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THE LOGIC OF PERSONALITY

THE LOGIC OF PERSONALITY

by

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THE LOGIC OF PERSONALITY

I

INTRODUCTION

IS THERE A PROBLEM ABOUT PERSONALITY?

THERE are all sorts of ways of solving problems. Much depends on what kind of problems they are. Some are solved by tossing a penny, some by fighting a duel or a war, some by appealing to an expert authority. But there are some problems which can be solved, if at all, only by thinking them out. It is almost a truism to say that philosophical problems are problems of this sort. I shall not be trying, in this book, to describe and classify problems, but to solve them. Accordingly, we shall not hear very much more of the word 'philosophy', though we may pause from time to time to remind ourselves that we are, as a matter of fact, engaged in a philosophical discussion. What problems, then, are we discussing? Does the notion of personality really raise problems that can only be solved by clear thinking?

Let us begin by having a look at some specimen problems. Here is the first list of questions.

Is anyone's personality completely describable, or is there something necessarily omitted from all possible accounts which must always remain a mystery? When we flatter someone by saying that he 'has personality', how do we reconcile this with our belief, in other contexts, that everybody has personality? What is the real difference between 'knowing of' someone and knowing him personally? Why does the fact that I have seen his face and heard his voice and watched his actions in private make such a striking difference to my knowledge of him? What do I know that I didn't know before? What is meant by saying that a picture 'expresses'

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the artist's personality? Can animals have personality? Can objects and places have it? If not, why are human beings specially privileged? When a Christian says that God is a person, does he really mean that God has personality? Which is the most valuable side of a man's life, the public or the personal? Is the full development of personality, as an aim in life, desirable or even intelligible?

Here is the second list of questions. Why have the great philosophers either ignored or misunderstood the personal side of life? Why did Plato speak of love as the soul's search for ideal beauty, instead of as a relation between persons? Why did Aristotle, in spite of setting up as the ultimate aim in life something rather like 'full development of personality', ignore the personal relation in friendship and attend only to the presence of mutually admirable qualities or virtues? Why did Kant say that 'rational beings' are called persons, as though personality consisted of the possession of certain intellectual equipment? Why have so few philosophers in this century discussed personality at all? Why has there been so little confirmation of Professor Macmurray's forecast, in 1933, that the problem of personality was becoming 'the central problem of contemporary philosophy'?

It will be seen that the second set of questions arises because unsatisfactory answers, or none at all, have been given to questions of the kind occurring in the first set. Now my reason for wanting to discuss personality is not that answers have been given which I find unsatisfactory. There are plenty of other philosophical problems of which that would be true. What makes this a rather special problem is that, roughly speaking, answers have not been given at all. Of course, any one of the questions I have quoted as specimens has no doubt been answered innumerable times, and in innumerable ways; my point is, however, that no set of answers has been given to the first set of questions, or any similar set. In short, no definition of personality has

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been produced which would enable us to answer, or even to try to answer, all the questions consistently.

It has become fashionable in recent philosophy to say that certain alleged 'problems' are not problems, or are 'pseudo-problems'. This might well be said of the problem expressed by the question (which does not occur in my list) 'What is personality?' If it were true that this is a pseudo-problem, it would not be surprising that no comprehensive definition has been brought into use. Moreover, it would be futile to look for one. And it must be admitted that the question, as it stands, does express a pseudo-problem. It is like the questions 'What is mind?' or 'What is truth?' which are said to express pseudo-problems because they suggest that an answer of a certain kind is expected, an answer of the same kind as would properly be expected of the question 'What is uranium?' when no answer of that kind can possibly be given. On the other hand, the word 'pseudo-problem' is not a philosophical panacea for all diseases of the intellect. It is rather a diagnosis of a complaint in the province of another specialist: 'Consult my colleague (or rival) the metaphysician' — or the psychologist, or the theologian.

Now if this is true of 'mind' and 'truth', it is still more true of 'personality'. We can get along without 'mind', or at least we can imagine ourselves getting along without it, if we accept the positivist view that it is only a way we have of classifying certain things we do, such as remembering, talking and multiplying. We can get along without 'truth', if we accept another positivist view that it is only a set of working rules we have for accepting or rejecting statements. Those of us who protest that we cannot get along at all without these two old friends will find it even easier to agree with what I have to say next. We cannot very well get along without 'personality'. At least, nobody, so far as I know, has undertaken to show us how. And the reason for this is that we need a good deal more than a set of conversion

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tables for the elimination of the term; more, even, than a system of rules for its correct use. We should like a comprehensive definition, but we cannot have one. What we need as an alternative, and what we can have, is an *analysis*.

When a chemist analyses an unknown substance, he discovers how it is made up of its component parts and what these parts are, or how they are to be classified. We must try to analyse the notion of personality in a similar way. We must examine the facts of experience out of which the notion arises, and we must see how they are to be classified. We shall find that they have already been classified. But they have been classified in widely different ways by psychologists, art critics, logicians and moralists — to name but a few 'specialists'. It is not that a selection of the available facts has been annexed into each of these different fields. All the facts have been annexed, but they have received characteristically different emphasis and interpretation in each field. What we need to do is to re-examine the facts themselves, using the special fields, or some of them, only as starting-points. The difficulty is not to explain why the facts of personality are relevant to so many different fields, but to isolate them from those fields for purposes of discussion. This difficulty is so great that I shall, for the most part, be discussing them from the point of view of different 'specialists'; but I hope my discussion will make it clear that it is the same facts that are being discussed from different points of view. I hope it will also become clear that the mystery, such as it is, of personality is due simply to its pervasiveness and not to its offering any special intellectual puzzles. But I do not claim to have answered all the specimen questions. My answers to some of them will, I hope, suggest ways of answering the others.

I shall now try to give a provisional outline of what appear to me to be, at the outset, the most puzzling features of personality. This will be an attempt at formulating the

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problem of personality. I shall begin with a philosophical commonplace, for at this stage familiarity is more important than precision. In the world of our experience, it is often said, we distinguish three different sorts of things. These are material things, living things and persons. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive classes. Living things are also material, and persons are both material and living, whatever else they may be. We classify the three types on the basis of a very characteristic difference of behaviour between material things which are alive and material things which are non-living, and between living things which are persons and living things which are not. Now we are usually told by philosophers, and we are often content with the statement, that what we do with material things is, primarily, to *use* them. Consequently, we understand material things when we understand the general properties which make them useful for any particular purpose of ours. For example, we understand wood (in the sense that we know all we need to know about it) when we know its general properties such as rigidity, lightness, durability, ability to be sawn and so on, which make it utilizable for purposes such as building. As for living things, we do not usually 'use' them in quite such a straightforward manner, but still we do understand them up to a point when we know their general properties, although these general properties differ from the general properties of material things in important ways. For example, we understand cows (in the same sense of 'understand' as before) when we know their general properties: the fact that they go through the biological life cycle, the fact that they have a certain kind of digestive system peculiar to 'cud-chewing' animals, the fact that their milk is nourishing for human beings. Now possibly there is a sense in which we do not *fully* understand either material or living things: we can always ask *why* they have certain properties, and in particular, we can always ask why it is that all material

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things have in common certain general physical properties and why all living things have in common certain general biological properties. Such questions may not be answerable or even sensible. But for practical purposes — for purposes, that is, of dealing satisfactorily with the objects concerned — an adequate understanding consists in knowing that they *have* the properties, not in knowing *why* they have them. This should be clear if we consider the attitude of the builder to wood, or of the dairy farmer to cows.

Now understanding the third or personal element in our world is quite different. We don't understand persons when we know the general properties they have, nor should we even if we knew why they have them. I shall deal with this point at greater length in the next chapter, where I discuss the psychological approach to personality. Just now I am only giving a preliminary sketch of the difficulties involved in comparing our understanding of persons with our understanding of other things. Of course, we do know that people have certain general properties. We know, for example, that they have material and biological properties. But we also know that they have so-called 'personal' qualities: we know that some people are humorous, intelligent, conscientious, adaptable. And this sort of knowledge certainly gives us understanding in the same sense as in the other two instances. But this kind of understanding was relevant, in the other two instances, to the purpose of *using* the things: it was concerned with the things merely as the bearers of properties. And this is, of course, a sense in which we also, for certain purposes, understand human beings. The management of a large firm understands its employees in at least this sense. Notice the qualification 'at least'. For this is what we might call the 'minimal' case of understanding human beings. It is a case of understanding them as bearers of properties which make them utilizable for certain purposes. But although this is a case of understanding human

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beings, it is not a case of understanding *persons*, even when the properties concerned are so called 'personal' qualities. An employer may assign a man to a certain job because it calls for, let us say, initiative and adaptability. And these are certainly called 'personal' qualities of the man. But they are also properties which can be 'read off' from the man's record; they do not call for personal understanding. Or suppose we know that Smith has a 'sense of humour'. We may for that reason invite him to a party which is otherwise likely to be dull. These examples show that even 'personal' properties can be known in a way which is only relevant to using people. And I don't think it needs to be argued that understanding persons as persons is quite different from this. The difficulty is to discover where the difference lies. What does constitute personal knowledge and personal understanding?

We need to be on our guard against the misleading suggestions of ordinary language, which uses the words 'person' and 'personal' in ways which tend to blur the distinction I have been drawing. One instance I have just mentioned is the use of the term 'personal quality', which invites comparison with 'physical quality', thus drawing attention to the difference between two kinds of quality or property instead of to the difference between two kinds of understanding. Another instance is the word 'person' itself, which is used like any common name. 'X and Y are both persons' sounds very like 'this and that are both tables': which suggests that what makes them persons is something they have in common other than their physical and biological properties. But, as we shall see later, what makes X a person is something he does *not* have in common with Y or with anyone else. Thirdly, the word 'person', as very commonly used in official announcements and elsewhere ('persons found trespassing will be prosecuted', 'persons resident in the city of Birmingham . . .') means even less. It

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has become practically synonymous with the word 'human being', with the added advantage of shortness and complete absence of emotional colouring. The word 'personnel' represents, perhaps, the lowest stage of degradation.

We can now make a tentative suggestion in answer to each of the two questions emerging from my sketch of the difficulties about personality. First: what is the difference between understanding persons and understanding other things? The suggestion is this. Since, apparently, other things are known by their general properties, and persons are known otherwise, perhaps other things are known by similarity and persons by difference; other things by what they have in common and persons by what each does *not* have in common with others. This suggestion will occupy us for the next chapter, where it will be treated as the main contribution of psychology to the discussion of personality. It will also be shown to fall short of what is required, at the same point where psychology fails to give a complete account of personality. The notion of difference does not suffice to give us the element of uniqueness which is essential to personality.

This will bring us to the second question: what constitutes knowledge of persons? If knowledge about things depends on knowledge of properties, and personal knowledge does not, it looks as if personal knowledge must be knowledge of the unique. But how can there be knowledge of what is unique and therefore indescribable? The answer will be that knowledge of the unique is an entirely different sort of knowledge, which we shall call *acquaintance*. Chapter III deals with this second question, and is largely occupied with a criticism of a typical philosophical view that personal knowledge, in spite of popular assumptions to the contrary, is not based on acquaintance. The rest of the book attempts to make a further analysis of personal knowledge and to trace the relevance of personality and personal relations to several widely different patterns of human activity.

II

PSYCHOLOGY ON PERSONALITY

§ I PROPERTIES, NOT PERSONS

PSYCHOLOGY is a science, and we may be inclined to say at once that science can tell us nothing about the mystery of human personality and how we get acquainted with it. But even if we know this already, it is very instructive to look for the precise point at which the psychological account fails. To do this, we must first see what it is that psychology does say about personality. We must also remember that psychologists do deal with problems which are called 'personal problems', and that psychological advisers and psychiatrists are often successful in helping people to solve their personal problems. How are they able to do this?

If we bear in mind our classification of material things, living things and persons, and the difficulty we raised about our understanding of the third class compared with the other two, we may be able to see what kind of help is to be expected of psychology towards solving our problem. In the first place, psychology is obviously about the way *people* behave, just as biology is about the way living things behave and physics about the way material things behave. (This is not, of course, an exact correspondence. Politics, economics and sociology are also about the way people behave: but a rough parallel is all that is needed.) But if this were all that psychology were about, it would assist our understanding of persons only in the same sense as physics assists our understanding of material things; and we have seen that this is not enough, for understanding persons is not the same thing as understanding that they have certain properties.

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But psychology can go further than this. It is not concerned merely with the general characteristics of human behaviour that distinguish it from animal behaviour. It is also concerned with differences between people: between, for instance, the child and the adult, the neurotic and the normal, the genius and the idiot. But does even this distinguish the psychologist's procedure from the biologist's and the physicist's? Clearly not; for these scientists are also concerned with differences inside the general field defined by any particular science. The physicist is interested in the differences between solids and liquids: the biologist is interested in the differences between species of a genus, such as butterflies and moths. So although it is true that psychology would not exist if all individuals were alike, it is equally true that no other science would, if its objects of study were all alike. It is difficult to conceive a science of biology existing if there were only one type of animal in the world, or a science of physics if everything had the same physical properties.

