experience which he interprets as a manifestation of the infinite.

Both aesthetic contemplation and ecstasy are examples of dissociation of consciousness. In both the active fiat making self is quiescent. The mystic recovers unity of consciousness and renders it more complete by connecting his ecstatic experience with his normal life, he is led to do this through the value he attaches to that experience.

On the other hand for most of us our moments of aesthetic appreciation remain detached from the central flow of consciousness. The feeling that moves us then, though often real enough, seems to have little bearing on our practical life. This unattached and purposeless emotion may, indeed, act as a disintegrating influence on consciousness. A fact which makes James advise us to hasten to perform some kindly act if our sympathies have been awakened by any representation of life, lest feeling and action become severed, and the power of emotion weakened. And since the ideas and emotions aroused in the aesthetic state are the result of external suggestion, we can understand that their effects may be fleeting.

11. The value of responsiveness to suggestion depends of course to a great extent on the nature of the ideas suggested. And suggestibility in itself seems to indicate either dissociation of consciousness or a tendency towards disintegration.

But the power of suggestion or auto-suggestion already described in conversion and mystical experience can hardly fail to have favourable effects on character. For not only are the controlling ideas in these cases of a nature to aid the development of a harmonious moral personality, but suggestion acts as a unifying influence; it brings into touch with the centre of consciousness subconscious motives, tendencies and inspirations, and so makes unity of desires and active dispositions not only possible, but almost necessary.

"Our myriad intuitions," says Maeterlinck, who has endeavoured to render subconsciousness articulate, "are the veiled queens who steer our course through life, though we have no words in which to speak of them." If subconscious motives thus control us, it is obviously desirable that they should become conscious, so that the activities of consciousness and subconsciousness may not be separated, but work together.

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APPENDIX.

And he who beholds all beings in the self, and the self in all beings, he never turns away from it. When to a man who understands, the self has become all things, what sorrow, what trouble can there be to him who once beheld that unity. (Sacred Books of the East, vol. I, p. 311.)

That (mental condition) . . . . in which one seeing the self by the self, is pleased in the self; in which one experiences that infinite happiness which transcends the senses, and which can be grasped by the understanding only; and adhering to which one never swerves from the truth; acquiring which one thinks no other acquisition higher than it. . . . Abandoning without exception all desires, which are produced from fancies, and restraining the whole group of the senses on all sides by the mind only, one should by slow steps become quiescent, with a firm resolve coupled with courage; and fixing the mind upon the self should think of nothing. . . . The highest happiness comes to such a devotee whose mind is fully tranquil, in whom the quality of passion has been suppressed, who is free from sin, and who is become (one with) the Brahman. Thus constantly devoting his self to abstraction a devotee freed from sin, easily obtains the supreme happiness - contact with the Brahman. (Sacred Books of the East, vol. 8, p. 70.)

L'âme s'avance ainsi dans son ascension vers Dieu jusqu'à ce que, s'étant élevée au-dessus de tout ce que lui est étranger, elle voie seule à seul, dans toute sa simplicité, dans toute sa pureté, celui dont tout dépend, auquel tout aspire, duquel tout tient l'existence, la vie, la pensée; car il est le principe de l'existence de la vie, de la pensée. Quels transports d'amour ne doit pas ressentir celui qui le voit, avec quel ardeur ne doit-il souhaiter s'unir à lui, de quel ravissement ne doit-il pas être transporté? (Plotinus, En. I, 6.7., translated by Bouillet.)

Puis donc que (dans cette vision de Dieu) il n'y avait pas deux choses, que celui qui voyait était identique à celui qu'il voyait, de telle sorte qu'il ne le voyait pas, mais qu'il lui était uni, si quelqu'un pouvait conserver le souvenir de ce qu'il était quand il se trouvait ainsi absorbé en Dieu, il aurait en lui-même une image fidèle de Dieu. Alors en effet il était lui-même un, il ne renfermait en lui aucune différence, ni par rapport à lui-même, ni par rapport aux autres êtres. Pendant qu'il était ainsi transporté dans la région céleste, rien n'agissait en lui, ni la colère, ni la concupiscence, ni la raison, ni même la pensée; bien plus, il n'était plus lui-même, s'il faut le dire, mais, plongé, dans le ravissement, ou l'enthousiasme, tranquille et solitaire avec Dieu, il jouissait d'un calme imperturbable, renfermé dans sa propre essence, il n'inclinait d'aucun côté, il ne se tournait même pas vers lui-même, il était enfin dans une stabilité parfaite, il était en quelque sorte devenu la stabilité même. (En. VI, 9, 11.)

