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HOW TO READ A PAGE

A COURSE IN EFFECTIVE READING
WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO
A HUNDRED GREAT WORDS

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FOREWORD

THAT this is a retort to Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book* and to Scott Buchanan's Hundred Books Program is manifest from my title. Though it does not discuss them, it suggests that their recommendations may not go to the root of the problem. My regard for the aims which prompted those recommendations leads me to hope that this more drastic treatment may not be unwelcome to those wholike-wise feel that education is being misguided.

The many references here made to *The Republic* are to my abridged version founded upon Basic English. In some respects this essay might be regarded as yet another series of footnotes to Plato's thought.

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	9
CHAPTER I <i>How a Reader Might Improve</i>	17
CHAPTER II <i>An Obvious Characteristic of All Animals</i>	26
CHAPTER III <i>To Learn, Compare</i>	40
CHAPTER IV <i>Random Scratching and Clawing</i>	57
CHAPTER V <i>To Unite, Abstract</i>	71
CHAPTER VI <i>The Warfare of Heart and Head</i>	97
CHAPTER VII <i>The Choice of the Key Words</i>	110
CHAPTER VIII <i>Part-Whole Shifts and Con- tent Changes</i>	132
CHAPTER IX <i>Make, Get, Give, Love, Have</i>	143
CHAPTER X <i>Seem, Be, Do, See</i>	160

CHAPTER	XI	<i>Mind, Thought, Idea, Knowl- edge</i>	186
CHAPTER	XII	<i>Reason, Purpose, Work</i>	210
		<i>Retrospect</i>	235
		<i>Index</i>	243

INTRODUCTION

*And thou saidst, "I will not transgress"; when
upon every high hill and under every green
tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.*

JEREMIAH II:20

A SLIP of the log I am sitting on by my campfire under Mount Sir Donald has given me as an alternative title, "How to *reap* a page," which perhaps better suggests the aim. We assume we know how to read: spell it reap, and we begin to wonder how we do it.

Twenty years ago a very inexperienced writer commenced authorship with the remark, "A book is a machine to think with." * Here he is trying to devise another sort of verbal machine: something which may be a help in using books as machines to *think* with. He seems to have been uneasy about the word "think" then, for he added in a later edition, "but it need not usurp the functions either of the bellows or the locomotive." Some books endeavor to transport their readers or to drag them passively hither and thither; others aim to stuff them, with facts or other supposedly fattening matter; others are microscopes, as it were, which can take the most familiar things and lay scraps and details of them before us, so transmuted by the new conditions under which we see them that we lose all power of recognizing or putting them to-

¹ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 1.

gether again; others behave rather as pulverizers or consolidators. My readers here will have to choose for themselves what sort of machine they will compare this book to. I do not believe that either a washing machine or a combination harvester is the right comparison.

How a page was read has often been a matter of life and death. Misread orders on the battlefield have sent thousands to unnecessary destruction. Their readings of a page of Scripture have led as many to the stake. Written words are very dangerous things:

Who hath given man speech
Or who hath set therein
A thorn for peril and a snare for sin

wrote Swinburne.² He was thinking of quarrels, but we are perhaps in most danger when we agree too readily, or think we agree when in fact we do not. One thing here, at least, I am clear about and I hope I can make myself clear on. Neither this book nor any other can say how a page *should* be read—if by that we mean that it can give a recipe for discovering what the page *really* says. All it could do—and that would be much—would be to help us to understand some of the difficulties in the way of such discoveries. "How the page should be read" is a typically ambiguous phrase. Everyone can see that it may mean: (a) the right reading, the authentic interpretation; or (b) the right general procedure, or way of tackling the page. I need hardly say that this book keeps it!

² *Atalanta in Calydon*.

eye on the second of these, and will be content if it can display some of the things which make it easy for us to twist pages to mean what we please—whether in order to damn or to praise them.

It is concerned with pages of all sorts—from plain exposition or instruction, the battle order for example, to poetry or philosophy, or the pages of Scripture referred to above. With the *first* there should be no doubt that there is one right reading which can be discovered or the writer is horribly at fault. But with the pages which on a long view have mattered most to the world, the utterances of the great poets and sages, we may reasonably doubt whether there is one right and only right reading. These greatest sayings of man have an inexhaustible fertility. Different minds have found such different things in them that we would be very rash if we assumed that some one way of reading them which commends itself to us is the right one. And yet . . . to assume so, to suppose that some one reading is the only right one, is our natural and our traditional approach. We feel very strongly that unless there is a right reading, and unless our business is to find it, we are wasting our time with such writings. This would certainly be so if they were like the specifications of an airplane, say, or like a map. A map on which hills and valleys could reasonably change places according to the consulting eye would be condemned as worthless by all. But with the highest poetry and philosophy and moral teaching, something like this happens and rightly. And the great pages lose nothing of their perpetual value because

it happens. Indeed, their value is perpetual because through them, as through nothing else, we gain such opportunities of surveying the possibilities of ourselves and our worlds. There are limitations here clearly. Not every vague saying becomes precious. You will not succeed in making up a sentence which, because it might mean anything, will be permanently interesting. The immortal pages are no such puzzles, though they are the great exercisers of the spirit. But if we read them as though they could say one thing only, or condemn them because they can say many different things, we will be cutting ourselves off from the best which has been known and thought in the world—to use Matthew Arnold's phrase.

A list of the vices of reading should put first, as worst and most disabling, the expectation that everything should be easily understood. Things worth thought and reflection cannot be taken in at a glance. The writer should, of course, have done his utmost to make things easy for us. He could have had nothing (could he?) more important than *that* to do. But where there is still some difficulty remaining, let us beware of blaming it on the author rather than on our own imperfect command of the language. To blame the writer will teach us nothing. To wonder if we are reading right may.

Next to this vice should come that shallow indifference which says, "Well, if the page can mean almost anything, what does it matter how I take it? One reading is as good as another." It isn't. All the value comes from the depth and honesty, the sincerity and

stress of the reflection through which we choose which meanings among its possibilities we will take seriously into our considerations. These things have many meanings because they touch us at points at which each one of us is himself many-minded. Understanding them is very much more than picking a possible reasonable interpretation, clarifying that, and sticking to it. Understanding them is seeing how the varied possible meanings hang together, which of them depend upon what else, how and why the meanings which matter most to us form a part of our world—seeing thereby more clearly what our world is and what we are who are building it to live in.

A chief modern difficulty in such understanding comes from the recent development of the historical sense. Compared with our great-grandfathers, we know incredibly much about the past. Scholarship has made the authors, their times and social conditions, etc., etc., known to us as to no other generation ever. This, at first sight, should make good reading easier. In many ways it does. We can turn to a dictionary such as Dr. Johnson never dreamed of and see how a troublesome word has been used century after century in varying ways. Concordances show us all the other uses the author made of the word. On wider points we can consult histories and biographies. Vast collections of disparate interpretations and comments are available. Around almost every important author an enormous critical apparatus has come into being. Its prime aim is just to help us to read better. But somehow all this wealth of scholarly aid does not

lift up our hearts as it should. It spreads attention out too thinly and daunts us with the thought that we would have to know everything before we could know anything. Doubtless this is true, philosophically, but to readers in search of a method it is unhelpful.

Modern historical scholarship especially terrorizes us with the suggestion that somewhere in the jungle of evidence there is something we happen not to know which would make the point clear, which would show us just what the author did in fact mean. That suspicion of a missing clue is paralyzing—unless we remember firmly that from the very nature of the case essential clues are always missing. However much evidence we amass, we still have to jump to our conclusions. Reading is not detection as the perfect detective practices it. We are never concerned with facts pointing conclusively to a central fact—what happened in an author's mind at a given moment. No facts could ever establish that. If psychoanalysis has done nothing else for the world it has at least helped us to realize that minds—including authors' minds—are private. All we can ever prove by factual evidence is *an act*—that the author wrote such and such words. But what he meant by them is another matter. Our conclusions there must rest, as best they may, upon another sort of consideration. Fundamentally they rest upon analogies—certain very broad similarities in structure between minds: "The all-in-each of every mind," as Coleridge called it.

To go deeper, the reader, as opposed to the biographer, is not concerned with what as historical

fact was going on in the author's mind when he penned the sentence, but with what the words—given the rest of the language—may mean. We do not read Shakespeare, or Plato, or Lao Tzu, or Homer, or the Bible, to discover what their authors—about whom otherwise we know so little—were thinking. We read them for the sake of the things their words—if we understand them—can do for us. But understanding them, of course, is not making them mean something we know and approve of already, nor is it detecting their ignorance and limitations. It is using them to stretch our minds as they have stretched the minds of so many different readers through the centuries. The interest they have so long had for man is the proof of their importance for us.

Emerson estimated that a man might have, if he were fortunate, some hundreds of reasonable moments in a long life. He was thinking probably of moments of inspiration from sources less traceable than the book in one's hand. The great pages are the most constant and dependable sources of "reasonable moments," if we mean by them moments when we know more completely what we are, and why we are so, and thus "see into the life of things" more deeply than in our everyday routine of existence. Such reasonable moments are the highest aim of reading. In them we do more than communicate with our authors—in the humble sense of communicate. We partake with them of wisdom. This aim is not attained unless we also gain such skill in reading as serves us in all our communications with our fellow human beings.

The arts of reading are a pyramid whose pinnacle rests on the stages below. No one can understand poetry well whose mind cannot take in the prose of discussion and necessary business.

ONE

HOW A READER MIGHT IMPROVE

Education: expansion of experience by experts,
c. K. OGDEN

WE all enjoy the illusion that we read better than we do; not least, no doubt, those who set out to write about *How to read*. But most of us—or those at least, who are likely to open a book with this title—are satisfied that other people read badly, that they can miss any point and will put their own wild interpretations on even the most obvious remark. In recent years books, papers, and articles which labor this point and accuse the general reader of incompetence with language have been coming out in plenty. Some of them hint despondingly that things are getting worse and threaten us even with universal intellectual collapse unless something is done about it. Authorities tell vast conferences of English teachers every few weeks that they are failing to teach reading. Texts simplified and written down to tenth-grade level are adopted in university courses because the undergraduates cannot, it is alleged, read anything harder. Publicists lament, in popular volumes, the plain man's helpless acceptance of verbal nonsense. Specialists complain that their contributions are

wasted because the other specialists do nothing but misread them. And prophets foretell the downfall of democracy through a decline in the citizen's ability to follow any discussion worth a hearing.

Behind all this there is enough solid evidence to make anyone who studies it very uncomfortable. If most people's reading is really as inefficient as it seems when carefully enough examined, the main staff of education is hardly worth leaning on. What is the advantage of toiling on through thousands of pages, if a chief outcome is an accumulation of misunderstandings? Surely it should be possible to go directly to the root of the trouble, to study verbal misunderstanding, its nature and causes, deeply enough to find and apply a cure?

Accordingly, a considerable literature is coming into being which discusses the theory of language: classification, abstraction, naming, metaphor, and the rest. Unfortunately, it cannot be said to offer us much hope of immediate remedies. And this is not surprising. The questions which our theory of language has to discuss are hardest of all to write clearly about. They are the meeting points of tremendous pressures coming from rival philosophic systems used consciously or unconsciously by those who discuss them. We should expect not only great divergences of view but persistent drastic misinterpretations among their students. Everyone who writes on such matters sighs to think how often he seems to be misread. The layman who looks into this literature extensively enough will be shocked to discover how much seemingly

fundamental disagreement it contains. If he does not go into it far enough to see this, he should be warned not to suppose there is anything at present there corresponding to the agreed doctrines the sciences can offer him. There is no agreed theory of language—as elementary mechanics, for example, is an agreed theory. Later on in this book we will see why there cannot be. Moreover, to get any adequate view of what the rival professors are maintaining, the inquiring layman would have to become an adept at a peculiarly difficult sort of reading in which one is specially apt to suppose he has understood when in fact he has not. It is not likely, therefore, that perusal of those confusing pages will make many people better readers. There is evidence, on the contrary, that misunderstandings acquired from them have made intelligent people more foolish and imperceptive as readers than they would otherwise have been.

The belief that knowledge of linguistic theory will make a man a better reader comes itself from such a misunderstanding. Theory and practice are not so simply connected. It is true that bad theory does lead to bad reading. But good theory will not necessarily produce good reading. Between the principles in the theory and the actual words to be read comes the task of seeing which principles apply to which cases, the problem of recognizing what the actual situation is. Theory can give us no *direct* help in this, more's the pity! We have to rely on whatever sagacity we have developed. Nothing, alas, is easier than to fit our distinctions to the wrong instances. And in most reading

there are strong motives at work which tempt us to do this. I will be analyzing some examples in detail later.

We are all of us learning to read all the time. All our thinking is a part of the process as affecting the way we will on some occasion take some sentence. Whenever we use words in forming some judgment or decision, we are, in what may be a painfully sharp sense, "learning to read." The lover scanning his mistress's scribble or her scowling brows is learning to read. So is the theologian comparing the ideas of *eros* and *agape* (see Chapter Nine).

There is an ambiguity here which is brought out by asking, learning to read what?—the written word? or by means of that word the face, or the heart, of Nature?

The answer, of course, is, "Both." We cannot separate them. We always read for some purpose—unless some sad, bad, mad schoolteacher has got hold of us. There is no such thing as merely reading words; always through the words we are trafficking or trying to traffic with things—things gone by, present, to come or eternal. So a person who sets up to teach reading should recognize that he may be more ambitious than he seems. He may pretend he is only concerned to help people not to mistake one word for another, or one construction for another. *That*, so far, doesn't look like an attempt to finger the steering wheel of the universe. But "Which word is it?" turns into "Which use?"; and the question "Which construction?" into "What implications?" Before long the would-be authority on interpretation has become in-

distinguishable from an authority on "What's what?"—a question which belongs to a more divine science than he may wittingly aspire to.

Nonetheless, by being more aware of this he will be better able to pursue his main task—the cultivation of general verbal sagacity.

Whence comes, then, the development of this sagacity so much needed if we are to see what is happening? The answer is "Experience," of course; experience of a certain sort. But "experience" is one of the words we are all always most likely to misunderstand, because we all use it in so many ways. As a rule, we are not more than dimly aware of the great differences between its possible meanings. In most sentences it can say very different, sometimes even contradictory, things to different readers. And these different meanings will, as a rule, all make fairly good sense. There is an interesting and not too obvious reason for this. With most uses of "experience," the other words round about in the neighboring sentences are ready to shift their meanings to conform with its meanings. Most explanations of "experience" will be found to contain words like "mind," "observation," "attention," "knowledge," "feeling," "consciousness," which systematically vary in meaning in corresponding ways. So to say what we may mean or what anyone else may mean by "experience" or by any of these words is no easy undertaking—though it is what these pages attempt.

It is no one's fault that these words behave so. It is a sign of their importance. All ^qunderstanding^q of

anything of general importance turns on our mastery of the ranges of ideas which such words cover. I put "understanding^q here in these specialized quotation marks (q for *query*) to note the fact that it is another of them and to suggest that in reading it we have to make out, if we can, which of its possible meanings it probably has. To assume that we know this too soon with any such word is the most frequent cause of bad reading. Later—at the end of Chapter Four—we will consider the use of various specialized quotation marks as part of the technique of analyzing the difficulties met with in reading.

This *systematic* ambiguity of all our most important words is a first cardinal point to note. But "ambiguity" is a sinister-looking word and it is better to say "resourcefulness." They are *the most important words* for two reasons:

1. They cover the ideas we can least avoid using, those which are concerned in all that we do as thinking beings.
2. They are words we are forced to use in explaining other words because it is in terms of the ideas they cover that the meanings of other words must be given.

A short list of a hundred such words will help to make these reasons for their importance clearer.

Amount, Argument, Art, Be, Beautiful, Belief, Cause, Certain, Chance, Change, Clear, Common, Comparison, Condition, Connection, Copy, Decision,

Degree, Desire, Development, Different, Do?, Education, End, Event, Example, Existence, Experience, Fact, Fear, Feeling, Fiction, Force, Form, Free, General, Get, Give, Good, Government, Happy, Have, History, Idea, Important, Interest, Knowledge, Law, Let, Level, Living, Love, Make, Material, Measure, Mind, Motion, Name, Nation, Natural, Necessary, Normal, Number, Observation, Opposite, Order, Organization/ Part, Place, Pleasure, Possible, Power, Probable, Property, Purpose, Quality, Question, Reason, Relation, Representative, Respect, Responsible, Right, Same, Say, Science, See, Seem, Sense, Sign, Simple, Society, Sort, Special, Substance, Thing, Thought, True, Use, Way, Wise, Word, Work.

I have, in fact, left 103 words in this list—to incite the reader to the task of cutting out those he sees no point in and adding any he pleases, and to discourage the notion that there is anything sacrosanct about a hundred, or any other number. A discussion of why they were chosen comes in Chapter Seven, and a commentary on some of the behavior of the most important of them keeps my last four chapters busy. Notes on others pepper these pages. Here the point to make is that the very usefulness which gives them their importance explains their ambiguity. They are the servants of too many interests to keep to single, clearly defined jobs. Technical words in the sciences are like adzes, planes, gimlets, or razors. A word like "experience," or "feeling," or "true" is like a pocket-knife. In good hands it will do most things—not very

well. In general we will find that the more important a word is, and the more central and necessary its meanings are in our pictures of ourselves and the world, the more ambiguous and possibly deceiving the word will be. Naturally these words are also those which have been most used in philosophy. But it is not the philosophers who have made them ambiguous; it is the position of their ideas, as the very hinges of all thought.

To say, then, that a reader's sagacity comes from *experience* in reading is not to say much unless we can do something to clear up what is meant here by ^qexperience.^q In a rough way everyone will agree. A good doctor gets his ability to diagnose from experience. A good judge gets his discernment from experience. But what is this experience which gives some men so much and others so little? It is not having many things happen to one merely. Some who have read little read well; others who have read much read badly. What happened and how it happened matter more than the quantity or variety of happenings. If we are to get any light on the reading process, on why it goes wrong and on how it might be improved, we must look as closely as we can into our own minds as we read and form as live a conception as we may of the sort of experience with words in sentences which makes better readers.

In the chapters which follow a connected series of passages will be put before the reader with which he may study his own proceedings as he reads. Some of them offer stiff challenges to any reader. Points of

interpretation are then taken up and what they seem to turn on is discussed. These studies are designed to lead, in an order which will not be evident till later, to a grasp, in practice rather than in theory, of the main differences between better and worse reading. Further, these passages themselves discuss questions upon which anyone must enter who is interested in the art of learning, which is the growth and control of ideas. The plot thus is double: a series of exercises in reading to be studied introspectively, and a development of doctrine on the fundamentals of reading which is largely contained in the material of the exercises. After this the book takes up, in groups, some of the great words of the language, to distinguish some of the different ways in which we use them daily and the connections and contrasts between their uses. What is studied here is almost all expository prose. But a parallel book on the reading of poetry would have the same problems to face, and would find in the behavior of the same words the same answer.

TWO

AN OBVIOUS CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL ANIMALS

*When I raised my brows a little more, I saw
the Master of those who know, seated amid
the philosophic family.*

INFERNO iv, 131

THE main source of any view, sound or silly, which we have of how we read must be our own observations of our own doings while we are reading. We should supplement this by observations of others' behavior and their reports, but inevitably in interpreting such other evidence we start from and return to that picture of a mind at work which only introspection can supply.

We do not realize what an opportunity our reading affords us for these self-observations. There, in the most convenient form, is an admirable experimental setup. We need no colleague to set us tasks; the author takes that duty over. All that we have to do is to cultivate the trick of changing our easily observed reactions from a communion or dispute with him into notes on our own deliberations. There must, however, be some difficulty in the page we face to stir us to noteworthy maneuvers. Otherwise this page prefaced by "I saw that . . ." would serve as a record of our

doings. Any page which stretches our power of comprehending can teach us much about how we grope, and comparison of a number of pages—if we did not let our interest in the search too soon overcome our interest in the searching—could show us useful differences between guessing and grasping. On the other hand, there must be something on the page we really care about understanding. Otherwise we will go through the motions of reading only and the result will be uninformative.

It is an advantage if the passages we use for these experiments form a series presenting in different settings and with different verbal expression somewhat similar problems to thought. The operations with which we work at them—generalization, abstraction, deduction, induction, division, exemplification, assumption, definition—have flavors of their own, which we learn to recognize as we become clearer as to what we are doing in them. As topics to *discuss* they are all but stupefying. Logicians long ago proved that to us. Only adepts long inured to them can keep awake. Only a minimum of such discussion will appear in these pages. We propose to practice these operations rather than to discuss them. And through practice we can become better aware of what they do than through even the clearest discussion.

In reading we are performing these operations all the time. Each has its own characteristic mishaps, and these stumblings have their own distinctive feelings. We can sometimes know that we are going wrong without being able yet to see what has happened. It

is such observations that we will be on the lookout for.

I will add after each passage a commentary designed to help a reader:

1. to notice what he does with them in a first perusal.
2. to compare this with what happens in later, more questioning attention.
3. to compare both with various suggested possibilities.
4. to notice upon what points any decision about the meaning of the passage turns for him.

Inevitably I will have my own views about the interpretations of the passages. To hide them would be artificial and the attempt would probably fail. My aim will not be to get the reader to agree with me in my readings. I have no very robust confidence that they are right. So I will not be expounding them as I would if persuasion were the aim. Just what our passages say is, for our purpose here, less important than *how* they say it and how they may say different things to different readers. It is the reading process rather than the products we are to study.

On the other hand, it would be idle to invite so much attention to passages which could not say rather important things, or in which the ambiguities were not of a sort which recur everywhere in writing. My extracts will therefore be, most of them, from great writers, and will treat questions of the first or-

der of importance. And these questions will be those we will inevitably have in mind in considering our experience while reading. Thus we may with them sometimes be catching more than one bird with the same throw of the net. Most of the passages will be difficult, some very. It is the difficulties of reading we are studying. In each case please read through once carefully. Then sit back and try to collect and survey what you have gathered before reading my remarks and returning to study the passage.

My first passage, which is among the hardest, gives us Aristotle's account of "learning by experience." It comes from the last pages (99^b 33-100^a 9) of the *Posterior Analytics*.

It will be followed by a version in Basic English (see Chapter Seven below). I shall be making much use of the techniques of Basic English throughout. Being pinched within the limits of 850 words forces one to look at the original one is translating with an intentness hard to keep up otherwise. By cutting out the easy synonym it makes one go into the possibilities of the forbidden words more deeply. Here "perception" (which Aristotle is describing for us) will be the only non-Basic word used.

Aristotle has asked how we get to know the basic, primary or immediate, premises from which demonstration leading to scientific knowledge sets out. Demonstration has to start from things undemonstrated. How have we come to know such things? Are we born with the knowledge and does the infant just fail to notice he has it? That would be too strange. On the

other hand, it can't just pop into our minds complete without there being anything from which it is developed.

Therefore we must possess a capacity of some sort, but not such as to rank higher in accuracy than these developed states. And this at least is an obvious characteristic of all animals, for they possess a congenital s discriminative capacity which is called sense-perception. But though sense-perception is innate in all animals, in some the sense-impression comes to persist, in others it does not. So animals in which this persistence does not come to be have either no knowledge at all outside 10 the act of perceiving, or no knowledge of objects of which no impression persists; animals in which it does come into being have perception and can continue to retain the sense-impression in the soul: and when such persistence is frequently repeated a further distinction is at once arises between those which out of the persistence of such sense-impressions develop a power of systematizing them and those which do not. So out of sense-perception comes to be what we call memory, and out of frequently repeated memories of the same thing de- 20 velops experience; for a number of memories constitute a single experience. From experience again—i. e., from the universal now stabilized in its entirety within the soul, the one beside the many which is a single identity within them all—originate the skill of the craftsman and as the knowledge of the man of science, skill in the sphere of coming to be and science in the sphere of being.

The first time we read through this we are likely at places to feel a little like those animals in whom no impression persists. What is said seems too cloudy or

too folded over upon itself to be taken in. One such place will be perhaps at lines 9-10, where the *either* ... or comes. This feels like a crumple in the discourse. It is as though Aristotle were saying the thing twice, or we were seeing double. And we may notice the same effect at other places, as in the following sentence: "animals in which it [What's *it*? The persistence of course] does come into being have perception and can continue to retain the sense-impression in the soul." Here if "the persistence docs come into being" it seems unnecessary to add that the animals "can continue to retain the sense-impression in the soul" That is said already. This redundancy of expression is very characteristic of Aristotle and may have something to do with his lecturing technique. These are lecture notes, and the repetitions can be so inflected by the voice that they amount to emphasis, or a sort of soothing confirmation to the listener that he *has* got the point. In reading with the eye we miss these pointers as to when it is a new nail being driven or just another tap on one already home. It will be found in general that reading a passage aloud with this sort of thing in mind is an enormous help in giving perspective to an argument, making its structure more evident, and focusing one's attention on the right places.

Developing the structure of the argument in this way goes, of course, along with questioning the meaning of its words and phrases and with tentative decisions as to what is said. As a means of getting that ready for discussion, let me offer here a simplified

translation. (Of the English passage as it stands. I have no pretensions to be able to comment on the fidelity of the Oxford version to the Greek.) This version may both bring out the structure, as I see it, and give you something to compare with what you have found.

So we have to be able to get this knowledge in some way but not in a way which makes it righter than the knowledge which comes out of it. And this is clearly true of all animals, for they have from birth a power to see different things as different, which is named "sense-perception." But though all animals have sense-perception by birth, some of them keep what it takes in, and some of them don't. Those which don't ever become able to keep these things have no knowledge at all when the act of sensing isn't going on. Those that are able to keep the effects of sensing and keep them again and again are of two sorts. There are those which become able through keeping them to put them into some order and those which don't. So out of sense-perception comes to be what is named "memory." And out of frequent memories of the same thing comes experience; for a number of memories make up one experience. From experience again—that is, from the general form now fixed as a complete thing in the mind, the one thing which is the same in any number of examples—come the art of the workman and the knowledge of the man of science, art as having to do with changing things and science as having to do with what is ever the same.

Now let us compare this rendering with the original and note some of the problems which came up in making it:

1. line 2, *higher in accuracy: righter*, as one answer to a question is nearer to the right answer than another. *Accuracy, precision, exactness* are difficult words to be clear about. They share some of the troubles of *true* and some of those of *definite*. A definite answer need not be true, nor a true one definite. If we try hard enough to see what *true* and *definite* may mean we will not be surprised that true and definite interpretations are so hard to arrive at.
2. line 5, *congenital discriminative capacity: power to see different things as different*. *See* is (by metaphor) short for "perceive through any of the senses." That would not mislead. But *see* might suggest that all animals do more than respond differently to some sorts of different things, that they *see* (i. e., understand as a philosopher might) what the differences are. Aristotle is thinking of no such intellectual feat. This discriminative capacity is just the ability to be affected differently when their surroundings are different in certain ways, that is, to vary with their surroundings in certain ways. Lifeless bodies have this ability too—in very limited ways, however. A billiard ball is affected differently by different pushes, but it is little influenced by smells if at all.
3. line 6, *innate: by birth*. I hesitated between *by*, *from*, and *at birth* here. *By* might suggest that the process of birth gave them the power, but that is

not a likely interpretation. *From* and *at* suggest that they have it the moment they are born. But an innate power may come into operation only later. Kittens have to open their eyes before they see different things as different. The notion of innate powers, like that of inheritance, collapses if we look at it too closely, as Aristotle knew. "Innate" and "congenital" say no more than that an animal has the power under the right conditions. What we are born with has to have certain conditions if it is to come out. So the contrast between heredity and environment is a false one if we make them independent. Under different conditions we would be found to have inherited different powers.

4. line 13, *and when such persistence is frequently repeated: those that are able to keep the effects of sensing and keep them again and again.* The problem here is whether the impressions which have to be kept if the power of systematizing them is to develop are of the same sort or not. I was tempted to write "able to keep the different effects of sensing." That would make a more satisfactory theory. But Aristotle might only have in view the return again and again of the same impression $a, a_2 a_3 \dots a_n$ leading to A , the universal or form which they share. On the other theory the thing would be more complex. By "the persistence is frequently repeated" he would mean that $a, a_2 a_3 \dots$

and $b_1 b_2 b_3 \dots$

and $C_1 c_2 c_3 \dots$ came back. Not only

that but there would be such repetitions as

$$a_1 b_1 a_2 b_2 a_3 b_3 \dots$$

$$a_1 b_1 a_2 c_2 a_3 c_3 \dots$$

$$a_1 b_1, C_1 a_2 b_2 c_2 a_3 b_3 c_3 \dots \therefore$$

The same sense impressions come back *in varying frames of other impressions*, and it would be through *that*, not through mere unvarying repetition, that "the power of systematizing them" would be developed. It is hard to see why any number of repetitions of the same impression, however well they are retained, should become anything other than an embarrassing crowd of them. But "the universal . . . the one beside the many which is a single identity within them all" is certainly not a swarm of impressions. The impressions are the many; the one is their form, that which makes them the same. The evidence *here* that Aristotle held the more complex theory is the next phrase I now discuss.

5. line 16, *systematizing them: putting them into some system*. I might have written (still in Basic), "sorting and ordering them and separating their different connections with one another," for that is what has to be done if this kind of knowledge is to arise. The systematizing which constitutes experience and supplies our basic premises is very much more than merely noting "thingumbob again!" A typical basic premise, guaranteed by experience, is: *tapping with one's fingernail on a table makes a sharp little sound*. This is woven in

with such other premises as *tapping so on a can, on a stove . . . makes a different sound*, and *tapping so with the soft tip of the finger makes hardly any sound*. The fabric these belong to is so vast that I could easily fill this book with nothing but such commonplaces of experience all connected with one another through universals. The universal which my wording makes prominent here is *tapping*. These are all instances of tapping. A much more embracing universal is *make*, which is indeed one of the topmost powers in the hierarchy (makes a sound, makes sense, etc.). *Tapping* is a fairly specific universal. It divides up into light-impacts-between-surfaces-of-solids, say, all of which are more general universals. *Make* is a very general universal and is perhaps indivisible. We meet a baffling simplicity if we try to say what making is. *Systematizing* here is the coming into the soul of universals and the growth of their connections with one another there. It is these connections which stabilize them. "The soul is the place of forms," says Aristotle elsewhere. Here he says, "within the soul." Maybe we confuse ourselves with this spatial metaphor *in* the soul. We would if we took it seriously. But the metaphor is too convenient to be abandoned. It might be more accurate to say that the soul just is the universals which knit together all it knows, as we might say that its knowledge (compare the metaphor in *cognition*) was that knitting together. But these are hardly lucid ways of talking. (Or overlucid? We have with

them the same difficulty that we have in seeing empty space.)

6. line 13, *soul: mind*. Basic does not include the word "soul," but adds it for its version of the Bible. "Soul" identifies for us Aristotle's word here (*ψυχή*), but we should not lightly identify Aristotle's conception of the soul with a Christian one or with any other. He is writing psychology here, and modern psychology in spite of its name has for such uses replaced "soul" by "mind." My change would therefore not mislead unless the reader were thinking of other Greek words which would have to be translated by "mind."
7. line 18, *memory*. Psychology distinguishes memory from retention, the persistence Aristotle is talking of here, and limits "memory" to remembering and what is remembered. When we remember some event we look back to it. But the effects of the event may persist without our remembering it. We do not have to remember former acts of tapping tables in order to know what sound will be made. It is retention—the persistence of past events—which forms experience here. It is not memory in the sense in which you will use your memory when you write your memoirs.
8. line 20, a number of memories *constitute a single experience: make up one experience*. "Experience" here plainly means something very different from the most frequent current use—"That raid was a

terrific experience"—or the sense in which teachers, for example, talk so much about "worth-while experiences/" In Aristotle's sense we do not get experience by just going through events but by learning something *general* or universal therein. "I regard as genuine knowledge only that which returns again as power," said Coleridge. The power is the ability to recognize, to know again that universal (or *with* that universal, if we make it the power of knowing rather than what is known).

Constitute is a troublesome word. Does it mean "set up" or "actually are"? A number of words have this same trick: *compose*, *consist* ("By Him all things consist—*Colossians* I:17), *form*, and *make* are examples. They are very convenient when we do not know which we mean, or when it does not matter, but they are a nuisance at places like this. The only thing to do is to explore both possibilities as far as we can. We get two theories:

- a. That Aristotle is stating as a matter of fact that a number of persisting impressions develop into or cause to come into being *something else*, a universal.
- b. That he is pointing out that, after all, an experience (as a universal) really is what is common to a number of persisting impressions. As soon as the impressions are taken together by the mind as being *of the same thing*, the universal is at work. They couldn't be of the *same* thing, without it.

Why a *single* experience? To raise the contrast driven home in the next sentence between the plural impressions and the one universal. We keep this use in sentences like "My experience is that such men don't go far." On the other hand, most pedagogic talk about "worth-while experiences" is about multifarious impressions.