We can go further from here along a philosophical diversion and say that we could not even conceive a state of affairs where everything had the same properties, whether physical or otherwise. For we could not know what it meant to use the word 'properties' in the plural unless we knew how to distinguish one property from another. And we could only do this by finding that every property belonged to some things and not to others. If, for instance, to stretch the imagination somewhat, the universe consisted entirely of blue balls, everything would be blue and spherical, and we should be tempted to say that everything would have the same properties, namely the two properties of blueness and sphericity. But we say this because the actual universe happens not to be like the one we are imagining. For it does contain things that are not blue and things that are not spherical. In our imaginary universe we should not be

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able to say at all that everything had these two properties, because they would be literally indistinguishable. They could be distinguished only if some things were not blue (but, for instance, red) and some things not spherical (but, for instance, cubical) and this requirement would introduce a comparatively enormous complication into our imaginary universe; for it would now have to contain not just one type of thing but at least three different types: for instance, blue balls, red balls and blue cubes. (Working out other possibilities is a simple exercise in permutations.) To go any further into the implications of this kind of view would involve us in a discussion rather too abstruse and metaphysical for the present purpose. All we need to conclude is that the notion of a property implies difference as well as similarity: when we say that a certain thing has a property x , we imply that it resembles some things and differs from others, or in other words that some things agree in having the property x and others agree in not having it.

Bringing this discussion back to the point at which we started, it should now be clear why it will not do to say just that the psychologist is more interested in differences (as opposed to similarities) than other scientists. The chemist, for example, is interested in the differences between the properties of chemical substances, such as acids and alkalis, in much the same way as the psychologist is interested in the difference between the properties of human beings, such as the adult and the child.

But it is still open to the psychologist to claim that he is more concerned, as a scientist, with the differences between individuals than the other scientists are; for he is really interested in differences between individuals, while the other scientists are really interested only in the differences between types. A chemist, it may be said, is admittedly concerned with the differences between lead and gold, but not with the differences between one lump of lead and another. But

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a psychologist is concerned with the differences between one human being and another. He will, of course, have to take care to distinguish between what interests him as a scientist and what interests him as a person. He will have to watch the line drawn between the objects of his scientific field and those belonging to other fields in which he may be interested. And in psychology this line is easy enough to draw but notoriously difficult to watch. But he may still insist that he is concerned, as a scientist, with individuals. He usually demonstrates this by contrasting his own procedure with that of the chemist and the physiologist. The chemist's account of a human being — an analysis of bodily material into chemical substances, and of bodily processes into chemical actions — obviously ignores the individuality of the human being. So does the account of the physiologist, explaining the interaction of bodily organs in biological terms. So does the account of the psychologist himself, when he tries to study universal 'laws' governing 'mental phenomena' in general, like the nineteenth-century Associationists. But he may adopt a different procedure. He may claim to take account of the whole organism as an individual living person; whatever goes on is described as the action not of a part but of the whole. Everything the psychologist observes is an activity of the complete individual functioning as a whole, self-integrated unit. The exception proves the rule, for any case of an individual behaving in any other way is automatically a psychopathological case. The standard activity is integrated activity. Psychology is simply the study of this activity of the individual.

This claim is apparently reinforced by the practical successes of psychologically-guided treatment, psychiatry and psycho-analysis. Psychologists do deal with actual individual people, they are often able to cure neuroses and to improve 'personality' in various ways, to give advice on tackling personal problems, and on judging character or

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'personality'. But all this must be dismissed as irrelevant. If practical success in dealing with individual cases is evidence of a concern with the differences between one individual and another, psychology would be no better off than the other sciences. Every science has its practical applications; but the fact that my knowledge of chemistry enables me to deal successfully with the problem of disposing of a particular corpse doesn't prove that chemistry is concerned with the difference between one human being and another. Even medical science (as distinct from practice) isn't concerned with individuals; of course, its practical applications concern individuals, but these are treated as case histories, as examples of known general facts about diseases. Psychology is exactly like the other sciences in this respect. In its practical applications it treats the individual simply as a case falling under some general classification or other. It treats him or her as a bearer of known properties, the practical problem being to discover which known property or properties to select for the given case. To take another analogy from chemistry, I may say of a particular piece of sulphur: 'If I ignite this object, it will burn with a blue flame and give off a pungent odour.' This prediction will be either verified or refuted by experience. If it is refuted, I shall have to examine the object more closely, to see if it really is sulphur. In the same way, I may say of a particular introvert: 'If I introduce this object into a social gathering, its behaviour will be diffident and abstracted.' This prediction, too, will be verified or refuted by experience, and if it is refuted — if, for example, the object conducts itself boisterously — I shall have to examine it more closely to see if my original classification of 'introvert' was correct.

This should make it clear that the practical success of psychology is irrelevant to the question, how far psychology is concerned with the individual. It should have also raised

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doubts whether the original claim that theoretical psychology is the study of the activity of the individual really tells us anything. Is the term 'the individual' perhaps misleading? Does it really mean anything of a kind fundamentally different from such expressions as 'the dynamo' or 'the elephant' in the sense in which we speak of studying 'the electrical properties of the dynamo' or 'the reproductive system of the elephant'? If not, couldn't we replace it, without any change of meaning, by 'the human being', or 'the man-woman-or-child'? I think we could. The suggestion implicit in the term 'individual' is that something is going to be said about individuality, what makes a person an *individual*; but this suggestion turns out to be misleading. Psychology, like all the other sciences, deals only with the general properties of things. Even individuality turns out to be a highly general property; this property, as is suggested by what I have said already, can be defined roughly as the property of being capable of integrated activity. But this is not a property that interests a psychologist except when he is trying to say in general terms what psychology is. When, on the other hand, he is actually working as a psychologist, the properties that interest him are much less general and more specific ones, such as 'heredity', 'intelligence' or 'persistence'. There is again a parallel here with other sciences. The physicist is not usually interested in the properties of 'being in space' and 'being in time', which belong to material objects, except when he is trying to explain to the layman what physics is; he is much more interested in less general properties like 'density', 'elasticity', or 'boiling-point'. 'Being in space' and 'being in time' are highly general properties, which serve to mark off the field of physical events from other fields. Similarly 'individuality' in the sense of 'being capable of integrated activity' is a highly general property which marks off the field of psychology from, say, the field of physics. It is important to notice that the field

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of psychology so marked off is much wider than the field of human psychology; for animals act as integrated wholes, just as humans do, and there is accordingly a separate branch of psychology relating to animal behaviour. We have the paradox, then, that the term 'individual' seems to denote the unique, but actually, in practice, denotes the very highly general.

These considerations may justify our initial scepticism about the value of psychology as a means of investigating personality. I have been trying to show that psychology takes no account of what constitutes the essential differences between one person and another, what makes him an *individual*. But surely this is just his personality. How then can psychology claim to deal with personality at all?

One of our examples of the practical applications of psychology was guidance in judging personality or character. Now it is obvious that psychology doesn't tell us how to judge a person's personality. We don't need to be told, because we all do it. We are always weighing up people we know, and making estimates of their character. If we did not, we should not be able to tell our friends about them. What psychology does is to help us to judge more accurately. This is a very important aid: but it is a development, and not a departure, from common sense. Ordinary people and trained psychologists do not use entirely different procedures in judging personality; the difference is in the methods adopted for getting data. This is an example of what happens in all the sciences: the scientist doesn't obtain his facts by methods which are fundamentally different from the common man's—he has more elaborate apparatus which enables him to obtain more facts and more detailed facts than the common man. Similarly, the psychologist has better apparatus than the common man, although it is not so spectacular as the giant telescope or the cyclotron. The methods are fundamentally similar. They have in common the only procedure

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by which personality can be judged, namely, description based on observation; they differ in the way the observations are obtained.

Now if we reflect on the kind of description that is involved in a judgment of personality, we find that it is a list of characteristics or properties. If someone asks me: 'What is your opinion of Smith? What sort of fellow is he?' and I have to reply unpremeditatedly, I may say: 'Oh, very sociable, rather tedious — talks too much; a heavy smoker and addicted to *The Times* crossword puzzles.' If, on the other hand, I have to write a testimonial on Smith's 'character and personality', I shall devote some thought to the business and produce a rather different account involving expressions like 'capacity for co-operation', 'unusually painstaking', and 'sense of responsibility'. Both accounts agree, however, in ascribing certain characteristics or properties to Smith. No other kind of account is possible.

§ 2 MEASURING 'PERSONALITY'

THE psychologist calls properties of this sort 'personality traits'. The elaborate procedure which makes his results more accurate than the common man's is largely the introduction of measurement to supersede vague formulae such as 'highly', 'unusually', 'more or less', or 'subnormally'. The technique of measurement is to take commonly observed personality traits which are as nearly as possible opposites (such as 'intelligent' and 'dull', 'sociable' and 'retiring', 'dominant' and 'submissive') and establish corresponding 'personality dimensions'.

These 'dimensions' are scales on which any particular individual rates high or low in one particular pair of traits. We need not go further into details such as intelligence testing and questionnaires, which are details of method. It will be enough to see that this procedure is completely

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intelligible from the common-sense point of view and involves no radical innovation in method. Personality is described by dividing it into personality traits and rating them on scales, very roughly for the common man, more accurately for the psychologist.

No psychologist claims that the complete personality is simply the sum of the personality traits. When we speak of 'dividing' personality into traits, we speak metaphorically. A person is obviously not like a cake, which can be literally divided into pieces. The slices of cake do add up to the complete cake, but personality traits do not add up to the complete personality. For one thing, they are never self-contained, but merge into one another. It is impossible to draw a sharp line between, say, submissiveness and sensitivity. Only a few dimensions — such as intelligence and persistence — can be considered as even approximately independent. This is inevitable in view of the fact that a person is a unit; whatever he does, he does with his whole personality. A living person is not an assemblage of components. But there is more to it than this.

Not only is a personality more than the sum of its 'parts'; knowledge of a personality is quite different from knowledge of personal traits or qualities. If we know a person, we know that he has certain qualities, because we can form an estimate of his character. But if we know that a person has certain qualities, we do not therefore know that person. We know enough about him for practical purposes — such as employing him in a certain job — but we certainly cannot be said to *know* him. A personal friend of Smith's may write a testimonial to Smith's potential employer. But there is still only one man who knows Smith, not two; although there are now two men (assuming the testimonial is genuine and informative) who know the personal qualities that Smith has. The second kind of knowledge is the concern of psychology; the first is not.

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Psychology, like all other sciences, involves abstraction; and, like most other sciences, it involves measurement. Abstraction is the process of ignoring all characteristics of a thing except for one or more specific properties. Measurement is the process of applying accurate, quantitative analysis to these properties. The process of singling out and measuring personality traits is just an example of scientific abstraction and measurement. All this could have been deduced from the fact that psychology is a science. It is also involved even in the practical application of psychology, in the kind of problems with which psychologists deal. Even the formulation of such problems involves abstraction and quantitative analysis. The ordinary man who wants to 'improve his self-confidence' or 'reduce the aggressiveness' of his small son, is abstracting from his own or his son's total personality a single factor estimated in rough quantitative terms of 'too little' or 'too much'. Indeed there is no other way in which personal problems of this sort can be formulated in order to enable the psychologist to understand them. In fact, there is no other way in which they can be formulated at all.

This brings us to the verge of another deep philosophical problem, namely, what is implied by the possibility of communication. We need only realize that what is implied in this instance is that the patient and the psychological adviser must attach some common meaning to the terms 'self-confidence' and 'aggressiveness'. Otherwise there would be no point in consulting the psychologist, or anyone else for that matter. But if the whole process of communication involves abstraction, if we cannot even attempt to describe a character without taking it to pieces that do not fit together again so as to reproduce the whole personality, it follows that psychology must inevitably fail to take any account of the essential element of personality. However sincerely a psychologist may try to visualize the individual as a living person and as something unique, he cannot escape from

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generality and become *aware* of this uniqueness. At least, he can do so only by entering into personal relations with the individual, by going outside the field of science. The 'striking personality' of a particular person is altogether lost in a scientific account, however high his rating in intelligence, dominance or persistence. Quite general considerations about the nature of science tell us that it is not the scientist's business to be 'struck'; the 'strikingness' of a personality comes from the fact that it strikes me, you or the other fellow. 'Striking' can only occur within the framework of established personal relations.

We may sum up by saying that psychology has something to contribute to the problem of personality, in that it emphasizes the differences that exist between one individual and another. But it is also concerned with general laws of human behaviour, and even where it takes account of individual differences, it does so largely in terms of cause and effect, and entirely in terms of differences of degree in standard variables. It fails to take account of the essential element of personality, because it must, in its nature as a science, limit its inquiry to what is describable; and the describable features of personality do not constitute a whole personality. We must try a different approach, suggested by the implied difference between knowing that a person has certain characteristics or personality traits and knowing that person. How then do we know persons, and how does our knowledge of them differ from our knowledge about them?