It is clearly necessary for the soul, aiming at its own supernatural transformation, to be in darkness and far removed from all that relates to its natural condition, the sensual and rational parts. The supernatural is that which transcends nature, and, therefore, that which is natural remains below. In as much as this union and transformation are not cognisable by any sense or any human power, the soul must be completely and voluntarily empty of all that can enter into it, of every affection and inclination, so far as it concerns itself.

. . . . On this road, therefore, to abandon one's own way is to enter on the true way, or, to speak more correctly to pass onwards to the goal; and to forsake one's own way is to enter on that which has none, namely, God. (St. John of the Cross, quoted by Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, p. 121.)

In so far as this becomes pure contemplation, the soul sees clearly that it cannot describe it otherwise than in general terms which the abundance of light and happiness forces from it. And though at times, when this knowledge is vouchsafed to the soul, words are uttered, yet the soul knows full well that it has in nowise expressed what it felt, because it is conscious that there are no words of adequate signification.

. . . . It is only a soul in union with God that is capable of this profound loving knowledge, for it is itself that union. This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God himself who is then felt and tasted. (Ibid. p. 124.)

And even sometimes when I was reading, there came suddenly upon me a sense of the presence of God, which did not allow me to doubt that he was within me, or that I was entirely engulfed in him. . . .

It (ecstasy) suspends the soul which seems altogether beside herself. The will loves, memory seems to be annihilated, the understanding ceases to reason, but retains her consciousness, she is as if amazed at the grandeur she perceives.

(Life of St. Teresa, translated by D. Lewis, p. 68.)

Whilst the soul is thus seeking God, she feels herself faint and die with a most great and sweet delight. Breath fails her, all the bodily movements are stilled, she cannot without great difficulty move her hands; the eyes close involuntarily, and, if they remain open, see nothing; she hears, but without understanding what she hears; speech is superfluous for she cannot form a word, and, if she could she wants strength to pronounce it; all exterior strength seems gone, and goes to swell that of the soul, to help her enjoy her glory more.

(Ibid., pa 139.)

The free inspiration of God is the spring of all our spiritual life, thence flows into us knowledge, an inner revelation, which preserves our spirits open, and lifting us above all images and all disturbance brings us to an inward silence. Here the divine inspiration is a secret whispering in the inward ear. God dwells in the heart pure and free from evil images. Then first when we withdraw into the simplicitas of our heart do we behold the

immeasurable glory of God, and our intellect is as clear from all considerations of distinctions and figurative apprehensions as though we had never seen or heard of such things. Then the riches of God are open to us. Our spirit becomes desireless as though there were nothing on earth or in Heaven of which we stood in need . . . . Lost in the abyss of our eternal blessedness we perceive no distinction between ourselves and God. (Ruysbroek, Vaughan, Hours with the Mystics, p. 254.)

The gate was opened to me that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university, at which I exceedingly admired and thereupon turned my praise to God for it. For I saw and knew the being of all beings, the byss and abyss and the eternal generation of the Holy Trinity, the descent and original of the world, and of all creatures through the divine wisdom. . . . So that I did not only greatly wonder at it, but did also exceedingly rejoice. If you will behold your own self and the outer world, and what is taking place therein, you will find that you, with regard to your external being are that external world. . . . Not I, the I that I am, know these things; but God knows them in me. (Jacob Behmen, quoted by Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, p. 151.)

When thou standest still from the thinking and willing of self, the eternal hearing, seeing and speaking will be revealed to thee, and so God heareth and seeth through thee. Thine own hearing, willing and seeing hindereth thee, that thou dost not see nor hear God. (Ibid., p. 155.)

All I can say is that there seems to be a vision possible to man, as from some more universal standpoint free from the obscurity and localism which specially connect themselves with the passing clouds of desire, fear, and all ordinary thought and emotion; in that sense another and separate faculty; and a vision always means a sense of light, so here is a sense of inward light. . . . The sense is a sense that one is those objects, and things, and persons one perceives, (and the whole universe) - a sense in which sight and touch and hearing are all fused in identity. . . . The whole faculty is deeply and intimately rooted in the ultra moral and emotional nature, and beyond the thought region of the brain. (Edward Carpenter, quoted by Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, p. 206.)

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