9. line 22, *in its entirety: as a complete thing*. Universals seem hard to think of, or even self-contradictory, chiefly because we try to imagine them, to see them in the mind's eye as if they existed in space. So when we say a universal is *in* many things and *in* many minds, if we do not take these *ins* literally, at least we give them a ghost's body. We think of universals as having parts: the phrase "in its entirety" is there to defend us from this habit.
10. line 26, *the sphere of being: what is ever the same*. Science is knowledge of the unchanging. This may seem odd since the scientific worker is studying changes all the time. But what he is trying to know is the law of some change; and laws are unchanging. *Art*, since for Aristotle here it is concerned with making things, or with practical activity as in medical treatment, is a knowledge of how to make changes. Both originate in experience. The scientist would have no changes to study and the artist-workman no *things* to change, if the universals had not been stabilized in their soul as experience. They would merely be indescribable chaos.

THREE

TO LEARN, COMPARE

No one can justly or successfully discover the nature of any one thing in that thing itself, or without numerous experiments which lead to farther inquiries.

FRANCIS OF VERULAM'S *Great Instauration*

WE may now pause to consider what, so far, in the process of reading as we have been observing it here in our minds, offers any suggestion toward a technique for improving reading. A number of points seem worth noting. I believe most readers will confirm them.

1. When eye reading alone does not give us a clear sense of the grammar and of the logical structure, we tend to switch speaking and hearing on. We can do this in two ways which are, as it were, degrees of realization or actualization of the sentences.

(a) We read it in imagination—producing *images* of the speech movements and of the sound of the words.

(b) We really utter the words faintly or out loud.

I have already mentioned the aid that vocal reading can be in giving structure to the argument. It is

an experimental manipulation, a testing procedure on trial-and-error lines. We shall be considering trial and error as a mode of learning in some detail shortly—in connection with motive, reward, and experience, and as to its bearing on reading. While noting that reading a thing out loud may be a great help, we should not forget that it can be a great hindrance. As the name "trial and error" (rather than "trial and triumph") suggests, there are likely to be more errors than successes. The eye is a more neutral agent than the voice. Or, to put it more fairly, the voice, if there has been failure, can easily add a very persuasive garb or garble of rhythm and intonation to support the misinterpretation. This commonly happens when the cause of the misinterpretation has been prejudice—the interference of some sentiment. Nothing is easier than to make words ring out or fall flat as we please, to our own ears—especially if we don't know we are doing it. So the chances of our detecting the twist we are giving in our reading are much reduced. When other people read things to us, we often think, "So long as you read it *that way* you can't possibly understand what it says!" We should more often be saying the same thing to ourselves. In particular, a certain querulous questioning tone—"What *can* it mean?"—is an enemy of comprehension. Read it as though it made sense and perhaps it will.

2. In addition to reading the words on the page to ourselves in various ways and with various tones, we can add to them—anything from ejaculations, de-

lighted or derisive, to an analytic commentary. Some people do no little talking to themselves while reading. For them, it is very much a part of the reading process. With argumentative matter the reader should talk back as much as possible unless he is merely fighting, talking for a victory there will be no one but himself to award. Though debate is silly, reasoning is still dialogue, as Plato said.

This touches a large theme—the different modes of reading suited to different types of writing. I will make only one comment here. It is absurd to read everything—poetry, prose, pulp—alike, especially to read it all as *fast* as possible. Whom are they fleeing from, these running readers? I fear the only answer is, "Themselves." Anything that is worth *studying* should be read *as slowly* as it will let you, and read again and again till you have it by heart. Only so will the persistencies be repeated frequently enough for a power of systematizing them to develop. But "Let us not pass an act of uniformity against poets," said Coleridge. I would add, "or against readers either." Still most of us read too fast rather than too slowly. This opinion goes bang in the teeth, I know, of the massed professional teachers of the reading art, those who are telling one another so often that they are failing to teach it. They will brandish their figures to show that the fastest readers get most. Their conception of comprehension, however, and of the aim of reading is so very different from that presented in these pages that I am not daunted. One may still ask: How do you

know they would not have got something of another order if they had not sped so fast? Have their speeding teachers themselves got quite enough out of their reading to be able to judge? And these are things which no "comprehension test" yet devised can measure. But all this belongs to our conclusions, when we have studied the process of reading in much greater detail.

3. From internal dialogue to rephrasing is a small step. Most people find that having two versions of a passage before them opens up the task of exploration immensely. This is true even when one version is clearly very inferior; its presence still throws the implications of the other into relief. So a black-and-white reproduction of a picture can make us see what the color in the original is doing. A better parallel, perhaps, is with photographic surveying. Two versions are like two views from slightly different angles. If we can fit them together, each tells us much about the things seen in the other. This parallel with visual space might be taken further: compare Chapter Six and Chapter Ten on *See*.

These effects are striking enough to promise (if we can study them successfully) some real improvement in reading. And tradition in teaching backs up this hope. Translation work has been the main technique of literary education in the past. Now no one who knows how translation—whether from Latin into English or back again or with French or German either way—is ordinarily done and has ordinarily been done

in the past will see in that dreary and largely mechanical routine any saving virtue. It is only in the best translation work, which comes after the mechanics of the strange tongue have been mastered, and only in the hands of teachers who are themselves exacting readers, that the incessant comparisons required between different ways of saying more or less the same thing become any royal road to good reading. *Thorough* mastery of a foreign language, no doubt, always improves our understanding of the mother tongue in some degree. Getting a smattering does not. Even the first steps in a foreign tongue *can* be made a profitable study of our own language, but current practice fails to do this; and the grim toil which follows consists mainly in replacing, one by one, words we hardly understand at all with words we have not time to consider—or vice versa. So my reference here to translation as a method of improving reading will not cheer up anyone to whom translation means primarily that. But there is an altogether different sort of translation in which both languages, as to the routine handling of their mechanics and the pocket-dictionary senses of their words, are fully grasped. The task then can become a deep exploration of meaning, a perfect exercise for developing resource and justice in interpretation.

The same merits can be possessed by English—English translation, if we put certain controls on it which bar out synonym trading and glosses which dodge or veil the difficulties. Basic English offers us many possibilities of such controls, which are touched

on in Chapter Seven, but here I wish to keep to the hints which reflection on our reading of the Aristotle passage may give us.

Comparison seems to be the key to all learning of this type. Learning to read is not fundamentally different from learning to be a good judge of wine, or of horses, or of men. Persistence of effects must be repeated frequently enough to become systematized. And, for progress to be rapid, effects whose similarities and differences—their sameness amid difference rather—are instructive should persist together. Some people can compare things across wide intervals of time. They go ahead faster than the rest of us. Others cannot make subtle comparisons between things which do not overlap in their effects. Everything depends, of course, on what things are being compared by whom. What I have just been saying applies chiefly to first comparisons between somewhat novel things in somewhat novel respects—the earliest stages of the systematization about which Aristotle was talking. The more any body of perceptions becomes systematized, the easier it becomes to span vast stretches of time in comparing examples within it. A real expert can identify a wine and its condition even though he has not tasted any similar wine for years. But that is only because his experience became well systematized in the bygone days when he was tasting such wines. And then, no doubt, his comparisons were not very widely spaced apart.

Now, if reading is a matter of organized comparisons between meanings, as it certainly is, it should

not be difficult to arrange things so that the best opportunities for the growth of this organization or systematization are secured. What we have to do is put the materials for distinctions and connections about which we are not clear enough *together*, so that the univorsals can develop through comparison. And we will do this best by using different ways of saying "the same thing" in close collocation.

But four very important qualifications must be made or this program will lead us into nothing but folly:

- (a) We must know which are the important distinctions and connections.
- (b) We must be very much on our guard with the phrase "the same thing."
- (c) We must respect the fundamental conditions of interest.
- (d) We must recognize that failure to see an important distinction or connection is most often due to our not *wonting* to see it.

I will take these up in turn, and then pass on to some experiments with another passage in the light of these reflections.

(a) I have mentioned already—when listing my hundred great words—the chief reasons which make some distinctions and connections more important than others. Let me restate them here in another form. The most important ideas (and an idea here is a form of distinction and connection) are the *necessary* ones

in the sense that we cannot do without them. They enter inevitably into all our thinking, for thinking is just another name for the operation of these ideas. Typical among them are the ideas covered by *same*, *different*, *change*, *cause*, *thing*, *idea*, *part*, *whole*, *abstract*, *concrete*, *general*, *special*, *form*, *implies*, *matter*, *quality*, and *relation*. Language has an inexhaustible variety of ways of expressing these ideas, and we may easily fail to notice that they are serving still as the structure of our thought. Sometimes, too, we may handle them better through language which does not make them prominent by using these bald and somewhat formidable words. More often, though, we miss a point or confuse an argument by failing to see that under the attractively novel phrasing, and behind its special graces, we have to do with the same familiar joints and muscles and bones.

To say we cannot do without these ideas may seem to get us into a difficulty. If we have them and use them all the time already, what is the point of working up great programs for teaching ourselves about them? The point is that no one is as skillful with them as he might be, and that much of the inefficiency of thought and language comes from needless blundering with these ideas. But here again we must note that skill with them is not in the least the same thing as being able to propound even the best theories about them. A first-rate authority on the foundations of mathematics might well be a poor mathematician. And so it is throughout. Our aim will not be improved theory of language but improved conduct with it.

If we can improve our conduct of these ideas, our reward is everywhere. That is why time given to the words which can handle them least confusingly is better spent than time given to distinctions and connections which are only locally useful.

If we open a dictionary of synonyms we are faced with thousands of subtle problems. The early nineteenth-century compilers used to attempt to *state* distinctions between usages—with all but uniformly absurd results. The only thing that will show us what these different implications are is watching them at work. And only then, when we see with the help of all around it what a word is doing, can we fruitfully attempt to state this, or by experiment explore differentiations. When we do so we discover that there is a certain limited set of words which we use most in such attempted elucidations. They form a language within a language—the words needed in explaining the rest of the language. The ideas these words cover are fewer than we suppose, though there is something very artificial about pretending that we can *count* such things as ideas. All we can say is that the meanings of words are relatively compound or simple, and that careful analysis *in contexts* can as a rule break down a complex meaning into simpler ideas acting together in a certain form. It is the simpler ideas (and the words which handle them best) that are the most important for us to study if we are to improve our reading. No one will pretend, of course, that an improved understanding of these ideas will by itself teach us what different things different complexes of them will

do. For that we need experience of the complexes themselves at work. But better knowledge of the simples will certainly help to form that experience of complexes at work.

(b) We have now to take a look at some of the problems behind the innocent-seeming words "say the same thing." Both "say" and "same" need our best attention. Their meanings are closely intertwined.

When something is *said*, words are uttered (whether through waves in the air or patterns of rays from the surface of paper does not matter here) which have certain effects. How widely and generally, or how narrowly and specifically, are we to take these effects? Looked at closely enough, they are never the same for two readers or for the same reader twice. Looked at indiscriminatingly enough, they are much the same always. (What other words come with them, what the situation is, and so on, must, of course, be kept in mind throughout.) -Whether for practical purposes we account them *the same* depends upon two things: upon our purpose and upon the respects in which they are the same and different. (Compare Chapter Ten, on DO, for an illustration.)

All this, which is wearying to write out and still more wearing to read, we all know in a sense very well already. Yet we endlessly talk and frequently (alack) think as if in forgetfulness of it. We assert that two phrases say the same or that they do not, as if that were something which turned on the phrases alone—in utter independence of who reads them and

when and why and within what setting. Probably when we do this we are assuming a host of things: including a standard reader with some sort of normal purpose and a standard setting and range of situations. We would be very hard put to it, indeed, if we had to be specific about these assumptions. But we are rather suspiciously careful not to explore them. We take them for granted and people are only too ready, in fact, to grant them. We seem even to suffer from a fear that questioning these assumptions will lead to no good, will shake the foundations of communication perhaps and let anyone with any word mean anything he pleases.

This background fear is empty, though its roots are perhaps deep in man's first speculations about language when he first began to experience its magical powers. Nobody perhaps, after reflection, now believes that words have their meanings in their own right, as our bodies have their minds. We have replaced that old belief with another which looks much more plausible but is as groundless. It is the belief in a sort of compact or agreement between all good users of the language to use words only in certain limited ways.¹ It is true enough that we do behave with words *as if* some such compact ruled their uses. But the explanation in terms of usage agreement is wrong. The stability of the language has other causes. It comes from our experience of the ways in which

¹I have written at some length and in detail about this in my *Interpretation in Teaching*, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1938. See Chapter XVI. Also in my *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Oxford Press, New York, 1936, Lecture III.

words are tied up with one another. A language is a fabric which holds itself together. It is a fabric which, for the most part brokenly and confusedly but sometimes with startling and heartbreaking clarity (as we may see later), reflects the fabric of universals which is our world.

There is no risk whatever, then, in questioning the assumptions which make us say two phrases must or can't mean the same. And to be able to question them—not as a piece of linguistic theory but in practice as they come up—is a large part of the art of reading. We ought to be incessantly ready to ask of two phrases which seem "more or less to mean the same" just wherein (and for whom) are their effects alike and wherein different. And to decide whether—for the purpose in hand, which is what the whole passage is swayed by—the differences are relevant. If they are not, we can be indifferent to them. But with a slight change in the purpose they might become very important. Any ruling on such points which does not take the purpose into account is an attack on language. We ought to fear pedants who cry, "But that *isn't* the meaning of the word," much more than any rash or wanton innovator.

One other quirk in our behavior with phrases said to mean the same is also perhaps connected with remnants of magical beliefs. My Basic English version of the Aristotle passage, for example, says, *more or less*, what the Oxford translation says. In comparing two versions our minds sometimes perform this antic: instead of regarding them as two sets of words

which in some ways have similar outcomes in other ways different, we may suddenly find ourselves thinking, of one, "So *that* is what he was trying to say!" We are then likely to follow it up with, "It's a pity he didn't say it!" In extreme cases (and none such will probably occur in this instance) what happens is that the reader then identifies the thought with the *words* of the version he prefers. They become for him what the other passage is (inefficiently) saying, and he makes no comparison between meanings. He is helped in this by the chief regular systematic ambiguity of *say*: We say certain words and then *they* may say more than we are saying with them. These three *say*'s say very different things—as we see if we replace them with more explicit phrases: We give voice to certain words and then they may be taken to mean more than we have in mind.

(c) There are few important words which are not in varying patterns systematically ambiguous; *say* is typical. These *regular* shifts of sense as a rule give us little trouble in reading. Later, in Chapter Eight, I distinguish them as Part-Whole Shifts. But all untechnical words also *change* their meanings from place to place in discourse tunder the pressures of the purpose and the setting. And these Sense Content Changes (see Chapter Nine), because they are so closely related to the purpose, are specially important to follow. We need not *notice* them and usually do not; but we must submit to them if we are not to mislead. But because they are made against the re-

sistance of the word's normal relations with other words, the likelihood of misreading is considerable. If we accept the change we will probably never be aware that it occurred. If we don't, then we will either boggle at the passage and find discontinuity or nonsense in it, or more probably we will go on happily assured of a meaning which a better reader would see was not intended. If an author's purposes lead him to change the meanings of too many words, people do not go on reading him. He becomes too hard to follow—unless he is so great a writer and so adroit in relating his changes to one another that he reshapes language for us. Shakespeare is the great example. The interest of what he is doing has made us accept an experimental handling of language which otherwise would have been unreadable. He wrote, though, for an audience which was very skillful in interpretation. Thus language protects itself.

It is possible to collect examples of important words pushed out of their normal uses by various pressures. The great dictionaries contain such collections in an early, as yet little organized, stage of development. By drawing on these collections and appending paraphrases to show how words which in one place say one thing in another say another, tables and exercises affording unlimited opportunities for comparisons can be prepared. It might well be thought that these would provide the best means of improving reading. The traditional grammar books, however, by failing to teach the lessons they intended, have taught us another, of more value perhaps. We do not learn lin-

guistic points from tables and examples; we learn through using the language—not in exercises but in the pursuit of a meaning we are seeking for a specific not a general purpose. In other words, the desire to improve our reading, worthy though it is, won't help us unless it operates through the work of puzzling out a passage because we care what it says. The persistencies of effects—no matter how well we make them overlap—will not systematize themselves into experience (knowledge that returns as power) unless they are heated by an immediate sustaining interest.

(d) But interest, the great weldor (as the weldors spell it now, a *welder* being a machine: compare *actor* and *sailor*) of universals, is also the great logic-breaker. If we want to, or if something in us wants to establish something, we grow blind to any thwarting idea, however familiar it is or however obvious it might otherwise be; we deform our distinctions and connections to meet our aim, commit every sort of injustice and make the very word "argument" a term of derision. Mercury, the interpreter and messenger of Heaven, was also the patron god of rogues.

Most mistakes in reading look willful—not only to the man in the other camp but to the Impartial eye. Few of them are, but it is harder to be fair-minded in reading than we know, and a passion for the truth is misinterpretation's favorite guise.

I propose, then, that we study now in detail an example of controversial misreading. It is from the pen

of a trenchant writer and accomplished scholar, and illustrates, I believe, some of the most powerful and frequent techniques of misrepresentation with unusual clarity. With this, of course, I am prejudicing the case as much as I can. I am doing it of set purpose, counting on your natural tendency to ask if I am not perhaps doing the misreading. The passages I cite have the advantage that they take up again from another angle the problem of learning by experience. They take it up under the heading Learning by Trial and Error. We shall thus have the opportunity, while studying our own proceedings in reading them, to compare our interpretations with those we formed of Aristotle's teaching. In order to refresh and amplify these, I will close this chapter with the paragraphs in which Aristotle summarizes his view.²

We conclude that these states of knowledge are neither innate in a determinate form, nor developed from other higher states of knowledge, but from sense-perception. It is like a rout in battle stopped by first one man making a stand and then another, until the original formation has been restored. The soul is so constituted as to be capable of this process.

Let us now restate the account given already, though with insufficient clearness. When one of a number of logically indiscriminable particulars has made a stand, the earliest universal is present in the soul: for though the

² I am indebted to the Clarendon Press for permission to make these citations from the translation of the *Posterior Analytics* by G. R. G. Mure, "The Works of Aristotle" under the editorship of W. D. Ross.

act of sense-perception is of the particular, its content is universal—is man, for example, not the man Callias. A fresh stand is made among these rudimentary universals, and the process does not cease until the indivisible concepts, the true universals, are established: e. g., such and such a species of animal is a step towards the genus animal, which by the same process is a step towards a further generalization.

FOUR

RANDOM SCRATCHING AND CLAWING

*For however men may amuse themselves,
and admire, or almost adore the mind, it is?
certain, that like an irregular glass, it alters
the rays of things, by its figure, and different
intersections.*

FRANCIS OF VERULAM'S *Great Instauration*

MY passages come from Chapter XII of R. G. Collingwood's *Metaphysics*.¹ Its title is "A Pseudo-Science Refutes Itself," which gives us fair warning. The pseudo-science is psychology, I happen myself to have a strong prejudice against the sort of psychology Collingwood is attacking, and considerable sympathy with his philosophic positions as I understand them, so I seem to be well placed to observe his proceedings. He begins:

Among the characteristic features of a pseudo-science are the following. (1) Red herrings, or the pretence of discussing a topic belonging to the field with which it professes to deal, while in fact discussing a different topic not belonging to that field. . . .

1. *Example of Red Herrings.* I take a standard textbook, Professor W. McDougall's *Outline of Psychology*, and

¹ R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, Clarendon Press, 1940.

open it at p. 193. The chapter title is "Habit and Intelligence in Animals"; the section heading, "The Method of Trial and Error." The question under discussion is how "animals" (the author means non-human animals) learn. One way in which things are learnt is by "trial and error"; and this is the process of which we are to be offered a psychological account. . . .

Professor McDougall writes: "Much human, as well as animal, learning proceeds in this way, and many experimental studies of such animal learning have been made." lie exemplifies this by quoting E. L. Thorndike's famous experiments on cats. I repeat Professor McDougall's own summary,

"Thorndike confined young cats in cages . . . (whose) door was fastened . . . by a catch or button which could easily be turned by the animal. In each instance the cat was placed in the cage in a condition of utter hunger; and food was placed outside the bars of the cage, beyond reach of the cat's paw. The result . . . was that each animal scratched and clawed about the front of his cage for some time, until, in the course of these random movements, he turned the button, escaped, and secured food. Each animal was put through the process again and again; and in the main the result was that he gradually shortened the period of random movement, until after many repetitions he learned to go straightway to the button, turn it, and so escape."

Collingwood then comments—

In the facts here reported there is no shred of evidence, I will not say that the method of trial and error has been

employed, but even that any single one of the five stages which go to compose it has occurred.

(a) There is no evidence even suggesting, far less proving, that the cat began by forming an hypothesis as to the right way of getting out.

(b) There is no evidence suggesting that, even if it has formed such an hypothesis, the cat has asked itself whether that hypothesis is true.

(c) There is no evidence suggesting that, even if it has asked itself this question, the cat deliberately acts in a way by which it has planned to discover the answer.

(d) There is no evidence suggesting that when a certain movement has failed to secure its escape the cat decides to abandon the original hypothesis.

(e) There is no evidence suggesting that, even if this does happen, the cat then starts over again with a fresh hypothesis.

On the other hand, the evidence is not entirely neutral as to what is going on in the cat's mind. It suggests that the cat is riot "thinking" on any "method" whatever, but is behaving like a man who has lost his head under some such influence as that of panic fear, and is therefore not capable of using "the method of trial and error," or indeed any other method.

Except as to one point—the point of the whole argument—this is far easier reading than Aristotle. My commentary therefore can be brief.

1. Line 1. The unpleasant flavor of *pseudo* spreads to make *characteristic*, *features*, and *among* reek with the same scorn. *Characteristic* is very ready to take it. Nine times out of ten when we say "Characteristic of

her, isn't it?" we are *not* admiring. *Features* when they cease to be portions of the face or of a landscape, and become abstract, tend to suggest a sort of non-descript, what-you-may-call-'em character. If we were favorably inclined we would be more likely to say *characters*, *qualities*, *attributes*, or *marks*. *Among*, of course, reflects the implication that there are any number of other nasty features.

2. *Definition of Red Herrings*: This amounts to an outline of the argument to come. The rest documents it and then applies this definition by specifying the topic and the field. So we will do well first to consider the general definition carefully. It is perhaps complicated enough to bear restating:

" 'Red Herrings,' or falsely seeming to be talking about something in a field it puts itself forward as talking about while in fact talking about another thing not in that field." (Basic English version)

Four things at least will have to be clear if we are to be certain we have caught such a red herring:

- (a) What the science does profess to deal with.
- (b) What it deals with.
- (c) What the topic it is discussing is.
- (d) What field the topic belongs to.

In the course of deciding these things we shall have to ask how and by whom are such things settled? What is C.'s view on this? Would it be the same as McD/s? What should be ours and on what ground

could we rest it? The last of course is the point which matters.

Now as to the documentation: The chapter title and section heading in McD. are traditional. C. has taken a very representative specimen—as he should. Thousands of psychologists have lectured and written on "learning by trial and error" so, using Thorndike's and much similar material.

In the summary, let us especially note that the cat *gradually* shortened the time taken to escape and in the end learned to go *straightway* to the catch and turn it.

The systematization of persistencies, the growth of the universal, the seeing of the trick, takes time apparently. For a *number* of memories constitute a single experience, as Aristotle ventured to remark. The "seeing of the trick" is the experience here in Aristotle's sense. The random scratchings would be experiences in the modern pedagogue's sense.

We may wonder what is wrong so far. But now comes the application. Here C.'s own cat comes out of its bag at once, and the strategy of his attack is clear:

1. He has his own five-stage account of what *he* would call "The Method of Trial and Error."

2. This, as his documentation does indeed fully show, is not merely different from McD/s account but an account of a different thing.

3. McD., C. says, is pretending that what C. would call "trial and error" is *really* this other very differ-

ent thing. In so doing McD. is going out of his own proper field (as a psychologist) and tampering with C.'s field. He is "professing" to be doing psychology, and actually doing (or pretending to do) something which it is not psychology's business to meddle with.

C. sees behind all this a very deep and dark plot on the part of psychologists: nothing less than the intention "to suggest that there is no difference between scientifically testing an hypothesis and acting under such an influence as panic fear" (p. 126). And he finishes up by saying that McD.'s answer to the question: How do we think? *in the special case C. calls "trial and error,"* is "We do not think at all. What is called thinking is a random scratching and clawing about" (p. 126).

That is the charge. Has he proved it?

From our special point of view, as people trying to notice all we can about how we read, we must not be content with merely adjudicating on the argument. We want to see just why one person (C., for example) may think it completely valid and conclusive and another person may brush it aside with a sigh or a guffaw. We want to see what the differences in the reading processes of these two persons may be. The turning point is the phrase "trial and error." There are two things—evidently very different—which the phrase may name: C.'s five-stage affair and the doings exemplified by the cats. Is McDougall trying to show, or to suggest, that they are the same or is he not? I, or any psychologist, I believe, would answer

"He certainly isn't!" The grounds for that answer would be partly in what we know of McD/s writings and those of other psychologists. They do, in fact, labor to a man to insist on the difference between this—which *they* call "trial-and-error" procedure in learning—and what they call "higher level processes." And they pose as one of their chief problems whether C.'s sort of trial and error could develop out of "random scratchings" or whether some different principle is required. Actually the name "trial and error" has been technicalized in psychology for at least forty years as the name for this "random" behavior, and carefully kept from implying any higher level "conceptual" processes. C.'s argument depends upon the reader's not knowing this. How far he knew it himself, in some sense, is hard to say. He remarks—between my first and second excerpt— ". . . let us observe that the author does not propose to use the familiar phrase 'trial and error' in a new and esoteric sense, for he offers no definition of it. Evidently he means us to accept the phrase for what it actually is, a common expression in everyday use, and to understand him as meaning by it what in everyday use it actually means." This shows, I think, a certain nervousness. Appeals to "what in everyday use the word actually means" are *always* to be suspected in discussion. C. was far too discerning a writer not to realize that if McD. did mean something different the whole argument would be headed for the trash-can.

However this may be, I believe that a reader who

did not happen to know anything about the psychologists' use of the phrase "trial and error" would be able, merely from my excerpts from what C. wrote, to see that the phrase must mean two different things. What would the evidence be?

1. The very absence (on which C. so insists) of any shred of evidence that McD. supposes anything like C.'s "trial-and-error" process was occurring in the cats. One would say McD. is obviously talking about cats, not about C.

2. The very phrasing of the definition of a red herring. This presents us with two topics and two fields. We can't pretend to be doing A while really doing B unless A and B are *different* things we might be doing.

Watching such situations is a main part of the business of reading. They arise whenever there is any suspicion or accusation that a man is not talking about what he supposes or pretends he is talking about. And that can happen in most arguments. Examples as open and explicit as this are not very common. For a parallel case I may refer to Chapter XV of my *Interpretation in Teaching*, where the analysis is pushed much further. The argument there dissected is actually *about* how words get their specific uses in a passage, what settles what they mean *there*, which is another reason for referring to it at this point.

What settles for us here what McD. is dealing with and whether it is what he "professes to deal" with?

"The facts here reported" from Thorndike's experiments and the things he says about them. C. brings no evidence that McD. is talking about anything else—except McD.'s failure to say (with a definition of "trial and error") that he isn't. The only valid evidence, in such a case, of a gap between what a man *seems to be* talking of and what he *really is* talking of would be something he says, something incompatible with his professions. In general, all the reader has to rely on is his ability to see how the passage hangs together or how it fails to hang together.

NOTE

Specialized Quotation Marks

WE all recognize—more or less unsystematically—that quotation marks serve varied purposes:

1. Sometimes they show merely that we are quoting and where our quotation begins and ends.

2. Sometimes they imply that the word or words within them are in some way open to question and are only to be taken in some special sense with reference to some special definition.

3. Sometimes they suggest further that what is quoted is nonsense or that there is really no such thing as the thing they profess to name.

4. Sometimes they suggest that the words are improperly used. The quotation marks are equivalent to *the so-called*.

5. Sometimes they only indicate that we are talking of the words as distinguished from their meanings. "Is" and "at" are shorter than "above." "Chien" means what "dog" means, and so on.

There are many other uses. This short list will suffice to show how heavily we overwork this too serviceable writing device. Some of these uses accordingly are taken over by underlining (italics), but there again ambiguity easily arises. We italicize for empha-

sis (of several kinds) as well as to show that we are talking about words themselves or about some special use made of them. In speech, of course, many of these subtleties can be handled by intonation and pausing, though not equally well by all speakers.

In the discussion of the passages which follow, quotation marks will necessarily be given an inordinately heavy task to perform. There is no avoiding it. In all interpretation work we have to be able to hold up words and phrases for separate and special attention, and we have to do our best to indicate what our attitudes to them and to their meanings are. It is somewhat absurd, indeed, that writers have not long ago developed a notation system for this purpose which would distinguish the various duties these little commas hanging about our words are charged with.

As an experiment, therefore, I am introducing, to take the place of the usual quotation marks, a range of special symbols. They will be small letters placed, as quotation marks are, about the words, the phrases, and the sentences they single out. A key to this notation follows. It will be found in practice, I believe, that two glances at the key prepares the reader to recognize, without consulting it anew, what I suppose myself to be doing when I use the notation. It gives us a compact means of commenting on the handling of language—more comprehensible, less ambiguous, and less distracting than the usual devices of parenthesis, qualification, and discussion. I believe it will abridge both the optical and the intellectual labor of the reader.

KEY

- ^w ^w indicates that the word—merely as that word in general—is being talked about. The marks are equivalent to "the word." E. g., "^wtable^w" may mean an article of furniture or a list."
- ^r ^r indicates that some special use of the word or phrase is being *referred* to. The marks are equivalent to: Please refer to the place in the passage we should have in mind when this word comes. E. g., "^rNature^r for Whitehead is not Wordsworth's ^rNature.^r"
- ^a ^q indicates that our problem is, What does this word say here? Not whether anything it seems to say is acceptable or not. The marks are equivalent to Query: what meaning? There is no derogatory implication. Most ^Qimportant^q passages are, or should be, in this situation.
- ! !
! ! indicates surprise or derision, a Good Heavens! What-a-way-to-talk! attitude. It should be read 'shriek' if we have occasion to read it aloud.
- ^{nb} ^{nb} indicates that how the word is understood is a turning point in the discussion, and usually that it may easily be read in more than one way or with an inadequate perception of its importance. The sign is short for *Nota Bene*.
- ^{sw} ^{sw} indicates that we are comparing what is

said with the words and something said with other words. The marks are short for said with. It is useful when the question comes up, Are———and———the same or not? E. g., if someone says "Art is significant form," he may be saying "What I say with, 'Art/ is the same as I say with the words, 'significant form.'" If so, you might try to dissuade him from that verbal practice but you couldn't profitably^{nb} argue^{nb} with him. We would write, ^{sw}Art^{sw} is ^{sw}significant form.^{sw} But he might mean all sorts of different things which are exceedingly likely to be confused with this. (See below on the *Definition Snare* of BE, Chapter Ten.)

- ⁿ indicates that the word is the *name* that is being used and that we know what it names though we may not think it a good name. The sign is equivalent to "the so-called
—————."

Lastly I will use the mark =, equivalent to, to indicate that the words or phrases it links are to be taken as having the same^q meaning^q for the purposes in hand. This escapes the unfortunate suggestion: that whatever the first is talking about really is' the second. The usual device is to write (i. e.,———), which too often carries the suggestion that somehow we have no need to ask ourselves what the second explanatory word or phrase is itself standing for here.

(See p. 52.) An equally troublesome device is to add (or——), which commonly offers us a dangerous, though usually a crude, ambiguity. 'Or' then may be presenting an alternative thing or just another *name* for the same thing.

FIVE

TO UNITE, ABSTRACT

In answering he states the question, and expoundeth the terms thereof. Otherwise the disputants shall end, where they outfit to have begun, in differences about words, and be barbarous each to other, speaking in a language neither understands.

THOMAS FULLER, *Holy & Profane States* 2, 55

THE last passage, if I have been right about it, has shown us how even a man of great ability and encyclopedic knowledge—for Collingwood was all that—can be carried into farcical misreading and injustice by a determination to make a passage mean what he wished it to mean. Not very surprisingly, he accuses McDougall of just the sort of thing he himself is doing. The plot against traditional views of thinking, which he invents for the psychologists, is an analogue of his own plot against psychology.

But do not let us mistake the grounds for such a mistrust of psychology with the 'evidence'¹ he fished up against it. The evidence may be rotten and yet the distrust be sound. Its root was the belief that our traditional conceptions of ourselves and how we learn and think (which stem from Aristotle) are in danger from irrationalism, one of whose manifestations he saw in

psychology. Now irrationalism—the dethronement of reason in favor of something else: whether this be the passions, the unconscious, or any other causes which may be supposed to dictate what we will see as true—is at least a formidable bogey. Is it more than a bogey? Is it an actual present evil, a widespread disease of the mind preluding the arrest of science and the dissolution of our civilization? Anyone can make up a terrifying list of current human doings which might seem to be cases of people letting what they want tell them what they know. German race-theory is a favorite example. The Marxian view that a governing class gets its beliefs from its position in the class structure is another. You can add, to suit your fancy, anything from the persistence of Christian beliefs to the breakdown of marriage. There is no philosophy or social practice which some opponent has not traced to this source: desire overruling reason. The very doctrine that Reason rules and the very doctrine that it is only the servant of our interests are each open to the same charge: that if we want to believe it we can and that if we don't we won't. This is no new charge, of course; the Prophet of old put it perfectly:

As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;

The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

JEREMIAH V: 27-31

This is the immemorial warfare of the head and the heart which rages everywhere, from that high abstract plane on which it enters into the discussion of itself to the most concrete matter of choosing to give one or other of two meanings to a word. In every pulse of the reading process, intellect and will come together and what the outcome shall be is constantly the reader's problem.