III

KNOWLEDGE BY ACQUAINTANCE AND KNOWLEDGE BY DESCRIPTION

§ I THE PHILOSOPHY OF 'ACQUAINTANCE'

THE difference between knowledge of a person and knowledge about him is familiar to everyone. When I say: 'I don't know Smith, but I know he is an interesting speaker', it's obvious that I'm using the word 'know' in two quite different senses. The distinction between these two senses was probably brought home to us at school, when we were learning the difference between *connaître* and *savoir*. Both in French, and in many other languages, different words are used for these two different meanings. Perhaps it was the peculiarity of English, which uses the same word to mean two different things, that first drew attention to the need for removing ambiguity by clearly defining the two meanings. The first clear definition was formulated by Bertrand Russell (*Problems of Philosophy*, chap. v). Knowledge *of* something is called knowledge by *acquaintance*: knowledge *about* something is called knowledge by *description*. 'I know Smith' means that I am acquainted with him; 'I know Smith is an interesting speaker' means that I correctly apply the description 'interesting speaker' to an object *x* called Smith, with which I may, or may not, be acquainted. No one will quarrel with this definition so far. We are quite prepared to call knowledge of a thing or a person 'acquaintance' and knowledge about a thing or a person 'knowledge by description'. We saw in the last chapter that psychology gives us knowledge of a person's characteristics only in so far as they are describable characteristics, and that this falls short of knowledge of

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personality. Knowledge of characteristics will be knowledge by description. When Smith's friend and his future employer both know that Smith is 'co-operative', they agree in correctly applying the description 'co-operative' to an object with which one of them is acquainted but not the other. Only one of them has knowledge by acquaintance; what they both have is knowledge by description. Knowledge of personality cannot be of this type. It must be knowledge which is confined entirely to a particular, unique situation and does not involve any generality, any extension beyond the particular. Such knowledge we shall naturally look for under the name of 'acquaintance'. This will be in full accord with common usage, which does regard 'acquaintance with' and 'knowledge of' a person as synonymous.

But if we follow such philosophers in their further discussion of the difference between acquaintance and description, hoping to find out more about the nature of acquaintance, something quite extraordinary occurs. We find them refusing — fairly enough — to give an exact definition of 'acquaintance': but we find them using the word in such a way as to deny that there can be acquaintance either with things or with persons. A few passages from Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* will make this clear.

'The actual thing which is the table is not, strictly speaking, known to us at all.'

'Among the objects with which we are acquainted are not included physical objects . . . nor other people's minds.'

'[When a man thinks of his friend] he knows that the various descriptions all apply to the same entity, in spite of not being acquainted with the entity in question.'

And a further example from Stebbing's *Modern Introduction to Logic*:

'It is doubtful whether, in the strictest sense of the word "acquaintance", we ever are acquainted with persons.'

We may well ask how these statements, which are so

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startlingly at variance with common sense, come to be made. Otherwise we shall be tempted to reject them out of hand; philosophers are up to their old game, we may protest, defining words by distorting them out of recognition into plain absurdities. How can they deny that we are acquainted with persons, even in the 'strictest sense'? Normally, when we draw attention to the 'strict sense' of a current term, we are protesting against undue looseness or broadening which makes the term apply to a wider class of things than the 'proper' usage permits. We are proposing to restrict the class of things to which the word is to be applied within closer limits. What we are certainly not doing is proposing to apply the word to an entirely different class of things. For example, we may say: 'Engine drivers are not, strictly speaking, civil servants', because we are being strict about the term 'civil servant', and defining the class of things to which it is applied in such a way as to exclude engine drivers, and assuming that our definition has the support of custom or other authority. No doubt this is the sort of thing that a philosopher who denies that we are acquainted with persons in a strict sense likes to think he is doing. We cannot say: 'Cows are not, strictly speaking, cattle', because by so doing we should be implying a definition of 'cattle' so as to exclude cows, which does not enjoy the support of custom or any other authority. I think it may easily be felt that the philosophers have been defining a 'strict sense' in something rather like this second way — a 'strict sense' which has no justification in customary language, but only in arguments the philosopher may introduce in favour of a proposal for improving ordinary language. Indeed, philosophers are often proposing improvements in ordinary language. These proposals have frequently been adopted with immense advantages in the clarity and economy of philosophical discussion. The question here is whether anything at all is gained by the attempt to use the word 'acquaintance' in

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such a way as to exclude acquaintance with things and with persons. We must look at the general considerations which led philosophers to do it.

§ 2 THE 'SENSE-DATUM' ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION

THE most important of these considerations was the supposed necessity of reducing all forms of knowledge to their lowest terms; to find, if possible, the fundamental kind of knowledge from which all other kinds are somehow derived. This project was closely connected with the attempt to solve the 'problem of perception', which had already given rise to doubts concerning the existence of physical objects and of persons independent of oneself. It was felt that there must be at any rate some things whose existence could be asserted without possibility of doubt, and, corresponding to these entities, there must be a fundamental kind of knowledge, more certain and direct than other kinds. These entities were held to be the sort of things of which we are supposed to be immediately and directly aware in any instance of sensation. Examples would be the colour of a particular table I am seeing, or the sound of a middle C I am hearing. Such entities were called 'sense-data'; a 'sense-datum' meaning, literally, 'that which is given in sensation'. It was held that when I am seeing a table, all that I am really experiencing is a certain set of sensations of colour and shape. Now these experiences actually occur, it was alleged, so what is experienced in them, the 'sense-data' or the 'given-in-sensation', must necessarily exist. The table, on the other hand, and all other physical objects, do not necessarily exist. The table may be part of a dream or an hallucination, or a piece of stage scenery. Even if it is none of these, there is no absurdity in doubting the existence of something which is, it seems, more than a list of sense-

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data. Since we do, of course, want to be able to say that the table does exist, various expedients were brought forward to justify common-sense belief in the existence of physical objects. But none of these expedients, as a rule, departed from the standard assumption that the fundamental elements of experience are sense-data.

Corresponding to these fundamental elements of experience, there was required a fundamental kind of knowledge. 'Acquaintance' was the term used for this knowledge. A provisional distinction had been made between knowledge of things, called acquaintance, and knowledge about things, called 'knowledge by description': acquaintance was knowledge referring entirely to a particular situation, knowledge by description having reference to generalities. Now that the entities called sense-data had been distinguished from things or objects, it could be seen that the distinction between acquaintance and description needed to be pushed further. Acquaintance was knowledge of the particular, but entities had been discovered which were more truly 'particular' than physical objects; clearly they had a better right to the term 'acquaintance'. Physical objects such as tables were not really 'particular' at all. A table, it was pointed out, can be seen from various viewpoints, which will yield very different appearances; it can be perceived at different times; it can be perceived by different persons; it can be recognized in the dark by the sense of touch, or even by the sound it emits when rapped. In short, it can be perceived from different places, at different times, by different senses, and by different persons. Each of these variables introduces a fresh generality. What is particular, as opposed to general, can only be what is perceived from a particular viewpoint, at a particular time, by a particular person using a particular sense organ. But this is what had been defined as a sense-datum. Consequently, what we are really acquainted with are sense-data. 'The sense-data which make up the appearance of my

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table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they are' (*Problems of Philosophy*, p. 47). Acquaintance is not definable, because there is nothing more elementary into which it can be analysed. It is a relation in which we stand to something of which we are directly aware.

This, then, is the 'strict sense' of 'acquaintance' in which I cannot be said to be acquainted with physical things or with persons. We can see now that we were justified in complaining that the philosophers were proposing to use a 'strict sense' which was not sanctioned by any usage of language, but only by their own arguments. We must concede, of course, that they were not proposing a general modification of language for all occasions. The 'strict sense' of 'acquaintance' was for use only when the relation of someone to his immediate experience was being discussed. I shall claim that 'acquaintance' is a most unsuitable term for describing this relation, that its use in this connection has tended to distort philosophers' views of the nature of what I hold to be the relation correctly described as 'acquaintance', namely, the relation between someone and particular things or persons. This discussion will bring out the important elements in the relation of acquaintance which I think will help towards understanding our knowledge of personality.

§ 3 USE AND MISUSE OF THE TERM 'ACQUAINTANCE'

I KNOW that man; he was at college with me,' I may observe, catching sight of a familiar face in the street. Or, reverting to the table, I may notice a piece of furniture in an auction room and say: 'I know that table; it belonged to Mrs. Smith.' In both these cases, 'I know' means the same as 'I am acquainted with'. The philosopher we are considering is saying that, in the strict sense, I do not know

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(am not acquainted with) either the man or the table. What I do know, what I am acquainted with, he will say, are certain patches of colour. To which the plain man will answer that, whatever the philosopher may say in a 'strict sense', this is certainly not what *he* means. If he is presented with a view of the table, and asked to consider the situation as one in which all he is directly aware of are certain colours and shapes, he may very well agree to concentrate his attention on a particular patch of colour; but he will stoutly deny that the patch, however vividly experienced, is something he *knows*. Patches of colour, shapes, sounds, smells and the rest of the paraphernalia are not things he *knows*: they are not even things he sees, hears and smells. He sees a table, hears a piano, and smells a cheese. And he will go further than this. He will deny that even the table is something he knows, unless he happens to have seen it before, unless, that is, he has *become* acquainted with it. A strange person, a strange object, is not something we know merely because it is being presented to our senses, however directly or immediately.

Acquaintance is not a relation in which we stand to something of which we are directly aware. In fact, there is no typical relation at all between acquaintance and direct awareness. I can be directly aware of something with which I am not acquainted, such as a strange person, and I can be acquainted with something of which I am not directly aware, such as a friend I am recalling. It will be seen from this that one essential element of 'acquaintance' is 'having become acquainted' in the past with the thing in question. 'Being acquainted' and 'becoming acquainted' are two quite different things. This difference is ignored by the philosophical account of 'knowledge by acquaintance'. We cannot stop here to analyse the process of becoming acquainted: this must be given in psychological terms, and we shall come to this in the next chapter. All that is needed here is to see that 'acquaintance' in the ordinary sense of 'being

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acquainted' presupposes 'becoming acquainted'. We cannot *be* acquainted without having *become* acquainted. Acquaintance is not merely a state or condition, but the result of a process. It is, then, a relation in which we stand, not to something of which we are directly aware, but to something with which we have at some past time become acquainted. If we are interested in the moment of perception itself rather than the preceding processes involved in 'becoming acquainted', we must say that any instance of perception involving acquaintance involves not only awareness of the thing as it is (or awareness of sense-data as they are) but also awareness of *familiarity* as opposed to strangeness or unfamiliarity. Familiarity has just as much right to a place among 'sense-data' as have the data of sight and hearing. Moreover, unfamiliarity is just as positive a quality as familiarity. Both these points are of great importance and we shall have to come back to them.

If 'acquaintance' is not a suitable word for describing our relation to whatever we are directly aware of, it follows that it is even less suitable for describing our relation to 'sense-data', as those philosophers try to do who hold that all we are ever directly aware of are sense-data. We cannot 'know' or be 'acquainted' with sense-data, because sense-data are, by definition, entities which do not recur and hence cannot be recognized. 'Acquaintance', on the contrary, by our definition, does involve recurrence and recognition. Recognition and the awareness of familiarity imply permanence, whereas a sense-datum is just the impermanent element of perception, the 'this' which never recurs.

What philosophers were doing, when they borrowed the word 'acquaintance' as a label for our relation with sense-data, was to concentrate on one element — the supposed reference to the particular — and to ignore something that was more important, the element of familiarity required by the possibility of recognition. Where this element did call

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for attention, it was treated as non-essential. ‘“Acquaintance” means that relation in which a knower stands to something that is directly presented to him. *By a convenient extension* of the term we can say that we are acquainted with what has been directly presented to us but which is not now being presented’ (Stebbing, *Modern Introduction to Logic*, p. 23 — my italics). This brings out the misleading shift of emphasis. Using ‘acquaintance’ in the ordinary sense in which it involves familiarity and recognition is said to be merely a ‘convenient extension’ of the ‘strict sense’ in which it involves pure particularity or direct awareness. But the important element of ‘acquaintance’ — what distinguishes it from non-acquaintance — just is this element of recognizing what we have *become* acquainted with. It is absurd to call this a ‘convenient extension’.

It will surely help us in understanding how we are acquainted with persons if we see just where this philosophical account of perceptual knowledge leaves a gap between theory and practice. ‘Bismarck to people who knew him,’ said Russell (*Problems of Philosophy*, p. 57) ‘... comes as near to acquaintance as is possible in regard to another person.’ We feel that, in practice, people did know Bismarck just as well, in just as full a sense of ‘acquaintance’, as I know Smith or Jones. If we want to know where people’s knowledge of Bismarck is supposed to have fallen short of acquaintance, we are told that ‘his body, as a physical object, and still more his mind, were only known as the body and mind connected with these sense-data’ — just as a table is only known as the physical object which ‘causes’ such-and-such sense-data, or is ‘made up’ of them. On this sort of view, knowledge of persons and of things must necessarily be indirect: for the class of things of which we are said to be directly aware is the class of sense-data, which is quite different from the class of persons and things. If sense-data are ‘known’ directly, persons and things must be known

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indirectly. They are objects 'connected with' sense-data, 'causing' sense-data, or 'made up of' sense-data. Each of these expressions (and many others are used) is a different way of describing the indirectness of our relation to persons and things, as contrasted with the directness of our relation to sense-data.