In the last chapter, if I was ^{nh}right, ^{nb} we watched desire getting the better of reason. If I was ^{nb}wrong, ^{nb} you watched another example of the same thing. Most mistakes we might say are examples. But, wait a moment, hold on! What is a "mistake" for a view of reading which does not acknowledge Reason as its ruler? What would 'wrong' and 'right' mean here if we held that *something else* than Reason decides what we shall see as being true? What is that something else? Would it be as Ulysses said?

Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong—
Between whose endless jar justice resides—
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,

Must make perforce a universal prey,
And last eat up himself.

Troilus and Cressida

These lines apply everywhere, from the government of the state to the government of the soul. There is perhaps even a *specific* reference as well as the general reference to Plato. The tradition Shakespeare wrote with could have given it to him. This 'universal wolf' is the tyrant of Book VIII of *The Republic* who—at the moment he purges his party—is thereby turned into a wolf.¹

"Then everything includes itself in power"

may be a puzzling line. But 'includes' here means ^{8w}shuts itself up in and so becomes only that^w—as men defending a fort become only its defenders and give up all other human ways. When justice loses its name everything turns itself into power and power thereby turns into will, and will into appetite, till, at last, after destroying all else,

Here now in his triumph when all things falter,

Stretched out on the spoils which his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

If 'wrong' and 'right' still point to a ruler, are we sure that ruling power is not still Reason operat-

¹ Commenting on Hitler's safety pledges, Arizona's Senator Henry Fountain Ashburn remarked: 'Absolutely worthless. Anyone who believes Hitler's promises has sweetbreads for brains. Hitler is a lycanthropist (a werewolf).' *Time*, August 26, 1940.

ing *incognito*? In brief, what is our view of this Reason which fights with pressure groups among the desires which try to make us misread? Have we a view of it and can we improve it by watching Reason at work in our reading? Let us see. All the rest of this book will be the endeavor to reach such a view. This is not a matter to be settled in a preface, but the most important of all questions, that on which every other one turns. For it is about the ἀρχή, the first principle or archproblem, upon which depends not only how we will read but what we who read will be.

We have had three accounts of ways of learning in these passages, Aristotle's, the cat story, and Collingwood's method of deliberate experiment. With which of these do which of our doings in reading most accord? I shall be trying later, in Chapters Six and Twelve, to link them up as accounts of different modes of thought. But first we had better consider abstraction, for "abstraction" names the processes by which we do most of our thinking and the somewhat different processes by which we come by our accounts of such things. And here, from Professor A. N. Whitehead's *Modes of Thought* (p. 100), is a passage about abstraction (itself in highly abstract language) with which to ask ourselves all the questions we can about how we tackle his sentences and about how we abstract.

In sense-perception we discern the external world with its various parts characterized by form of quality, and interrelated by forms which express both separation and connection. These forms of quality are the *sensa*, such as

shades of blue, and tones of sound. The forms expressing distinction and connection are the spatial and temporal forms. The world, as interpreted by exclusive attention to such forms of sense-perception, I will term "Nature."

These forms, qualitative and spatio-temporal, dominate this experience. They are indifferent to emotion, being just themselves, namely, the vivid realization of things capable of abstraction from that instance of actuality with its cargo of emotion. Nature is devoid of impulse.

Sense-perception is the triumph of abstraction in animal experience. Such abstraction arises from the growth of selective emphasis. It endows human life with three gifts, namely, an approach to accuracy, a sense of the qualitative differentiation of external activities, a neglect of essential connections.

These three characters of the higher animal experience—namely, approximate accuracy, qualitative assignment, essential omission—together constitute the focus of consciousness, as in human experience.

This is the hardest passage this book will offer. Its only rivals will be some of my attempts at elucidation. So a methodical and elaborate approach will be suitable. Let me list a number of words and phrases for question. How are we to take the following?

sense-perception, discern, characterized, form of quality, express, sensa, as interpreted by, exclusive, dominate this experience, indifferent, being just themselves, vivid realization, capable of abstraction, actuality, cargo, devoid of impulse, selective emphasis, an approach to accuracy, qualitative differentiation of external activities, neglect of essential connections, essential omission, focus of consciousness, as in human experience.

That there should be so many points at which we will do well to stop and wonder is a tribute to the span of Whitehead's grasp as well as a sign of the alternate rarefaction and compression of his style. The reader will find that by taking pen in hand and making for himself a running commentary in other words on these points as they come, he will gain a much more lively awareness of how he is reading than he can get by working the example in his head. As a specimen of how such a commentary might run, let me annotate a few sentences which come from the same discussion two pages earlier and help to explain our passage.

Our more direct experience groups itself into two large divisions, each capable of further analysis. One division is formed by the sense of qualitative experience derived from antecedent fact, enjoyed in the personal unity of present fact, and conditioning future fact. In this division of experience, there are the sense of derivation from without, the sense of immediate enjoyment within, and the sense of transmission beyond. This complex-sense of enjoyment involves the past, the present, the future. It is at once complex, vague, and imperative. It is the realization of our essential connection with the world without and also of our own individual existence, now.

Now what is this saying? Some of my commentary must seem too easy reading, some very hard. While we are facing the difficulties Mr. Whitehead presents and waiting for the nutcrackers, let us consider hardness itself a moment.

It is the hard sentences and paragraphs which can do us good, as readers; our mental gums need

strengthening. But the hardness must be of the right sort. The hounds of thought can chew bones with profit, but not rocks. It is characteristic of us that though our mouths distinguish hundreds of different problems among the things they might bite or swallow—from plumstones to fishhooks and from sugar to glass—our intelligences behave in a less discriminating fashion. We seem confident we can cough up anything if need be. Once upon a time, it may be, primitive man—like the human infant who is said to represent him—chewed and swallowed everything. That was perhaps how we found out which things are poisonous. Perhaps our intelligences—our minds' mouths—are still in a like experimental stage of behavior, and we are not yet as casualty-conscious as we will be. We little know, perhaps, what price we pay for freedom. However this may be, it is certainly strange that we do not study more seriously and separate more clearly the different sorts of difficulty we meet with in our reading. When is the trouble due to the author's negligence or to his pains, for example? Is he trying too hard to make us see just what he is saying and nothing else? Or is he wandering happily on, talking to himself about his views and not caring a whit what we do? There is a common saying that what is written with difficulty is read with ease and another of the opposite effect. These seem as misleading as any such sayings. Some of the pages that are written without a second thought may be perfectly read likewise. And they may carry a full charge of im-

portant and even difficult meaning. But an author's watchful eye and helping hand, his careful preventions, pointers, warnings . . . the apparatus of *precisely*, *on the contrary's*, *latter's* and *former's*, *nonetheless*, *only's*, *simply's*, *nothing hut's* . . . his *generally's* (which may mean that it is or it isn't general^q), his *quite's* (which can mean opposite things on opposite sides of the Atlantic), his *token's* and *then's* so untimely, his limiting adjectives, qualifying clauses, and explanatory parentheses—all these anxious pains to keep us on his tracks have a way of losing us. *Absit omen*. Such remarks as these come home to a writer's bosom. Most of the remedies, in fact, for feared obscurity are worse than the disease, and my explanations may well be harder to understand than the passage I am elucidating. No matter. It is the exercise in attending to its own doings which strengthens the reading mind. We learn through it not to ask words to do more than they can. The rest is for us to do.

A modern poet—with far more to say than most and, as the author of *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, with more knowledge of what and how things may be said—puts every writer's problem with a rare and lovely candor in these lines:²

² From "Courage means running, in *The Gathering Storm* by William Einpson, Faber & Faber, London, 1940. "The urgent creed" may be a puzzling phrase; a proofreader queried it as a misprint for "urgent need/ But if we will think of the councils which draw creeds up, and what creeds are and do, and how urgently necessary it is for them 'to balance enough possibles,'" and how thenceforward they work as such balances . . . reasons enough for the word will appear.

As the operative clue in seeking treasure
 Is normally trivial and the urgent creed
 To balance enough possibles; as both bard
 And hack must blur or peg lest you misread

The writer, whatever his rank, has two main devices by which to make you "balance enough possibles" and thus support his meaning in your understanding. He may ^rblur^r—^{sw}make vague, general and unclear^{sw}—or he may ^rpeg^r—^{sw}fix, arbitrarily prevent from its natural movements. ^{sw}Both words have an unpleasant aura: ^wblur^w suggests smudges and the effects of rain drops, or tears, on handwriting; ^wpeg^w suggests exchange control and the prevention of inflation, a step reluctantly taken to avoid worse loss of value. The bard we imagine regrets these necessary steps more than the hack. Which needs them most is another question. But ^wblur^w at least reminds us that clarity can mislead: the precise, specific, concrete image offers us a thousand things to take up which are not to the author's purpose. The blurred or generalized meaning avoids that danger. Be "judiciously vague!" might be good advice if we understood enough what hides behind ^qjudiciously. ^q^wPeg, ^w on the other hand, reminds us that our easiest way to control a meaning is to pin it (even if somewhat cruelly) to some other meaning that is in recognized currency (even though the two would not otherwise behave alike).

We "blur" when—to avoid irrelevancies—we use a wider word than fits our thought. We "peg" when we adopt a routine word in current use in place of the

word which would better let our thought be itself. Pegging often blurs and blurring often pegs. But there is no point in technicalizing further these metaphoric descriptions. Most attempts to explain are attempts to un-blur or un-peg, and in making them we should remember that these things were probably done by the writer in the first place 'lest you misread.'

Now here is my gloss on Mr. Whitehead's sentences:

OUR MORE DIRECT EXPERIENCE

More ^qdirect^q than what? Than the rest of our experience? Direct? With nothing between it and us? Hard to understand so with ^rmore.^r ^wDirect experience^w and Immediate experience^w are traditional phrases—parallels, I suppose, of ^wdirect and immediate know\ledge^w; but it is clearer that we could have ^qknowledge^q either directly or through something. In such traditional phrases ^wdirect^w just insists that it is experience, here ^{8w}what is happening in consciousness,[^] that we are talking about, not something else known through it. (Compare Chapter Eleven on IDEA.) But *here*, with ^qmore,^q Whitehead seems to be suggesting that even in experience, so taken, there is a more and a less direct. Perhaps ^rdirect^r means ^{s*}full, complete, concrete, not abstracted^{sw}?

GROUPS ITSELF

We do not group it, so not = ^{sw}may be divided.^{sw}

INTO TWO LARGE DIVISIONS

Why 'large'¹? He is saying more than ^{sw}is of two general sorts^{8w}; while thinking of these divisions the

richness and extent of their variety is before him.

EACH CAPABLE OF FURTHER ANALYSIS.

Not HE=^{sw}which we might subdivide"¹" or ^w-able to be subdivided." ^rCapable^r suggests they can and will go on grouping themselves, separating rather than being separated. It is not we who by analysis here break them down. And yet it is! But not the we who write such tilings as this (or read them). Whitehead is using this artificial language partly to avoid such confusions. He is describing not how experience seems to the analyst but what it is in itself, if he can. There may be a parallel with cell-division throughout here, as though experience in the first large division and in further divisions were ""organizing"¹¹ itself.

At this point it will be a good plan for you to turn from this passage for a while and make your own gloss on the main passage from Mr. Whitehead (pp. 75-6) following or departing from this model as you will. Then you will have something of your own to compare mine (and Whitehead's) with when we come to it.

To continue:

ONE DIVISION IS FORMED BY

Not ^wmade up of^r but ^{iw}made up by: becomes what it is through^{-w}

THE SENSE OF QUALITATIVE EXPERIENCE

It might seem that a blank would do all that ^rsense^r does. By ^{iw}the force of qualitative experience^{1*}? But no. That would not get the point that the experience

itself senses the three things that follow. ^wSense^w might be ^wfeeling^w if that would suggest, too, that it was right in so feeling. ^rSense^r here also names that character which experience gets through the three things which now come.

^wQualitative^w carries special stress as the key word marking this large division of experience off from the other.

DERIVED FROM ANTECEDENT FACT

Coming from (out of) what has come before.

^wFact^w seems to have no special implication and to be merely a syntactic pin. In this division there is no contrast between fact and not fact.

ENJOYED IN THE PERSONAL UNITY OF PRESENT FACT

Had together as mine now. ^QEnjoyed^q—no implication of pleasure; it is a technical word^{8w} had as immediate experience.^{8*} Very much as in ^{8w}he enjoyed poor health^{8w} if we take out any ironical implications. 'Personal unity'^r is ^{8w}together in the way in which parts of a person's experience are together** which is different from all other togethernesses though it may well be their source, entering into all our ideas of different types of unity. This ^{8w}enjoyment^{8w} is sometimes made the same as ^wthe existence of the self.*^w Compare Hopkins:

God's most high decree

Bitter would have me taste. That taste was me.

AND CONDITIONING FUTURE FACT.

And making future fact be what it will be, being among the conditions of future fact.

IN THIS DIVISION OF EXPERIENCE, THERE ARE THE
SENSE OF DERIVATION FROM WITHOUT

Is this saying the same again? Yes, with the difference that space is replacing time.

THE SENSE OF IMMEDIATE ENJOYMENT WITHIN

Immediate,^w like 'direct,' reinforces 'enjoyment.'^w
^w\Within* suggests both ^{8v}'within the skin'^{sw} and 'in the personal unity of present fact/'

AND THE SENSE OF TRANSMISSION BEYOND.

What is the difference between 'without' and 'beyond'¹? It is as though experience here flowed through a tube. "Transmission*" seems to identify what is sent out with what is here now in a fashion which "conditioning future fact"^w refrains from.

THIS COMPLEX SENSE OF ENJOYMENT

^{8w}All this^{s*}? or only 'immediate experience within'?
No matter.

INVOLVES THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE.

We will do well to give this word 'involves' all its meaning here: ^{svv}rolls up in itself, spirally; gathers in, embraces, includes"* ('My love involves the love before'¹—Tennyson); the peculiar returning-on-itself motion of a snake; the old mathematical sense of multiplication by itself; the philosophic sense in which a higher form involves lower forms as its conditions; even the mystical sense in which the Sufi exclaims, "I am the wine whose vine is its jar." It will be noted that past, present, and future themselves receive as much light from their involvement in this enjoyment as it does from them.

IT IS AT ONCE COMPLEX, VAGUE, AND IMPERATIVE.

'Complex'^r reinforces 'involves.'^r 'Vague'^w = ^{sw}capable of being made and needing to be made more definite.[^] 'Imperative'^w takes up this need and adds ^{sw}commanding, requiring action.^{sw}

IT IS THE REALIZATION OF OUR ESSENTIAL CONNECTION WITH THE WORLD WITHOUT

It is both our awareness of the connection and the coming into being of that connection, which is 'essential'¹ⁿ as being that without which we would not ourselves be. The connection is not something into which we enter (as things whose being is already fixed) but as we enter into it we become thereby ourselves.

AND ALSO OF OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE, NOW.

'Individual'¹ⁿ corrects what might be an unbalanced, excessive stressing of the dependence of the self in its connections with the world without (as in my last comment). There are persistencies in the self making it *one* being—the type and source of the *oneness* we find in other things.

Now for the main passage. I hope you made your own commentary on it at an earlier stage. If so, probably what we have just read—from the earlier page—will have made some difference in how you would read the main passage now. Look it through once again for such changes. If you have not written out a commentary, why not make one now—before comparing my monologue, which follows. It is somewhat

long, though I have been cutting it down ever since I first wrote it. Such a passage can easily generate whole bookfuls of comment.

IN SENSE-PERCEPTION

In the sort of knowledge we get of the world outside us through the senses? No, that is too wide; on some theories it would include all knowledge! What follows tells us how we are to limit it.

WE DISCERN

Both the parts of ^wdiscern, ^wdis and *cern* (compare ^wconcern^w) have a suggestion that something is separated, set apart or away from, distinguished, disentangled, sifted from something else. So Whitehead's choice of this word as against ^wperceive^w (etymology ^{iw}thoroughly take hold of*^w) stresses separation. But what is separated from what? (a) One thing in the external world from another? (b) The whole external world from us?

THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Is there a sense-pause here after ^wworld^w? Is what follows a description of what we find it to be as external? Or does what follows say *how* we discern? The later paragraphs suggest the second answer. Accordingly let us read

WITH ITS VARIOUS PARTS CHARACTERIZED BY FORM OF QUALITY,

as ^{iw}in a way which takes its various parts (spatio-temporal parts) as having for their distinctive characters (or marks) qualities of different forms, ^{sw}rather

than merely, ^{8W}as having different characters in its different parts. ^{RW}

AND INTERRELATED BY FORMS WHICH EXPRESS BOTH SEPARATION AND CONNECTION.

^qExpress^q may suggest that these spatio-temporal forms we perceive come from other separations and connections which are, as it were, behind them. That is, the forms we see would not be simply those which things *Iwve*, but be an expression, in our perception, of other separations and connections between other things (particles of ^qmatter, ^q for example). But more probably the point is that heing-separate-yet-linked-up is a universal thing of which the forms we see are special cases.

THE WORLD, AS INTERPRETED BY EXCLUSIVE ATTENTION TO SUCH FORMS OF SENSE-PERCEPTION, I WILL TERM, "NATURE."

Interpreted" is always a troublesome word—just because the ideas it covers are so very important. What we get in an interpretation is more or less different from what is interpreted. Whitehead is stressing the difference here. ^rNature^r is not the world but the world taken in a certain way: by ^rexclusive^r attention to such forms. This sort of attention leaves something out. That is his main point. It is abstractive. What is left out? He is going on to tell us in part.

THESE FORMS . . . DOMINATE THIS EXPERIENCE.

They control, rule over, decide at least the main lines of our experience as the way we discern the external world?

THEY ARE INDIFFERENT TO EMOTION,

They dont change with our emotions. This may seem false. Love and hate may make us see a face very differently. But we must note that the remark is limited to the forms of 'Nature' seen in exclusive attention. We must not lut back into 'Nature' the very things Whitehead is keeping out.

BEING JUST THEMSELVES,

Being only what that exclusive attention lets them be.

NAMELY—THE VIVID REALIZATION OF THINGS CAPABLE OF ABSTRACTION FROM THAT INSTANCE OF ACTUALITY WITH ITS CARGO OF EMOTION.

To wit, the full and strong and clear (living) coming into being (or coming into consciousness)—"realization"^w usually carries these two closely connected meanings—of things able to be taken apart from that bit or specimen of fidler being with its charge—more than that, perhaps; a ship's cargo is what it sails for, without cargo there would be no voyages—of emotion.

NATURE IS DEVOID OF IMPULSE.

Nature (as limited above) has had all characters coming from the living animal's pushfulness and desire (the sources of emotion) emptied or kept out of it. Or, more simply, Nature is without them.

SENSE-PERCEPTION IS THE TRIUMPH OF ABSTRACTION IN ANIMAL EXPERIENCE.

Sense-perception is what comes about through abstraction in so far as abstraction is completely successful in animal experience. What makes it perception is

successful abstracting. ^rAmmal^r is stressed. There are higher sorts of experience (mathematical, for example) which animals do not develop. But so far as animals have sense-perception (or we, as animals, have it) the perception is the outcome of abstraction. And abstraction in animal experience goes no further.

SUCH ABSTRACTION ARISES FROM THE GROWTH OF SELECTIVE EMPHASIS.

This power to separate develops with the increased power to pick some things out as more important for a purpose than others. ^{nb}Growth^{nb} is packed with implications. It is more than increase; it is improvement in organization (in systematizing, to use Aristotle's word). And Selective emphasis^r harks back to ^rexclusive attention/ To emphasize something is here to give it more attention than something else.

IT ENDOWS HUMAN LIFE WITH THREE GIFTS,

It gives man, as a permanent resource in his ways of living, three things

NAMELY, AN APPROACH TO ACCURACY,

(1) *A way of getting, with care, nearer and nearer to precision—to seeing what specific character or form a thing has under some general heading: e. g., which blue its shade of blue is, how long its length is ...*

A SENSE OF THE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENTIATION OF EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES,

(2) *An awareness that the goings on outside us are different in quality from one another.*

A NEGLECT OF ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS.

(3) *A trick of not taking into account connections*

on which the being of things (what they are) is dependent.

THESE THREE CHARACTERS OF THE HIGHER ANIMAL EXPERIENCE

Higher than what? Than that immersion in bodily feeling which does not go out to see external activities as of this sort or that.

—APPROXIMATE ACCURACY, QUALITATIVE ASSIGNMENT, ESSENTIAL OMISSION—

^wAssignment^w suggests that the qualities are *given* to the things rather than that they *have* them, and brings to mind the conditions under which we give them: e. g., on a green ground we see a red patch as redder than we do on a white ground.

^{Db}Essential omission^{nb} adds to what was said by 'neglect of essential connections.' It adds the idea that we could not see the things as we do in sense-perception *unless* we omitted some of their connections. These omitted connections are essential to their being what they are and *our omission to notice* them is essential to our seeing them as we do.

TOGETHER CONSTITUTE THE FOCUS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AS IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

As how we see things depends on how our eyes are focused so the sort of consciousness the higher animals (including man) have in sense-perception depends on these three things.

If one idea had to be picked out as more important than any other for a good reader to grasp in theory and apply in practice, it is this idea of ^{nb}essential omission,^{nb} and the metaphor of the focus of consciousness

which supports and illustrates it. In later chapters I shall be returning to it frequently, and then I hope the trouble we have gone to over this page from Mr. Whitehead will be seen to be justified, though I fear that in my commentary I may have failed to omit the right things.

Perhaps now the parallel between what Whitehead has to say about sense-perception and what we have to think about how we read will stand out. I can state it by making a sort of parody or transposition:

In reading we discern a meaning for a passage with its various parts (the words) seeming to have forms of sense of their own and interrelated by forms which express both distinction and implication. The forms of sense are what the dictionary professes to list. The forms expressing distinction and implication are the grammatical and rhetorical forms. The meaning as interpreted by exclusive attention in such forms I will term "Proper Meaning."

These forms . . . dominate the experience of reading. They are indifferent to our wishes, being just themselves, namely the vivid realization of things capable of abstraction from that instance of actuality with its cargo of emotion. "Proper Meaning" is devoid of impulse.

Reading is the triumph of abstraction in educated human experience. Such abstraction arises from the growth of selective emphasis. It endows human life with three gifts: namely, an approach to comprehen-

sion, an awareness of the differentiation of word-senses from one another, a neglect of essential relevancies.

These three characters of educated human experience—namely, approximate understanding, a sense of the diversity of word-senses, essential omission—together constitute the focus of consciousness in the reading experience.

You will want at certain points to amend my substitutions. No matter, they are somewhat arbitrary. In comparing the two accounts you may note:

(1) The same uncertainty as to whether they are talking about sense-perception and reading *as they should be* or *as they in fact are*.

(2) The same resultant uncertainty as to whether the ^rNature^r and ^qProper Meaning¹ they speak of are in some sense *there* in the external world or in the passage and if so how.

(3) The same difficulty in remembering clearly enough that these words ^rNature^r and ^TProper Meaning¹ are given definitions in the passages which should settle Doubt Two but actually don't. This is a perennial trouble in such reading, into which technical terms are being introduced.

(4) The same doubt as to how ^rNature^r or ^TProper Meaning¹ can be devoid of impulse. But with 'meaning¹' it is clearer that it has its cargo. The point, however, is that *which* cargo (what impulse) it has in it does not depend (or should not) on *our* wishes and attitudes as momentary readers. We read again in an-

other mood to find the same cargo there. Thus even with emotion we abstract all the time and put a barrier between our attitudes to the page and the feelings the page carries. Compare Chapter Ten on BELIEF.

(5) The same main point that Nature and Proper Meaning are what they are (whatever that is) only through connections (relevancies) which we have to neglect or omit in order to get what we do get in perception as in reading.

(6) The extreme interdependence of the remarks in each passage as to how we both should and do take them.

The fifth is the important point here. In all reading we *abstract*, we take only some of the possibilities of the words' meanings into account. No matter how concrete the topic or its treatment seems to be, we are abstracting, we are leaving out some of the possibilities. Obviously in different sorts of reading we do this in different degrees. We let in (and should let in) less in reading such prose as this than we let in with most poetry. But in all reading whatsoever much must be left out. Otherwise we could arrive at no meaning. The omission is essential in the twofold sense: without omission no meaning would form *for us*; and through the omission what we are trying to grasp becomes *what it is* (gets its essential being).

Thus in all reading there are two things we may contrast. The meaning we find or give; and a Proper Meaning or "What the passage really means" as we are apt to say. This Proper Meaning, though it is what

we aim at, is something we won't hope to grasp. It is, remember, what the passage ^ras interpreted by our *exclusive attention* to the senses of its words and to its grammatical-rhetorical structure¹" would be saying. But in any reading w[^] can give it, our attention will not be thus exclusive. (Any more than in any sense-perception we will see ^rNature.^r) In come all sorts of wishes inevitably. And, furthermore, this very Proper Meaning itself depends essentially on omissions. It derives from the senses of the words and their grammatical, etc. interrelations. But these very things only come to the words by abstraction.

To sum up: the Proper Meaning of a passage (what it really means) is a kind of scholastic ghost with very much less in it than a good reader will quite rightly find there. This is no license, however, to the bad reader. I can put the situation in the terms in which Whitehead a few lines later describes scientific practice.

In order to observe (read) accurately, concentrate on that observation (of senses of words and constructions) dismissing from consciousness all irrelevant modes of experience. But there is no irrelevance. Thus the whole of science (formal purism) is based upon neglected modes of relevance, which nevertheless dominate the social group entertaining these scientific modes of thought.

In brief, never let what the words "should mean"^{*1} (or 'really mean') prevent you from seeing what is being said.

As an example, this last sentence I have quoted

from Whitehead will serve. "The whole of science is based upon neglected modes of relevance" should mean "based upon modes of relevance which we neglect," but what he is saying (unless I mistake) is that in science we carefully keep out certain modes of experience and that only through our doing so does science become possible. Science is based not on the neglected modes but on the neglect of these modes. If we read Whitehead here in accordance with Proper rather than actual Meaning we would be distorting his view.

We had another example of the same risk in the case of Collingwood's preference of what "trial and error"^w 'should' mean, to what McDougall and the psychologists do in fact mean by it.

It may be worth adding, in connection with Whitehead's dictum, "There is no irrelevance," that every mode of experience seems necessarily to be based upon the neglect of others. Selective emphasis rules all our worlds. The religious and aesthetic modes (which physical science as such neglects) themselves neglect physics. This becomes clear when we ask which sorts of causes each mode considers. To work out causal uniformities we want isolated systems. But, to quote a writer who has been much influenced by Whitehead,

The distinction between systems that are causally isolated and systems that are not cannot be made absolute.³

³ L. Susan Stebbing, *An Introduction to Modern Logic*, Methuen, London, 1930, p. 273.

It is only as ideals or fictions that the world of sense-perception or of Troper Meaning¹ can be regarded as self-dependent or isolated. Miss Stebbing continues,

But unless there were systems that are practically isolated with regard to many changes occurring in these systems, the discovery of causal uniformities would be impossible. The determination of practically isolated systems is again a problem of detennining what is relevant to the occurrence of change.

So far so good. But note what happens in the next sentence.

The belief that some occurrences are irrelevant to the happening of other occurrences is, in fact, the belief that there are causal uniformities.

Here again we have a chance to misread through preferring 'what the words ought to mean'¹ to what is being said. Taken strictly^{sw} the belief that some occurrences are irrelevant^{sw} is not, 'in fact, ^{sw}the belief that there are causal uniformities.^{sw} These are two different beliefs, though the first may be a part of or a necessary condition of the second. Even so, we would have to say '*practically* irrelevant if we are to keep in mind what Whitehead is saying with There is no irrelevance/

SIX

THE WARFARE OF HEART AND HEAD

*Doubt wisely; in strange way
"To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
To sleepe, or runne wrong is. On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and hee
that will
Reach her, about must, and about mmf goc;
And what the hills suddennes resists, winne so.*
JOHN DONNE *Satyr III*

A GREAT trouble with that archproblem "Reason"¹—what should settle for us what is true; what is the reader's guide to Truth?—which set us inquiring into abstraction, is that this is not a ^rstrange way/ Doubt as wisely as we may, the slope is seamed with familiar, well-beaten paths and dotted with notice-boards bearing most persuasive and reassuring inscriptions: "Scientific Method," "Intuition," "Faith" among them. All claim to point the way to Truth. Generations have worn the paths smooth, but what have they found? Is there one Truth waiting to welcome them, or are the peaks many and crowned at best by empty shrines? Sir Donald and the Asulkan peaks are wrapped in cloud as I write and the night wind visits only a cairn on the highest summit. Our tracks on the snow about it turn down again. Donne's image is not very comforting to a mountaineer.

But he is right with "about must, and about must goe." When we are inexperienced we think that the shortest way—if we are not afraid of difficulty—will be best, and that by cracking the sinews of thought we can get there.¹ We learn better. This problem embraces and sums up all problems. We do not solve it by merely cutting, as we think, the knot and separating intellect (with its Truth) from emotion (and its other modes of Truth).

It is by abstraction that we arrive at these different spheres of mental action. That was why we had to consider abstraction, with Mr. Whitehead's help. As science—by the abstraction he describes—creates Nature (in his sense), so by a harder abstraction, neglecting all cargoes of emotion, desire, and impulse, we get Pure Thought.¹ Meanwhile, by a complementary abstraction we have invented pure feeling, desire, impulse, or what not. All these are harder abstractions as needing more effort to carry far and as being more difficult even than 'Nature' to sustain. But they feel easy because they are traditional to us, and to some degree we must make them whenever we discuss our minds' doings.

Here an inevitable ambiguity of "abstraction" must be noted. To say that we separate Thought from Feeling "by abstraction"¹ might mean (a) that in strict thinking we actually in practice *leave off* desiring,

¹ "The ways of contemplation, indeed, nearly correspond to two roads in nature, one of which, steep and rugged at the commencement, terminates in a plain; the other, at first view smooth and easy, leads only to huge rocks and precipices." Francis of Verulam's *Great Instauration*, The Announcement, Bohn, 1864.

feeling, etc. Or it might mean only (b) that *in our accounts* of the mind's doings we attend to separable theoretical aspects of our activity—much as in our accounts of physical things we arrive by abstraction at their shape and their size. But we don't suppose that a thing can have a shape without a size or vice versa. (If some physicist alleges that there are such things, we say he is talking about mathematical, not actual, things.)

So here in talking about the separations and conflicts of thought and feeling we should do our best to be clear whether it is (a) *actual mental processes* or (b) the *intellectual machinery of our accounts of them* which we have in view—whether the abstraction is a leaving-off or a leaving-out-of-the-intellectual-picture.

We cannot, in fact, wholly leave off wanting. No thinking can be motiveless (though its motives may vary in relevance). It could not go on if it were. And if we leave this fact out of our picture and suppose that 'pure thought*' can be uninfluenced by anything but the logical relations between thoughts, we are simplifying by abstraction (b) to a dangerous degree. Sometimes it is safe; in mathematics only a very general motive—an interest in order and consistency of thought*¹ —is needed, and other motives may be irrelevant. But for our problem here—what should rule the reader in his quest for truth—any such simplification would be obviously fatal. The problem would solve itself by suicide.

We cannot, then, here be content with any mere

opposition or divorce of the heart from the head, though in much reading, and reflection about our reading, we take such a distinction somewhat lightly for granted. And most current theories—whether they propose that or not—tend to encourage us. There are numbers of ways of describing it: what is said and what we feel about it; the referential² and emotive functions of language; the factual and rhetorical aspects, the semantic and pragmatic dimensions, intellect and impulse, content and purpose. . . . All of them easily mislead us if we forget that they are abstractions (b), theoretical machinery made for special purposes, not actual cleavages in the stream of the mind's activity. They are useful, indispensable for their special purposes—literary criticism, the description of linguistic devices, the analysis and contrasting of different types of utterance: the scientific treatise, the sermon, the political speech. . . . But they do not hold outside their purposes, they do not apply directly to the make-up of the mind, only to some of the phases of its activity.

Thus some current disputes, as to whether language has two jobs (emotive and referential) or three (indicative, intuitive, and representative), or four, or a hundred, are idle. It has as many jobs as we find it convenient to distinguish for a purpose. And for our purpose here—the approach to the archproblem: what

² For an account of the many different distinctions with which linguistics has attacked this problem of thought and feeling see Stern, *Meaning and Change of Meaning*; also *The Meaning of Meaning*, Chapter VII; *Practical Criticism*, Part III; and Hugh R. Wai-pole, *Semantics*.

should guide a reader in his search for Truth; or what is Reason, the all-ruling principle of thinking—no short cut which divides heart from head will do. We "about must, and about must goe." Our way will take us from one to another of the great key words with which we do our best to describe the mind's doings: MIND itself, THOUGHT, IDEA, KNOWLEDGE, REASON, PURPOSE. . . . We cannot fix a meaning (the meaning) for any of them and answer in terms of these meanings, for their meanings depend upon one another's, and only our understanding of their interdependencies will guide us aright. And to reach such understanding in some degree we will have to study first some other words which might seem less directly in our way or, to press the figure, they will seem not so much points we orientate ourselves by as the very joints, muscles, and nerves we use in walking. Such are MAKE, GET, GIVE, HAVE, SEEM, BE, and DO.

The first wide swings of this trail will take us apparently far from our goal—through a general survey of our language. But this is to make the interdependencies I have mentioned more evident later. After that we will soon be on more lofty ground; indeed, we shall be passing through topics where the air may well seem thin, for we shall be considering what we are and what being is. We cannot, or should not, avoid that, if we are to reflect with any gain upon Truth and its interdependence with Will. What we are and would be, what is and what we would have it be are our guiding problems in all that follows. And it is just here, at these outposts of theology, that we are

most likely to hear charges of confusion between thought and desire, and of wishfulness as corrupting sense of fact. These witness to the wide varying of our greatest words. It is through no one-eye confusion of irreconcilables but in a self-completion which ends the self (being its end) that this difference between heart and head will, if ever, be overcome. Until then it is the mark of our imperfection. Rationalism, supposing that the head should teach the heart, and Irrationalism, proposing the contrary regime, are equally doctrines coming from the divided mind—equally disturbances of the peace which passeth understanding. There Reason rules,³ which, in this its highest sense, makes none of the abstractions of the understanding and Essentially omits' (see pp. 90, 93) that abstracting of thought and feeling which helps to keep the mind divided. Victims of desire, victims of intellect alike have fallen away from Reason in rebellious quests for the separatist's illusions. The things of the mind and the things of this world are in analogy. Separated interests in them—nations or sciences or religions—dream of dominion, or of autarchy or isolation. But what is true of the political planet is true of the mind. There is no substitute for unity. Slowly, and at what cost, we learn what Plato told us so long ago, "Till philosophers become kings, states will have no rest from their troubles, dear Glaucon, and if I am right man will have none" (*Republic* V,473).

³ See (he author's *Coleridge on Imagination*, Chapter VIII, The Boundaries of the Mythical, p. 180.

No more than an *introduction* to some of the key philosophic words is possible here. But why call it that? We know them well and use them daily; they are old acquaintances and some of them seem the most familiar, intimate friends we have in the language. Long ago in the nursery were they introduced to us, and we have not lost touch with them. What is this talk of introductions?

Indeed they are no strangers, but how much do we know about them? A language is very like a society; we may live long enough in a great city before we discover who really rules in it and on whom the behavior of which of the citizens depends. The links between words are not less subtle; and however familiar these great words are, we must expect to go slowly in studying the sources of their power—the more so that the knot they form is that which makes up man. Such dark sayings should perhaps be uttered upon the harp, but here are a few more.

This society of words is rather more than an analogue of a soul; it is a symbol⁴ or instance of a soul at work and therefore will show a soul's virtues or infirmities. But in this society not the mere words but the forms or universals they follow are the spirits which inhabit it. It is these which must understand one another if it is to rule itself in unity.

Let us try now to put together the views on experience and the learning process we have gathered from

⁴ On this use of "symbol"—which is Coleridge's—see my *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, New York, Oxford Press, 1936, p. 109.

these passages and apply the outcome in our study of reading.

For Aristotle, we saw, experience was no mere accumulation of happenings we undergo but a growth in the power to systematize them. This growth is in ability to ^qsee^q likenesses and differences in situations—likenesses and differences relevant to a purpose. But the seeing need not be the sort of thing which leads us to say "I see"—meaning that we have a clear intellectual understanding. In animal learning it need be no more than the ability to be guided by something relevant. Thorndike's cats were in a situation, to start with, in which no feature relevant to their purpose of getting at the food could stand out. Hence the 'random' scratchings and clawings. These were not random in the sense of chance movements. Scratching and clawing had been good-enough ways of getting out of partly similar situations in cat history. But repetitions and persistencies were needed here in order that the motion of the door-catch which was the relevant feature should stand out and become 'the universal, the one beside the many which is a single identity within them all'^f—the *experience* from which the cat's skill as a puzzle-box escapist derived.

Just how this systematization comes about is what the psychologists with their beautifully refined procedures for studying the conditioning of responses are discovering. When, through the recurrence of samenesses-amid-differences, the relevant universal is implanted, the cat typically can go straight to the door-catch and move it with its teeth instead of with its

claws. Teeth and claws in its past have been indifferently good tools with which to move things. What the cat needs is to see that this movement of the catch is the key to getting out.

Compare now the familiar process of deliberate experimentation described by Collingwood with the account of conditioning which every psychologist gives—whether in connection with chickens pecking at caterpillars or rats running in mazes. An impressive formal parallelism may be remarked between them. The reflective inquirer putting forward his hypotheses one by one, and using all Mill's Methods of Agreement, Difference, and Concomitant Variation to eliminate them, seems to be doing consciously and of set purpose very much what the nervous system in one of Pavlov's celebrated dogs does unwittingly and Automatically¹ in virtue of its^q mechanisms^q of conditioning—inhibition, generalization, specification, reinforcement, and the rest—though clearly the activities are on very different levels, and we must not crudely think of them as the same. Nonetheless, the important thing in both is the discernment of the relevant universal—that likeness amid differences. Early inquirers perhaps described the sort of learning the cat achieves too much as though it were reflective. Recent inquirers may sometimes make the opposite mistake and treat intelligent learning too much as if it were simple conditioning. However this may be, we can note *ds we read* that sometimes we arrive at a meaning as though the words were conditioned stimuli merely—cues to acquired responses—and sometimes through a

much more elaborate process of questioning, comparison, and excogitation.

These are not *alternative* methods. The second presupposes the first. The way of reflection presupposes the responses it considers, compares, and decides between. Any whole presupposes its parts; and all this which it does is their interaction within it. When the responses dry up and the words go blank and we wonder what they can possibly mean—the typical case for Collingwood's 'trial-and-error' method, the paleographer's case—what we do is suspend our suppressing doubts in turn and encourage any response that will come out. The logical contradictions or agreements which then settle whether this response be slaughtered or crowned have the same forms as those which shaped it, but they hold between units of larger scale and the operative universals are of higher order. It seems that the simplest scrap or pulse of learning and the grandest flight of speculation share a common *pattern*, much as the inside of the atom seems to be built on somewhat the same plan as the solar system, and that again to have its analogies with the disposal of the galaxies. Or, again, see how from Plato's time the cell, the "individual"⁰ organism, and the society have been thought to ape one another's order or disorder. This may be a sign of some principle in the universe which pays little heed to scale, or it may betray poverty in man's imagination. In any case it is striking. No doubt a process in the brain of picking up another habit is incomparably simpler than deciding a point of economic or military polity. But

satirists love to compare them—which itself shows how much resemblance there is, and how easily higher grade processes slip into the sequences of lower.

This depends upon how far the ruling universals are ^{sw}aware of ^{sw} === ^{sw}conditioning ^{sw} one another. Sometimes, indeed, our reading is very like a 'random' scratching and clawing. This happens only when there is no ruling universal as yet and the passage is of a very unfamiliar pattern, in which no key move can as yet stand out. More often we push at some catch in accordance with some already established 'experience/ which may or may not be the right one. And then whether or not we have got the food becomes another puzzle problem.

Learning to read—like learning to see how the catch on a door works—is becoming able to grasp some of the ways in which the parts of a complex system are dependent upon one another. The experience from which skill in reading derives is, of course, a vastly more complex and potent growth of universals than anything the cat can develop. Nonetheless, as with the cat, though much more so, the secret of success lies in the stabilization of universals in the soul. But the universals winch good reading calls for concern the wide general ways in which minor universals of less scope may and may not fit together. What counts most is not familiarity with the senses of words taken separately but knowledge of their interdependencies. Senses of words are like aspects of a physical thing, say a table. If we were designing a rectangular table we might make drawings of certain aspects—

the table seen from a point vertically above its center, the table seen from a point opposite the middle of one side, and so on. But most of our views of a table are from some other angle, from which it does not *look* rectangular. These aspects don't confuse us—we take them as representing a rectangular table—because we have a very highly developed experience of the interconnections of the various possible aspects. We anticipate them because we have an expert practical knowledge of the geometry of visual space. To read well we need a parallel knowledge of the interdependence of meanings in general.

Most misreading—and here Whitehead's point about essential omission is all-important—comes from faulty abstraction. We abstract all the time, but not skillfully enough. The universals which result from abstraction are insufficiently stable, or insufficiently flexible—too fluid, or rigid in the wrong directions. We learn to read better through practice—but above all through noting and reflecting upon the points at which we may fail through either of these opposed reasons. Any such point is an opportunity for growth in the relevant experience. But the points which return most often in the most varied circumstances are the best opportunities. And these points are marked by the recurrence—in the original or in an analytic gloss—of the hundred key words. These words present the situations in our reading at which most may be learned about our customary maneuvers in abstracting. They do not name abstractions but rather the places at which choice between different abstrac-

tions becomes especially important. If we can see how we read or misread ^wcause, ^w ^wform, ^w ^wbe, ^w ^wknow, ^w ^wsee, ^w ^wsay, ^w ^wmake^w . . . how we omit or fail to omit in taking their meaning, we develop our experience as readers better than in any other fashion. It is with these words that the major universals which should order our reading can best be held up for less 'exclusive attention/ These words, as we all know, vary their sense with their company. Their variations are patterns for all other words which follow the same forms. As these patterns grow in our minds they become operative in thousands of places in connection with thousands of other words and without our ever being aware what unnamed forms have become our guides in interpretation.

SEVEN

THE CHOICE OF THE KEY WORDS

It appears to me that men know neither their acquirements nor their powers, but fancy their possessions greater and their faculties less than they are; whence, either valuing the received arts above measure, they look out no farther; or else, despising themselves too much, they exercise their talents upon lighter matters, without attempting the capital things of all. And hence the sciences seem to have their Hercules' Pillars, which bound the desires and hopes of mankind

FRANCIS OF VEHULAM'S *Great Instaination*

WHICH words should we study most if through them we are best to understand the others? This is the simplest formulation of our problem. We have seen above what the general principles guiding our answer must be. Here I come down to detail, to how these words may be chosen and the reasons for preferring some to others.

Throughout this inquiry we will be reminding ourselves of what we know already, and collecting our observations, rather than making any new discoveries. We may best start with a wide survey of the dictionary, which leads us to divide words, for our purpose, into eight great classes:

Class I. Words like *white, soft, hot, loud, sweet, pleasant*—which stand for qualities in our experience

no

which could not possibly be explained to anyone who, being blind from birth, or without skin or muscle sensibility (feeling), or deaf, or deficient in his taste organs had had no example of them in his experience. Even here, though, if we look closely enough we will doubt this with *soft*. Could not a man who could only see get a good-enough idea of what *soft* means merely by watching another man molding clay and comparing what happens with his attempts to mold a lump of iron? This brings out the fact that *soft* may have (among others) two different though connected senses: (a) what I *feel* when something yields to the pressure of my fingers; (b) what happens to something, how it changes shape, when pressed. The second we could convey to a man without feelings of touch or strain. The first we could not. Most of the words in this first class are like *soft* in this. ("Is the room hot or am I?") So we must be careful. It is only in some of their senses that they are inexplicable to those without the appropriate experience. In their other senses they could be explained in terms of other experience.

So we come back to a master rule of method: *It is the sense of a word in a particular use which we have to consider first, not the general meaning, TMthe wide range of all its senses taken together, TMnor something we may suppose is common to them all.* Later, after studying the various senses, we may go on to plot the word's range and ask if anything is common to its senses, and if so what. A knowledge of the patterns of these rangings is—I have insisted—the most

valuable thing we can learn from the inquiry, for it is knowledge of the make-up of the universe including our own. But on the way to this we must take all the care we can to consider separately what each of these senses is, which together form the word's range. This master rule applies to all words whatever.

Class II. Words like *table*, *skunk*, *apricot*, *finger*, *cloud*, *rainbow*—which stand for common objects. That is, here, for things which people may have before them in common, things they can point out to one another and talk about with no reasonable doubt that they are talking of the same things. What they say or think about them may be different, but at least they differ about a common thing. Whether the thing is "common" in the sense of "frequently to be seen somewhere" does not matter. A new star which only two astronomers have seen is a common object to them. So would be a cry which only two people heard.

With all these classes we come across borderline cases, which, as always, raise deep questions—not so much about which class we will put them in as about the principle ('universal/ see Chapter Two) by which we are making the class. Borderline cases between the inorganic and organic, vegetable and animal, instinct and intelligence force us perpetually to re-examine our conceptions of the meeting classes. So it is with classes of words; or, better, with classes of their senses. The doubtful cases will teach us, if we reflect prudently enough, how we are setting our classes up and for what.

Here we may well be doubtful if this *cry* which

only two hear is a common object to them or not. It is common to them, but is it an object? We have two things to do in facing up to and perhaps settling our doubt, (a) We consider what we are calling a ^Qcry^Q—what sense are we giving that word? Was it the act of the creature that sent the cry out or was it the sound waves that came to their ears? Or what arose in their minds from the sound waves? (b) We consider how^r we are using the word ^Qobject.^Q This looks harder still—largely because philosophers have meant so many things by the word. It is a useful warning to bear in mind, that the more any word has been discussed the more as a rule we must watch it, and the more likely we will be to have trouble. Sometimes this is the fault of those who discussed it; more often it is not their fault but comes inevitably out of the persistent opportunities for misunderstanding at that point in thought—which was, of course, the reason why the word was so much discussed. For our purposes here (and a class always depends upon a purpose) an object is just any thing or event which is common to two or more people, or to a man and his dog, Tray. For a different purpose an object might be ^{8w}whatever is before the mind in thinking, whatever we may think about.^{sw} But that would not do for us here because most of the things which come before my mind, or yours, are—fortunately, perhaps—private, not common. When people really believe that all their thoughts are common—as being known to God—that can be a strong restraint upon their thinking.

How about the cry now? What do the two men together observe? They observe two sounds, one each, fairly immediately and treat them (it) as if they (it) were the act of the crying, and there is no objection if you say they further observe the crier. But we notice that we have to put some limits to this^qobserving.^q We observe the crier, maybe, but only as^{sw} whatever made the sound.^{sw} Now if it were two boughs rubbing together which made the^(l)cry,^q ^wcrier^w as^{svv} the source of the sound^{sw} would mean very much less than at first we take it to mean.

These reflections are but a sample of those arising with the attempt to frame a class of 'common objects'¹—things about which two men may talk with some reasonable confidence that they are the same things. In spite of such local doubts, anyone can name thousands of such common things and everyone else will agree with his list. We need to separate this class by and large—for we can set it aside as *not* containing the words which are worth most study. In practice—if we remember that we are sorting *senses of words*, not words—we use this classification with very little trouble. Borderline cases we will keep out of it for special treatment.

Class III. Words like *shake, jump, twist, throw*—which stand for acts we can perform, or could point to, as we talk of them. Somewhat similar questions come up with these as with the words in Class II. When a lamp throws its light on the page, is that the same sense of ^wthrow^w and is it to be put in Class III?

Again, is that an *act* of the lamp? If the light jumps, is that jumping and is that an act? We settle these questions, if we can, as before: (a) by studying the particular sense of ^wthrow^w in that case, and (b) by asking what we want the general word ^wact^w to do for us here. ^wAct^w again is a much discussed word. All the great general words we most need for classifying have been much discussed and can cause much trouble. We did not stop with Class I to remind ourselves what tremendous problems surround ^qExperience^q. Some of them we have considered in Chapter Two. ^wAct, ^w too, we shall take up again under the heading of no. But here we want it in a broad sense which ^rpegs^r or ^rblurs^r (Chapter Five) its implications—vital though they are in other connections to our understanding of ourselves. We want it for the things we can observe others to do, and can be observed to do ourselves. We want it for any event we take an active part in and so could demonstrate by doing it, if someone did not clearly get the sense of the word we are using.

If there were any doubt what throwing a stone was, we could clear it up by action. But, in fact, for words in this class there will be no doubt because we could clear it up so. But how about the lamp's throwing its light? Words like these: *shake, jump, twist, throw*—partly because they are so clear, partly because of the extent to which we model the world in thought upon ourselves and our own doings—have an immense range of simple metaphoric uses. We take advantage

of there being something similar in an event which is my act and an event in which something else has a part, and talk of the something else as though it did what I do. There is something similar in the way I throw things here and there and the way in which a lamp wows its light here and there. Try to replace wow with a current English word. You will find that most of the readiest words, *casts*, *sends*, *sheds*, *makes it go*, *gives out*, etc., are in the same case as "throw."^w Such metaphors arc all but unavoidable. If we take "throws a stone" in a specific sense which brings in muscles and joints and take "throws light" as a physicist takes it, there is not very much that is similar. Motion in a direction and some very general form of energy-exchange might be all. But we know this well enough and only use the minimum of similarity that safely does the job. So "throw*" gives us a handy way of talking about the lamp and its light that will mislead no one. And we would be very hard put to it to do without such uses of such words.

For everyday, practical occasions this is safe enough. I called these metaphoric uses ^qsimple^q above. I meant by that to contrast them with such uses as we may make in poetry or in poetic prose. In poetry "throw*" and the rest may properly invite us to lend the lamp and the sun and stars a far greater similarity to ourselves. We may partly or completely personify them. Another way of saying this is: we may invent or discover a Sun in poetry that is very much more than the sun physics studies. If someone calls this

make-believe, then we have make-believing to study.¹ We may find it harder than he supposes to separate make-believing, in a sense applying to good poetry, from other believings. Of course, ^wmake-believe^w may mean what ^{aw}pretense^{sw} means and then it would not apply to the same poetry. But I must resist the temptations of this great topic here.

Another sort of metaphor which is *not simple* would be illustrated by "That throws little light on the question." This is a metaphor mounted on a metaphor. In considering the word-senses in Class III, we will be safe enough to let in simple metaphoric uses of the names of acts. They will not normally mislead, and this whole classification is only designed to let us compare words (word-senses) as to the likelihood of their causing readers and writers trouble. But *complex* metaphors, whether of the serious personification kind, or the multiplied kind (throwing intellectual light, illuminating dark recesses in the mind, and so on), we will do well to ponder. They may easily make us think we understand more than we do (or less than the author hoped). So let us reserve them for special attention and not let them lightly into our Class III.

The effect of admitting simple metaphoric uses of the names of acts will be to include in Class III a great number of word-senses with which we describe events and situations in which no one is doing any-

¹ See my lecture, "The Interactions of Words," in *The Language of Poetry* (M6sures Lectures, Princeton), and *Practical Criticism*, Chapter VII, "Doctrine in Poetry."

118 How to Read a Page

thing, When a leaf *shakes*, when a pebble *jumps*, when a crack *yawns*, or a wind *moans*, these will probably be Class III uses of the words. We will see why "probably" should come in here in a moment. I might equally well, perhaps, have framed Class III from the start to include all these word-senses, instead of beginning with our acts and then extending them, by simple metaphors, to take in so much. I might have written "Words describing observable physical happenings" and put in acts that we do as an important sub-division. But the point I wanted to bring out was the extent to which such words are clear to us because they lend our ways to the world in which we live. We understand our own doings—the overt physical ones—better than anything else. We *June* to understand them to survive. And we make the world about us understandable to ourselves and others largely through talking of it with the same words. The very use of a full verb is an incipient personification. Compare "The stone was in motion" and "The stone moved." When it moved it seemed to *do* something.

Why did I raise a doubt above (with "probably") as to when a word would be in this class or not? To call attention to a second master rule of method in the whole undertaking. It is as obvious and as easily overlooked as the first.

Whether a word is clearly understandable or not may turn not upon its use but upon the uses of other words in the passage. A word may, for the reasons sketched above, have a use which normally would mislead no one, but, because of something else in the

passage, it may send us far astray. So in considering the intelligibility of words, in connection with these classes, we cannot simply say, "Ah, this is used here for a simple sense quality (I); or for a common object (II); or for an act (metaphorically or literally) so it will be clear." If we did we would jump into every sort of folly. There are no rules of thumb in this game of interpretation. There are only certain master rules and a technique for becoming wiser through experience. So do not let us take our classifications too seriously. Every instance must be judged on its own merits as it comes, in the passage, in all its living interdependence on the rest. The classes are only guides to us in surveying the different sorts of words there are, and in seeing how and why some of them need more attention, as being more easily misunderstood, than others. With that said, we may go on to:

Class IV. Words like *in, on, at, yon, I, or, now, that, too, but, except, while, though, only, then*—which link up qualities, things, events, situations or words, parts of sentences, sentences and paragraphs, etc. to one another in multifarious ways. There are not a great number of these words and they are mostly short ones, but they do an enormous amount of work. We learn what they do through having to use them so much. They are not easy to learn—witness the struggles of any foreign learner, or the amount of a good grammar book which has to be given up to trying to say what they may and may not do. But though we would be hard put to it to supply an adequate account of their work, we normally manage them well enough.

The exceptions occur mostly when the manifold senses of the words they link up allow equal chances of linking them up in two or more ways. When this is so the fault is probably in the whole sentence or passage, and it may be unfair to blame the little word.

Class V. Words like *beautiful, true, good, exquisite, haggard, abstract, malicious, peculiar, probable, dominant, clean, clear*—which assign qualities to things and events. These are not like the names of sensory qualities of Class I. With these in Class V we can at least make a reasonable attempt to give an account of their meanings. They are not tied to simple, unanalyzable qualities of sense-experience. Many of these accounts will be in terms of what the things having them do to us (*thrilling*), or what we or others have done to them (*precious*); or in terms of their relations to other events (*probable*); or in terms of the relations of their parts to one another (*oblong*). About some of them (the most discussed as usual; the first three, for example) there is room for much doubt about the sort of account which should be given. Many have said that ^wbeautiful^w and ^wgood^w have, as their fundamental and serious meanings, simple qualities as unanalyzable as the sense-quality red—though they are not sense-qualities. Others have said, with equal confidence, that they are analyzable, in different ways: into terms of pleasure caused under certain circumstances to certain people or into terms of the aim of man's existence, and so on. We shall be looking into some of these accounts later. Here I will remark

merely that these are questions not about *the* meaning (right meaning, only true meaning, proper meaning) of a word, but about one or some of their meanings. Such words are certainly used (and rightly) in many ways.

Class VI. Words like *relation, quality, religion, property, preparation, amount, competition, description, name, energy, way, thing, mind, object, experience*—which we certainly cannot make clear by pointing to the things they name. Some of their senses, in some places, give no trouble. But among them are the hardest words to manage successfully either in writing or in reading. We use them by the hundreds, and are polite enough to one another to pretend we understand. But, to quote the experienced Bacon,

The error is both in the deliverer and in the receiver. He that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such form as may be soonest believed and not as may be easiest examined. ... As in the courts and services of princes and states, it is a much easier matter to give satisfaction than to do the business.

Class VII. Words like *involve, suppose, imply, profess, assign, compete, organize, divide, demonstrate, govern, know, observe*—which name acts we cannot demonstrate as we might *shake* or *throw*. These are in many cases connected with nouns in Class VI (*compete-competition*), and what is said about those holds here, but slightly more so. For a verb frequently adds some further opportunity to misread from which the

corresponding abstract noun escapes, the noun naming a part or an outcome or a condition of the whole state, situation, or process the verb covers. Finally

Class VIII. Words like *be, have, do, get, give, make, seem, see*—the verbs of widest utility, which sometimes are but empty neutral links between the parts of the sentences they unite. Then they are faithful reflectors which only reinforce the influences they exchange, but sometimes they make violent interventions of their own, changing everything.

These, roughly sketched, are for our purposes the great divisions of the language. A synopsis of the classification may be convenient.

- I. Simple sense-qualities
- II. Common objects
- III. Acts (and metaphoric extensions to physical events)
- IV. Logical-linguistic links
- V. Higher qualities
- VI. Problem nouns
- VII. Problem verbs
- VIII. General verb operators

Which of them contain the key words we are seeking?

It will be clear enough that we may pass by the first three classes. They present problems—which I have touched on—but those problems must be discussed with words from the other classes and will turn on our handling of those other words. And of the

words in Class IV the same is true. They are a flexible shorthand for indicating relations which are covered by words of the last three classes. But some of the words we are looking for will be in Class V—good, *beautiful*, *true* are certainly among them. Which others? And how will we choose them?

Here Mr. C. K. Ogden's vast researches into the substitutability of English words—under certain conditions and for certain purposes—leading to his invention of Basic English, come into our picture. It seems obvious, once the problem is posed, that there must be some relatively small number of words which can together say (subject to the above-mentioned conditions and purposes) what the rest of the language can say. Mr. Ogden was the first to pose this problem. If you know what you are doing, as he knew, and are discriminating enough about meanings, as he was, you can set to work to eliminate words by replacing them with paraphrases built from your provisional limited list of necessary words. The task was a long one—not to be attempted without masterly linguistic acumen as well as the more famous attributes of genius. The outcome was the 850 word list of Basic English. Since its appearance in 1929, it has been easy, of course, to produce word lists of comparable scale with more or less similar covering power—usually less. But Basic English was far more than an adequate minimum vocabulary with unlimited covering power, astonishing though the feat of producing such a thing originally was. It was a method and system for teaching English *as a foreign language* which revolution-

ized all existing procedures. We are not concerned here with that aspect—epoch-making though its consequences for world communications will be—but only with its uses to us, who know our English well enough to pass already. What we have to note is that by its very nature Basic English is a superb instrument (if we know what we are doing with it) for improving our understanding of what we read and write, hear and say.²

The qualification I put in parentheses is important here, however. Basic English was invented for the sake of the foreign learner of English, to give him the easiest, most compact English to meet his needs; to be his first stage, if he would go on, in his fuller conquest of our language. It is shaped to his needs throughout, and his needs are not ours. This is something which those who are experimenting in the use of Basic English with English-speaking people in American classrooms find strangely hard to remember. Basic can help *anyone* to improve his native English—to understand it and to compose in it—but *not* through those of its features which are there *only for the non-English-speaking learner's sake*. I emphasize this because the point is so often missed. Some who are interested in this application of Basic seem sometimes at a loss to imagine which features these may be. They take up Basic as though it were a patent medicine whose in-

² For further information on these aspects of Basic English consult *Basic in Teaching—East and West*; Psyche Miniature, Kegan Paul, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Arts*, V. LXXXVII, No. 4515, June 2nd, 1939; *Interpretation in Teaching*, Chapter XI; *Semantics*, Hugh R. Walpole, Norton, 1941.

gredients and principles they would rather not know, hoping to benefit in some magical fashion from mere contact with it.

But let us consider. Basic can benefit the English speaker chiefly as an opportunity for English—English translation. We gain through such translation because it teaches us something about our language. When it teaches us nothing—or only things we know perfectly already—there is no gain in doing it. Any one who, after a short but sufficient study of Basic, takes up his pencil and makes a Basic version of a paragraph of the newspaper or of his favorite novel, will find it easy to separate the parts of the work which are amusing and profitable from those which are not. When to break down a non-Basic word into some Basic equivalent teaches one something about the new word (or about some Basic phrase), or makes one look at it from a new angle, or prompts questions unstirred by ordinary reading, we profit. The exercise is both instructive and entertaining. But when the non-Basic word, as there used, is something we understand perfectly already, the translation work is merely an expenditure of ingenuity and soon palls. The same applies, with minor reservations, to our observance of the limitations and restrictions which Basic puts upon English syntax—to the *foreign* learner's great gain and delight. We know how to manage our verbs though he doesn't; after a little we learn nothing further through breaking them down by the Basic technique.

Nonetheless, if we make this separation—which is

itself most instructive—and let the side of Basic which looks to the foreign learner go hang, keeping to the side which can teach us more about our English, the writing of such free versions—*making use of Basic* but not obeying its very proper rules as such—can give us an insight into language which no other exercise yields. We sharpen our sense of the interdependence of words upon one another, we learn much about the multiplicity of meaning, and—most important of all—we become better judges of whether or not we have understood as much as we can of what is before us.

Ruskin used daily to translate a page of the New Testament and a page of Plato before breakfast as a whet to his wits. Few things could make us more aware of how much we ordinarily peg and blur in our reading than a similar task in English—Basic translation.

But to return to the choice of the key words. Thanks to Mr. Ogden's labors, the words we seek will be on the Basic List. It contains the words through which the rest of the language may best be explored.

We need not, for *our* purposes, here be bound by the exclusion of verbs—which Basic is perfectly justified in for *its* purposes. Thus *knowledge* will cover *know*, *feeling* cover *feel*, and so on. But, as we will see in the next chapter, there are times when the Basic avoidance of verbs focuses attention sharply—as no other technique does—on subtleties of implication we would otherwise overlook.

When we have set aside those Basic words which

belong to our Classes I-IV (the job of picking and sifting them out is an excellent exercise) we have some 400 words left as candidates. We ask again: which are of most help in explaining which others? And the result is our short list of a hundred which was printed on page 22.

Of these some are much more important than others. Some are indispensable, The ideas behind *cause, change, comparison, end, existence, desire, feeling, form, idea, government, knowledge, love, measure, motion, name, number, order, part, place, pleasure, purpose, relation, sense, tiling, and thought* are too clearly necessary to be kept out. But even with these we might make some slight changes: cover the same ground with *effect* as with *cause*, for example.

A group of equally important adjectives would be: *beautiful, certain, clear, different, free, general, good, important, natural, necessary, opposite, possible, probable, special, and true*. Here again changes are possible; *right* might take the place of *good* or *like* cover the ground of *different*.

Among verbs a short list would be: *get, give, make, seem, be, do, have, say, and see*.

Of the rest it would be pedantry to pretend that these rather than *any* other words are in some mysterious way *the* keys of thought. I should insist upon this because the point of having such a List at all will be lost by any reader who worries about the membership of its tail end or about redundancies in its head organs. Of course, there will be a doubtful fringe; of

course, by overworking some of the chief words we could dispense with some others. But no one with much experience of discussion will doubt the claims to special attention of most of these words, once the general argument about their use as the tools and microscopes with which we explore other words has been grasped.

One further point. Certain words of immense importance are absent from the List. *Life* and *soul* and *God* are good examples. They name the archproblems or the archproblem. Their omission in no way indicates any tendency to avoid their consideration; still less any philosophic presuppositions or *parti pris* as to their standing as problems. I could be eloquent upon the need to regard all intellectual effort as preparation for or pursuit of their study, but that will come in later chapters. These words, however—though whatever understanding we can attain of them is all-important to us—are not *tools of thought* as the other words in the List are. *Life* sometimes is, but the inclusion of *living* among the adjectives takes care of that.³

⁸ The reader might be interested in one sample here of Mr. Ogden's explorations of the multiple uses of our most familiar words. Here are thirty things which "living" will say for us: *contemporary* (the greatest living authority on the art of war); *animated* (he was a living skeleton); *burning* (he took up the living coal); *still in vernacular use* (living languages); *realistic* (the living image of the man); *maintenance* (his living expenses were high); *subsistence* (high cost of living); *conducting oneself* (way of living); *capable of vital function* (living tissue); *feeding* (living on lettuce); *luxuriating* (living on the fat of the land); *not separated from* (still living with his wife); *having immoral relations* (living with a woman); *sponging* (living on his relations); *pushing expenditure* (Living up to one's income); *spending one's energies*

The same reflections, in a less degree, apply to *Time* and *Space*.

The words in my List share with these archproblem words one very striking characteristic: extreme versatility and ambiguity. If we think any of these words are *not* ambiguous we have missed out or overlaid an important part of our education.

We might do well to revert to an eighteenth-century printer's practice and put these words in capitals, in any serious discussion. In many ways they are capital words. Capital as the city from which the government of a country rules is its capital, for these words together form the government of the language. Capital as the chief, head, or most important. Capital as having questions of life or death in their charge. Capital as ships-of-the-line used to be capital before the days of the torpedo bomber; on them the rest used to depend. Capital again as being the money, as it were, with which the business of thinking in words is carried on, or as being the machine tools we use to produce more knowledge through other words.

This government, this capital fleet, this great banking system, gets its tremendous powers from the rest of the language, from being the representatives and

(living fast); *wearing* (living down a prejudice); *enjoying* (a life worth living); *afloat* (no vessel could be living in that sea); *continuing* (living in the memory of mankind); *surviving* (living after death); *composed of humans* (living statuary); *for general use* (living room); *leading* (living a life of crime); *sleeping* (living at an address); *inhabiting* (living in a house); *dwelling* (living in a town); *residing* (living in a suburb); *existing* (living in poverty); *being a vagabond* (living nowhere). Thus do words work on one another.

the clearinghouse through which that rest keeps in union with itself. But the techniques with which these words perform their duties are not entirely open and aboveboard. No one becomes a representative of innumerable warring claims without acquiring capacities for duplicity. These may be innocent, even indispensable sometimes; but sometimes they are not. These words are skilled politicians, adepts in reconciliation and adjustment, but, like their human counterparts, they care more for smooth running* and an appearance of order than for the verities. We can safely use this metaphor. These words do all this since we do it through them. But if we aspire to be their masters we must try to understand their necessary techniques of multiple representation. We must learn to watch the inconspicuous shifts by which what they say sometimes slides from A right around to Z. If we could watch it to full effect, we would learn nothing less than the structure of all thought, since this alphabet contains the relations which link up all things. We will be content if here and there we can see why words with such great duties must move so freely and so unobtrusively into such different meanings. And it is the connections between these meanings which we need most to note.