This contrast between directness and indirectness is oversimplified and largely false, and has certainly been seriously misleading. It invites us to attend to the 'indirect' nature of much of our knowledge and to various accounts of the grounds on which we are justified in passing from direct awareness to indirect knowledge. It is pointed out that the things we are acquainted with are very limited, and that we are dependent on knowledge by description for the possibility of passing beyond these narrow limits of our private experience and obtaining knowledge about things which we have never experienced, such as the facts of history or the geography of the Antarctic continent. It is then suggested that the limits of our private experience are, in fact, much narrower even than we had thought, and that actually our knowledge of our friend Smith or of our dog Fido is of the same indirect kind as our knowledge of the Antarctic continent. Our direct knowledge does not, on this view, extend beyond our immediate sensations; and the interesting problem is to see how indirect knowledge is possible at all.

But it seems to me that, so far from deserving interest, this problem need not even exist, at any rate as regards knowledge of persons and things. There is no real contrast between 'direct awareness' of sense-data and 'indirect' knowledge of persons and things. We can be directly aware of persons and things just as we are aware of coloured patches. In fact, I shall be arguing in the next chapter that our awareness of persons and things is, if anything, more truly 'direct', in important ways, than our awareness of coloured patches.

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When I am aware of another person, my experiences cannot be described in terms of 'sense-data' without involving both distortion and omission. Distortion is involved because I am directly aware of the presence of a person, and not performing some intellectual feat which transforms a set of visual sense-data into the appearance of a person. Omission is involved because I am never aware of a person simply as an object, or even as a body of which the behaviour suggests a mind like my own. I am aware of a person expressing his personality in some way or other. I am aware of him not as *being*, but as *doing*. I may be aware of him smiling, or frowning, or merely 'looking like himself'; if I am already acquainted with him (in the ordinary sense) I shall be aware of him as standing in a special relation to myself and as possessing familiarity. This list of distortions and omissions can be extended almost indefinitely, but to do so would be irrelevant, because our philosopher already has an answer to all this. He will say that what I have called the distortions and omissions occur because he is performing the operation of 'abstraction'. He is isolating the elements in the situation which are relevant for his particular purpose and dismissing the rest. And we have already seen that this is a perfectly normal procedure in the sciences. Why should not the scientific privilege be extended to the philosopher? Why should the philosopher not be allowed to abstract from a given type of situation those features which are relevant to his particular purpose? Certainly we cannot withhold the privilege unless we find fault with the philosopher's particular purpose.

§ 4 THE 'COGNITIVE-EMOTIONAL' HERESY

WHAT is his purpose? It is to analyse the 'act of perception'. All that is relevant to the perceiving of something, he will say, are the elementary sensations of colour, shape, sound and so on, and the way in which these

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sensations go to 'make up' the total object of perception. Anything else, such as a sense of familiarity or an awareness of anger, are irrelevant. They do not go to 'make up' the object; they are somehow 'extra' to the object already constituted by the other sense-data. The philosopher will express this difference by saying that he is concerned only with the 'cognitive' aspect of perception. The cognitive aspect is the aspect in which the 'act' of perceiving can be considered as an 'act' of knowing. Of course, he will say, in any actual perceptual situation, we are not merely knowing something, we are feeling as well: we are experiencing certain emotions. This will be the 'emotional' aspect of perception, as opposed to the cognitive. He is not concerned with the emotional aspect. Sensations of colour, shape and sound are cognitive; so are certain others such as those of memory and introspection; but the rest, including those I have mentioned in the list of distortions and omissions, are emotional and can be ignored for the purpose in hand.

This is the sort of thing that the philosopher will say. At first sight, we might be inclined to accept the distinction between 'cognitive' and 'emotional' aspects of perception. Even if we question it, the philosopher can defend it in some such way as this. All that we are directly aware of are sense-data; but we obviously need, for practical purposes, to be able to claim some sort of knowledge of physical objects and of persons. We require for them some degree of permanence, which is not possessed by sense-data, strictly defined. Now although sense-data never recur, and consequently the same sense-datum cannot exist on two different occasions, nevertheless very similar ones can; and this is specially true of the sense-data yielded by the eye and by other 'privileged' sense-organs. These sense-data which 'make up' a table — a set of brown shapes, let us say — on one occasion, will be closely similar to those which 'make it up' on a second occasion. These sense-data will constitute the

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cognitive elements in the perception of the table. They are those which enable me to know the table as it is. Any other experience I may have with regard to the table, such as a feeling of regret to be parting with it, or an itch to chop it up, will be dismissed as emotional. All this will be equally true of acquaintance with a person. The only cognitive aspects of the situation are the sense-data which I 'connect with' his body and others which I 'connect with' his mind. Everything else, such as my experience of his anger, will be dismissed as emotional. Cognitive data 'make up' the actual person or thing as it is 'in itself'; emotional ones only testify to some accidental quality or activity such as 'being angry'. Cognitive awareness is awareness of being, not awareness of doing.

But the argument that cognitive sense-data can be made to yield some sort of permanence while the emotional data cannot, is fallacious. Admittedly we believe that a person exists all the time, whether or not he is being angry (causing 'anger' sensations); so far as this goes, 'anger' sensations do not, of course, 'make up' the person. But we also believe that he exists all the time, whether or not his body is causing certain (cognitive) sense-data. Again, if permanence of a table, or of a person's body, is due to the fact that closely similar sets of sense-data are experienced on different occasions, I may retort that permanence of personality is due to the fact that closely similar sets of 'emotional' data are obtained. Successive experiences of a person's anger may be just as similar as successive views of a table. Finally, how can we know that one sense-datum is 'closely similar' to another? Only by recognizing it. But recognition means awareness of familiarity. I do not want to say that familiarity must be a quality of sense-data. I want to draw attention to what seems to me to be the only possible alternative. The connection between permanence and familiarity need not proceed by the devious route through sense-data and

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similarity. The table is permanent because every time I look at it, I experience an awareness of familiarity, as well as all the orthodox sense-data. Yet awareness of familiarity does not seem to have been considered by philosophers as a cognitive element in perception.

What this seems to add up to is that inevitable absurdities result from the 'cognitive heresy'. This is my deliberately abusive name for theories aimed at maintaining the distinction between 'cognitive' and 'emotional' aspects of perception. The distinction is untenable. 'Emotional' elements, such as the sensation of familiarity, are required to supply the characteristic of permanence needed for any object of perceptual knowledge. 'Cognitive' elements, on the other hand, may be so closely bound up with 'emotional' ones that the distinction becomes quite arbitrary. Consider, for example, the 'cognitive' element of a pistol-shot. This will be an auditory sense-datum. But this cognitive element is quite inseparable from the 'emotional' element, which is the start of terror or surprise. The most important characteristic of a pistol-shot is not that it is loud, or located in a certain direction, but that it is startling. The same is true of a red coat, or a bright blue wallpaper. In fact, something like this is true of every case of perceiving. It isn't enough to say that every act of perceiving is emotionally coloured. The emotion is not incidental, not something arising indirectly out of the 'cognition'. I do not experience the sound of the shot *and* its startlingness. Both are inseparably fused in the single act of perception.

Pure sensation does not occur; or, if it does, it is not a datum. For it is not given, but achieved; and it is achieved, if at all, only by a severe intellectual effort, as anyone can testify who has tried to 'see' patches of colour where a moment earlier he was seeing coloured objects. Sensation or cognition cannot be isolated from the totality of perception. In perceiving, the whole organism is involved, not just the

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sense-organ and the mind. Every perception is a reaction of the total organism to the total situation. In view of this I think we can re-instate the term 'act of perception', which received considerable misuse at the hands of the perception theorists I have been criticizing. They made free use of the term while at the same time denying the active element in perception. Awareness of sense-data is purely passive; the only 'activity' which appears is the process of transforming or 'constructing' them into physical objects. I have already criticized the notion of this intellectual feat. There is an active element in perception — to perceive is to do something; 'perceive' is an active verb. But the activity is a reaction on the part of the whole organism.

The 'cognitionist' may still argue that all this is begging the question. He may say that when I called the 'startlingness' of the pistol-shot the most important characteristic of the situation, I was begging the question 'important for what?' He may insist that it is not important for theory of knowledge, but only for psychology; only for a consideration of the behaviour of organisms in response to stimuli, not for the analysis of perceptual knowledge. I can only say that this line affords us no further advance at all towards understanding personality. 'Strikingness' of a personality is just like 'startlingness' of a pistol-shot. It involves a reaction of the whole organism. But if we abandon theory of knowledge, as we must if we accept the exclusion from it of the 'emotional' element, we do not fall back into psychology, except to find a fresh starting-point. This will be the analysis of familiarity, which will take us into new ground.

IV

ORGANISM AND ENVIRONMENT

§ I AWARENESS WITHOUT ACQUAINTANCE

WE shall begin our inquiry into the notion of familiarity and acquaintance by indulging in a little armchair biology. We shall try to imagine the kind of awareness possessed by the most primitive forms of life — one of the earliest and simplest organisms inhabiting the ‘intertidal slime’, described in the opening chapters of H. G. Wells’s *Short History of the World*. What will such an organism be aware of? Its sensations will be very different from those with which we are familiar. It will not be aware of coloured patches, or of sounds of certain pitch or loudness, because such ‘sense-data’ require elaborate sense-organs which the primitive organism does not possess. It will not, in fact, enjoy ‘sensations’ at all. Yet it must be possible to say that at least it is *aware* of something. For it is a characteristic of a living thing to ‘react to stimuli’, that is, to behave differently in different circumstances, the difference in behaviour being normally such as tends to preserve and maintain the conditions necessary for the continuing life of the organism.

Now let us suppose that our organism in the intertidal slime is adversely affected by either an excess or a deficiency of moisture. This is not an idle supposition: one of our reasons for believing that life began in the intertidal slime is that this was the only region, in times when the earth was very much hotter, where there were not extremes of moisture and dryness. Some water is necessary for the possibility of absorbing vital oxygen: but with too much, the organism drowns. The organism survives, then, only if it can avoid excessive moisture and excessive dryness; and this it is able

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to do by reacting to the stimuli provided by these extreme conditions. It behaves differently under the different conditions, the difference of behaviour tending to preserve the conditions necessary for life. Excess of water, for instance, may cause the organism to struggle further up the beach; excessive dryness, to move towards the sea.

Now the important point is this. It does not involve any further step to say that the organism is 'aware' of the stimuli which modify its behaviour in this way. To say that the organism is aware of something is to say no more than that it reacts in a characteristic way to that something, or that its behaviour in the presence of the something is regularly different from its behaviour in the absence of the something.

It will not be strictly correct, however, to say that the organism is aware of wetness and of dryness. As long as it remains in the 'neutral' state, where the conditions for life are just right, it will not be aware of either wetness or dryness. It will not be aware of anything at all. It will be aware only when it is reacting, and it reacts to a stimulus. But a stimulus is not a state of wetness nor of dryness, it is a *change* from wet to dry or from dry to wet. If the environment is getting wetter, the organism behaves accordingly. So what it is aware of is not wetness nor dryness, but a change from dry to wet. This is an extremely important point in the analysis of perception. Primitive awareness is awareness of changes and not of states. This may count as a biological reason for my statement in the last chapter, that pure sensation never occurs. It performs no biological function. What does have a biological function is awareness of change. The sensation of 'sense-data' is quite different. A sense-datum is *something*, not a change from something to something else. What matters biologically is not the something which changes, and the something else into which it changes — represented, possibly, by two different sense-data — but the

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change itself, which is not a sense-datum. In other words, perception is dynamic, whereas pure sensation is static, or would be if it could. Life is dynamic, and the function of perception is very intimately a part of the dynamic process of living. There is an obvious connection here with my point in the last chapter that perception is not of being, but of doing. Doing involves change; being involves absence of change.

For the sake of simplicity, however, I shall say that the organism is aware of 'wet' and 'dry', bearing in mind that 'wet' is being used, not to mean 'wetness' but merely as an abbreviation for 'change from dry to wet' or 'change from less wet to more wet', or, simply 'wetter'. Let us now ask ourselves what will be the relation between the individual organism and its environment. To what extent will it be acquainted with its environment, or familiar with it? The obvious answer is that, if indeed the organism is aware only of wet and dry, the extent of its acquaintance with the environment must be nil. Not a single detail of the relatively permanent features of the environment will be known to it. The colour of the sand, the height of the rocks, the noise of the sea will be entirely outside its awareness. Even the changing features of the environment will be unknown to it, with the single exception of changes in humidity. Changes of temperature or of light will be outside its awareness. All it perceives are changes of wet and dry.