Why are some words so troublesome, shifting, almost treacherous, other words so stable and good? To put it so is most unfair to them. It is not the word or even its history which is at fault, but the business it has to transact and the influences it has to meet. As on our planet there are areas where the weather is un-

stable and other zones of equable air, so it is with the sphere of intellectual communications. There are pressure areas in the mind and along the lines where they shoulder one another we must expect turmoil and blasts that back and veer. The poor words we spread here won't behave as they do down in the Trades. Captain Slocum, alone in his little *Foam* there, could lash his tiller and sit down to reread *TJie Inland Voyage*, but we have to be perpetually fiddling with our sails. Each of our capital words presents a lesson, could we learn it, in mental seamanship.

EIGHT

PART-WHOLE SHIFTS AND CONTENTCHANGES

These . . . escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident.

EDGAR ALLAN FOE, *The Purloined Letter*

A CERTAIN distinction between two ways in which words change their meanings should be pointed out now. If I can make it clear here much which might seem hard in what follows will become easy. It is an unfamiliar rather than a difficult distinction.

I will illustrate it first with two words which cause no trouble; we understand them very well indeed in all the varieties of their behavior. The first is the word *addition*.

It may name

- (1) a general process: "Addition is easier than transformation."
- (2) one event: "The addition was soon made."
- (3) what is added: "This wing of the house was a later addition."

Here, though "addition" shifts its application by pointing more widely or more narrowly to the process

in general, or to a specific instance, or to a part—here "what is added"—there is no change as to the meaning. The process it is in different ways talking about remains the same. We are changing our focus from a *whole* to different aspects or *parts* of it. Let us call these differences Part-Whole Shifts.

But suppose we passed from talking about arithmetic or building to talking about the alterations a writer may make to his text? Here something very different is happening. The Part-Whole Shifts (I will be mentioning them frequently, so will abbreviate the label to P-W) can still take place in parallel fashion. "The absence of all that is a great addition." (You would be surprised to see how true this is of the present essay.) But there has been a change in the sense: we are talking of a different sort of adding—a heightening of value, not a quantitative increase. We will label such differences Content Changes (or CC).

Now consider *Attention*

The P-W shifts are between

- (1) General process of attending: "Attention soon flags under these conditions."
- (2) Some one instance: "Attention, Please."
- (3) Outward appearance of attention: "His lack of attention was deceiving."

Notice that most examples we try to give of these differences will probably be themselves ambiguous. We must expect this. The language has produced these P-W shifts largely to handle situations which are inherently ambiguous. But that does not prevent

us from detecting them when we need—and that is more often than we know.

Number (3) here names outward signs of interest. A special class of such signs of interest has been singled out: acts done to please or help, "He showed her sundry attentions/" Special implications come in here which may amount to a CC. Attentions, after all, in Jane Austen's time could involve the gentleman who paid them in no slight consequences. But this CC we note is made possible by a special P-W focus in the use of the word—a focus on overt acts rather than on the general process of giving attention to something.

Now let us consider the verb *attend*. I remarked in the last chapter that Basic English by making, for example, *give attention* do the work of *attend* forces us to note many things we might otherwise overlook. It is fair to say that most of this chapter is a by-product of work on ambiguity which prepared the way for Basic English.

Attend, too, covers—somewhat less distinctly—(1) the general process, (2) the specific cases, and (3) the signs: "We attend better when fresh." "Please attend." "Are you attending?" It is less clear that it takes over the special implications of "attentions" in the lover's sense. We can give it them, of course, but whether we would succeed in communicating them is more doubtful. For the verb docs several other things which the noun either docs not do or does with a noticeable difference.

(a) To say "I will attend to that" = ^{sw}take care of,

look after, see to^{sw} is not the same thing (normally) as to say "I will give it my best attention." The verb form implies that I will *do* what is needed about it. The noun form only promises that I will direct my mind to thinking about it. The context, and especially what we know about 'that,' may imply suitable action; but there is a perceptible difference between the two statements in the implications suggested. This becomes still clearer with "I will attend to him" and "I will give him my attention,"

(b) To be present at; "Why did you attend the lecture if you didn't attend?"

(c) To wait for; ("loth to make the saints attend her long," see John Donne, *The First Anniversary*, line 9: unwilling to have them wait for her, wait on her, or *listen* to her long?) .

I have chosen examples (*add*, *attend*) where there is little or no likelihood of interpretations going wrong. But, if we turn to more important words, we shall see what an enormous amount of persistent misconception comes from neglect of P-W shifts and the CC's which they engender. Half the theory of education, throughout its long history, has been an ineffectual attempt to make people separate ^qknowledge,^q as the process of knowing, from information—in its degraded sense of items which can be acquired, retained, and regurgitated without any serious knowing of them, ^{sw}understanding^{sw} of them taking place at all. The word ^qeducation^o- itself performs the same P-W shifts as ^qknowledge^q and so do most of the key words **in** the educational vocabulary: *thought*, *ex-*

perience, instruction, needy observation, comparison, perception.

The psychologist long ago found that ^wperception^w was so troublesome a word—as failing to distinguish between the perceiving process and what it perceives—that they coined the technical word ^wpercept^w for this last on the model of ^wconcept.^w But they might have been warned by the adventures of ^wconcept^w itself—one of the trickiest of all words—that new coinage here would be no remedy. ^qPercept^q continues to be the occasion of the same verbal misconceptions. The remedy is not in new words but in a fuller study and understanding of these P-W shifts as a general feature of certain groups of words—inevitable with them because of the sort of work they have to do. Many words which end in -tion (and which might be therefore called shun! words, if that would not suggest that we avoid them. We cannot.) have the same P-W shift. *Destruction*, for example:

The destruction of the town took 20 minutes.

The destruction from that raid was still visible in 2042.

The reader will find it instructive to run over the following and note which take this P-W shift and which do not: *action, instruction, emotion, information, construction, conception, investigation*. When the movement of attention required in this inquiry has become easy, he might turn to a few words ending in *ment*—*advertisement, amusement, government*—

and consider how far their P-W shifts are the same and what Content Changes seem to follow them. Then one of the reasons, at least, why discussions are not as profitable as they might be and why reading is a more difficult art than we suppose may have become more apparent. We shall be studying later how systematically these P-W shifts parallel one another, how study of a few type specimens of them can make us more ready to deal with thousands of others of which, as a rule, we are only very uncertainly aware. And we shall note how what sometimes seem irreducible oppositions and unresolvable clashes of theory as to the mind's dealings with the world can be traced to differences in the focusing of our attention upon this or that terminus of a P-W shift and the resulting Content Changes in our fundamental conceptions.

It will be useful, as a preliminary to attacking some of the greatest key words, to take up three or four words of less importance, less difficult and better understood, and note briefly their more striking variations of meaning—both their Part-Whole Shifts and Content Changes. For the art of making such analyses easily and without strain is very largely—as Aristotle taught us—that of allowing the relevant ^rexperience^r time to grow. These changes follow a small number of fairly constant patterns. After studying a few of them thoroughly, the parallel instances leap to the eye—the universal; the one behind the many which is a single identity within them all^r has made its stand.

Comfort may be our first example. When we comfort someone, what are we doing? Is the comfort our

words or acts or some outcome of them in his feelings? Compare: "The more she comforted him, the less he was comforted/"

When we say "comforting words," are comforting words sounds which should, or sounds which are intended to, or sounds which in fact *do*, give comfort? They may be any of these things on different occasions, and normally we are not misled by such P-W shifts—though in my example no doubt *she* was. Most people follow such changes with the greatest of ease and conversation in which they are missing lacks all savor, all wit, and all grace. Those who do not recognize them are boors or bores. Nonetheless, it takes something of a straddle of die intelligence to note that the very same shifts occurring with words like *mean* and *say* are a source of a large proportion of human misunderstanding.

Now let us examine the word *find*, an innocent word in itself but useful in preparing the way for an examination of *show*, which is very far from harmless. *Find* has a variety of senses. The main Content Changes are between

- (1) To come across, fall in with;
- (2) To discover, or get to after attempts;
- (3) To become conscious of through thought, to learn by experience.

There is little enough risk of confusion between these, and, if there were, no problems of any serious *intellectual* consequence are likely to arise.

Show is another story. Its meanings are not only

more various but far more deceptions in their interactions. The main meanings are:

- (1) To look at (obsolete);
- (2) To put in view, to let be seen;
- (3) To make see, to point out;
- (4) To be, or give, signs of;
- (5) To prove, or make certain by argument.

The first three of these groups of meanings are roughly comparable in complexity to those of *find*, and if that alone was the range of *show* it would be no danger to us. But Groups (4) and (5) use it to describe three situations which are well known to be among the chief occasions for misinterpretation: the sign-situation, the statement situation, and the proof situation. Any word used to describe these situations must cause trouble and be rightly suspect—as spies, members of secret police, and go-betweens generally must by *their* profession.

^wShow^w is in fact a member of a guild of words which is professionally tainted. It belongs—with *mean* and *say* and *interpret* and *express* and *prove*—to a peculiar trade: namely, the handling of sign and symbol situations. Clear and honest dealings in these situations are, we know, immensely to the *general* interest. Unluckily, obscure and dishonest dealings are incessantly to the particular interest here. The behavior of ^wshow^w shows this well. If I say "That *shows* you what sort of person he is!" the word exploits, with damaging intention, the easy confusion between:

(a) being a *sign* of certain doings. Signs have to be read in settings; mean totally different things in very slightly different settings; suggest different things to different people; have interpretations which are conjecture only unless verified . . . and so on.

(b) being a *proof* of certain doings. And proofs as we know are of all sorts; range from demonstrations, and verifications, to mere suasions and *seance* phenomena.

(c) being a *manifestation* of certain doings. That is being the very doings themselves, no signs or proofs of them.

It may be greatly to my advantage, on occasion, to confuse these things for you. The word ^wshow^w is a perfect instrument for the purpose. But do not let us blame the word. It does nothing except what we do with it. Its trickiness derives from our own lack of competence and candor in certain situations. We want to elevate a hunch into a proof or, still higher, into the very presence of the fact itself before us. We want to do this so often, alas, that language has conformed to our wishes. We are provided with an elaborate apparatus of words, of which ^wshow^w is a typical part, which lets us do this very smoothly and secretly. Then the apparatus takes charge; man becomes the servant and victim of his language machine; and even when we sincerely want to be clear and candid, to say no more than we are justified in saying, to deceive no one and least of all ourselves, we will lazily and in all innocence use such words as ^wshow^w and suffer thereby the proper penalty of our past evasions.

Very often, of course, ^wshow^w will be entirely harmless. But it can be so viciously misleading that we should at least be aware of its tricks, and, if the importance of the occasion warrants, be ready to replace it by phrases—*is a sign that, makes it clear that, makes it possible that, makes it probable that, makes it certain that, offers a suggestion that, puts before us, presents to us*, and so on—which will say what it says more frankly, and open up to us the shifts through which its power to confuse us comes.

My last example is ^winvolves.^w This word ought to be more famous than it is as the foggy mind's best friend. When you are not sure what you are saying you will usually be safe in saying ^winvolves.^w On the other hand, it can be used with precision, though it rarely is. Remember what a wealth of meaning it carried for Whitehead in the passage we examined in Chapter Five.

"A involves B" may (among many other things) say:

1. A is not possible without B.
(Every act involves some assumptions.)
2. B is a part of A.
(Every act involves a beginning, a middle and an end.)
3. B is among the causes of A.
(Smoke involves fire.)
4. If we have (or do, or undergo) A, we will probably have to have, or be wise to have (or do, or undergo) B.

Compare similar uses of ^wimplies.^w The two words are frequently synonyms, but ^wimplies^w has technical uses in formal logic not shared by ^winvolves,^w and both have many special senses. Thus, to use ^wimplies^w—or "includes" or ^wentails^w—in elucidating ^winvolves* would be poor technique. It is far wiser to take the problem of its precise meaning at a given place in a given passage down to the most indispensable words—*possible, part, cause, necessary*. We have a better chance then to see what the word is saying. And now let us consider (and may the stars, if they can, aid us) how some of the greater and necessary words behave in our minds.

NINE

MAKE, GET, GIVE, LOVE, HAVE

Mencius said, "Words near, meaning far, good words; keeping simple, application extensive, good principle."

MENCIUS VII, ii, 32

FOR me, with the three largest English dictionaries yawning around me, the chief difficulty here is to select, from among the vast varieties of these words' uses, those which will most repay special study. The master rule is: *If to note some point in a word's behavior will help us, not with that word only but with scores of other words as well, then that point deserves our best attention.* As I have insisted, the modes of the shifts and changes of meaning recur and recur in different words. The words we are to study now present the archetypal patterns of these changes. My task is to pick them out and display them as clearly as I can. If some of these expositions are not as lucid as we could wish, it is worth remarking that to read on and come back later is a sound plan. These words throw much light upon one another. In fact they bathe in one another's beams. If someone could fulfill my task we would discern each one by the radiance of the others, and no one of the elucidatory sentences could be properly read apart from the rest. For the

fumbling account, which is all that I can give, re-reading and cross consultations will be very desirable. It may be found that the Index gives help in seeing how these last four chapters fit together.

It seems fitting that we should start with the idea of creation:

MAKE

- Compare: (1) He made the world and all that in it is.
(2) It makes a noise,
(3) I made a triangle with three matches.
(4) You made me do it.
(5) Beauty makes beautiful things beautiful.

How far are these using ^wmake^w in the same way? The first sense, of sheer creation out of nothing, is unique. It belongs to *Genesis*; and we do not say of anyone or anything other than God that he or it made or makes or will make anything in that sense. Thought stops short of understanding that. In the next three what is made is *some change in something*. Thus in (2), when it makes a noise, it makes a change in the air about it, and in (3), when I make the triangle, I put the matches in a certain relation to one another. I change their positions. And in (4), my doing it is a change in my behavior caused by you.

All such MAKING then is ^{sw}causing something to become, the giving of form to something.^{sw} This is true of making a table, a picture, a decision. . . . So far as that goes, these three senses of MAKE seem to be one

and the same. But here comes in the immensely important fact that CAUSE has its range of senses. The tricky question is "How far does the idea of *being forced from without* come into any use of MAKE?" (*Ambiguity One.*) When two and two make four, the two by being together just are or become four. There is no suggestion that they *force* four to come into being.

"Except in someone's mind?" you may interject here. But, if so, you have changed the example. One thought may make —^{sw}force another^{sw} — thought to come up. But *that* MAKE has a different sense from the MAKE I was using in "two and two make four." There we can equally say "two and two are four"; not so with the thoughts which call up others. Similarly when these words *make* this sentence, the sentence is the outcome of their being together so, but it isn't literally *forced* to be. We can, of course, say that if the words are there, the sentence is *forced* or *has to be* there, or that the words so put together *necessarily* form the sentence, and so on. All this shows that *forced*, *has to be*, and *necessary* share this ambiguity with MAKE.

This illustrates well a point in these notes of very great importance. The ambiguities in these capital words which most need attention are those which reappear in the very phrases with which we try to separate and distinguish them. So we find that *forced to*, *have to*, *must*, *necessarily will*, etc. can be ambiguous in just the same way as *made to*. This makes tilings look (through this, things look) more desperate than in fact they are. For we can, in fact, watch all these

words shifting their senses, and so, though it is hard to state the differences unambiguously, it is easy sometimes to see them clearly. For example, compare:

- (a) My very nature makes me desire good.
- (b) Tyranny makes men do what they do not desire.

(a) is like "Two and two make four," but (b) is like "He made me go"; or "I made the needle go through the canvas/* The force in (b) here is perhaps metaphoric. But it need not be: "Taking his hand firmly in mine, I made him pull the trigger."

The importance in political, educational, and social theory of this ambiguity in MAKE is obvious. "This made him see" may be:

- (1) Through this he was able to see;
- (2) Through this he was compelled to see.

Ralph Barton Perry in *Shall Not Perish from the Earth* listed Uniformitarianism as one of the four main ideas of totalitarianism (p. 94). Uniformitarianism is the doctrine that all men are to be made the same in the interests of society. 'Made the same' here may be:

- (1) forced by training to do the same—the Nazi technique.
- (2) given full opportunity to become as complete human beings as they can; i. e., the same in being as fully developed as their natural endowments

let them be. This gift of freedom is the democratic version of "made the same."^w

The various modes of ⁿ"causing"^q which MAKE may cany become especially clear when we parallel them with senses of ^w"must."^w We all know that ^w"must"^w in:

- (a) There must be three feet in a yard.
- (b) I must die sometime.
- (c) To get there in time you must fly.
- (d) You must have another drink.
- (e) You must go to prison.

is saying very different things. Its sense comes in

- (a) from the working definitions of the other words in the sentence;
- (b) from natural law;
- (c) from the relation of means to ends;
- (d) from human volition in social persuasion;
- (e) from human volition as organized in law.

The same pattern of meanings is shared, less obtrusively, by ^w"law," ^w"rule," ^wand Torder.^w Times which try men's souls try especially their understanding of these words, of this pattern of meaning. Good citizenship and the choice between the forced and the free life—between totalitarian and democratic government—stem from our understanding of these possibilities behind the words ^w"must"^w and MAKE. To study them and think them through in one instance is a help in recog-

nizing them and benefiting from them in all the others.

Our fifth use of MAKE, which links up with much we will be saying about BE, appears frequently at important points in Socrates' inquiries. In the *Euthyphro*,

Socrates: Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three examples of holiness, but to explain the general idea which MAKES all holy things to be holy. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the unholy unholy, and the holy holy?

Again in the *Phaedo*,

Socrates: What I am sure of is, that it is beauty which MAKES all beautiful things beautiful. This seems to me to be the safest answer that I can give to myself or others; I believe I shall never fail if I hold to this . . . that it is beauty which MAKES beautiful things beautiful. Don't you think so?

Cebes: I do.

Socrates: And it is size that MAKES large things large and larger things larger, and smallness that MAKES smaller things smaller. . . . And if you were told that one man was taller than another by a head, you would not accept the statement. . . . You would be afraid to assert that a man is greater or smaller by a head, lest you should be met by the retort, first, that the greater is greater, and the smaller smaller by the same thing; and, secondly, that the greater is greater by a head, which is a small thing, and that it is truly marvelous that a small thing should MAKE a man great. Should you not be afraid of that?

Cebes (laughing): Yes, indeed.

Socrates played with words (as the best way to keep them from playing with him) right through his last hours. Here he is pointing out that—

(a) to be made great by the addition of something, and (b) to be made great by greatness, are quite different. (*Ambiguity Two.*) (a) is like "I made a triangle by putting three matches together." But what is (b)? How does greatness MAKE great things great, holiness MAKE holy things holy, beauty MAKE beautiful things beautiful, and triangularity MAKE triangles triangular?

It is easy to say that this is all word-juggling, and that such remarks say nothing; easy enough to mock such 'explanations.'¹ They may often say nothing; but equally they can be a way of directing attention to something very important indeed, and that is what Plato, through Socrates, did with them, though generations of later philosophers have often missed the point. This beauty which MAKES beautiful things beautiful is for Plato no ghostly empty form which gets inside a thing and suddenly, as it were, shines out at us. That is a crude superstition or name-magic from which Plato was free. The forms or ideas, which for him MAKE everything in our everyday world what it is, are at the least a device—and on the whole a successful device—for saying that each thing has a structure, or MAKE-UP, through which it is that thing and not a different thing, and it is with the MAKE-UP of a thing that thought is concerned. So when Socrates

asks about the idea which makes holy things holy, he is asking about that MAKE-UP without which they would not be holy.

But note here how tricky this word MAKE is. I might have written instead:

He is asking "What makes people think them holy?"
or "What makes people call them holy?"

Now these, if read one way, would be the same question: "What MAKE-UP must they have to be (rightly) thought, or called, holy?" But equally it might ask, "What feelings, etc. happen to make people pick on these things to call them holy?" And that would be a very different inquiry.

The same ambiguities haunt the question "Why are they said to be holy?"

One outcome of Socrates' discussion will illustrate again for us these two uses of MAKE and the difficulty of being certain with which we are dealing.

Socrates: It is not being dear to the gods that MAKES a thing holy, but its being holy that MAKES it dear to the gods.

The first MAKE might be ^{SW}makes-up a holy thing^{SW}; the second might be ""causes it to be,^{8W} as with, "It's his cheerfulness that makes me like him." But this great saying will be read very differently by men with different conceptions of the gods. If we think of them as merely, superhuman humans—sometimes wise, sometimes jealous, sometimes amorous, and so

on—the second MAKE will very probably be ^{sw}causes it to be ^{sw}: its holiness is what causes them to hold it dear. But with a more exalted view of the gods, being holy and being dear to the gods would become the same thing under two names. The sentence would then say that ^w"holiness" was the more illuminating name for that MAKE-UP.

Compare Troilus' great speech made after his discovery of Cressida's perfidy, at a moment when one less "firm of word" and "fairly built" would have had his heart broken.

This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida,
If beauty have a soul, this is not she;
If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimony,
If sanctimony be the gods' delight,
If there be rule in unity itself,
This is not she.

The gods would not be gods if sanctimony was not their delight. This seems to have been Socrates' belief.

GET

GET, like so many other words, links up with MAKE, and shares its Ambiguity One.

"I got him to go" SEE "I made him go," The suggestion may be that the means included the person's own choice; i. e., "I persuaded him to go." But how free was the choice? Persuasions range from arguments addressing the freely judging intellect, to blows. And ^w"argument" is another word which can take this shift.

Blows have been described as the most effective arguments a donkey knows.

But the most interesting fluctuation of GET is between ^{8W}be given it^{sw} and ^{sw}go out and take it and make it yours.^{sw} (*Ambiguity Two*.) GET in its simpler sense is the passive reciprocal of GIVE. "You give it to me" s= "I get it from you." But GET can be a very aggressive word: "Hitler got Crete quickly." Ordinarily it implies some trouble—as when one gets there at last. The two senses are illustrated in "She will get dinner and then we'll get our dinners."

GIVE

GIVE ranges in a somewhat parallel fashion, from making an outright gift without return, or as sacrifice, through temporary control, "Give me your attention," to exchange, "I'll give it you for 15 cents," on to the ironical "Give him a good kick." As a general term for the passage of something from one thing to another, it spans communication ("give a piece of one's mind"), producing ("gave light"), and various causings ("gave pain," "gave effect to," "give way to").

On the whole, we handle these sense changes with great clarity and ease. We are very expert with the physical and social situations in which we use GIVE, and this keeps the word in good working order. Few questions arise here. But with less tangible and more serious gifts it is otherwise. And at one point—where one sense of GIVE joins up with a sense of GET—an

archproblem arises and, for some minds, a blaze of light upon it. This may be instanced from Coleridge's *Dejection*.¹

O Lady, we receive but what we give.

GETTING and GIVING here are one: our world is what we have put into it. The so-called "data" are of our making. (Compare SEE, *below*.)

LOVE

The greatest example of this union of GIVE and GET is in the word *agape*, standing for what it is tempting to call *the* Christian concept of love. But we should not call it that—since, from the earliest days of Christianity, this word has been the focus of a tremendous struggle to reconcile what have seemed to most people at most times to be opposite senses of GIVE and GET. The history of Christian dogma is the record of this intellectual-moral struggle. Orthodoxy has wavered between different adjustments and heresy after heresy might be described as a leaning toward one extreme or another. (*Ambiguity One*.)

Over against *Agape* as the rival concept of love is *eros*, which is best studied in Plato's *Symposium*. *Eros* is that love which comes from lack. We desire or want because we are in want. He who desires something is

¹ For a commentary on the poem and its implications I may perhaps refer to my *Coleridge on Imagination*, Chapter VII. Cf. also on SEE below.

in want of it (200). Our desires mount from bodily pleasures and beauties to the beauties of the mind, to institutions or laws, to the sciences, and at last to the all-encompassing knowledge or Idea of the Good (210-11), the final cause of the ascent. At each stage there is rebirth—a new need takes the place of the old needs. But all is need—the fulfilling of what is wanting. All desire, whatever its guise, is a striving to GET, and love, as Eros, whether it seeks pleasure or knowledge or a perfection still higher than knowledge (*Republic* V, 509), is still an effort to gain.

This concept of love seemed to Plato to span all desire from its humblest stirrings to its noblest flights. When Christianity first broke with it and made an equally extreme identification of LOVE with GIVE, the opposition was recognized by men of both parties. It came to a head with St. Paul. It has often been remarked that Plato and St. Paul would have made little enough of one another. To St. Paul a new world picture had come into being with a new conception of God.

To Plato, the more self-sufficient a man is the more perfect (*Republic* II, 381). And if we may let Aristotle in an early work speak for him, a perfect being would be without needs.

One who is self-sufficient can have no need of the service of others, nor of their affection, nor of social life, since he is capable of being alone. This is especially evident of God. Clearly since he is in need of nothing, God can have no need of friends, nor will he have any (*Eudemian Ethics*, 1244b).

It is perhaps harsh to read into the last clause all that we might. Nonetheless, there is a repugnancy between this "self-absorbed object of unreciprocated love" (to use a phrase from Ross) and most Christian concepts:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (*John* III:16).

It is true that Eros, for Plato, did convey prophecies and such from God to man as well as man's love and desire to God. Nonetheless, Eros is a stream of GETTINGS and Agape a stream of GIVINGS. As Eros, man's love to God is acquisitive, a desire to GET him for ourselves. It is the most enlightened form of self-love; the bad fail to love themselves. In it we seek our own good, and we must love him for nothing else, for no other gains than that self-fulfillment. But, as Agape, Love is all outgoing, and pure GIVING. It is not acquisitive; Charity "seeketh not her own" (*First Corinthians* XIII:5). And of this love God is the *source*; not, as with Eros, the *object*. All love is from God—overflowing in man's love for other men. It lends all value to men, who are all otherwise worthless. Our love to God is not desire for him but surrender to his love. In place of love for him we have participation in his love for other men. (It is worth remarking, after Plato, how confusing the phrase "the love of God" can be in such discussions.)

This brief sketch has sharpened the contrast between Agape and Eros for its purpose, which is to dis-

play the meeting point between GIVE and GET, the point where their senses become one and indistinguishable. Western civilization, since Christendom began, has centered round it. But the struggle has not been only between different doctrines of the GOOD, but still more between different component impulses in men's lives. Doctrines, like the Sabbath, are made for man.

A further peculiarity of Western civilization seems to be (though some learned Sinologist or Vedantist may correct me) that this extreme inner richness and ambiguity of ^wlove* (in such theological contexts) accompanies the word into all its serious uses—pre-eminently into the sex uses. (*Ambiguity Two*.) That one word with such varied possibilities behind it should span so vast a range of interest and activities is perhaps the single linguistic fact which has made most difference to human history. It is not the span of the word but the reasons for it which have mattered, of course. Somehow, in spite of them, we have managed neither to raise eroticism to a religion nor to lower religion to lovemaking. Perhaps the inner conflict I have been sketching in ^wlove^w is the explanation.

HAVE

After these notes on GET and GIVE, I can be brief about the questions which HAVE raises. Some of them are momentous enough, since they concern the institution of private property; but, if we follow the GET-

LOVE-GIVE implications, we will easily see how they reappear with HAVE.

When we HAVE something, in the sense of owning it as private property, we have it under our exclusive control. Various restrictions as to what we may do with it whittle down this control here and there. We are not allowed to do as we will with our sons and with many other things. So far our property in them is no longer private. And there are many tilings we own in common with other people, and their interests then limit our use. But so far as our property is fully ours, we have power over it. The source of this power is the first point to examine. In civilized communities—as opposed to thievish warring hordes—it comes from consent operating through the laws. There may be much doubt in detail as to who gives the consent and whether, in particular cases, consent would be given if the question were raised. But, as a social institution, the right to private property is accorded to men in their own interest and in the interest of society. If and when private property does not serve these interests, no other foundation for a right to it can be found. So it is with all other rights.

Now let us consider these interests. Private property serves its owner in three chief ways. As I list them you will probably feel a healthy stirring of 'Imts" within you.

(a) It enlarges the sphere of his personal responsibility—the sphere in which he *acts in* the full sense of the word (see DO). It makes him, for this sphere,

a recognizable, operative cause of how things happen within it. But this is true only so far as he is actually in charge of it and ceases so far as he delegates decisions about it to others.

(b) Through the sharp contrast between his property and that of others, it heightens his ability to cooperate with others without interfering with them. It puts an easily recognizable line between his business and other people's business. But this is chiefly of symbolic value as an easy way of teaching a man to respect his own claims and rights and those of others.

(c) It trains a man in foresight and accountability and in balancing values. But it only does this if his property is limited rather narrowly, so that to use some of it for one purpose bars him from some other uses. This amounts to saying that private property is most beneficial to the relatively poor man—a reflection which is comforting to the moralist. Property is a form of power. "All power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely," remarked the great historian, Lord Acton: another comforting reflection in connection with dictators. But a limited power, symbolized by private property, seems educationally indispensable.

It will be noted that all these three justifications of this institution are educational. The others vanished suddenly with the recent arrival of the age of abundance. But we have hardly realized that yet. Abundance is clearly not an unmixed blessing. When all *HAVE* more than anyone can use, we may have to count

losses of a less tangible sort—as we can already see. It is not a good thing that men should feel free to purloin government and railway property, for example. More than an "unconsidered trifle" is missing on such occasions. The amount of pilfering that occurs is a sadly revealing index of the genuine trustworthiness, truthfulness, self-respect, and responsibility of a population. If we were building a Utopia, we might perhaps rule that the young are to enjoy the use of a limited private property, and only when they have learned all that that can teach should they enter into possession of the commonwealth.

TEN

SEEM, BE, DO, SEE

*I've looked as far as I can see—
Though that's not far—down into me;
If you have seen as much of you
And tell me it's a pretty sight,
Look again, and take a light.*
RALPH HODGSON, *Silver Wedding* (1941)

SEEM

AS we would suspect, this is a very deceitful word. The crux, as Plato made us see, is how we are to separate the things which can only SEEM from things which can BE in a further sense. What seems is; the seemings at least are; but there are other deeper senses of BEING, and it is against these that we may ask: Does the world of the senses only seem to us? Are what it consists of all only seemings? But notice then—as with the cry only two men heard in Chapter Seven—how ambiguous^qthe world of the senses¹ becomes.

When we have picked out for this phrase a suitable world, which is all and only appearances and has nothing they are appearances to or of, we can say of that world, "Nothing is but as it seems"—an attractive doctrine which deserves a pleasanter name than phenomenalism. Within its world it is true, and this defines that world. But even within that world we rightly make a distinction between seemings (illusions) and

facts, and we use SEEMS then in another sense to record that vital question. (*Ambiguity One.*) Facing a mirror, we have no doubt that we seem there but are here. All that we see may be equally seemings—but some of them are dependable, others not, or—as with mirror-images—only dependable when we know the special laws they follow.

This applies more widely than to the world of sense, to our judgments of people, for example. In "young women are not the angels they seem to be" (for which discovery the dictionary gives 1756) more than mere visual or sensory appearance stands over against cruel fact. And cruel fact here may be further seemings (the termagant's shows); or something beyond all seemings, a true BEING which is their source. Thus SEEM has two levels of use:

- I. The philosophical contrast between appearances and reality.
- II. Within appearances a contrast between what *dependably* seems and what does not.

And with the unreliable and deceptive seemings, we suspect or trust that if we knew more about how they arise (as we know with mirrors) we would be able to turn them into dependable seemings by seeing why they are to be expected. This KNOWLEDGE of laws is the knowledge of tine BEING which Plato, for example, contrasted with all seeming. But Plato knew better than to suppose that if we had it completely, the philosophical distinction would lapse and appearance would become reality.

In our worlds these contrasts of SEEM and BE are the source of most ironies. "That seems wise" equals "is probably wise." But, "That seemed wise" tells a different tale. In, "I can't seem to make it," the complainer sounds as though the best he could hope to do would be to create some sort of illusion. What, in fact, he means is, "Somehow or other, it seems that I can't make it (but that can't be really the case if I am what I think I am)!" Here "it seems" is straight enough; but Macaulay's "There is still, it seems, a hope for mankind" fills the phrase with mockery of pretentious pessimism.

BE

Of all the snares in the language, those set for us by BE are without doubt the sliest. The following distinctions may be some help to us in detecting and avoiding them.

We use this verb ¹

- I. To *state*, that is, to put forward something to be thought about—but not necessarily to be believed.
- II. To claim *existence* for something but not necessarily any special sort of existence. Here "existence" has only the widest possible sense, *^wcan be talked of.*^w
- III. To *name* something: "Let this kitten be Walrnse!" settles nothing more about the kitten than its name.
- IV. To *connect* something with other things. We can picture this connecting in three ways at least:

¹ A fuller discussion of these senses of BE will be found in my *Interpretation in Teaching*, Chapter XIX.

- (a) as putting X with other like things in a sort;
- (b) as giving a quality, property, character, or predicate, etc. to X;
- (c) as relating X to other things.

These are logico-verbal machineries for talking about connections between things, but not rival ways of connecting them.

- V. To *identify* one thing with another. But since, if they are identical, there is only one of them, it is better to say: to show that two ways of talking are ways of talking about one thing.
- VI. To say that something is *changed*—is not the thing it was. Hourly I am different and in saying so I do not use ^wam^w as I use it in saying I am writing or sitting at my desk. These ^wam's^w connect me with writing, or my desk, but if I am growing or changing it is not my connections with other things which are talked about, but my make-up or being.
- VII. To express or claim *belief* of some sort. We will come to BELIEF later. For many purposes it is wise to regard it as various variable things. This use of BE is frequently confused with statement (I); but, as I am distinguishing these uses here, we may properly state without believing and without deceiving. A lie is a fiction of belief and only deceives in so far as it invites belief in others.
- VIII. Lastly, to mark the *tense*. It was, it is, it will be.

But a mere list of the different jobs which BE may do will help us not a bit. We need lively examples to watch, analyze, and remember. Here are three types of these snares, labeled, dissected, and illustrated:

1. *The DEFINITION Snare. (Ambiguity One.)*

This comes from confusion between naming (III) and connecting (IV). In giving something a name, if that is all we are doing, we are saying nothing more about it than that that is its name. With proper names this may be clear enough. "This is Walmsel" connects nothing except "Walmsel," the name, with *this*, whatever it is. But—and here the catch begins to work—we may have heard of Walmsel before. Then "This is Walmsel" will do more than give *this* a name. It will connect (IV) *this* up with the things formerly heard about Walmsel. And then "This is Walmsel" is no longer a naming remark: it says something further about *this*. It perhaps tells us that *this* ate the canary.

So far there is no trouble. This combination of the naming BE with the connecting BE is indispensable. Without it, names would be useless. Turn now to general names. Take a troublesome general name like ^Qword.^Q Whenever we use it we give it some sense (or set of senses). We take it, that is, as the name of some sort (or sorts) of things. Only thereby are we able to say something with it. But what are we talking about? These senses we give to ^Qword,^Q these acting definitions, are very various. Compare

(a) There are 261 words on this page (including heading).

(b) There are only 110 words on this page

Both these are true and there can be no dispute about either. "Word," in fact, is being used with two differ-

ent definitions. In (a) a printer's definition is used. In (b) the 10 occurrences of ^wis^w and the 12 occurrences of ^wthis^w are each counted as one word.

That is, in (a) and (b) ^wword,^w having a different acting definition, *names* different things and ARE therefore rightly connects them with different numbers.

Underneath and supporting every such remark for each word in it, is an unexpressed, assumed naming statement or acting definition. Thus a fuller formulation would be

- (a) A separated clump of letters is a word and 261 of such words are on this page;
- (b) A distinct form of such clumps is a word and 110 of such forms are on this page.
(This is only a rough definition. An adequate formulation would be long and complex, for example, "make" [as product] and "make" [as mate] would not be the same word. It is amusing to note that a modern colloquial phrase revives this otherwise obsolete use of "make.")

Any connecting statement then contains implicit naming statements which would say, if they were formulated, what the words are names of or stand for.

Now the snare which BE sets for us is that sometimes the naming statement is expressed but it looks like a connecting statement. We then wobble be-

tween taking what is said as just giving a name and taking it as saying something about what is so named. And this wobble is usually fatal to intellectual order at that point. So far as something is simply *named*, no question arises—any more than it does over whether this is Walmsel. "Such and such things are here named ^wwords^w; well and good; now what about them as so named?" But we rarely remain so submissive and consenting. The bare naming statement seems, and is, empty; we want it to say something—to say something more than that this sort of thing has this name. "Words are separated clumps of letters" looks too thin. But we can only make it say something more by some change in the acting definition of ^wwords.^w We catch ourselves asking, "But *are* words only separated clumps of letters?" And in that very question ARE switches over from naming to connecting. So we unwittingly slip in a different implicit naming statement (make ^wwords^w stand for something else) and use the old naming statement as a connecting statement true or false.

Most pages of argument are creased with such duplicities. A man says that Freedom—or Democracy or Poetry or Truth or Logic or Beauty or Experience or Education or What-not—is 'simply' so and so. If he were naming something—saying what he is using the word for—no question would arise. It would be important to note it clearly and firmly because our understanding of what he then went on to say with the word would depend upon that naming statement. But, alas, it is these very assertions that are most often

taken up for dispute as though they *said* the most important things that language has to say.²

It is easy to see why this should be so. The writers usually wobble every bit as much as their readers between naming something with their sentences and saying something about some other thing. While this is so their utterances must be the pivotal points of controversy. For they should record the acts in which the writers are setting up what they are to talk about. But we suppose them (and they suppose themselves) to be laying down an alleged truth about something which is set up otherwise. Whence most of our intellectual woe. Any training we can give ourselves, any techniques we can develop for handling this prime shift, will be illimitably rewarding.

Our usual procedures when we are aware of this snare are:

I. To put the name in quotation marks to hint that it is the word *as a name* we are talking about, not the things it names. Some other words describing these things then follow is. E. g.

"Freedom" is the absence of restrictions.

(I choose a poor definition as more revealing for our purposes here.)

II. To expand the sentence to become an explicit naming statement. E. g.

I understand by Freedom, etc.

I take Freedom to be, etc.

² For a further discussion of these points see my *Basic Rules of Reason* (written in Basic English), Psyche Miniatures, London, 1933.

In my sense Freedom is, etc.
 Freedom is the name for, etc.
 Freedom may be defined as, etc.
 Freedom means, etc.

These, when men remember to use them, are serviceable. But they are tiresome. They break the rhythm. Quotation marks, as we have seen, have other uses and can easily infect a naming statement with the suspicion that the writer thinks little of Freedom (or What-not) anyhow. ^wMeans, ^wworst of all, may mean all sorts of other relations besides this naming relation between a word and the things it stands for.³ There should be room in training work for another device, which would draw attention to the naming use of is and ARE in the very sentences which most invite us to mistake it for a connecting use (and for belief and temporal uses). A small *N* as an index (if printers' kindness may be still further stretched) would be clarifying. "Freedom is^N self-realization" is how it would look. But writers would probably put them in and still use the sentences as connecting statements. It is worth adding that any "more or less," "probably," "possibly," or other such qualifications here show that it is not a naming but a connecting statement.

2. *The BELIEF Snare. (Ambiguity Two.)*

The second great snare set by BE is confusion between mere statement (I) and statement with BELIEF (VII). This is more generally recognized but is hardly

» See *The Meaning of Meaning* by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, fifth edition, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1938.

less dangerous. Indeed, much traditional doctrine has deliberately cultivated this confusion by maintaining that a verb (and pre-eminently BE) only makes a complete statement by expressing a belief or judgment. Even if you are doubtful and express your doubt with a *may* or *might*, a *perhaps* and a *possibly*, you are still, according to this, uttering a 'belief that it might perhaps possibly, etc., be so! Statement is, on this view, to be defined as the expression of belief. There would be no objection if it were understood that BELIEF then became an almost empty word, not standing for any of those feelings and impulses to action which we ordinarily so name. Since, however, for a clearer understanding here, we need to separate sentences which invite us to believe (in these ordinary uses of the word) from sentences which do not, it is more convenient to make ^wstate^w a neutral term. Then we can more easily raise the question, "Which sorts of belief come in where?"—a question it is always very much our business to ponder. This ambiguity is naturally paralleled in ^wsay,^w which may mean ^{8w}to utter^{sw} or ^{sw}to affirm.^{sw}

Statement here then is^N merely propounding, putting forward for thought. What attitudes we take up as a result of thought upon such statements will be a further question. No belief is^N a necessary condition for thinking about what they say, that is, for having them before the mind.

But what about understanding them in the fuller and more interesting senses ^q Understanding^q? Can we get what someone says without entering, in some

way, into his feelings, his attitudes, including whatever beliefs are behind his utterance and are expressed by him in it? Probably not. But the way we enter is all-important. We will not understand *Mein Kampf* without imaginatively reproducing Hitler's beliefs, but Heaven forbid that we share them! This is one of the things imagination is for: to spare us the necessity of actually undergoing what we contemplate.⁴

"What an inexplicable frame of mind is belief," said Charles Darwin. Probably he meant religious belief primarily. Study of the varieties of belief, the natural history of the believings, is so oddly neglected that the neglect somewhat suggests that men are afraid of the topic. For there are certainly very different sorts of believings. Ordinarily we discuss the matter as though the only question were *which* statements should be believed, as though belief were some standardized product, and as though the only question is as to *what is believed*. But *how* and *with what kind of belief* and *as what* are we to believe some statement are more searching questions. "Is" cannot discriminate between the invitations to beliefs it offers—though the voice uttering it, and sometimes the complete written sentence, can. It fails to indicate the entertainment proposed. We should beware of supposing that believing or not is like turning a light on or off. It is much more like focusing or not focusing the eyes.

⁴ These questions are more fully discussed in the author's *Practical Criticism*, Chapter VII, and *Interpretation in Teaching*, pp. 157, 334.

3. *The EXISTENCE Snare. (Ambiguity Three.)*

Subtler still are the risks when we ask—not "Do I believe it when I say 'It is so?'; nor "What is this believing?"; but "What is 'being so,' what is BEING and what EXISTENCE?" Those questions, in one form or another, religious or metaphysical, are the proper concern of the wise and harm only the foolish, but the wisest are foolish sometimes. Some forms of them, which may be stretched to include one another, are: "What am I?" "What is matter?" "What is God?" "What is spirit?" No one who does not face and struggle with them (Jacob and the Angel is the traditional image here) can come to mental maturity. To live with them is a necessary condition of healthy growth—provided that the peculiar and inevitable tenuousness of the answers is rightly recognized. These questions—in this age at least; this is perhaps a sign of our cultural crisis—dwarf all answers; their power to provoke the mind is immeasurably greater than the ability of the best answers to satisfy it. And the best answers are renewals or reincarnations of the questions.

Here lies the first risk. Seeing the emptiness of the answers, we are tempted to suppose the questions idle, too, and grow impatient and then indifferent. Indifference to these questions permits a man to be a good technician but no more.

An opposite danger is that we take some answer and satisfy ourselves with it. By thus claiming to know *what is what* we may make the attainment of order, coherence, stability, and power easier. This is true in

a measure whichever answer we so take—phenomenalist, mechanistic material, idealist, Platonic, Christian, or Vedantic—though the Christian answer is the most central, rejects least, and unites the most conflicting components. But there is a price, however little it is in comparison with the price we pay for having no stable view at all. These views are jealous goddesses. If we are faithful to one, our devotion gives us an unbalanced knowledge of possibility. If and as we change our attachment we find this out. These views are rather eyes than things seen, so much do they settle what shall be visible.

So "What is?" is a formula which can become a number of different questions rather than the simple direct question it seems to be. As we ask it from within different philosophies it has to have different answers. To the phenomenalist (or most modern psychologists) the answer will be sense-experiences; to the mechanist, particles in motion; to the idealist, spirits; to the Platonist, the Idea of the Good; to the Christian, God and his creation; to the Vedantist, the One. But these, though language very nearly forces us to think so, are not rival answers to one and the same question. The questions are different, though the formulation is the same/ Each has its own answer and is not open to others. What the ear hears is sound and what the eye sees is light. Sound alone exists for hearing as light alone exists for seeing. With the senses we understand why this is so, It is harder to grasp why it is so with the philosophies—why the is of existence changes its sense with the philosophy it serves,

though, here again, the idea of 'essential omission'¹ (Chapter Five) helps. To understand fully enough how this happens would be to create a mediating philosophy. The mind that could do that could enjoy the use of all the philosophies, as we enjoy the use of all our senses, would be the perfect Dialectician (see REASON), and would know another world than any we know.

DO

Meanwhile we have to DO with and live in this unknown or very partially known world. Do is the great replacer among verbs. As "it" is to names, so "do" is to verbs.⁵ So its characteristic behavior reflects that of innumerable other words, among which *act*, *agent*, *responsible*, *free*, *cause*, *reason*, *choice* are of prime importance. It therefore makes a handy peg on which to hang the discussion of a very general point, the active-passive doubt. Where does "doing" end and "being done to" begin? When his mother told him not to sneeze so, Tommy replied, "I don't sneeze; it sneezes me!" Tommy seems to have been entirely justified. That is what it feels like. We still say "God bless you!" to a sneezer, because of the old belief that a demon is attempting to extract his soul—a belief for which, if introspection were the only evidence, there would be much to be said.

Thus DO may bring in the very delicate question:

⁵ "Who broke the window? Who did it?" But here "it," of course, replaces "the breaking of the window" rather than the window, and "did" replaces the same phrase rather than "broke."

How much conscious control must I have, how much foresight and intention, if I am to do something, not merely take part in its being done? That question is an important way of getting at the deeper question, "What am I?" It should be more than a commonplace of education that a mind develops chiefly through doing things, but we must do them ourselves, not just go through the motions without consciously seeing, willing, and guiding what we do. In other words, reason and choice must come in. The mind must be acting under its own proper laws, not running under the very much simpler laws of a machine. In this strict sense a man who is unconsciously scratching himself is not DOING anything, though, of course, we would commonly say he was. More clearly, perhaps, a man talking normally is DOING something. In delirium something is being done to him. Sleep presents a typical case. In deep sleep am I DOING anything? By a relaxed use of the word, I am: I am sleeping. More strictly I am not. But, as Plato was fond of hinting, the difference between sleeping and waking is one of degree. We are always more or less awake and asleep together. The neurologist states this in terms of quantity and distribution of inhibition in the central nervous system.

This point comes up especially in connection with the words *act*, *responsible*, *free*, and *will*, and is essential to an understanding of all such words. How must we DO in order to be *acting*, *responsible*, *free-willed* persons?

In all this we are using views of "cause."^w Some

events in the mind are the places where the most complex causing occurs. The mind is purposive and guided by its past. When it reflects, reasons, and chooses, into the causal process come far more varied factors—scattered over its past in far more diverse interrelations—than in any other process known. Whether we *ix*) or are done to chiefly turns on how far this most complex and uniting sort of causing is at work. Being active or passive is a matter of degree. *How much* of the past comes into what happens and in what togetherness and interdependence? In physical and physiological causing we assume that only *immediately prior* events count. *Where* a billiard ball starts for depends on this push of the cue. But if it remembered past miscuings which that particular cue had committed, or recalled⁶ what an indifferent player I am, and acted accordingly, we \ould have mnemonic or psychical causation, and the billiard ball would have a mind. And the more the different separate parts of the past, *as* they entered into this causing, depended upon and varied with one another, the more the billiard ball could be said to *act*—the more it would do rather than be done to. On this view mind would be^N a certain sort of causing, and you and I would be this sort of causing in connection with our bodies.

Do raises a further problem directly connected

⁶ See Chapter Two on "memory" in the Aristotle passage, and, for a fuller discussion of mnemonic causation, *The Meaning of Meaning*, Chapter III; *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Lecture II; and, especially, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Chapter XIV, pp. 104-05.

with these—the problem of the agent and the instrument. When my chin is cut did I DO it or the razor? When I build a house, do I DO it or the workmen? We normally say "both," but there is clearly an important shift in the sense of DO. This is a problem which can cry pressingly for an answer. At the moment we are all trying to think through:

- (a) When workmen are locked out, who *does* it—the management, the corporation, the board of directors, or the shareholders, or Congress—or the whole nation?
- (b) When a war is started, who does *that*—Hitler, his party, or the German people?

With the mind-endowed billiard ball the question was: How much of its past is *responsible* for its doings? How much of its past is it responsive to? With the agent, instrument, or alleged statesman the question is: How much are those acting through him responsible for his acts, and he responsive to, and responsible to them, *and* to *what* in them? Is he pleasing the man, the lion, or the many-headed beast in them, as Plato put it? (*Republic* IX, 588.)

Do often deceives us by describing very different acts as though they were the same. Two men are doing the same work, we say. That might mean that the outcomes, after a time, are the same so far as what is produced goes. But what was going on may be very different. One man might be living well and fully in and through the work; the other might be just drearily drudging along. If we shifted our focus from the out-

comes to the acts themselves, we would have to say they were doing very different things. This ambiguity haunts all the words DO will take the place of. The parallel instance of 'saying the same' discussed in Chapter Three may be noted. How closely and fully are we considering what is done? Men and acts at a sufficient distance look alike. Close up, things are very different. On a broad general view we are always doing the same things. Looked at closely enough we never do anything twice. This is especially important if we are trying to judge the value of our doings. Their value depends on what they are in the finest and fullest detail of their MAKE-UP—not on how in some broad fashion they might be sorted. Twenty people may read the same poem, say. Loosely speaking, they have done the same. In fact, they will probably have done twenty different things with it. There is a very general problem here, which turns up incessantly in connection with nearly everything we talk about. If they read the poem differently, what do we mean by "reading the poem"^w? And what is "the poem"^q? If I read it queerly enough, you will be likely to, say I didn't read it, but another 'poem' of my own invention.⁷ Two men meet the same girl. One falls in love with her at sight; the other detests her. Yet as meeting her they did the same.

This point is frequently described by the contrast between *what* we do and *how* we do it. This *how* is our doing looked at fully and closely enough for the

⁷ See Chapter XXX, "The Definition of a Poem," in my *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1938.

needed judgment to be made; the *what* is the same doing seen from too great a distance. We may profitably ask whether there is any limit to the nearness at which things may be examined. This metaphor of distance is handy here, and not misleading if we think it out far enough. Vision is a good representative specimen of ways of knowing (see SEE and KNOWLEDGE). Whenever there is a gap between what knows and what is known there is between them a two-way interdependence. Between the knowing and what is known *as it is known*, of course. They vary together—but we should not say hastily, in any instance, which causes which. Compare again our discussion of the page from Whitehead in Chapter Five. The sort of abstracting we are doing, the essential omissions we are making, settle what we know as much as does what we are knowing.

This gap, this metaphorical distance we may be from what we are thinking of, can close down to nothing. What the mind then knows is its own activity—KNOWING becomes BEING. We may wonder if it still ^qknows, ^qwhether there is enough left in common with other modes of knowledge to make ^wknow^w here a useful word. In our tradition there is. Aristotle made the divine thought one with its objects. There THOUGHT and what it is of are one: its thinking is a thinking upon thinking. For Aristotle, that BEING in which KNOWING and BEING are one and the same is that toward which, to become which, the whole universe strives—the explanation of all that happens and of

anything happening at all. This, the greatest idea man has had, is now behind DO when we take it seriously and separate it from undergoing. Strictly, when anything—stone, plant, or man—DOES (in this sense) it is, according to its condition and degree, realizing itself in its effort to imitate God. Stones rarely fail, said Aristotle, to do what they should, or be themselves; they are lowly beings and it is easy for them. Plants fail more often; and man, as the highest creature, fails most of all. Still, his life is an unceasing effort, usually mistaken, to become in fact what in design he already is: to realize his own nature. Here 'realize' (as we saw in Chapter Five) unites the two senses: ^{*w}to see clearly^{sw} and ^{8w}to become actually.TM This is one of the innumerable suggestions in language that BEING and KNOWING are somehow one. Compare the etymology of Conception^w—that best of metaphors by which we describe the formation in us of an IDEA⁸—and the etymologies of *know* itself and of *cognition*, *apprehend*, and *grasp*. As we saw in connection with ^wcause^w two or three pages back, it is when most things most come together to determine our action that we most truly DO. It is then that we most truly ARE and KNOW, and accordingly then ^{nb}nature^{nb} is ^{sw}true being.^{sw} Whatever man *does* in the course of this self-realization he does naturally—i. e., he is moving *toward* his nature. It will be noted how different this use is from others: "The natural man wars against

⁸ See my Introduction to *Semantics* by H. R. Walpole, Norton, New York, 1941, for an expansion of this.

the divine man," or Whitehead's 'Nature' as what sense-perception discerns. Separation is a step toward nothingness.

SEE

This word has an immense range of uses which are extremely easy to confuse with one another. In fact, anyone who could control them would have solved half the problems of philosophy. Theories of our knowledge of the external world do conjuring tricks with them perpetually, and it is doubtful if anyone knows how to avoid or detect them. This is a pity, because one of the things that sometimes is "vanished" is the world itself.

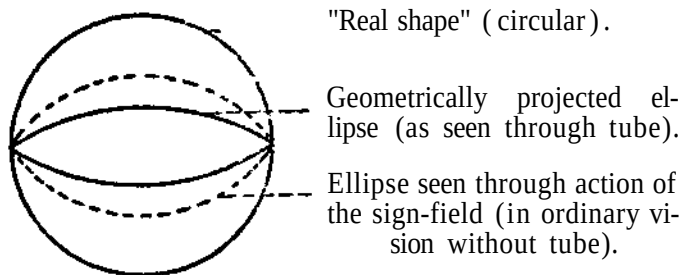
What do we SEE—the table, its surface, colors, patches in our eyes, waves of light, impulses in nerves, atoms, photons, or what? This is an old riddle. It depends on our pretending to keep the sense of SEE steady. But it can't stay put if the type of the thing we are said to see is changed. We see dogs and cats and chairs much in the same sense. But, to see surfaces, the perceiving system has to change in all sorts of ways. Any artist knows practically—though he may not know theoretically—how different it is to look at flat canvas and into a "picture space," but few people know how deeply interdependent the seeming size, the seeming distance, and the seeming shape are in this constructive activity we so glibly call just seeing. Coleridge was perfectly right. It is literally true that in looking at a penny on the pavement we only get what we give.

Some experiments of Dr. R. H. Thouless⁹ bring this out clearly. We see the penny as having a certain shape, size, distance from us, angle to our eye, and so on—as soon as we see it *as a penny*. A great deal happens here in a very short time, and our common-sense ideas of what happens and how it happens are oversimple. We see a round penny, we say. Probably, if we were asked to be more specific about the shape of *what we see*, we would say, "Well, of course, unless we are looking *straight down* upon the penny, we see an *elliptical* brown patch; but we know that's how a circular thing seen from an angle must appear. It looks elliptical but we know it's really round." So far so good, but *how* elliptical does it look? That is the question on which experimental findings are surprising.

We are likely to suppose that geometry settles that. There is the penny tilted at a certain angle to the eye. The fatness or thinness of the ellipse depends on the *angle*, we will suppose. But careful experiment shows that something else comes in and to an astonishing degree. If we ^qknow^q that the brown patch (the penny) we see is round, we will ^qsee^q a much fatter ellipse—much more nearly circular—than the geometry of the situation would let us expect. How do we ^qknow^q it

⁹ R. H. Thouless, "Phenomenal Regression to the Real Object," *British Journal of Psychology*, XXI (April, 1931), 339-59; and "Individual Differences in Phenomenal Regression," *ibid.*, XXII (January, 1932), 216-41. See also I. A. Richards, in *Reading and Pupil Development*, Sup. Ed. Monograph No. 51, Ed. William S. Gray, University of Chicago Press (October, 1940), Chapter V. "What is involved in the Interpretation of Meaning?" where the parallels with the reading process are further developed.

is round? We have recognised it as a penny, and pennies are most of them round. Moreover, in seeing it, we see the pavement, or the table, it is lying on and have plenty of good reasons for knowing the angle of that plane to our line of vision. The elliptical brown patch, in short, belongs to a complex sign-field, which tells us how it would look from directly above it. But suppose we cut the sign-field out — by looking through



a cardboard tube, say — so that all we see is an elliptical brown patch on a background with nothing to tell us what the angle is and with no clue to show that it is a penny? We will see then a very much thinner ellipse; our knowledge of the real shape of the patch is no longer acting.

The point is that even the shapes we take things as SEEMING to have — as well as those we say they HAVE — depend on our knowledge or supposals about what they ARE. And the same is true of all the characters of what we seem to SEE. The seeming distances and sizes of things are more obviously interdependent. The same elliptical brown patch SEEN here as a penny

might in different settings (sign-fields) be a manhole cover fifty yards off, or a threshing floor a mile away. And its seeming color again (as the artist knows) depends upon the color we suppose it is. And the same applies to all the deliveries of our senses. What we take to be data—appearances the world presents to us for us to make what we can of them—are discovered by careful enough experiment to be already products of our interpretative activity. The very bricks from which we build the world are themselves of our own making, and so is the clay. As Troilus put it, it is

As if those organs had deceptive functions,
Created only to calumniate.

Thus to SEE something—and the same holds of all perception—is far from being the simple act we commonly, and rightly for most purposes, take it to be. Indeed, there are no simple acts anywhere in our lives. But we do well to forget this except when forgetting makes us unjust dogmatic, or unimaginative toward our own or others' meanings. The art of remembering it relevantly, we will see later, is that supreme art of knowing, Dialectic.

When we step over into the metaphoric senses of SEE, passing from the world of the eye (which, as we have just noted, is so little ruled by optics) to that of the intellect, we find seeing (understanding) still more constructive. We build up the ideas we pretend we take in. But consider the active-passive shift we discussed under DO as it occurs here in "build." That

does not MAKE (5) our ideas less truthful than they might seem by other accounts. As much as ever they have to check with one another. To realize the constructiveness of understanding, of intellectual seeing, would protect us from innumerable errors. Understanding comes through active thinking. We are not wax which takes impressions from an alien world. We are so intimately interrelated with it that it is impossible to say where we stop and it begins; or whether we are more its work than it is ours. (Compare DO.)

Thus an understanding of the part the mind plays even in seeing with the eyes, and the still greater part it has in intellectual discernment, breaks down that line between what is *in* and what is *over against* the mind which language so glibly persuades us to draw. It prepares us at the same time to be more alert to the danger to guard us from which that line was drawn: the confusion of our imaginings with the facts. "When a man mistakes his ideas for people and things, he is^N mad," said Coleridge. A mad world, my masters!

These points about intellectual seeing are Plato's:

Socrates: If so, education is not truly what some of its professors say it is. They say they are able to put knowledge into a soul which hasn't got it—as if they were putting sight into blind eyes.

Glaucon: They do say so.

Socrates: But our argument points to this: the natural power to learn lives in the soul and is like an eye which might not be turned from the dark to the light without a turning round of the whole body. The instrument of knowledge has to be turned round and with it the whole

soul, from the things of becoming to the things of being, till the soul is able, by degrees, to support the light of true being and can look at the brightest. And this, we say, is the good. (*Republic* VII, 518.)

Into understanding, so conceived, of such things our whole being enters. And this is true, in varying measure, of all understanding. In mathematics, perhaps, the intellect comes as near to being separated from the rest of the mind as anywhere. But as we go from mathematics toward the sorts of knowledge which give a more complete view of things, more and more of us comes in. This progress is toward the vision of the good, because that vision alone shows us where the less complete views fit in. That is why, for Plato, for all things which are known, that they are and what they are comes from the good. Moreover, it is for the good that every soul looks, and for which it does all that it does. (*Republic* VI, 505, 509, 531, 537.)

One further note on intellectual seeing. We must on no account confuse it with visualizing—having visual images in the mind's eye of the things we so "see." These things of the mind cannot be seen through the eye or through any *visual* image or copy. To suppose that the only things we have knowledge of are things the senses can represent is to shut ourselves up needlessly and foolishly in Plato's cave.

ELEVEN

MIND, THOUGHT, IDEA, KNOWLEDGE

*And I do not want to talk that language of
spiritual aspiration which is nothing but
words.*

T. S. ELIOT, *Towards a
Christian Britain*, 108

WE now take up a group of words of which we may safely say that understanding them is understanding their interconnections. The senses of these words are so sensitive to one another that even to read them over in different orders is to set shadowy dramas moving in the background of our awareness. What we have to attempt is to bring these dramas—these interactions—forward, slow them down, and simplify them till we can follow them.

Thought freed from words might see all these interrelations together. There are moments when it all seems strangely simple and clear. But that vision would be incommunicable. The words with which we beckon and wave to one another must come out one after another. What one sentence said may have faded before even the next one can come to its aid. We live in time; what we are endeavoring to see could only be rightly contemplated *sub specie aeternitatis*. Yet we understand nothing except through under-

standing ourselves, and understanding ourselves is understanding these words. Almost every page we read puts them to work. In fact, we all understand them far better than we suppose. Our very troubles in describing how we use them come from the wealth of our understanding. We know too much to be content with any account we can offer or be offered. Unless, that is, we are so miserably divorced from the tradition as to suppose that some one doctrine has refuted and disposed of all the rest. It must be admitted, though, that this supposition is itself a part of the tradition. Numbers of the thinkers who together make it up have thought they had sight of exclusive truth.

MIND

The origins and early history of the word put *memory* foremost—so hinting, perhaps, how minds developed. Compare Aristotle on 'experience.' Any general thought on MIND takes us back to DO and BE. What we ARE (here, what our minds are) can almost become the same as what we DO. So the broadest human sense for MIND (as *men* have or are minds) is^N what we are able to BE, and DO. On the all-embracing sense in which MIND is God (Wordsworth's "The eternal deep haunted forever by the eternal mind"), compare Aristotle as quoted under DO.

With human minds usage distinguishes mind as intention or PURPOSE (I have a good mind to . . .) and mind as power of THOUGHT or intellect (he has a fine mind). Sad contrasts—between the evilly able and

the well-intentioned witless—support this division. But still, the philosophic tradition which comes down from Socrates—whether we take him to have invented the soul or not—fights against it. In that tradition knowledge is virtue; a man is evil only through ignorance; he is pursuing GOOD in wrong directions; his whole soul needs turning round. Thought cannot be unmotivated, nor can desire or purpose be unguided by thought. We separate these two components of MIND (will and intellect, conation and cognition, the why and what of mental process) for our convenience. As we have noted already in Chapter Six, the division is of immense use to us. We can hardly describe any human behavior without it. But fuller and more serious reflection, after profiting from it, breaks it down. And the highest human activity, that in which, Aristotle would say, man is most himself, is described by combining both aspects in the New Testament phrase, "the knowledge and love of God," too closely for either to be distinguished from the other.

THOUGHT

THOUGHT, like MIND, ranges from almost anything whatever that we do (the most disconnected feelings are sometimes called "thoughts" and so are intentions: "I do begin to have bloody thoughts") to an aspect of our doings we sometimes cut off sharply from the rest and then call "reflection." In between, we often include under "thought" perceiving things through the senses, and we may even be said to think

with our muscles and joints as in games of skill. A potter thinks with his hands, a musician with his ears and fingers, and so on.

What is common to the manual or perceptual sort of thinking and to reflective thinking is chiefly the sort of outcome they have when well done. That is order or control by PURPOSE. When a man thinks with his hands, their movements serve especially well, or unusually directly, an end which he has in mind. Of course, most things we do with our hands serve a purpose, but with some very skillful people their hands rather than they seem to know what to do and how to do it. This may be the effect of reflection and deliberate experiment while learning. The main point is the control by PURPOSE.

In reflective thinking, disengaged from perceiving and from muscular action, control by purpose has an equally decisive place. We talk of "idle thoughts," and include random daydreaming, free association, apparently motiveless chains of reverie, recollection, and castle-building under "thinking." But we are very ready to cut through these ramblings with "I must *think*." And we should especially beware of supposing that the chains of associations we can study through experiments in free association represent faithfully the mind's normal processes of thought. The whole point of them is that the normal control of purposes is there artificially suspended and relaxed—in favor of a general purpose—to let happen what may. We are no such automata in our ordinary living. Yet too many in modern times naively believe that chance

and the unconscious link together all our thoughts for us.¹

Whether it is purposive in the fuller senses or not, thought may be carried on in images (visual, auditory, muscular, tactual, images perhaps of what emotions would feel like), in words, in images of words, and probably without any relevant words or images at all. Different men's thinking at different times may vary greatly in the vehicles it uses, without these differences seemingly making much difference to the quality of their thought.

What is said by "thought" is further complicated by the following Part-Whole Shifts:

- I. A man's thought may be a momentary occurrence in him, an incident in his biography.
- II. It may be a persistent pattern in his thinking.
- III. It may be what his thought (in I) is of.
- IV. It may be the structure in things his thought (as II) corresponds to.
- V. It may be what men of a certain sort have thought (eighteenth-century thought; legal thought).
- VI. It may be the process of thinking in general, or the ability to think.

¹ "All things that surround us, and all things that happen to us," Coleridge thought, "have but one common final cause; namely, the increase of consciousness in such wise that whatever part of the *terra incognita* of our nature the increased consciousness discovers, our will may conquer and bring into subjection to itself under the sovereignty of reason" (*The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix 5). *Coleridge on Imagination*, p. 139.

VII. It may be especially systematic thinking.

VIII. It may be a process of growth, a self-remaking or self-realization.²

If these distinctions were a thought clearer, we might find the word of more help in our communications.

IDEA

Many of the variants of the uses of IDEA parallel those of THOUGHT. (I) to (V) do so, and "Ideation" parallels (VI) as one of the senses of REASONING parallels (VII). The same problems of the supporting vehicle (words or images) come up. The same straddle of intention and intellection. The two words are, over a wide range, synonyms, in fact. But there are some important differences, which come from especially important phases in the history of the word "idea." Of these Plato's and Locke's philosophically opposed uses stand out. As Locke seems to be still in control of current "common sense" here, I will take him first. It will

² Of the thought in Plato's earlier dialogues Jaeger writes:

"With Plato the primary impulse was originally the formative one. He did not write in order to set out the contents of his doctrine. His desire was to show the philosopher in the dramatic instarst of seeking and finding, and to make the doubt and conflict visible; and that not in a mere intellectual operation, but in the fight against pseudo-science, political power, society, and his own heart; for the spirit of Plato's philosophy necessarily collided with all these forces.