Now an interesting question arises. If primitive awareness is always awareness of change, how is it possible to be aware of permanent features of the environment? In other words, how is acquaintance possible? For acquaintance involves familiarity, and what is familiar is something recognized as unchanged. Can we, by multiplying the number of features of which an organism is aware only when they change, arrive at awareness of features which are not changing? Surely perception cannot be analysed completely in terms of

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reaction to stimuli, because we can be aware of an environment which is not providing any stimuli, or, at any rate, not stimuli to which we are reacting? The answer to this important problem will be along the following lines. We can start by showing that it is possible to imagine a world in which there could not be such a thing as acquaintance with relatively permanent features of the environment, even for a more highly developed organism. This will help us to see what there is about the world as it happens to be that makes such acquaintance possible.

It would be logically possible for pairs of contrasting stimuli, such as wet and dry, cold and hot, light and dark, and so on, to occur quite independently of each other. Changes of humidity, temperature and light might be completely unrelated. An organism more sensitive than the one we have been considering so far might have been aware of changes in all three features. If these changes were independent of one another, then the characteristic differences of behaviour on the part of the reacting organism would be independent too. Its difference of behaviour in reaction to light and dark would be unrelated to its difference of behaviour in reaction to wet and dry. However many pairs of opposites we care to take, postulating awareness of them all on the part of the organism, we shall never get any nearer to an awareness of permanent features, or an acquaintance with the environment, than we did with our prototype, so long as the changes are independent of one another.

But the world happens not to be like that. Changes of temperature are not unrelated to changes of light or to changes of humidity. Everyone knows that it is generally warmer during the day than at night, and that the sea is warmer than the land in winter and colder in summer. What will be the effect of this on our primitive organism? If we suppose it to be aware of bright and dark (changes of

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light) as well as of wet and dry (changes of humidity), we can say that, in the experience of the organism, bright and dark are not unrelated to wet and dry. If, for instance, the beach slopes steeply, or the sea is muddy, it may be that wet often goes with dark and dry with bright; if the sea is clear and shallow, and the beach abounds in rocky holes, the opposite may be the case. Here we have a change from wet to dry correlated with a change from dark to bright or *vice versa*. This means that the reactions of the organism to dry or wet stimuli will be correlated with its reactions to dark or bright stimuli. It will not have a 'wet' and a 'dry' reaction plus a 'bright' and a 'dark' reaction; it will have a 'bright-and-wet', a 'bright-and-dry', a 'dark-and-wet' and a 'dark-and-dry' reaction. These reactions are clearly more complex than those of the first organism we considered. If we make our organism sensitive to heat and cold, its reactions will be more complex still; and so the result of our introducing fresh types of sensitivity, together with a degree of correlation between changes in the environment, is not simply to multiply the number of opposite reactions of the individual, but to diversify and complicate them.

§ 2 THE ORIGIN OF ACQUAINTANCE

WE are now getting near to a possibility of real acquaintance with the environment. There are two ways of showing this. The first is to compare the more primitive organism with the organism having the more highly differentiated reactions. The former had no acquaintance with the relatively permanent features of the environment, because it was aware only of changes between wet and dry. But as soon as we introduce awareness of other changes, there arises the possibility of distinguishing the relatively permanent from the relatively changeable. The less primitive organism is aware not only of the difference between wet

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and dry, but also of the difference, say, between dry-and-hot and dry-and-cold. This immediately suggests a change of temperature occurring against a background of unchanging humidity. The first organism, if it could speak, would have a language containing only the two sentences which are represented in our own language by: 'It is wet' and 'It is dry'. The second organism would have a much more elaborate language, and would be enabled to say (among other things) 'That which is dry is hot' and 'That which is dry is cold'. We have here, in 'that which is dry', the rudiments of acquaintance. With increased sensitivity we might obtain 'That which is dry, hard, smooth and rigid is hot' and 'is cold'. Here we have the organism distinguishing between a hot rock and a cold rock (say a sunlit and a shaded one). The awareness of the rock has been made possible by the correlation of changes of temperature with changes of humidity, hardness, texture and rigidity. Here again, of course, we must insist that these changes are not sensed separately but are perceived as a complex whole. If the creature's environment contained only one rock, the perceptions associated with the rock would occur in combination in such a way that they were always accompanied by a characteristic complex of behaviour. It would then be fair to say that the creature 'recognized' the rock and was 'acquainted' with it. If there were more than one rock in the creature's immediate neighbourhood, recognition and acquaintance would require awareness of further differentiating characteristics. One of these will ultimately be spatial differentiation. Difference of position distinguishes objects which may otherwise be identical; and awareness of such difference itself arises from sensations, such as kinesthetic ones.

So far we have been speaking of the organism as if it were passive, but the mention of kinesthetic sensations suggests that, as a matter of fact, every organism is active as well as passive. Acquaintance with features of the environment

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does not just come to the organism. It is acquired by a process of *getting* acquainted, by *exploring* the environment. This process involves a correlation between the movements of the organism and the series of perceptions. A baby gets to know its surroundings not by looking and listening, but by groping, grasping, feeling, handling, tasting, pulling, throwing, crawling and so on. All these are exploratory activities. Their function is to acquaint the child with the whole of its accessible world.

One way, then, of showing how the possibility of acquaintance arises with increasing complexity of reaction is to describe awareness of change as occurring against a background of relative permanence. The other way is to show how awareness of change itself develops into awareness of *objects*. Our primitive organism was aware only of change between wet and dry. We say it is aware because its behaviour exhibits a characteristic difference in the two cases. Let us now consider a more highly developed organism such as a cat. A cat's behaviour when confronted by a large dog is characteristically different from its behaviour in the presence of a rabbit. But the cat's awareness is not limited to the change from 'dog situation' to 'rabbit situation' and *vice versa*. The world of a cat's experience is infinitely wider than that of the primitive organism. The animal is constantly receiving a multitude of different stimuli and reacting in enormously complicated ways. Although it is true that the introduction of the dog can be described as a change from situation-without-dog to situation-with-dog, and that this change (very likely) is accompanied by a very characteristic change of behaviour on the part of the cat, it is not true that this change of behaviour is either simple or uniform or predictable, as it was with the primitive organism. This is because the cat is not merely aware of the change from situation-without-dog to situation-with-dog. It is responding to a new set of very complicated stimuli, not merely to a

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single 'doggy' stimulus. Although it responds as a whole to the new situation as a whole, its response is conditioned by the particular combination of stimuli which differs more or less appreciably from one 'doggy' situation to another. To a casual observer the difference in behaviour of a strange cat in the presence of two successive strange dogs may not be apparent; but there is a very obvious and striking difference between Tabitha's behaviour, snarling and spitting, in the presence of a strange dog Rex, and her behaviour, tolerant or even affectionate, in the presence of a well-known dog Fido. A cat is not merely aware of 'dogginess' but of the particular object called Rex and of the particular object called Fido.

It will be noticed that we have already advanced from the most primitive level of awareness to a very highly developed and differentiated perception like our own, without bringing in the notion of sense-data. I have described the cat-and-dog situation without analysing the cat's perceptions in terms of 'doggy' sense-data such as whiteness, canine smell, barking noise, and so on. I have only said that the object called 'the dog' does provide a number of stimuli to which the cat reacts. I have not said that these stimuli either are definite sense-data or are the cause of such. The cat responds to the set of stimuli as a whole, in a way that can only be described intelligibly in the biological terms I have been using. It may be possible for human beings to transcend this animal level of perception by sensing individual sense-data; but my point is that this achievement, if possible, is in the nature of an academic exercise, not part and parcel of the dynamic perceptual process of life. We have already seen that the sense-datum terminology does not help us in the understanding of acquaintance and familiarity. But there is more to be said about this from our present standpoint.

We decided that our primitive organism could not be said

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to be acquainted with anything in its environment. If we transport it to an entirely different environment, so long as the conditions for life are fulfilled, it will not notice the change. It is capable of distinguishing only between wet and dry, not between 'wet here' and 'wet there'. The same will be true of other lowly organisms. But with increasing sensitivity on the part of the organism, it naturally becomes increasingly difficult for us, as experimenters, to find sets of conditions which adequately reproduce those prevailing in the creature's 'home' environment. We certainly cannot do this for Tabitha. A few careless people may choose to believe that if she is taken for a train journey and introduced to a strange house, she will be quite 'at home' so long as the 'necessary conditions for life' — the saucer of milk — are reproduced. But people who own cats know very well that her behaviour in the strange environment will, in spite of the saucer of milk, betray obvious malaise and discomfort, until she has explored her new surroundings. How can we understand this difference of behaviour? It is not like the fish out of water, where we can point to a single obvious difference in the circumstances as a complete explanation of the difference in behaviour. Still less is it like the difference between the behaviour of two successive cakes in the oven, one of which rises and the other is ruined. For in cases like this we assume at once that the difference in behaviour is due to a single difference in the antecedent circumstances, even though we may not know what the difference is (it might be forgetting the baking powder, or opening the oven door). But we do not assume anything of the sort in the case of Tabitha in the strange house. We know it would be absurd to try to explain the difference of behaviour on the assumption that a single factor was responsible, such as the different colour of the wallpaper or the different relative positions of the mouseholes. These are not deliberately farcical examples. It would be equally absurd to select any

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single factor whatever, or any specifiable combination of factors. The point is that it is the whole situation which is responsible for the changed behaviour, whereas in the case of the cakes it certainly isn't. The cook knows very well that only a very few factors in the situation can possibly affect the performance of the cakes; but the performance of the cat is affected by all the factors, by the situation as a whole. The whole organism reacts to the whole situation.

§ 3 SENSE OF FAMILIARITY

WE can only understand the performance of the cat in terms of our own experiences of familiarity and unfamiliarity. A sense of familiarity usually goes with things with which we are acquainted, and a sense of unfamiliarity with those things with which we are not acquainted. There are, however, certain very interesting exceptions to both these statements. I shall deal with them in a moment.

We have already seen that the awareness of familiarity has as much claim to be described in terms of sense-data as any of the orthodox senses. Only there is little temptation to do so. I suspect this is because it would be extremely difficult to isolate any separate elements in a given instance of 'familiarity-sensation', as coloured patches are isolated from the total visual field in any given instance of vision. Another reason may be that sense of familiarity is inseparable from the world of objects. It cannot, like the other senses, be discussed on its own merits while leaving open the question whether there are any external objects at all. Russell and others, it will be recalled, have maintained that whereas there is no possible doubt about the occurrence of sense-data, it is quite possible to doubt the existence of the objects which are normally assumed to cause them. There may be a red shape, whether or not the pillar-box exists; for the existence of the red shape is, according to these philosophers,

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logically independent of the existence of the material object called the pillar-box. But no one is going to maintain that the existence of a feeling of familiarity is compatible with the non-existence of the thing, or things, which are normally said to be the object of the feeling. We have already seen in Chapter III that a sense-datum cannot be the object of acquaintance. One reason was that we cannot become familiar with it. What is familiar or unfamiliar must be, not the logically simplest element of experience, such as a coloured patch or a sound, but a complex of many elements, ranging from a small object to the whole environment itself.

Sense of familiarity and unfamiliarity keeps us in closest touch with the world of objects. Problems about the existence of material objects do not arise so long as we bear it in mind: because the very fact of bearing it in mind keeps us on the biological plane. We cannot avoid thinking of the whole organism reacting to the whole environment.

Another characteristic of the sense of familiarity and unfamiliarity is one which it shares with all the other senses. It can mislead and delude us. It has not exercised philosophers with the Problem of Illusion, for they have confined themselves to dreams, hallucinations, buzzing in the ears, tingling in the 'toes' of an amputated leg, all well-known examples of illusion associated with the orthodox sensations. What ought to be regarded as just another pair of similar examples are the two cases of a queer feeling of strangeness and detachment from the world, and a queer feeling of 'at-home'-ness in a situation known to be new. These are the interesting exceptions to the rule that what we are acquainted with strikes us as familiar and what we are not acquainted with as unfamiliar. The first case takes various forms and is hard to describe. Wordsworth has attempted it in *Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood*. Most of us know the kind of situation in which everything takes

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on a 'strange' aspect and there is a sense of 'losing touch' which may range from sublimation to panic and the borderline of insanity. The other case, sometimes known as *déjà-vu*, also has various forms, the commonest being the experience described in such terms as 'I have been here before' when visiting a strange place. Another form is the rather more exciting one of a very ordinary situation in which you suddenly 'know' that 'everything has happened before' and that you know what is going to happen next. No satisfactory explanation of these illusions has been produced. But any attempt at explaining them will have to start from the assumption that the sense of familiarity or unfamiliarity is normally something characterizing the organism in relation to the whole situation in which it finds itself. Some cause must then be found for a departure from normality, such as an unusual mental disturbance, or (in the second case) some coincidental circumstance not consciously recognized as such.

This chapter can be summed up as an attempt to develop in broad outline an approach to the notion of 'acquaintance' which differs radically from what has become almost a traditional philosophical theory, as I described it in Chapter III. I have offered the present view not as an alternative but as a correction. In this I shall probably seem dogmatic, and I am in frank opposition to those philosophers whom I have accused of the cognitive heresy. But I believe that it is only by taking into account general biological and psychological considerations of the sort discussed in this chapter that we can hope to arrive at an adequate notion of what it means to be acquainted with something. A further analysis of the relation of acquaintance, along more strictly logical lines, will be made in Chapter VI. Its starting-point will be the position we have already reached, but another line of investigation is suggested by the present biological discussion. Personality cannot be discussed in a purely biologi-

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cal context, for it involves more than a relation of acquaintance between an organism and its environment. It involves a relation of acquaintance between an organism which is a human being and a piece of environment which is another human being. I shall modify this later on, but it will do to introduce the following discussion.