According to his original view of it, philosophy is not a sphere of theoretical discoveries but a reorganization of all the fundamental elements of life. . . . Plato was writing the philosopher's tragedy." Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 24.

be useful to have some specimen passages from him, with which to examine, with other sentences than mine, how we are reading.

For Locke, ideas are signs, which

"the mind makes use of for the understanding of things, or conveying its knowledge to others. For since the things the mind contemplates are none of them, besides itself, present to the understanding, it is necessary that something else, as a sign or representation of the thing it considers, should be present to it; and these are ideas. And because the scene of ideas that makes one man's thoughts cannot be laid open to the immediate view of another, nor laid up anywhere but in the memory, a not very sure repository; therefore to communicate our thoughts to one another, as well as record them for our own use, signs of our ideas are also necessary. Those which men have found most convenient, and therefore generally make use of, are articulate sounds. The consideration then, of ideas and words, as the great instruments of knowledge, makes no despicable part of their contemplation who would take a view of human knowledge in the whole extent of it. And perhaps if they were distinctly weighed, and duly considered, they would afford us another sort of logic and critic, than what we have been hitherto acquainted with."³

They have not yet been distinctly weighed or duly considered enough. What Locke was hoping for has not, so far, come about, and he has himself perhaps been an important obstacle.

Chief points to note here are:

(a) "The things the mind contemplates are none

³ *Of Human Understanding*, IV, xxi, 4.

of them, *besides itself*, present to the understanding/' We will consider 'besides itself' in a moment. For Locke, though we may contemplate a table, it is not present to us; only signs of it are, and these are ideas. It is only exceptionally, in such discussions as these, that we contemplate the signs or representations. Normally we use them to contemplate the things.

(b) These ideas are either *sensations*: "Our senses . . . convey into the mind . . . what produces there those perceptions. This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION" (II, 1, 3); or *reflections*: "the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got . . . and such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds. . . . This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense . . . I call this REFLECTION" (II, 1, 4). These two sorts are all the ideas there are—we might say "all there is," for Locke is not very successful in getting to anything else from them.

(c) Now as to that 'besides itself/ Locke seems to be saying here that the mind itself can be present to the understanding. But, when we go deeper into this, we find him holding that only *what the mind* DOES, its operations are so present. And these operations seem to be present as ideas of reflection. But his view

on this is not entirely clear. Only *ideas* are present to the mind. Therefore its operations, if present to it, must be ideas. But we would expect these ideas to be ^qof^a the operations rather than to be them.

This looseness of *of*,^w which lets it point both to what is before the mind and what that is of, is usual and frequent, but it is especially troublesome just here, where we have still another ^wof^w to watch:

Locke's ideas of sense are *of* qualities ^qof^q what?

Locke's ideas of reflection are *of* operations ^qof^q what?

The first is a harmless classifying link (ideas of sense -- sensations; ideas of reflection -- reflections); the other two are the obscure ones in each question, especially the last. Here are Locke's answers:

When we talk or think of any particular sort of corporal substances, as horse, stone, etc., though the idea we have of either of them be but the complication or collection of those several simple ideas of sensible qualities, which we used to find united in the thing called horse or stone; yet, because we cannot conceive how they should subsist alone, nor one in another, we suppose them existing in and supported by some one common subject; which support, we denote by the name substance, though it be certain we have no clear or distinct idea of that thing we suppose a support (II, xxiii, 4).

The same thing happens concerning the operations of the mind, viz., thinking, reasoning, fearing, etc., which, we concluding not to subsist of themselves, nor apprehending how they can belong to body, or be produced by

it, we are apt to think these the actions of some other substance, which we call spirit; whereby yet it is evident that, having no other idea or notion of matter, but something wherein those many sensible qualities which affect our senses do subsist; by supposing a substance wherein thinking, knowing, doubting, and a power of moving, etc., do subsist, we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit, as we have of body: the one being supposed to be (without knowing what it is) the substratum to those simple ideas we have from without; and the other supposed (with a like ignorance of what it is) to be the substratum to those operations we experiment in ourselves within (II, xxiii, 5).

(Since Locke's time *experiment* and *experience* have exchanged jobs.)

Equally, then, of matter and of the mind, as substance, "we have no idea what it is, but only a confused obscure one of what it does" (II, xiii, 19).

(d) Locke thus puts up 'a scene of ideas' to be signs of other things—the external world and the mind—which we do not know except through them. And these ideas are private to each of us. We communicate about them (and thereby about the unknowns; only we forget that they *are* unknowns) through other signs (words and such) which are signs of *our ideas* (not of the unknown things). But these linguistic signs also are ideas—sensations and reflections, conjoined—and equally private to us. "But though words, as they are used by men, can properly and immediately signify nothing but the ideas that are in the mind of the speaker; yet they in their thoughts give

them a secret reference to two other things": to other men's ideas, and to "the reality of things" (III, ii, 4). How this reference is given Locke himself keeps somewhat secret—while complaining at great length of the troubles and confusions words cause us.

Both of Locke's sorts of ideas are particulars—that very idea of sense which then is before us and equally that very mental operation we then perform on it. His problem was to contrive from these particulars general ideas. He did it, to his own and his followers' satisfaction, by including among the operations of the mind abstracting and generalizing. According to him, we take a sign and make it—by limiting the qualities it stands for—the representative no longer of one thing but "of all of that kind." "General and universal belong not to the real existence of things; but are the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs, whether words or ideas" (III, iii, 11).

Knowledge, accordingly, is limited to knowledge of ideas. "Knowledge, then, seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas" (IV, i, 2). When we know that something exists, we perceive the agreement of our own idea of it with our idea of existence. This leaves us still shut up within the walls of our ideas, though Locke added an intuitive knowledge of our own existence and a demonstrative knowledge of God's existence; "of the existence of anything else, we have no other but a sensitive knowledge, which extends not beyond the objects

present to our senses (i.e., ideas)" (IV, iii, 21). Locke felt, as everyone else feels, the objection that with all this we are still very short of where we should be. But his caution does not allow him to go further. With 'ideas' so defined and knowledge limited to the perception of ideas, we are certainly very inadequately provided—in comparison with the quantities of 'knowledge' offered us by other philosophers, by Plato for example. If we read Locke's chapter on *The Extent of Human Knowledge* (IV, iii) we will be struck by the limitations he insists on. It is only less striking than the vast range of being he considers must forever be barred from our ken—though how we can 'confidently say' anything of this 'rest' at all is)ot another problem.

Want of ideas of this kind (substance), being a part as well as cause of our ignorance, cannot be described. Only this I think I may confidently say of it, that the intellectual and sensible world are in this perfectly alike; that that part which we see of either of them holds no proportion with what we see not; and whatsoever we can reach with our eyes or our thoughts of either of them is but a point, almost nothing in comparison with the rest (IV, iii, 23).

He solaced himself by contemplating the splendid certainty of the knowledge that a circle is not a triangle.

This part of knowledge is irresistible, and, like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived, as soon as ever the mind turns its view that way, and leaves no

room for hesitation, doubt, or examination, but the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it (IV, ii, 1).

This passage, filled as it is with Platonic echoes (compare *Republic* VII, 518, and on SEE above), contrasts queerly with Plato's account of the mind's ascent to knowledge of true being.

Socrates: Now see how it will be if something frees them from their chains: When one is freed and forced to get on his feet and turn his head and walk and look towards the light—and all this hurts and, because the light is too bright, he isn't able to see the things whose shadows he saw before—what will he answer if someone says that all he has seen till now was false and a trick, but that now he sees more truly? (*Republic* VII, 515.)

What can be said here of the Doctrine of Ideas is not an attempt to reproduce what Plato thought. That would be a challenge to scholarship. This is a note merely on how some readers today—friends of the Ideas as well as foes—understand them. This doctrine has split thinkers into camps and single philosophers into half-men ever since Plato's brother Glaucon confessed to Socrates, "It seems to me very hard to believe; though in another way it is hard not to believe it" (532).

We have quoted two key passages on the doctrine in connection with MAKE and another on the turning round of the instrument of knowledge toward the things of being in connection with SEE. The earliest sense of IDEA (the Greeks spelled it the same, *ιδέα*)

had to do with seeing: a thing's idea was its looks or apperancee. One way of stating the Platonic sense of IDEA would be to say it is furthest from any seeming.

Two ways of "understanding"¹ the Doctrine are in perpetual dispute. One turns the IDEAS into gods or goddesses.

I too have seen

My vision of the rainhow-aureolecl face

Of her whom men name Beauty, proud, austere

Divinely fugitive, \who haunts the world.

The other turns them into empty words. The Beauty which makes beautiful things beautiful, is, for them, "only an abstraction." This phrase mixes some disdain with its refusal. We might as well say "only a problem/" No one interested in the IDEAS has ever supposed them to be anything but abstractions. The question has been "What are abstractions?"

Abstraction—like so many other words which cry *shun!* or *'tion!* (see Chapter Nine)—may mean:

- (1) The act of abstracting
- (2) The process in general
- (3) The product

(See also Chapter Six. These complexities in our use of the word explain why ^wabstract^w is so terrifying a word. Abstracting is an easy and omnipresent activity; talking about it is a harrowing business. But this field, to yield, must be harrowed.) It adds, however, two more variants which ^waction^w or ^wdestruction^w do not carry:

- (4) The abstracted condition of mind of the abstractor
- (5) What he beholds therein: the IDEAS.

Locke, we have seen, shrank the problem down to (1), "How do we abstract?" His answer was that we attend only to some respects or qualities of our sign, disregarding others, and make it thus the representative of all other signs having the like respects or qualities. The problem, however, remains behind the words ^qrespect or quality^q and behind ^qthe like.^q No one has doubted we do as Locke says; but the questions are: "How do we do it?" "How is it possible?" "What have we done?" ^QRespects^q or ^qqualities^q are easy to talk about, and it is not hard to say that things are ^qalike^q or ^qthe same^q; but what are we saying, what is this ^qsame quality^q which different things may have?

The product (3) of abstracting, for Locke, was a pruned-down sign. For the Platonist it is the vision of a stable being, able to give the flux of events whatever order it obeys. That there is stability and recurrence is agreed. For Locke, the human understanding (whose powers he sometimes limits so severely) somehow imposes stability, but only on signs. It fixes their capacity to be signs of other signs of ... And as to recurrence, the mind just recognizes recurrences and, as Locke's mind, refuses to have a theory of sameness at all. To the Platonist, the theory of sameness is another name for the Doctrine of Ideas. *In* the things the mind knows (which are not Lockian ideas, though sometimes known *through* them) and *in* the mind it-

self (enabling it to repeat its acts) is a structure. We may learn it. Doubtless we do so through the agreements or repugnancies of our Lockian ideas among themselves—or rather through their agreement and repugnancy. But what we then learn is not the ways of our minds (except incidentally); it is what truly is: The order of the IDEAS.

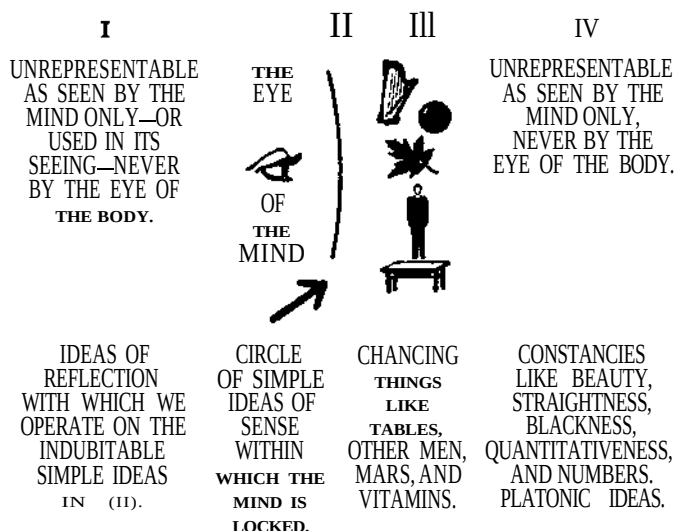
Plato added, and Platonism still remains, a religion. His logical discovery, that a theory of thinking has to include a theory of stability, can be separated—with some difficulty, as Aristotle found—and formulated in other ways; but the Ideas, in the *Phaedo* and *Republic* at least, are moral myths still more than intellectual machinery. The abstracted thinker comes into the presence of something which spans all lives and has been far otherwise known. And in the Idea of the Good he would see that from which comes not only the power to know but whatever is known. "Things are known only because the good is present; both

⁴ "In the *Phaedo* we can still clearly discern the original currents of thought that were united in Plato's religion of immortality. The one comes from the Anaxagorean speculations about pure *Nus*; this rested on an apotheosis of scientific reason, and constituted the philosophical high-water mark of fifth-century rationalism. The other current is of opposite origin. It arises out of the Orphic belief in another life, out of the cathartic religion that preaches repentance and purification in order that the soul (*faxi*) may not suffer the most frightful penalties on the other side. In this there is no speculation; it is the ethical and religious feeling of the independence and indestructibility of the souls essence. In Plato these two currents coalesced into a seeming unity. This unity was based, however, not on a real kinship in its elements, but on the marvelous combination of rational clarity and fervent religious longing in Plato's own soul. Beneath the probe of the analytical intellect the creation breaks up again into its original parts." Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 50.

that they are and what they are come from the good" (*Republic* VI, 509). And among what is known are the patterns and exemplars through the vision of which alone the thinker's life is able to be ordered.

That ideas alone may be truly known is thus a belief which, as far as the *wording* goes, Locke and Plato share—though no one could imagine more opposite contents.

A diagram may help to give more distinctness to the possibilities we encounter whenever we meet the word "idea."



An idea may be of I, II, III, or IV.

An idea may be I, II (Lockian), or IV (Platonic).

Ideas I are of one another, or of themselves: if we

bend our diagram so that I joins IV, completing a circle, then the ideas of reflection would become the operation in the mind of some of the Platonic Ideas. They would not be what we see but what we see *with*: "The mind is the place of Forms," said Aristotle. To Locke, ideas were "what is before us when we think." That phrase in common everyday language points to III. But III breaks down easily into II or IV. These changing everyday things in III are chiefly kept together for us by mutual distraction, an operation which ranks with abstraction as a source of order in our everyday world.

KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE (and KNOW) move around in a triangular area between three poles represented by some uses of BE, DO, and HAVE. The simplest and most perfect way of knowing something is to BE it; when that is not so, to "know how" is to be able to DO it; the rest of the time, knowing is HAVING of one sort or another.

The shifts which all these words take together and the fact that we can nonetheless with their aid keep these distinctions in good order is, incidentally, a disproof of the simpler doctrines that thinking is^N just talking. Of course, if ^wtalking^w includes *everything* we do while talking, then talking will be thinking—sometimes.

Scores of senses for KNOWLEDGE may be distinguished. More interesting are the patterns they follow and form:

(a) *The 'tion pattern* noted in Chapter Eight:

Act of knowing—a relation to—thing known
This knowledge was a knowledge of that knowledge.

(b) *Generality pattern* (a) shifts up and down
from the specific act to the general condition.

(c) *Willing-feeling-seeing*. KNOWLEDGE ranges
with MIND or THOUGHT across all our doings and
sufferings.

We noted that with God's knowledge, and with the mind's knowledge of itself, KNOWING and BEING are the same. Knowing and being, however, have less comprehensive and more comprehensible connections. If we ask what a thing is, the answer starts with anything that is known about it and stops when that is exhausted. Thus what there is in a thing is what, for any purpose, there is to be known in it. About most things, most of our time, we are content to know very little. And if that little has only a very slight and fleeting connection with the rest of their being, we are not disturbed. A thing's shape and size, the color of its hair⁵ or the cut of its coat, do well enough; we are not concerned to go deeper. It is otherwise with people (and things) we care about. Knowledge grows more ambitious. Mere handles and tags to sort them

« Cf. W. B. Yeats, *For Anne Gregory*:

I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.

with do not satisfy us. We want to know more completely what they ARE.

Here the orders of KNOWLEDGE divide. People of different types—and we ourselves from hour to hour—seek this completion in different sorts of knowledge. Sometimes mere accumulation of details, scraps and orts of peculiarity, the waves of the gossip-market content us. Sometimes causes and effects—their history—seem the only satisfying things. How did they come to be so? What will they do? What will become of them? These seem the things to know. But sometimes—not so often—the quest for knowledge seeks something very different. It asks what they ARE and refuses to accept any amount of these other findings for an answer.

What we are seeking, then, is that in the thing from which its casual peculiarities come through its causal traffickings with other things, that which MAKES it what it is. And this is its ^{nb}form^{nb} in the sense which is nearest to that of IDEA as Plato used it. It is this form, or principle (to give yet another name to this mystery) that is the END such knowledge pursues. On the way to it we meet or manufacture the *formula*, or definition, which in an Intellectual Pilgrim's Progress would be the most dangerous adventure of them all. With it we think we have the essence, the BEING, of the thing, caught in a holdfast of thoughts or words. But there are no holdfasts in philosophy. The knowledge we seek is not something we should hope to HAVE, as something separate from a power to understand. In so far as we come to know the form—as op-

posed to a formula—of a thing, we become able to see the why of what it does and undergoes. To see this is to take into our minds the forms of the things we understand, knowing them by becoming them; but not, of course, in that other way in which to know what having a broken leg is requires us to become brokenlegged ourselves.

But "To know anything is a way of becoming it" is only a formula for this sort of knowledge and, even if we mistake it not, acquaintance with the formula is not the knowledge. In a book about words it will be well at this point to insist on the obvious fact that many men have deep knowledge of all kinds without the power to talk or write well about their knowledge, and the converse is true also. Nonetheless, for those of us who are in between, who know a little and can say something somehow about it, better management of our words and more fear of them can help us to manage our thoughts better. And the way to this knowledge of forms, of what things are, which we have to distinguish so carefully from knowledge of their formulas, is by that 'experience' which we began by considering. It was of formulas that Lao Tzu ventured to say, "He who speaks does not know: he who knows does not speak."

But knowledge in seeking form must not leave the world behind it. When it does, it arrives in a mere ghost-world of words. The great disease of knowledge is that in which, starting from words, we end up with them. This disease perpetually attacks our culture and is unavoidable in a culture which attempts such wide

knowledge as ours. A reader today needs his inner guide more than ever before.

When Plato divided intellectual operations into four grades (*Republic* VI, 510) he named the lowest of them with a word (et/ccwna), which word means both ^{8W}image viewing^{sw} and ^{8W}uncertain belief.^{8*} In this activity we see images, shadows, reflections only—the images, etc, produced in the mind typically by the words we learn before we have any experience of the things they name.⁶ Most of us, if we grow up in a talkative family or do much juvenile reading, live in a world largely composed of such images and shadows which have come to us through *words*. The next grade of knowledge contrasts with this as coming to us through experience with *things*. It is a higher grade because it can correct the lower one, when it needs correction. Word-born conjectures need not be wrong. In a healthy community where the communications the child receives mostly come from people who know what they are talking about, most of it will be healthy, if rootless. In most modern communities most of our word-born imagining and conjecture will be diseased. Experience of actual things, random observation of them, will correct conjecture to some degree but not enough. Plato names the products of conjecture and of uncriticized experience—"opinion" and contrasts opinion with the two higher grades of KNOWLEDGE much as he has contrasted images (conjectures) with actual experience. Opinion need not be wrong. In fact, to have the right opinions

⁶ See R. L. Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*, p. 241.

is to be virtuous; to have true courage for example is to hold fast, through everything, to the right opinions as to what is truly to be feared (*Republic* IV, 430). "This feare great courage, and high valour is" (Donne *Satyre* HI).

But opinion still needs to be corrected. What corrects it is the next grade of knowledge, which we may call "thinking" or the "activity of the intellect."⁰ This is the sort of thinking the man of science or mathematician does, if he is content to deal *departmentally* with his subject matter and does not take what he is considering up toward the first principle and thereby reconceive the terms in which he treats it. Above such thinking is still the comprehensive view which sees how the thinking in the department itself needs correction, since the very things each department takes as its fundamentals, its bases, its starting points, or hypotheses are dependent on the limited purposes of the departments and on one another in a fashion which only becomes intelligible if they are seen together. Compare Whitehead's points about "essential omission" in Chapter Five. This highest knowledge we do not attain; it would be the perfect vision of the good (*Republic* VI, 508). We strive toward it, and in the measure in which we succeed our knowledge is of true being—that is, is truly knowledge.

But this ascent in knowledge is not a departure from the worlds of the lower orders of knowledge. It corrects them, but does not deny them. Each order is a shadow in comparison with that above, but there is nothing wrong in seeing shadows unless we mistake

them for solider things. The higher modes of knowledge do not destroy the validity or the value of the lower *in their place*. But through them we see how what we had formerly taken as BEING arose for us.

TWELVE

REASON, PURPOSE, WORK

*These are really the thoughts of all men in
all ages and lands. They are not original
with me.*

WALT WHITMAN, *Song of Myself*

AFTER these long approaches we come at last to our archproblem: what should rule our reading—of the page, of one another, of the world?

REASON

In the sense which goes with the highest mode of knowledge, REASON is the dependence of all knowledge upon one principle. Only as viewed through or with that would all become reasonable. But we do not view with that, and study of the stages of our unreason better suits with our degree. Corresponding to each grade of knowledge is a sense of ^wreason,^w and it will be wisest to begin at the foot of the ladder.

A very simple sort of reasoning corresponds to conjecture or hearsay. Any formal statement would make it seem far more reflective and critical than it is. Roughly, "I haven't heard anything against it" represents the argument. If we stated a general rule to the effect that "All that is said is so," the reasoner would reject that at once. But unless there is an open

clash *between* the different things that are said, he acts as if that were the rule of his thinking.

About such thinking we are as ready to talk in terms of causes as of REASONS. "Cause" and "reason" overlap here at the foot of the scale and again, in a different way, at the top. In the middle, in the simpler sorts of scientific experimentation and explanation, we take great pains to distinguish them. There the two words can conveniently separate different aspects of what takes place—though for different speakers they shift about most confusingly. But down here, in dealing with hearsay, the two aspects are not so clearly two. "They say . . ." or "It was in the paper" can equally be called the reason or the cause of someone's opinion, and, *if we do not represent this thinking in a way which hoists it up to a much higher level*, the causes of the view and the reasons the thinker has for it seem to be the same. A general condition of *readiness to accept* what is said, other things being equal, parallels an unformulated major premise, "What's said is so." Into this comes something that is said as the minor premise: "They say . . ." The effect (or conclusion) is the belief "It's so." This analysis can be confirmed, I believe, at the appropriate level by most of us, for unless we are monstrously intelligent there will be, whenever we pick up the newspaper, some column in it down which we plunge into such refreshing simplicities of hearsay thinking. We go to sleep, in fact, hypnotized by the sentences.

This parallelism, at these levels, of "cause" and "reason" in part explains why the words are so often

such close synonyms. Higher up they diverge. They are still close together in the simplest sorts of observation for which "seeing is believing." A statement of the evidence (reasons) for a view would do well as a statement of the *causes* for its being taken. But as the evidence becomes more and more complex and the causation more and more complicated, the opportunities for them to differ increase. There are fields in which we are almost ready to assume beforehand that the reasons a man will give for his belief will not correspond at all to its "real causes"—for example, in explaining his own behavior, or reporting on controversial affairs. Here comes in the Freudian process of rationalization, wherein "cause" and "reason" are farthest apart and commonly in opposition.

Here come in, for example, most utterances of the popular strategists and the assents their readers accord them. If challenged, they would have to acknowledge that they cannot possibly possess the evidence needed for the judgments they profess to make. That evidence is always secret. They are being swayed by their national or personal loyalties and antipathies, not by the military situation. To a student of reading these dangerous doings point very plainly to our general lack of technique. If you study most commentators enough you will discover that they do not, maybe cannot, read the communiques, or even try to. As a rule they haven't the time. If this were more widely understood, less harm would be done. All this, in the writers and their readers, illustrates what always happens to the topics men care most about.

Nonetheless, scientific and legal training manages, with considerable success, to make reason rule over a vast domain here. That is to say, the causes for a man's acts and beliefs become also their reasons. Instead of being determined by a local desire, say, the outcome is determined by a general interest in behaving rationally as an unbiased person. The answer we give to an addition sum, unless we are sentimentalists or crooks, is settled by arithmetic. The just judge consults the law, not his wishes. This rule of reason corresponds to the zone we named "thinking" or the "action of the intellect" in discussing Plato's ladder of knowledges. It is a man's duty to a department of science in which he works to reason in this sense. But above the departments, and above the knowledge they pursue as such, there was, we recall, a more comprehensive study. What happens there? What is REASON in this most authoritative of the sciences, in the knowledge that claims to be the most universal, and the hardest, but at the same time the most knowable,¹ the knowledge of the first principle, that DEPENDENCE

¹ Most knowable because in it what is known and what knows are nearest to one another: "In the case of immaterial things the knower and the known are the same." Aristotle, *De Anima*, 430^a5. "The knowledge of everything necessarily belongs to him who knows the universal because in a sense he knows the particulars under it. These universals are perhaps the hardest for man to grasp because farthest from the senses. Again the most exact of the sciences are those having most to do with first principles. . . . He who desires knowledge for its own sake will seek the most perfect knowledge, the knowledge of the most knowable, and the most knowable are first principles and causes, . . . And the science which knows for what end each thing is done is the most authoritative: i. e., the Good in each case, and in general the supreme Good in the whole of nature" (*Metaphysics*, 982^a20-b7.)

in which all other things are known? What rules there?

The men of science in modern times have been apt to answer "Whimsey!" or "Wishfulness!" or "Compensation for Frustration!" Philosophers have often justified them. But these answers were part of a denial that there is any legitimate knowledge which is above the sciences of the departments, or any study which could question their starting points, assumptions, and procedures in ways not within their own competence. Those who answered so omitted to consider the question raised by Aristotle in the first page we studied. They behaved as though the same 'essential omissions/ the same abstractions, the same 'experience' were adequate for all human studies—as though, in fact, there were only one sane set of such things, and all others were forms of lunacy, shocking or mild. They read everything (or tried to) and wrote everything in terms of one sort of assumption—the sort that had worked so well in the "sciences."ⁿ They narrowed that name down to those studies in which these assumptions worked, forgetting that it had covered all the other tributaries of wisdom, and wisdom itself. Indeed they sometimes forgot that there could be any such thing as wisdom—a far more inclusive, and therefore more authoritative, science than any a department can study. I write ^qthey^q here out of tact. But it is we readers—still spellbound by the technical triumphs of the departments—who do all this. We worship the test for fact, in the scientist's framework of assumptions; and when we go beyond it, as we in-

cessantly must, we tremble with guilt and shame, or pretend, if we can, that we are not doing so.

This trespassing of scientific modes is the *contemporary* occasion for the war of heart and head. The divisions we name so are shaped by their aggression. It will help us to look again at the boundaries Plato traced for what are now called the "sciences," before their recent successes at home sent them out on such prideful invasions. Note, though, how careful he is not to disparage them—in their performance of their own tasks.

The REASON which rules in the most inclusive study of all—Dialectic is the name he gave it—is by him expressly distinguished from "reason" in the sciences. The test of whether a man is a Dialectician or not is how far he is able to see the different sciences together as a whole. "He who is able to see all things in their connections with one another is a Dialectician: he who is unable is not." (*Republic*, 537.) Each science, for its own purposes, simplifies by abstracting, by 'essential neglect/ It is this which separates them. If the body of knowledge they together compose is to be seen as a whole, these abstract simplifications must be put together again. Moreover, each science takes these abstractions as its starting points "without troubling to give any account of them, to itself or to others, simply believing they are clear enough to anyone. They start out from these assumptions and go on from them in an ordered way, till they come to the end for which they started. . . . And in this (in the sciences) the soul is forced to use

these starting points; it does not go on up to a first principle because it is unable to escape from and get up higher than these starting-point bases." But, in *Dialectic*, "The things reasoning takes as bases are not taken by it as unquestioned starting points, but as helps or steppingstones, as something to give a footing, or as springboards, by which it is made able to go up to that which is no such base which needs to be taken, but is the first principle of everything. And after getting to that, it takes again a grip of the first things dependent on that, and so goes down again to die outcome/' (*Republic*, 511.)

In this account, Plato's name for the starting points or bases in the sciences is *Wo'&orei?*. Most translations make that *^hypotheses,** but as scientists use that word nowadays it means something very different, and readers may be sadly misled. A modern scientific hypothesis is something put forward to be proved or disproved, as it stands, by the subsequent course of research. Collingwood, in the second passage we discussed in Chapter Four, gives a good account of this sense of *"hypothesis,"* But, for Plato and Aristotle, a hypothesis was not something waiting to be established or overthrown. It was a something which is dependent for its full^w understanding upon knowledge of a more inclusive order. Numbers, for example, are hypotheses as Plato used the word. It is not the mathematician's business, *as a mathematician*, to consider how we come by numbers. As a mathematician he uses any conception of number which is serviceable in his undertaking. If he cares to be more inclu-

sive and ask what counting is, what can be counted under what conditions, and where lie the limits of the application of mathematics to life, he does so in a further capacity, as a Dialectician.

To be a good Dialectician—a good reasoner in this superdepartmental inquiry—he must not only be able to "see very different sorts of things (e. g., Ideas and atoms) together"; he must be able "to ask questions and answer them." Thought here is internal dialogue, a process which examines itself. This is connected with Definition. He must be "able to give and audit a full account of what may be meant in a discussion." (*Republic*, 532.) This amounts to being able to say what he is talking about, and being able to find out what others are talking about—in other words, to a mastery of definition. The Dialectician is an expert in knowing what he himself and others are talking about, and whether their professed definitions, set forth in the same words maybe, are in fact the same or not. To fit the departmental studies together, he has to see whether, for example, "matter"^w and "observe,"^w as the physicist is now using them, mean the same as the similarly spelled words the psychologists use, and so on.

This seeing together, this process of getting definitions distinguished and disentangled, is twofold. The Dialectician has to *combine*, that is, he has to discover forms (universals, as Aristotle called them in our first passage) which collect the things he is talking about, though they may seem very diverse. It is as having these forms that he is talking of them. Their form is

their BEING as he is concerned with it. It is what they are. Secondly, he has to *divide*—he has to separate within the things that share one form those that share different forms. He has to make the right divisions and see which divisions, for his purpose, are subordinate to which. And in all this he has to avoid mistaking one form or division from another in spite of all the opportunities and invitations language offers him to do just this. It will be seen that every careful reader is willy-nilly a Dialectician in some measure. But as our study becomes more inclusive, and more modes of the mind are in play together, the task becomes harder.

Here is Plato's account of these two motions of method which together are REASONING in this highest sense:

"First, the taking in of scattered particulars under one Idea (or Form), so that everyone understands what is being talked about. . . . Second, the separation of the Idea into its parts, by dividing it at the joints, as nature directs, not breaking any limb in half as a bad carver might."²

This comparison with carving suggests that the

² *Phaedrus*, 265 D. It may be interesting to compare the account of philosophic method which Chuang Tzu, the Chinese sage who was almost Plato's contemporary, gives:

Prince Hui's cook was cutting up a bullock. Every blow of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every tread of his feet, every thrust of his knee, every *whshh* of rent flesh, every *chhk* of the chopper, was in perfect Harmony—rhythmical like the dance of the Mulberry Grx.ve, simultaneous like the chords of the Ching Shou.

" 'Well done!' cried the Prince. 'Yours is skill indeed.'

" 'Sire,' replied the cook, 'I have always devoted myself to Tao.

body of fact which the Dialectic reasoner has to deal with has a natural organization before he attacks it—a suggestion which sends us back to DO, and the close of our remarks on SEE.

All this about method is itself Dialectic of an advanced order. It needs an illustration, and a good one is supplied by Plato in the Fifth Book of the *Republic* where he is discussing the kinds of work to be done in his ideal community by men and women.

Socrates: Who doubts, seriously or not, if a woman is able to take part in men's work, some of it or all of it, and where

It is better than skill. When I first began to cut up bullocks, I saw before me simply whole bullocks. After three years' practice, I saw no more *whole* animals. And now I work with my mind and not with my eyes. When my senses bid me stop, but my mind urges me on, I fall back upon eternal principles. I follow such openings or cavities as there may be, according to the natural constitution of the animal. I do not attempt to cut through joints: still less through large bones.

"*A good cook changes his chopper once a year—because he cuts. An ordinary cook, once a month—because he hacks. But I have had this chopper nineteen years, and although I have cut up many thousand bullocks, its edge is as if fresh from the whetstone. For at the joints there are always interstices, and the edge of a chopper being without thickness, it remains only to insert that which is without thickness into such an interstice. By this means the interstice will be enlarged, and the blade will find plenty of room. It is thus that I have kept my chopper for nineteen years as though fresh from the whetstone.

" 'Nevertheless, when I come upon a hard part where the blade meets with a difficulty, I am all cautious. I fix my eye on it. I stay my hand, and gently apply my blade, until with a *hwah* the part yields like earth crumbling to the ground. Then I take out my chopper and stand up, and look around, and pause, until with an air of triumph I wipe my chopper and put it carefully away.'