V

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§ I PERSONALITY AND PRIMITIVE LANGUAGE

I. '*Personality*' a *Non-primitive Concept*

IN order to see what is essentially involved in the relation between persons, we have to turn from a biological to an anthropological point of view. The biological study of the general relation between organism and environment leads up to the anthropological study of the less general relation between human organism and environment, or between man and the world. For anthropology is the study of a particular kind of organism, the human being, in its environmental relations.

We must adopt an anthropological point of view: but that does not mean that the present chapter is an actual study in anthropology, any more than the last chapter was an actual study in biology. The aim of that chapter was not to reconstruct the early stages of terrestrial life, or even to describe any actually existing lowly organisms. Its aim was to clarify certain concepts, such as 'awareness', by postulating certain highly simplified sets of conditions. Similarly, the aim of the present chapter is not to perform an *a priori* reconstruction of the origins of human society, or even to describe any actually existing societies. Its aim is to clarify a little further the concept of 'personality' by analysing into logically simple elements certain complex types of situation involving communication by language. My 'primitive language' is not an actual language which I assign to a remote past or to a remote continent; it is a property which belongs to all languages, past and present, but always in

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association with other less 'primitive' properties from which I try to isolate it.

In this chapter, then, I shall not be describing any actual primitive societies, though I shall have a good deal to say about 'primitive man'. I shall not be discussing any actual primitive language when I discuss 'primitive language'. It is necessary to enter this word of warning here, as I shall otherwise be accused of ignoring or misdescribing the facts which anthropologists and linguists actually investigate. Recent work in anthropology has probably suggested lines of interpretation; but the discussion of language owes nothing to linguists, and involves only a knowledge of English and a rudimentary knowledge of another language such as French. My 'primitive society' and my 'primitive language' are standards or types to which actual societies and languages conform to a greater or lesser degree. The need for such standards, and their utility, if not already clear, will, I hope, become so presently. The term 'primitive' must not be taken as implying any inferiority or other value-concept; it is not even a cultural notion, but a logical one. I use it as a matter of convenience. The behaviour of people in actual societies of the sort that are commonly called primitive may conform more closely to the standard behaviour described in this chapter than the behaviour of modern or Western man does, or it may not. Probably it does; but it is not essential for my thesis that it should.

I do not pretend, however, that the analytical account can be cut off completely from the genetical. If I want to say that a general feature of present-day society in a familiar part of the world, such as language (which I will call X) has three distinguishable aspects or properties (A, B and C), I shall not consider it irrelevant to ask how X may have come to have B and then developed C. This is my excuse for the mention of 'early' man as well as 'primitive' man, and the suggestion that we may sometimes be dealing with chrono-

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logical, as well as logical, relations. The excuse is needed, because standards or ideals cannot be early or modern, since they are necessarily timeless.

Seen against the background of human society as a whole, both past and present, the *problem* of personality appears on a very much reduced scale. For 'primitive man', the problem as I formulated it in Chapter 1 could not possibly arise. This is not to say that the problem cannot be couched in terms simple enough for simple people. It means that for such people there is no such problem and could not be such a problem. In Chapter 1, I drew a familiar distinction between three fields of experience, the material, the organic and the personal. We have different concepts appropriate to these three fields: one set of concepts for material things, another for living things, and another for persons and personal relations. But primitive man has not evolved these different sets of concepts. He has only one set of concepts for what is, for him, only one field. These concepts, and this field, are the personal.

For primitive man, all relations between himself and other objects are personal. It is difficult to appreciate the significance of this. A superficial interpretation is often accepted unthinkingly. It may be felt that primitive man is really aware of the essential difference between material things, animals and beings like himself, but that his peculiar primitive language forces him to speak of all three categories in pretty much the same terms. Or it is felt that he really knows quite well, or at least could easily be brought to see, that an object such as a tree will not respond to his entreaties in the same way as a human being might, but that nevertheless he acts as if it will (for example, by praying to it); and this is due to the effect of mass-suggestion, simple primitive credulity, inhibitions of tribal sanctions, wishful thinking, and so on. I am putting these erroneous views crudely. No anthropologist holds them. But I think many other people

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do, even though they would probably disown them once they were made explicit. For it is very difficult for a member of modern civilized society to regard primitive man as anything but inferior. That is why I had to make a special point, at the beginning of this chapter, that I wanted to use the term 'primitive' without any of its habitual suggestion of inferiority. The reasons why it carries this suggestion are obvious enough and we need not go into them. We cannot understand primitive man unless we resist the suggestion. Nothing can be more obstructive than the attitude typified by this sentence from the nineteenth-century anthropologist, L. H. Morgan: 'The inferiority of savage man in the mental and moral scale, undeveloped, inexperienced, and held down by his low animal appetites and passion . . . is . . . substantially demonstrated.' Civilized people have always tended to speak in these terms of human beings belonging to other culture groups; but the view of the ordinary man of today, which I have been criticizing, owes much to the underlining by the Victorian writers.

It is so difficult to try to reproduce forms of thought which differ radically from our own that we tend unconsciously to 'rationalize' the behaviour of primitive men in terms of our own experience. We tend to take our own behaviour as standard and to interpret other kinds as deviations. The deviation then calls for a special explanation of its own. Thus we may interpret the phenomenon of tree-worship as a deviation from our own standard (which calls for quite a different attitude towards trees), and explain the deviation in terms of a confusion between personal and non-personal objects, or of a belief in the magical efficacy of verbal formulae on the growth of crops. But both these explanations are misleading. It is misleading to speak of a confusion between personal and non-personal objects, because for primitive man there *are* no non-personal objects. It is equally misleading to speak of a *belief* in the magical effects

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of language. Language does not, for primitive man, have magical effects in some fields and ordinary, non-magical effects in others. There is only the one field, the field of phenomena affected by language. In this field language just does have its effects. We recognize a much smaller field of linguistically-controlled phenomena; but within our smaller field, our attitude is the same as the primitive man's. If I tell someone to open the door, no one interprets my behaviour in terms of my 'belief' in the effects of language.

These examples show that primitive behaviour cannot be usefully explained by regarding it as a deviation from our own standard. This would be putting the cart before the horse. Indeed, this will be obvious once it is stated. From the historical point of view everyone would agree that the general pattern of behaviour characteristic of modern man can be explained as having developed through certain well-marked phases from a much more primitive state. Keeping this in mind, we may be able to refrain from demanding explanations of primitive behaviour of the kind I have instanced. Instead of interpreting primitive man's activity as deviations from the modern standard, we should explain modern man's activity as deviations from the primitive pattern. We cannot understand primitive man from the standpoint of modern man, but only from a standpoint which takes in both at once. Such a standpoint will be recognizably objective and scientific.

When we start to investigate personality, we must follow the same procedure. We must not allow ourselves to assume that primitive man lives in a world much the same as ours and that his actions in it and his beliefs about it are peculiar in various ways. Instead we must assume from the start that his world is very unlike our own and is one in which his actions and beliefs are not at all peculiar. If, for instance, in the world of primitive man a tree *is* a sort of person, there will be nothing peculiar in his praying to it. Now this is

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too simple. It is not really helpful to say that for primitive man a tree is a sort of person, because to use the word 'person' at all is to commit the very mistake I am trying to expose — the error of interpreting primitive man's experience in terms of modern man's. For the primitive mind nothing is a person, because there is no distinction between what is personal and what is non-personal. It is rather like the case of someone totally colour-blind, for whom nothing is green, because there is no distinction between what is green and what is not green. We should say, not that the tree is a person, but that primitive man does not make the sort of distinction that we make between things like a tree and things like John Smith. Of course, he does make *some* distinction, but the distinction he makes is only that between one individual and another, not between individuals as standing to him in quite a different kind of relation and belonging to entirely different categories.

2. *The Concrete and the Abstract*

When in Chapter II, I discussed the failure of science to take account of the essential element of personality, I said that science is concerned with objects not as unique individuals, but as the bearers of properties. The process of ignoring all characteristics of an object except the ones relevant for certain purposes is the process of abstraction. Now it is a commonplace that modern society is a scientific one. But it is not quite so obvious that our whole way of thinking about and interpreting our experiences is so shot through with scientific patterns of thought and interpretation that we can almost say that the contrast between primitive and modern thinking just is the contrast between the concrete and the abstract, between the unique and the general. The contrast is not really one between two clear-cut extremes. We may allow our primitive man to engage in a certain amount of abstraction of a rudimentary scientific nature;

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and modern man does often act and feel, in fully personal situations, in the same way as primitive man. But there is a contrast between two broad patterns of behaviour characteristic of the two types of human being.

Primitive man lives in a world of acquaintance. His relation to his environment is closely similar to that described in the last chapter. Every situation is a concrete situation constituted by certain unique individuals each standing in its own unique relation to the man. This relation has been described as the 'I-Thou' relation. Every element of the environment is a 'thou' whose existence and activity is essentially related to the 'I'. For modern man, on the contrary, at least to the extent to which his attitude is scientifically conditioned, every element of the environment is essentially an 'it'. 'It' does not entail 'I', as 'thou' does. There cannot be a 'thou' without an 'I', since 'thou' expresses one term of a dyadic or two-term relation of which the other is necessarily 'I'. But 'it' does not express a term of a relation. The 'it' is independent of the 'I', for it represents an element of a world which is not constituted by personal relations. Hence there will be no 'it's in our primitive language. There is nothing to which 'it' could refer, for there are no objects of which the existence is conceived as unrelated to the 'I'. Equally, there are no events of which the occurrence is conceived as unrelated to the activity of the 'I' or of the 'thou'. If we like to say that everything that exists is a person (though I have criticized the looseness of this), we can say, similarly, that anything that happens is an action. There is no such thing as an independent, impersonal event. For us, a peal of thunder is an event, objective and independent of ourselves and of our activities. For our primitive man, the peal of thunder is an action on the part of somebody; he would express this by saying 'thou thunderest'. The introduction of the 'it' marks the distinction between the personal and the non-personal.

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This is a point we can discover from any grammar-book. For it is in this way that the forms of language reflect the origins of scientific objectivity. Language, in fact, is one of our most important sources of evidence for the mental attitudes of early man. The only other important source is myth. Much can be learnt from a study of the myths as recorded in ancient times, though the written record represents a highly conventionalized and stereotyped form of the myth, not the dynamic element inter-woven with the life of a society. Careful comparative study of various myths from various sources is necessary in order to isolate the essential features of mythical thinking and to attempt the reconstruction of primitive mental habits. But I shall have more to say about myths shortly.

Language represents even more highly conventionalized and stereotyped forms of what were once living patterns of speech and thought. The distortion is inevitable, since language, unlike myth, has had to adapt itself to modern needs and purposes. The surprising thing is that the distortion is so comparatively slight. Relics of the most primitive forms of speech make our grammar and syntax what they are; but the forms are so entirely devoid of content that we hardly ever stop to wonder if they ever had any. We do not notice these relics except perhaps when we are just beginning to learn another language — especially if it is a language belonging to a different family from our own, such as Russian or Japanese. Difference of gender is a good example of the survival of obsolete primitive forms of thought into a living language. In French, for instance, every object is either masculine or feminine, regardless of whether or not it happens to be a sexed organism. French grammar, in fact, appears to illustrate the stage of primitive mentality of which I have been writing, namely the stage at which no distinction is drawn between material objects, organisms and persons.

The use of impersonal pronouns, as we saw, does mark the

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origin of such a distinction. Now the recognition of the impersonal is an important stage of the development away from primitive awareness towards abstract thought. I now want to examine those features of language which illustrate most directly the contrast between the modern tendency to abstraction and the primitive attachment to the concrete.

If we were suddenly asked to give an example of an abstract noun, we should probably produce a word like 'whiteness', 'beauty', 'eternity', rather than a word like 'cat', 'mountain', 'clock'. We might even be strongly tempted to deny that the second set of nouns is 'abstract' at all. And certainly there is a characteristic difference between the two sets which prompts us to apply the term 'abstract' to the first set rather than to the second. But in fact both sets of nouns are abstract. The first set is 'more abstract' than the second — how this comes about I will inquire in a moment. It is only a matter of degree. Both sets are abstract: the contrast between abstract and concrete is not the contrast between the first and second sets, but between both sets taken together and a third set, such as 'Tabitha', 'Tryfan', 'Big Ben'.

Why do we have to say that a word such as 'cat' is really abstract? It is because the process of abstraction is the process of attending only to certain general features common to different situations and of ignoring an indefinitely large number of other features, some of which may also be common to the different situations, but some of which will certainly not be. The word 'cat' represents an abstraction, because a person using the word is attending to a limited number of features — feline qualities — of a particular situation and ignoring an unlimited number of others, such as the presence of sticks and stones, the time of day, the particular antics of the animal at the time, and so on. Abstraction is clearly a prerequisite of all language, since without it a word could never be used twice, which is absurd. All situations are

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different, but they may contain similar features which can be isolated and associated with words, so that to a similar feature corresponds a similar noise or mark. These noises or marks will be abstract words.

Now we normally tend to use the term 'abstract' of the first set of words rather than of the second, because the first set represents a much higher degree of abstraction. We can roughly measure the degree of abstraction by the range of variations permitted between two situations each of which is proper to the same abstract word, or, what comes to the same thing, by seeing how much there must be which is common to the two situations. For instance, consider the difference between the two statements 'Cats are related to tigers', and 'Cleanliness is next to godliness'. There are several things common to one 'catty' situation and another; the range of variation permitted between them is rather closely limited. But there need be very few features which are common to one 'cleanly' situation and another; a great deal of variation is permitted. The fewer features there are in common between the two situations referred to by the same word, or the greater the permissible variation, the more the concrete situations have been whittled down. 'Cleanly' represents more whittling-down than 'cat' does. So does 'whiteness'. Adjectives, as a rule, are more abstract than nouns. For most nouns are bundles of adjectives (a cat is a bundle of feline qualities).

The exceptions are the so-called 'abstract' nouns like 'cleanliness' and 'whiteness'. These are not bundles of adjectives, but single adjectives converted into nouns. Since each adjective represents a single feature isolated from the total concrete situation, it should be clear why the so-called 'abstract' nouns are further removed from the concrete than the supposedly non-abstract nouns like 'cat'. Users of 'abstract' nouns ignore more of the particular situation, in attending to only one element of it.

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And they may ignore too much. For it is here that there arises the danger of misunderstanding and misuse. To name a single feature of the situation is often not enough to indicate to the hearer what kind of situation it is that the speaker intends to indicate. This means that the 'abstract' statement is capable of various interpretations, which may be desirable for stylistic or oratorical reasons, but is certainly undesirable for reasons of clarity and precision. Thus the statement 'Cleanliness is next to godliness' can be interpreted so as to apply to a wide variety of possible situations in a way the statement 'Cats are related to tigers' cannot. (It could, for instance, bear the interpretation that it is better to have a hot bath on Sunday morning than to go to church.) 'Abstractions' are notoriously dangerous to clear thinking; we have only to consider cases like 'humanity', 'race', 'purpose', 'equality', to be reminded of these dangers. 'Personality' is an equally vague abstraction; most of the difficulty in writing this book is to find a fair sample of the possible meanings it can bear.

I have mentioned the danger of abstractions only by way of illustrating the notion of 'degree of abstraction'. (The higher the degree, the greater the danger.) We need to have this notion in order to understand what is meant by saying that primitive man's power of abstraction is low.

To revert to the example in Chapter I, we may say of a piece of wood that it is light, rigid, able to be sawn, white, inedible, and so on. To say this is to regard the wood quite differently from the way in which we might regard it as something to be invoked or prayed to, with special powers and a special name. For we are no longer interested in the tree as a unique individual, but only in some of its properties. If we want to build a boat, for instance, we shall be interested in the first three but not in the rest.* As soon as we come to regard something as a means to an end, rather than attend-

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ing to it as an individual and for its own sake, we become interested in it as a bearer of properties. As such it is no longer unique, because several objects may bear the same properties. There are many trees, for example, that will do for boat-building. Now the process of attending to some properties and ignoring others is the process of abstraction. Abstraction ignores uniqueness both because it does not take account of the whole situation but only of the presence of certain relevant properties, and also because it ignores the difference between one object and another in respect of these relevant properties which are present in both. Now I have already allowed our primitive human being to perform a certain amount of abstraction. (Actual primitives, for instance, would do so in the selection of materials for the processes of agriculture and other simple industries.) But this is a very limited degree of abstraction; for, although primitive man may have to attend to what we would call the 'properties' of lightness and rigidity, he has not evolved names for them, as we have. He probably has not evolved a name for 'wood', but only for different trees. He may not have a single word for 'cat', but only different and even unrelated names for different species of cats, cats of different colours, cats in different conditions of growth, sex, activity and so on.

And it is a curious fact that even this remote linguistic procedure can be illustrated from modern English. We do not have a single name for 'dog' when we attempt to observe a strict vocabulary; we have different and unrelated names, 'dog' and 'bitch', for animals which may differ in nothing but sex. We do not have a single name for 'sheep', but different (and only very remotely related) names for one animal in the field and an entirely similar, or even identical, one on the dinner-table. This particular practice is not, of course, a primitive survival, since it dates from the Norman Conquest (the Saxons reared animals which they called

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sheep, cow and pig for the tables of the Normans who called the same animals mutton, beef and pork). But the continuing existence of this practice probably seems about as absurd, to a Frenchman learning English, as the French genders do to an Englishman learning French — and for a very similar reason. Even to us, our own practice of giving different names to meat 'on the hoof' and meat on the table would seem ridiculous if it were proposed to extend it from the animal to the vegetable kingdom. But in primitive language it will be quite in order to give different names to objects which we regard as essentially similar.

For people whose power of abstraction is low, the problem of personality does not arise, because the personal situation is normal and standard. Abstraction represents a considerable intellectual effort, only to be put forth for certain special and well-defined purposes. Personality raises problems only for people for whom the normal, standard situation is no longer personal, but abstract. (It is always the deviation from the standard that calls for explanation.) Now there is, of course, an air of paradox about the assertion that the normal situation for modern man is not personal but abstract. We feel that we should like to be able to say that the personal situation is at least as normal as the abstract, because much of our everyday life is quite obviously taken up with our relations and dealings with persons. The personal life, we feel, is still full and rich, however little we may talk about it. Here is the clue to the solution of the paradox. We do not, as a rule, talk about the personal life at all. What we do is to live it. We experience personal relations without talking, or even thinking, about them. But when we do talk or think about the personal life, we are faced with the problem of personality; but not before. This is because the problem is an intellectual one. It is not a practical problem. There are, of course, practical problems about personality; I gave some examples in Chapter II. But the problem of

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personality, as we have been discussing it, is an intellectual problem and, in fact, a philosophical one.

The actual solution to the paradox is this. All reflective thinking, which is not mere remembering or imagining, involves abstraction. Hence to say that a problem is intellectual or reflective is to say that it can be conceived only in abstract terms. Now reflective thinking occupies a very prominent place in the mental activities of many (if not all) people in our modern society. The whole of science, for example, is the product of reflective thinking. Anyone who works out a bit of mental arithmetic, or solves a crossword or a crime puzzle, is engaged in reflective thinking. These activities are entirely different from the activities involving personal relations. Which kind of activity is normal? It is impossible to say. It might be said that, from a point of view which takes in all human activities, both reflective thinking and the personal life are normal. But even this will not do. Every point of view is intellectual, that is to say, it involves reflection; it cannot be anything else. It cannot be personal; there is no such thing as a personal point of view, except in a loose sense of 'personal'. For to adopt a point of view is to be a spectator, not a player; it is to assess and criticize, not to engage in the personal life. From any point of view, then, abstraction is normal and personality something that raises problems. The personal life cannot raise problems about itself, so long as we are engaged in living it and not in thinking about it. But the mere fact that I am writing, and that you, the reader, are reading — as well as the fact that we are both engaged in a philosophical discussion anyway — means that we are inevitably committed to reflective thinking and to abstraction. I cannot communicate anything of my concrete personal life to someone with whom I am not personally acquainted; nor can you. All that we can do is to discuss problems intruded by our personal lives into the common ground of theoretical discussion.

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3. *Dynamic Language and Fact-stating Language*

When we contrast the prominence of reflective thinking in actual modern society with the scarcity of it in our ideal primitive one, we must expect to find a corresponding contrast in the field of language. The most striking contrast is in the function of language itself, which can be illustrated with some interesting survivals. We are accustomed to calling language the vehicle of thought. But whereas it is true that reflective thinking cannot be carried on except through the medium of language, the converse is certainly not true; it is not the case that the function of language is to carry on and to communicate processes of reflective thinking. I shall repeat this in other words, for it is worth driving home. I say that the primary function of language is not informative. Certainly the function of a vast amount of written and printed language, and of a good deal of spoken language, is to convey information; and it is easy to fall into the habit of supposing that the purpose of language as a whole is to convey information, primarily, perhaps, to others, and, secondarily, to oneself in the form of reflective thinking. But the characteristic function of primitive language is not to convey information at all. It is to do something much more positive; to perform a definite action. When primitive man utters, he does so in order to secure certain effects. I have already given one example of this. Praying to inanimate objects is a case of using language in order to secure certain effects on something in the environment — to promote the growth of crops, let us say. It is essential to notice that this 'dynamic' use of language is not a secondary use, the main use being to state facts or convey information. Primitive man does not state facts or convey information. An utterance which we might tend to regard as informative is informative only on an interpretation which ignores the essential element of the situation and represents that situation misleadingly. Suppose a raiding

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party sends back word that it has been ambushed. This is not a statement of fact, a piece of information, but a request, say, for assistance. Pure information, as a set of simple independent facts, is unknown to our primitive, because it involves the concept of something impersonal, something not standing in a direct relation to the individual.

That is why it would be irrelevant to object that my example is misleading, that in any context (not merely in the context of a primitive society) such a message about an ambush would be more than mere information. Or it might be said that the function even of 'informative' or 'fact-stating' language *is* to do something positive, namely to convey information. These objections miss the point. The point is that in the case of primitive language, it is impossible to isolate the form of the words from the action of the person uttering them, whereas in modern language this is often quite possible. For instance, it is impossible to isolate the words 'Give me that stick' from the particular action of someone requesting someone else to do something. But it is quite possible to isolate the words 'Wood is lighter than stone' from the action of someone conveying such information to someone else. If it were not possible to do this, the expression would be meaningless apart from the actual context in which it is uttered. But this is obviously not the case. We must look a little more closely at the difference between the two types of expression.

The first expression, 'Give me that stick', is bound up with a particular concrete situation which could not be otherwise: it could not, for instance, be a situation in which the speaker refused to accept the stick. But the second expression is not bound up with any particular concrete situation. It might, and normally would, occur in a situation in which someone is informing someone else about the properties of wood and stone; but it might equally well occur in a situation in which someone is misinforming

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someone else, for example about the properties of ebony and pumice. A lie is a fact-stating piece of language used for the deliberate purpose of misinforming. We cannot tell from the form of the expression whether it is being used to inform or to misinform, as we can tell from the form of the expression 'Give me that stick' that it is being used to make a request or command, and not to make a prohibition. Thus 'informative' or 'fact-stating' expressions can be cut loose from their context. They can have meaning independently of the circumstances in which they happen to be uttered. The purpose they serve is just one of these circumstances. Modern logicians have described this state of affairs by saying that what is expressed by fact-stating expressions is a 'proposition', a proposition being something that is independent of the context in which it is expressed and even independent of the question whether anything is expressed at all but only, it may be said, believed or silently thought about. This, I think, is misleading, for it suggests that propositions are mysterious objects we somehow get acquainted with and either express in speech or writing or else keep to ourselves. Propositions, on the contrary, are always expressions, which may be actual or imaginary. Actual ones certainly occur in a great variety of different contexts. But the reason why the meaning of the expression is independent of the actual context in which it is uttered is just that we supply for it an imaginary context which is a standard one. This is possible because actual contexts do not vary indiscriminately; there are certain major features which are present in all. The most important standard context is the one in which someone is informing someone else. The other standard context, nearly as important, is the one in which someone is misinforming. The logicians I mentioned have recognized that an extremely important property of 'propositions' is that they are either true or false. But I am suggesting that we can know what it is for a proposition to be true only because

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we supply for it an imaginary standard context of the first type; and, similarly, we can know what it is for it to be false, only by supplying an imaginary standard context of the second type.

Primitive language, then, contains no such expressions. (I am still, of course, talking of primitive language not as an actual language, but as a model or standard.) Every verbal formula is closely bound up with the particular occasion for its use, and serves a special purpose of its own. There are no propositions for which imaginary contexts have to be supplied; all contexts are actual. Every piece of language does something; its function can be defined only by reference to some concrete, personal situation.

Here, again, we should be able to keep a proper sense of perspective by regarding the concrete and personal use of language as the normal and standard use, and the informative, impersonal use as a comparatively sophisticated development. It is not easy, of course, to avoid overstressing the importance of the informative function of language, as the modern logicians tend to do. The existence of written and printed materials is largely responsible for this. Almost the whole of this vast mass of literature consists of language used reflectively and informatively. Expressions like 'Give me that stick' find no place in science or literature, except, of course, in drama and novels which deliberately imitate forms of speech from beyond the literary boundary. For such expressions do occur in ordinary daily life, since spoken language tends, much more than written and printed language, to remain in close touch with the concrete, personal situation. These expressions bear witness to what I have called the 'dynamic' function of language as it still survives. Even written and printed language does, sometimes, have a direct dynamic function, as we can see if we remind ourselves of signs reading 'Wet Paint', 'Danger—Concealed Turning', or 'Please Keep Off The Grass.'