" 'Bravo!' cried the Prince. 'Fioin the words of the cook I have learnt how to take care of my life.' "

Chuang Tzu (Herbert Giles' translation).

war comes in here? . . . Let us take up the two sides of the argument, like this: "Socrates and Glaucon, you yourselves at the start said, 'Everyone is to keep to his own business/ " "We did." "Well, aren't men and women very different?" "They are." "Why do you turn round now and say men and women are to do the same things, though they are naturally so different?" Now, Glaucon, will you surprise me with an answer to that?

Glaucon: Not straightway. It comes so suddenly. But do let us have your answer, whatever it is.

Socrates: These are the hard points, Glaucon, which I saw waiting for us. . . .

Glaucon: It is hard, by Zeus!

Socrates: Why yes, but the fact is that, after falling into deep water, we have to swim for it, if it's the baths we are in or the great sea. So let us swim out of this sea of argument and get to land again. A great thing, Glaucon, is this power of making one say opposite-things.

Glaucon: Why do you say that?

Socrates: Because it seems to me that many men fall into its hands against their will. They take themselves to be reasoning when they are only mixing things up in a fighting spirit, through not being able to use the right divisions of the forms. They make opposites of things which are only opposites in words, and go in for word-fighting, not Dialectic

Glaucon: Yes, that's so, but is it true of us here now?

Socrates: Certainly. I fear at least we are slipping unconsciously into word-fighting,

Glaucon: In what way?

Socrates: We are keeping most manfully and in the most fighting spirit to the law that beings who are not the same

are not to do the same work, keeping to it in words; but did we stop to see *in* what ways they were to be "the same" when we handed out different work to different men and the same to the same?

Glaucon: No, we didn't go into that.

Socrates: Let us, for example, put this question to ourselves: are bald men and hairy men the same? No? Then if bald men make shoes, are we to stop hairy ones from doing so?

Glaucon: That would be foolish.

Socrates: And why? For any other reason than that we hadn't *any and every* way of being different in view but only those which would have some effect on the work the men do? For example, a man and a woman equally medical-minded will be, as far as medical things go, the same. But a medical man and a worker in wood will be different. So, if it seems that the male and the female sex have different qualities making them good at different arts or forms of work, then we will say they are to do different things. But if they seem different only in this: that the female produces and the male begets, we will say that no argument has been made out; and we will go on giving our guardians and these women the same work to do. (*Republic* V, 453-55.)

^wDifferent^w here, as it so often does, cut at first across the bones and did not divide at the joints.

Dialectic reasoning, the highest form of REASON, has then to be clearly and forcibly distinguished from verbal argument. It works not through contention and debate, which are modes of verbal *fighting*, but through displaying clearly the relevant differences

and connections between the things we may be saying. It is the art of exhibiting and respecting the divisions between the Ideas (the senses of words) which are needed for the purpose of the discussion and of remaining undistracted by the innumerable irrelevant others; it is the art to which all readers aspire.

Socrates says in the *Phaedrus* (226 D), "I am myself a great lover of these processes of divisions and connection—they help one to talk and to think—and if I come across any man who is able to see a One and a Many as they naturally are, that man I take as my guide and 'walk in his footsteps as though in the track of a god/ " Men have been walking in Socrates' track ever since.

PURPOSE

Man is the most purposing of animals. That might be another way of saying he is the most rational of them. But before we look into the very close connection between REASON and PURPOSE, it may be well to glance over the Part-Whole Shifts and main Sense-Content Changes of the word. As we do so, we will soon realize, through our dissatisfaction with any formulas, how complex the idea of purpose is, how it links up with words like *right*, GOOD, *ought*, *use*, *natural*, WORK, BEING, and *form*, and how central it is among our conceptions. We must remember that in this dissection we are endeavoring to divide at the joints, and where the joints are will be decided by our purpose, which here is to see how purpose itself is to be guided.

Part-Whole Shifts

- I. The general process in which means are being used to an end.
- II. Any action which is an example of I.
- III. The putting of something before one as a thing one is going to do.
- IV. That which is so put, as an END.
- V. That which a man sees as the reward of work.
- VI. What a man (or thing) can best do.
- VII. The way in which a thing is a means.

Examples

- I. We see signs of purpose everywhere in Nature.
- II. My purpose in all this was to reassure you.
- III. This purpose soon took shape in my mind; how to start on it was another question.
- IV. A black eye for me was evidently his purpose.
- V. My only purpose throughout all this labor was to get some money.
- VI. The purposes of a screw driver and a chisel are different,
- VII. To hold a table up is the very purpose of its legs.

These shifts are exceptionally confusing. It will be seen that examples can often be read in various ways—whereby, of course, they exemplify the shift. We would be happier if they would stay put. In particular, the difference between III and V is hard to state because so many of the phrases we want to use reproduce

the ambiguity: What is the *use* of doing that? What is the *good* of it? What is the point? What are you after? Why do it? What are you doing that *for*?

The answer might be in terms of what *that* was, i. e., the work itself which is to be done. Or it might be in terms of the money (e. g.) the worker got for doing it. In every case of purposive action we can ask these questions about the what and what for. Sometimes these answers will coincide happily. We all agree there is something wrong when the work itself "has no purpose" (as we say), or "doesn't justify itself," and is only done because it is a way of getting something else, a WPA livelihood, for example. But we do not clearly enough realize what high philosophical principles this agreement of ours depends upon and witnesses to. In saying that a certain sort of work has no purpose, or that the things done or made through it are no use, or don't justify themselves, we are bringing in considerations going far beyond those to which we are habitually conscious of appealing. For these views of ours are not tunded by someone's pleasure or some use he is to make of the product. We are looking to the *use* of his pleasure and his employment and judging of their place in his life and the place of his life in the world. Our view of purpose in general, of our own purposes and of the purposes of things, is in fact far more complete than we suppose and a far fuller sketch of an agreed philosophy than we imagine. But, largely through these Part-Whole Shifts, we fail to realize here how much we know.

The other frustrating influence comes from the

Sense-Content Changes. Purposive action—action passing through means to an END—may be *consciously* taken or it may occur without anyone seeing the outcome as that for which the steps toward it are the means. There is any amount of this sort of purposive action going on. The physiologist finds every part of any living organism busy at it. In every cell means are being used for ends. There is no need to imagine little minds in them planning and administering, and there are very good reasons why we should not. The same applies to larger organs like the eye or the lungs. They have their special work to do, that is, their END. Every time we pass from one room to another the conditions under which they do their work change and they change the means by which they do it. Again in saying this we are not turning them into little human beings. Our phrases may seem to be lending them life and purpose from our own spirits. When people talked so before physiology knew what it knows now, they may have been doing that. But today we know enough about the behavior of cells and organs to be certain that they everywhere show the distinctive thing about purpose—the use of means for ENDS.

Furthermore, the biologist finds the same thing illustrated throughout the development of life. He, too, refrains (nowadays) from supposing that dimly somehow in man's sea-dwelling ancestors there was an intention to become man which by planning and experimentation has led at last to us. He merely notes that there appears, throughout, that adaptation of means to ENDS which is the form of purposive action, and which

we know and understand best in our own case, in the carrying out of our conscious purposes. But we know also that many of our actions have this purposive character, without our being conscious of the END we proceed to in the means we employ. And here again we will do well to refrain from inventing unconscious wishes and buried selves to keep their eye on and guide such doings.

Purposive action, in brief, is extremely widespread and perhaps omnipresent. Some of it in our case is consciously taken, has the further character that an END is thought of and consciously used to guide our steps toward it. But in most purposive action no such consciousness is either necessary or probable.

This amounts to an immense Sense-Content Change between "My purpose in writing this page" and "The plant's purpose in growing" or "The purpose of play in kittens." Many people will object violently to these last uses of the word. They will complain that we have no right whatever to attribute purpose to plants and animals. If they do, after the above explanation, they will, I think, be illustrating combative rather than dialectical discussion. All that these phrases say is that in the plant and the kitten there is adaptation of means to ends. They do not in the least attribute foresight and conscious design to their doings.

The situation may be further complicated here by a premature intrusion of theology, which may bring in another great Sense-Content Change. To talk of purpose in Nature suggests an Argument from Design, the belief that the world and everything in it has been

so created that everything has a purpose. This (as with, What is?) is not one doctrine but several as we take ^qpurpose^q in one way or another.

A crude doctrine conceives a Great Artificer on the model of a watchmaker, and thinks of his work, including man, as a vast machine. Another conceives all things to have been made to serve man and to have that as their sole purpose. In its cruder, later forms it neglected the point—so much insisted on before—that man, who is to be so served, was created to serve God. These things *then* were not man's servants but the servants of the servant of God. This is that "teleological view" which used to be so savagely fought over. A wiser doctrine insists that the way toward a better understanding of this supreme question is through considering more fully our own conscious purposes, and purposive action in general, before attributing purpose to the whole. Then we may have a better hope of knowing what we were and were not saying. It is well here to remind ourselves of Spinoza's remark that man's Truth and God's Truth would be as alike as Fido and Sirius the Dog Star.

WORK

Man is always pursuing his purposes; whatever he does is purposive in some degree. Of course, if he is falling downstairs, we would not say he is purposing. But we would only say he was **DOING** that as a joke. Whenever he *acts*, he acts for some purpose. Yet another way of saying this: he is always seeking **GOOD**.

We may have the most varied views as to what is good, and what good is, but we are united in seeking it. With everything else we may be ready to put up with what SEEMS so only. "But with the good, everyone goes after the thing itself, and what only seems good is not good enough for anyone. . . . This, then, every soul looks for, and for this every soul does all that it does, feeling in some way what it is, but troubled and uncertain and unable to see clearly enough" (*Republic*, VI, 505).

What further can we say of this GOOD? The connections in language and in the tradition between REASON, PURPOSE, and GOOD are so close and take so great a part in constructing our views of ourselves and the world that whatever is said may seem to the unco-operative eye merely tautology, merely a ringing of the same changes on new bells. But it is the changes themselves which are "the true music of dialectic" (*Republic*, VII, 532).

Here is Aristotle on Happiness and each thing's WORK—a last page we may take as an exercise in our power to read.

Happiness, then, is something final and self-sufficient—the End at which all actions aim.

But, to say that Happiness is the supreme GOOD may seem only a truism, and what is wanted is some clearer account of what it is. This might perhaps be given, if we could ascertain what Man's WORK is. For, as in the case of the flute-player, the sculptor or any craftsman, their goodness or efficiency is thought to reside in their work, so it would seem to be with Man, if there is any WORK belonging to him.

Have the carpenter and the shoemaker their own WORK and has Man, as Man, none? Is he without one which is naturally his? Would we not rather hold that, as eye, hand and foot and generally each of his members has its own special WORK, so too the whole Man, over and above all these, has some WORK of his own? What, then, can this be? It is not mere life; that is shared even by vegetables, and we want what is peculiar to him. . . . Next in the scale comes the life of perception; but this is shared by horses, oxen and animals generally. There remains, then, the active purposeful life of the rational part. This has two divisions, one obedient to principle, the other having the principle and exerting thought . . . and this last, the active exercise of the rational power, is the one which we mean. If, then, the WORK of Man is a working of the soul in accordance with REASON, or at least not independently of REASON . . . then the GOOD of Man is the active exercise of the soul in accordance with virtue, or if there be more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete.

But we must add "in a complete life"; for one swallow does not make a summer, or one day; so one day or a short times does not make a man blessed and happy (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 1097^b22-1098^a20).

In everything which has parts, every part has a certain WORK to do in relation to the whole. It is a good or bad part as it does that work well or ill. When we KNOW something in the deeper sense of *knowing what it is*, we see how its various parts make it up and the WORK they do in making it up. This is what REASON, in the parallel sense, discovers. Moreover, this WORK is their PURPOSE in the whole; it is the way in which

they are means to the being of the whole. And again this work is the reason why the whole has that part. Thus, to say anything is GOOD, in this sense, is to say that it does its WORK with regard to some whole.

The application of this to the words in a page, and to the meanings which a reader gives them, will be evident. A good reader would be one who ^rexerted and obeyed^f in his reading the same principles which, if he exerted and obeyed them in life, would ^rmake him blessed and happy/

This is a very wide sense of GOOD. We use it when we talk of a good tool, a good bed, a good ballplayer, a good cook, and so on. In all these cases we are considering the purpose of the thing, what it is for, its *raison d'etre*, "what it does toward the WORK of some whole of which it is a part. It is a small step on from this to the view that since everything, except the universe, is a part of some larger whole, everything has thereby a WORK to do with regard to that whole. A man, for example, is a part of many different wholes. He is a part of physical nature and does his work there by obeying physical laws. This is easy. Aristotle, we recall, said that stones rarely fail to be themselves, i. e., do what they should. (See the close of our discussion of DO.) But maybe that is because a stone contains so vast a number of particles. We only observe what enough of them do together. Some of them may default. As a part of the animal world, a man does his work by obeying physiological laws. But here comes in the idea of Health, and ^qlaw^q is always a word to watch. Health, too, is a means. A healthy body is one

which does its work well, and its WORK, its purpose as a means, will vary somewhat from man to man. Cowboys and painters don't need quite the same bodies. With that we come to man's membership of various types of society and to his PURPOSE so far as that is dependent upon the work he has as a member.

Here the links between PURPOSE, REASON, and the GOOD become even closer. But here the greatest care is needed or we will combine and divide mistakenly, forgetting what man's work and society's work are, and making a man only the servant of a state.

What a man can do best for a society is his right work *for it*. But equally what a society can best do for its members is its right work *for them*. Only as a member of a society which does that work can a man become fully himself. "A man who would live to himself alone must be either a beast or a god," say Aristotle, and Bacon after. "At the start, a city or state, in my opinion, comes into being because no one of us is enough in himself. Every man is dependent on other men" (*Republic* II, 369). This dependence is the key here. Man has his proper WORK which is *not* reducible to his specific service to society, though only by doing it—as well as his specific service—does he fully help the society to do *its* proper work. That work is for man. A state, since a man's life is dependent on it, can, in wartime for example, require him to give up even his life to protect it. But otherwise it exists for him, not he for it. This is the side of the matter that totalitarian theories and practices overlook. Even Plato sometimes overlooked it. A society has no pur-

pose apart from the well-being—the full development through their proper WORK—of its members and future members. Its GOOD is realized only through theirs. Each man's GOOD is an END in itself; his GIVING is his proper purpose, however true it is that he can pursue it only through a society. So men are not to be used as means by society, in any way which prevents them from advancing toward their proper ENDS.

This declaration of man's prime right, his status as an END in himself, will seem arbitrary, if it is not seen to hold by reason of the ideas of PURPOSE, WORK, and the GOOD which enter into it. Reason, "dividing at the joints," discovers that a man is what he can do, that his end or purpose is to realize his fullest being by doing what he can do best, and that "best" here means *^wthat which most conforms with that order through which alone a man can DO anything, or BE at all.^{8w} As Socrates says in the *Phaedo* (99) "It is the binding power of good which really holds things together/'

This might mean many, many things, though whether Plato meant any of them and if so which of them is another question.

One group of such meanings may be represented by:

"All men in all that they do are seeking good." (*Republic*, 505.) And in this quest—except when in the grip of disaster—we see things as it seems good to us, and this it is which chiefly gives our numberless private worlds their likenesses. But this bond of unity is no license to the scoundrel.

Another group may be represented by: "With all

things, that they are and what they are conies from the Good." (*Republic*, 509.)

This claims that not only as they seem to us in our private worlds but in the general laws of their interdependence, all things are DEPENDENT on the GOOD. There are theological ways, complex and simple, of taking this: "And God saw everything he had made and behold it was very good" (*Genesis* I, 31) is the simplest. If that seems too simple to us—too like giving God a pat on the back because things turned out so unexpectedly well—we can easily reflect that his goodness being part of God's nature—without which he would not be God—the goodness of that which he does and makes must follow. *Ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivator*. From the Divine beauty the being of everything is derived. And lest we take this again in too bright and cheerful a spirit, let us recall with this the sentences that Dante put over the Gate of Hell:

Through me is the way into the woeful city; through me is the way into eternal woe; through me is the way among the lost people. Justice moved my high creator: the divine Power, the supreme Wisdom and the primal Love made me. Before me were no things created, unless eternal, and I eternal last. Leave every hope, ye who enter!"

Inferno, Canto III.

Everything is not bound together even by GOOD except at a cost—each thing within it being what it is and having its possibilities for good and therefore for evil.

And yet another group may be represented by Mencius' view that men by their nature like the virtues. These virtues are good because they are the virtues which hold together. We trust them because they are what we can trust. That things should be bound together is so important (this familiar word ^w"important" here mocks us like the disguised and dusty god it is), that what really will and does hold things together becomes what is ^{BW}good. ^{8W} But it must really bind things together *by* their natures, not against them. That is the totalitarian error. Doubtless there are some under any tyranny ready to say of it, "This service is perfect freedom," and we will never understand the strength of the perpetual enemy unless we see how this is so and what wider awareness of what we are is needed. Like the despondent Boethius, "We have forgotten who we are."

These are the perpetual exercisers of the spirit of which the Introduction spoke.

RETROSPECT

*Set thee up way marks, make thee high
heaps: set thine heart toward the highway,
even the way which thou wentest: turn
again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these
Thy cities,*

JEREMIAH XXXI: 21

LET us look back now across the wide landscape to some of the landmarks and turning points in our journey. Near the start, very soon after our first study of Aristotle's account of Experience/ we came up against a doctrine of *usage*—as ruling all right use of words—which had to be tackled or turned. I preferred, in Chapter Three, to turn that formidable obstacle, and from this point we can see what a forbidding barrier it is.

Anyone who believes that usage *fixes* the meanings of words—in the customary form of that belief—cannot advance far in knowledge either of how he reads or of how to read. But I had better try to state this customary form of belief, though, as with so many such obstructions, the very attempt to state them tends to transform them into something else which no one will support. Compare the newspaper-believer's lowliest sort of REASON, "If it's said, it's so." He will deny that he believes this, but he acts as though he did.

In its most dangerous and baffling form the belief holds that a word when rightly used carries one only

meaning (or exceptionally two or three), and that reading is essentially collecting these right meanings and a sort of adding them together. Now let us first say quickly all that can be said in favor of this doctrine (it is not much), and then in looking over what may be said against it our eyes will follow almost all the main points on our journey hither.

The belief ^qapplies, ^qroughly and superficially but well enough, to technical terms and names of tools, materials, birds, flowers, . . . in brief, "common objects" (see Chapter Seven, Class II). And it ^qapplies^q in a somewhat different sense to words so vague and manifold in meaning that, like blunderbusses, they can hardly miss (e. g., *involves* as on p. 141 but not as on p. 84). It applies, too, to most "common acts" (Chapter Seven, Class III), and here again, if we look closer, we will see in most instances that this one meaning the word seems to have is so wide and loose and takes its specific character in a sentence so much from the other words that it is rather a possibility of meaning than a fixed meaning. And this, if we consider it enough, we will see to be true in different measures of all words. Take Mr. Ogden's footnote on ^wliving^w (p. 128). Each of the semiformula phrases it goes into has a crisp, sufficiently clearly defined sense, means one thing only—and to *these* phrases the belief I am demolishing applies. But this crispness comes from the very fact that ^wliving^w enters into combination with other words in so many phrases, to meet so many subtly related situations. It *can* mean such different things that in each place it takes care to mean one

thing only. The neat pigeonholing—one phrase, one meaning—results from the very stresses, the very temptations to mean something else, which ^wliving, ^wthat most variously possibility'd word, undergoes.

If we will reflect imaginatively on these internal dramas in which what a word is to mean in a place is decided—and no exercise is better for a reader—we will smile at "fixed meanings" doctrine in any form which can harm our reading. How it could harm us was shown, I hope, in Chapter Four, where Collingwood was on trial and found to be in error. It is *not* the case that fixed meanings for the words in a sentence make up its meaning by any sort of adding—any more than that the happiness of a family, when together, equals the added-up happiness of its members while each is *on holiday*! Words get their values from their togethernesses and enter into infinitely subtler and more manifold relations to one another than any addition can represent. A sentence, in brief, being the act of an organism, is an organism. The harmful usage doctrine just ignores this; where and while it rules in a mind, intelligent reading is impossible, as impossible as digestion would be if no chemistry were allowed to occur in it. But, of course, if we like to call ^{8w}what *does* determine meaning^{sw} by the name "usage," the most general laws of the interoperation of words will be usage; and usage will, very satisfactorily, rule all.

But this is the direct attack on the rampart, which is why, with Collingwood's aid, we turned it. We then found the passionate Will (like a wind that bloweth

where it listeth—but meteorologists say otherwise) confronting a cold, dark Intellect (as inscrutable and incorruptible in theory as any crag). We seemed to be in a Scylla-Charybdis situation—in danger either of exhaustion on the barren steep:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there;

or of committing ourselves to the whirlwind. But this, to even a second glance, appeared to be an illusion. What ^qWill^q and ^qIntellect^q are (or what we should take them to be and what ^qwe^q are to be who take them) became then the archproblem.

Its pursuit sent us first, with Whitehead, inquiring into *abstraction*, since it is by our abstraction that all these ideas of will, desire, thought, logic, and reason arise. In a difficult commentary on Whitehead's very difficult page, and the parallel page which applies it in parody to the process of reading, all the capital questions we grappled with in the last four chapters came up. The very words furthest in their behavior from those to which the crude usage doctrine applies were found to be the ones most needing our attention. A rapid, generalized tour of the dictionary, in Chapter Seven, confirmed us in believing that how well we can read^{nb} depends^{nb} on how well we can understand these few words. We saw, too, *why* they must be hard to understand, and why no attempts to *fix* meanings neatly for them could give us that understanding. We saw that the 'experience'—that growth of universals

—which Aristotle pointed to as the master key to all learning could be no process of bolting (or 'pegging') meanings down to our key words. We are seeking "^{nb}stabilities?" it is true, but in Plato's image (*Republic* VI, 511) these stabilities are not gained (as in the elementary parts of the sciences) by building them *up* from foundations of defined assumptions but through their ^{nb}*deperidence*^{nb} from a first principle or master rule of all being. (As gravitation—that sketchy image of dialectic Reason—keeps the universe stable in its freedom; rather than the Elephant standing on the Great Turtle's back which supports the world in the old fable. But how to keep our philosophy from becoming a Great Turtle is always our problem.)

But to know *about* these things is little gain unless we so know them that every hard sentence of our reading becomes a lucid example. The capital universals which enter into all understanding of words, and supreme among them DEPENDENCE itself, we have been studying in our last chapters. Again and again, and inevitably, it is no *one meaning* for MAKE, GIVE (data), LOVE, BE, DO, KNOW, REASON, PURPOSE, Or GOOD **which** we have had to clarify and cling to, but interdependencies, between the meanings of each word and those of others, which we have had to become ready to obey. For these interdependencies are the mind in action. The universals whose growth in us is its growth are not single meanings (unless we stretch that word beyond its breaking point), but interdependencies of meanings.

In studying these capital words we have come

across no new problems and certainly no new answers. These are the problems of all thinking and cannot possibly be new. Latent or overt, they are present in all reading, in all interpretation. We know them in a sense or we know nothing. All we can do is to give them better opportunities than ordinarily arise to present themselves for our realization/ And we may give this phrase here all the meaning we found for it in Chapter Five and in connection with KNOW. All this essay, in fact—like any other on this theme—must either be common knowledge coming to terms with itself or diseased verbiage. But so endemic are the diseases of language on this theme that making common knowledge come to terms with itself is the hardest, if the highest and most necessary, of all our linguistic undertakings.

"Common knowledge" suggests Truth—that which REASON approves. Our archproblem from Chapter Five onward has been "What should guide the reader's mind?" Our answer was "Our awareness of interdependence, of how things hang together, which makes us able to give and audit an account of what may be meant in a discussion—that highest activity of REASON which Plato named 'Dialectic/' "

This will leave us with divided minds, if we don't develop our sense of the hanging together far enough to see that it allows no severance of head and heart—no neutral intellect fighting against the motives which make up its activity. But there is and ever will be warfare *within* "the sphere of intellectual desire" as Blake called it, and in every line of our reading we wage it.

The contest is not between heart and head, but between more perfect and less perfect understanding. Whatever tells us what a passage may mean would also, if we let it, tell us whether and how to believe, disbelieve, or keep an open mind. The archproblem of Truth is never solved once for all; though the more we know about it, the better our local decisions should be. It is a "huge hill," indeed, on which Truth stands, and we will be fortunate if we never suppose we have ascended it.

That author—with his "machine to think with"—from whom I began remarked with easy prescience that "The controversies which the world has known in the past are as nothing to those which are ahead." It has been so, and they have already looked like tearing our traditional intellectual world up by its roots. We shall deceive ourselves if we suppose that physical victory will re-establish it unaided, or without a greater effort to understand that tradition than we have been making for some generations. While we neglect it, the raging doctrines—whether implemented by planes, tanks, radio, or worse—will continue to charge and countercharge. . . . Can we not—as a parallel to the possibilities of World Communication which Basic English holds out—make an attempt in education which would measure up to our need? Can we not contrive that the fundamental *ideas* through which alone we can understand one another are studied in place of so much else which today leads us apart and into opposition? We might at least make the three or four books which best embody these ideas

available in the most readable form. But this study must be by Dialectic not debate. Word-warfare on such great themes in this bomber-shrunk world is but incipient battle, prelude to oppression or surrender, and we have, most of all, to reconceive discussion itself. The greatest evil *is* injustice, things out of place and therefore against one another—in a mind, in a nation, and in the World State. Only in a state ruled by Reason can we be certain that freedom for Thought, in the only sense that matters, will not be withheld or destroyed. For Reason is what gives us that freedom, and that is why it must rule.

INDEX

- Abstraction, 18, 27, 75, 88, 93, 98, 108, 196, 199-200, 215
- Act, 175-6
- Acton, Lord, 158
- Addition, 132
- Agape, 20, 153-6
- Ambiguity, 24, 92, 134, 236
- Antipsychology, 57, 62
- Aquinas, 233
- Archproblem, 75, 97, 210
- Argument, 54
- Aristotle, 26, 29, 30-8, 45, 55, 228
- Arnold, Matthew, 12
- Art, 39, 69
- Ashburn, Senator, 74
- Attention, 133
- Austen, Jane, 134

- Bacon, Francis, 40, 57, 98, 121
- Basic English, 29, 35, 37, 48, 51, 60, 123-6, 134, 241
- Battle Orders, 10
- BE, 162-73
- Beauty, 148, 199
- Belief Snare, 168-70
- Blake, 240
- Blurring and Pegging, 80, 115
- Boethius, 234

- Capital Words, 129
- Cause, 175, 178, 211-13
- Chuang Tzu, 218
- Coleridge, 14, 38, 42, 102, 103, 153, 180, 184, 190
- Collingwood, R. G., 57, 216, 237
- Comfort, 137
- Common Objects, 112
- Comparison, 28, 32, 35, 45
- Complex Meaning, 48
- Conception, 179
- Conditioning, 104, 105, 107
- Conjecture, 207, 211
- Constitute, 38
- Conversion, 188
- Courage, 208
- Cry, 112-13

- Dante, 26, 233
- Darwin, Charles, 170
- Data, 153
- Definition, 217
- Definition Snare, 164-8
- Democracy, 147
- Dependence, 65, 101, 107, 175, 210, 213, 231, 233, 238, 239
- Dialectic, 173, 183, 215-22, 240
- Dictionary, 13
- Division, 81
- Do, 173-80
- Donne, John, 97, 135

- Education, 135, 174
- Eliot, T. S., 186
- Emerson, 15
- Emotion, 88
- Empson, William, 79
- End, 225, 232
- English Teachers, 17, 20, 38, 39
- Eros, 20, 153-B
- Essence, 205
- Essential Connection, 85, 89
- Essential Omission, 90, 93, 109, 178
- Existence Snare, 171-3
- Experience, 21, 23, 24, 32, 137, 207
- Experience*, 38, 39, 54

Foreign Languages, 44
 Form, 36, 217-18
 Formula, 205, 206
 Freedom, 174
 Freud, 212
 Fuller, Thomas, 71
 Functions of Language, 99

General, 38, 80, 196
 GET, 151
 GIVE, 152
 Good, 227-33
 Grammar, 53
 Great Sayings, 11, 234
 Growth, 89

Happiness, 228
 HAVE, 156-9
 Hitler, Adolf, 74, 152, 170, 176
 Hodgson, Ralph, 160
 Holdfasts, 205
 Homer, 15
 Hopkins, G. M., 83, 238
 Hundred Words, 22, 108, 127
 Hypothesis, 59, 215-17

IDEA, 191-203
 Ideas, 25, 47, 179; Lockean, 191-8, 202; Platonic, 198-202, 218, 222
 Importance, 46, 127
 In, 36, 39
 Inheritance, 34
 Intellect, 33, 208, 213, 238
 Interpretation, 20
 Introspection, 24, 25, 26
 Involves, 84, 141
 Irrationalism, 71-4, 102
 Irrelevance, 94

Jaeger, Werner, 191, 201
Jeremiah, 73, 235
 Johnson, Dr., 13

KNOWLEDGE, 38, 178, 203-9;
 grades of, 206-09, 210-17;
 departmental, 208, 211-15,
 217

Lao tzu, 15, 206
 Law, 39, 161
 Living, 128, 236
 Locke, John, 191-8, 202
 Logic, 27, 54
 LOVE, 153-6

Macaulay, Lord, 162
 McDougall, W., 57
 MAKE, 36, 82, 144-51, 177
 Man and Society, 231-2
 Memory, 30, 37, 187
 Mencius, 143, 234
 Mercury, 54
 Metaphor, 18, 36, 39, 115, 116,
 130, 178
 Mill, J. S., 105
 MIND, 187-8, 239
 Motivation, 20, 27, 54
 Must, 147

Nature, 76, 88, 89, 91-5, 180,
 226
 Nettleship, R. L., 207
 Newspaper Readers, 211-12, 235

Of, 194
 Ogden, C. K., 17, 123, 126, 236
 Opinion, 207
 Or, 70

Paraphrase, 43, 53, 77, 91
 Part and Whole, 230
 Part-Whole Shifts, 52, 132-42,
 222
 Pavlov, 105
 Penny, shape of, 181
 Perception, 29, 33, 55, 75, 86,
 136
 Perry, R. B., 146

- Personification, 118
 Phenomenalism, 172
 Philosophy, 24, 172
 Pilfering, 159
 Plato, 14, 42, 74, 102, 126, 148, 149, 155, 160, 191, 201
 Poe, Edgar Allan, 132
 Poetry, 177
 Principle, 19, 205
 Proper Meaning, 91-5, 121
 Property, 156-9
 PURPOSE, 52, 175, 189, 222-7
 Puzzle Boxes, 58, 104

 Quotation Marks, 167

 Rationalization, 212
 Read, ambiguity of, 20
 Reading, aloud, 40; speed, 42; standard, 50; difficulty of, 77-9; and viewing, 108
 Realization, 88, 179
 REASON, 15, 72, 73, 102, 210-22; and gravitation, 239
 Red Herrings, 57, 60
 Rules of Method, 111, 118, 143
 Ruskin, 126

 Saint Paul, 154-5
 Sameness, 38, 44, 45, 46, 49, 62, 104, 200, 220
 Say, 49, 52, 177
 Scholarship, 13
 Science, 39, 94, 211-15
 Scripture, 10, 15, 126, 188
 SEE, 43, 104, 180-5
 SEEM, 160-2
 Sense-Content Changes, 52, 132-42, 222
 Shakespeare, 15, 53, 73, 151, 183
 Shape, 181-3
 Show, 138-41
 Sleep, 174
 Slocum, Captain, 131

 Sneezing, 173
 Socrates, 148, 149, 151, 187, 232
 Soft, 110-11
 Soul, 36, 37, 103, 128, 187
 Specialized Quotation Marks, 22, 66
 Spinoza, 227
 Stability, 50, 200, 239
 Stebbing, L. Susan, 95
 Substance, 194
 Swinburne, 10
 Synonyms, 48
 Systematic Ambiguity, 21, 22, 132, 135, 137, 145

 Technical Words, 23, 52
 Teleology, 227
 Tennyson, 84
 Theory of Language, 19
 Thorndike, E. L., 58
 THOUGHT, 188-91
 Thouless, R. H., 181
 'tion Words, 136, 204
 Totalitarianism, 146, 147
 Tradition, 187
 Translation, 43-5, 125
 Trial and Error, 41, 55, 59, 62, 106
 Truth, 97, 101, 240

 Understanding, 13, 22, 27, 48, 101, 183-5, 206
 Universal, 30, 38, 51, 106, 107, 137, 146, 196
 Usage, 50, 235-7

 Value, 177
 Verulam, Francis of, *see* BACON
 Visualizing, 185

 Walpole, H. R., 179
 Whitehead, A. N., 68, 75
 Whitman, Walt, 210
 Will, 54, 74, 101, 174, 237

- Word, magic, 50; classes, 122;
definition of, 165
Wordsworth, 68, 187
WORK, 227-32, 228
World State, 242
WPA, 224
Yeats, W. B., 204