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4. *The Dynamic Function of Names*

Another feature of modern language which bears the stamp of primitive 'linguistic dynamism' is the use of names. The use of a proper name indicates the existence of a single, unique individual object or person. A proper name does not, of course, necessarily designate an individual standing in a personal relation to me, for I may not know the person or thing personally. I may use the words 'Montreal' and 'Winston Churchill' even though I am not acquainted with either of the objects so named. In such cases, Russell's theory of descriptions holds good; to say something of Churchill is to say something of an object x , which I know by description as having certain properties such as 'Prime Minister', or 'Leader of the Opposition 1945-51'. But other proper names do designate uniquely objects and persons with which I am acquainted. Common names do not designate uniquely. Nouns like 'cat', 'house', 'triangle', refer to a class of objects, not to a single unique individual, as the noun 'Archibald Higglesworthy' does. What determines a class of objects such as cats is the presence of certain common characteristics. A common noun, therefore, represents a certain degree of abstraction. We shall find, accordingly, that our primitive language contains comparatively few genuine common nouns. Proper nouns are more prominent. Every object in the environment will tend to have its own special name, and to be referred to not by a general common name, such as 'tree', 'stone', or 'hill', which indicates its similarity to other objects, but by its proper name, which indicates its uniqueness and its difference from other objects. A general name designates the 'it', a proper name designates the 'Thou'. Its use marks the awareness of an object as standing in a personal relation to the individual.

Even in the case of human relations, the use of the proper name tends to be more restricted than with us. It tends to designate the 'Thou', whereas for us it also serves to designate

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the 'he', 'she' and 'it'. The primitive proper name occurs in sentences which are dynamically related to a concrete situation. Consequently there is always a very close and tight connection between the person and the name. The name is not merely a useful device for distinguishing between references to more than one person. It does this only in language of the 'fact-stating' type. The characteristic situation in which a proper name occurs in dynamic primitive language is not one of 'reference to' or 'talk about' a person at all: it is the situation of *doing* something to that person, entreating or commanding, for instance. If I want someone to do something, and I find that the utterance of his name is an essential feature of the verbal formula I employ for bringing about the required result, it is inevitable that I shall attribute great potentialities to the name itself. We do not need to look any further than the nursery for evidence of this. The child learns at a very early age that the verbal formula 'Mama' produces at will an apparently omnipotent and benevolent being: hence he attributes all sorts of potentialities to what a rational adult regards as a mere name. (Though hardly anyone can regard his own childish names for his parents as *mere* names; the strong emotional flavour of the names is the survival into adulthood of the early acceptance of the potency of the names.) Primitive man, just because he uses language for simple and direct purposes in a concrete situation, inevitably regards the connection between a person or object and its name as something very real and potent and certainly not at all arbitrary or conventional. We should say that he finds a 'causal' connection between the utterance of a name and the occurrence of some (wished-for) event. Names are a set of tools for the job of controlling the environment.

If we are apt to scoff at this notion of the function of names, we ought to remind ourselves of two things. The first of these is that the notion cannot be as absurd as it seems,

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because names *are* instrumental, even today. There are plenty of instances in everyday life in which there is a causal connection between a name and an event. It is still true that the quickest and most economical way of producing Smith is to shout 'Smith!' It is also true that the name 'Smith', in the form of a signature on a cheque, makes all the difference between £100 cash and a worthless piece of paper.

The other thing we ought to remember is that the belief in the potency of names survives, in one shadowy form or another, long after the belief in any actual efficacy has been rejected. The childhood tendency to demand the names of everything new persists into adulthood. We still want to know the names of strangers and of strange objects. We feel ill at ease in the presence of a person whose name we do not know. We feel even more uncomfortable if we did know it once, but have forgotten. We are momentarily puzzled by a familiar-looking face in the street, and instantly relieved if we are able to attach it to a name. Many people are quite unable to carry on a conversation without frequently uttering the name of the person they are talking to, even though it is perfectly clear all the time who is being addressed. We like to catch the names of passing railway stations and to be able to name a range of hills or a distant town. We like to know the names of different parts of a ship, or of unfamiliar tools. (Even common names, it will be noticed, are affected.) Christening and launching ceremonies are relics of a time when this conviction of the potency of names was less shadowy than it is now.

The conviction goes deeper still. We feel that the name of a person expresses in some mysterious way his very personality, and this not merely in the sense that the utterance of his name brings up a mental image of the person in all his individuality. There are certain limited, practical purposes for which it is useful to refer to people by numbers instead of

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by their names. This may happen to soldiers, hospital patients, or convicts. Now we do tend to feel a repugnance against this practice. We feel that it is only to be justified by the exigencies of the situation; that it is fundamentally wrong, because, say, it reduces the human being to a mere cypher, negates his personality, is an affront to the dignity of the human person. This attitude would be very odd if proper names were simply a mode of reference like general names. It is not at all odd if, as is the case, there is a survival of the dynamic function of the name, a residual awareness of a positive, active connection between name and person. Logically there is nothing wrong with numbers. They are as good as names, and very often better, for distinguishing between references to different persons. But numbers have never occurred in the dynamic, spoken language in which names first acquired these peculiar properties.

5. *Name and Personality*

It should not be hard to see the relevance of this discussion to the problem of explaining certain characteristically primitive practices such as ancestor-worship and general attitude to the dead. The cult of the dead obviously involves a belief in the continued existence of personality after bodily death. Such a belief, in the forms in which it is held by modern man, is essentially a subject-matter of psychical research and of religion, and does not concern us here. In the case of primitive man, however, such beliefs are so closely integrated with ordinary day-to-day activities, that they cannot be set apart as irrelevant to a discussion of personality. I want to emphasize the importance of the function of names in the study of ancestor-worship and related phenomena. Once we grasp the fact that for primitive man there is an active, dynamic relation between name and person, and that every name has its own peculiar

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potency, it is clear that primitive man will be utterly unable to accept the extinction of this potency as a result of mere cessation of organic activity. In other words, the power of the name is but little affected by the death of the person named. Throughout his life, the person has acted in a way that has confirmed the potency of his name. The dead person no longer responds overtly to the utterance of his name; he is deaf to all entreaties and commands. But it is unthinkable that there is no response whatever. If there is no response on the part of the body, there must be a response on the part of something else. Whether we call this something 'soul', 'spirit', 'mana' or 'personality' is immaterial. Whatever it may be called, it just is simply what is required to maintain the necessary continued potency of the name.

For although the body ceases to exist, the name does not. Even for us, the extinction of the body does not reduce the name to a meaningless noise. For primitive man, the name has always been much more than a noise with meaning: it has been a noise with an effect; and it would seem absurd to suggest that a name which continues to exist suddenly ceases to have its well-known effect. Hence arises a tendency to dissociate the name from the body. This has two important results for social life. The first is that continuity of name entails continuity not merely of existence but of active existence. So the ancestors who are dead in one sense are also very much alive. They are alive to the extent of exerting a very real influence on the life of the community. Anthropologists who have made a study of living primitive societies confirm this. In primitive societies, ancestors are very much a part of the community, they have their duties, responsibilities and privileges much as the others have. The fact that they are no longer literally alive is a fact of relatively minor importance. Here then is an example of the intimate connection between language and behaviour.

The second result of the tendency to dissociate the name

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from the body is that the tendency is operative not only after death but also before. It is clear that, if destruction of the body does not seriously affect the potency of the name, it is not the body but something else which is the essence of the individual and which is dynamically related to the name. In other words, whatever is required to maintain the continued potency of the name after death is not something which suddenly comes into existence at the moment of death, but something which was there all the time. Out of this attitude emerges, at a less primitive level, the concept of 'soul' or 'spirit' as applied to a living person. The 'soul' or 'spirit' is conceived as something independent of the body, normally quite closely related with it, but capable of independent activity. It may, for example, leave the body when asleep. The occurrence of dreams will corroborate this, for in dreams we do appear to engage in activities in which the body, as we discover on waking, has not participated.

Everything I have said about the connection between the function of names and the concept of 'spirit' or 'soul' applies just as much to objects as to persons. This follows from the argument that primitive man does not make a distinction between objects and persons. Of course, even primitive man is aware that death is a phenomenon which does not affect all the objects with which he is acquainted. Animals die but mountains do not. Flowers die but some trees apparently do not. We have already seen that his relation with each of these objects is alike a personal one; he does not attribute radically different characteristics to persons and things. Death, though always a glaring fact, is not in itself of sufficient importance to create a difference between his relations with mortal and with non-mortal objects. But man has always tended to venerate the permanent rather than the temporary. It may be because the relative permanence of mountains, rocks and giant trees is revealed in the outward form as well as in the inner 'spirit' that

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primitive man tends to worship such objects. They do not undergo the phenomenon of death which, for his own kind, is necessary in order to free the permanent factor of personality from its temporary association with the body. But these conjectures are taking us rather far afield.

We can, however, certainly assume that our ideal primitive man does find personality in objects. Just as in the case of persons, there exists a 'spirit' independent of the body and very intimately and dynamically related to the name, so in the case of objects there exists a similar 'spirit'. This will be true, for instance, of a personal weapon, which has to be addressed and propitiated before going into the hunt or battle. It will be true of particular places such as woods and mountains. Even today there are few people who have not 'felt' the uniqueness of certain familiar, or even of unfamiliar, places and scenes. This is a feeling which cannot be named, but which is undoubtedly a vestige of a much more powerful feeling of 'presence' or 'potency' in particular places, experienced by primitive man. I shall have more to say about this kind of experience in Chapter VII. Again, there is the closest dynamic relation between the name and the 'spirit' or 'soul' of the place. The name is not the name of the object or place as a geographical or physical unit, say of a particular wood regarded as a collection of trees. It is the name of the 'spirit' or 'soul'; of what the early Romans, for instance, called the *genius*. This was the word for that something which bears the same relation to the material aspect of the wood as the human 'spirit' or *genius* bears to the human body associated with it. In the age of literacy, the Romans knew this; their remote ancestors, who practised the behaviour that gave rise to the notion of *genius*, did not 'know' what they were doing. Critical appraisal of behaviour involves a higher order of intelligence, a different set of concepts from those involved in the behaviour itself. It is one thing to act, and another thing to understand actions, either

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other people's or one's own. Primitive man acts, but it takes a non-primitive man to understand his actions.

§ 2 ON INTERPRETING MYTH

1. *Belief and Action*

THIS is an appropriate point at which to reflect on the method we have adopted in discussing personality from the anthropological point of view. I have been postulating a primitive man who does not have the concept of personality because he does not distinguish, as we do, between the personal and the non-personal. Yet I have been able to speak of personality in connection with the activities of primitive man. How is this possible? The fact that it is possible is of great philosophical importance. For it means that we can treat man as an object of scientific study, not merely in his biological or psychological or sociological aspects, but in all three together. The study of personality thus involves a kind of synthesis. We can form conclusions about personality not by examining the records left behind by actual primitive men, such as myths, simply as records, but by observing primitive behaviour as a whole. And what we can do for primitive man we can do for non-primitive man too. I have been doing it quite freely in the last section.

When we examine myths from this point of view, we do not study their content but their formal characteristics. We do not attend to the question 'What does primitive man believe?' but the question 'How does he believe?' — that is, to the circumstances in which his beliefs find expression. The older anthropologists made a mistake here. They sought to interpret behaviour in terms of belief. They assumed that people's beliefs determine what they do. Ancestor-worship and burial customs, for example, were for them the effects of certain beliefs about the nature of the afterworld.

Modern anthropologists tend to reverse this procedure.

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They agree in finding a causal connection between beliefs and actions, but it is the actions that cause the beliefs, not the beliefs that cause the actions. We can see how the older attitude was mistaken, if we go back to the discussion in the first section of this chapter. A belief about the nature of the afterworld cannot very well be entertained, much less expressed, without the concept of personality as 'spirit' or 'soul', something that survives bodily death and exists in the 'afterworld'. But our primitive man does not have such a concept, for this would involve a process of abstract thinking, of a fairly low degree, perhaps, but still beyond the power of the primitive mentality we are considering. We must return to the discussion of the contrast between primitive attachment to the concrete and the modern tendency towards abstraction. The very nature of a belief is something abstract. 'I believe that such-and-such is the case' is a formula that does not occur in primitive language. 'I believe the man was killed' is a sentence containing a proposition 'the man was killed' plus an assertion of a certain attitude towards it on the part of the speaker, namely an attitude of belief, as distinct from knowledge or doubt or any other mental attitude. As I said before, it is a characteristic of 'informative' sentences like 'the man was killed' that they are not directly, immediately and inseparably related to the concrete situation in which they are uttered, as primitive language sentences are. I may believe that the man was killed, or I may disbelieve it, or know it, or question it. In any of these alternative cases, the proposition is identical, although the circumstances (my attitude to it) are different.

Are we to say, then, that primitive man has no beliefs? This would be true in an extreme case, as it is true of animals. For 'belief' is an intellectual term; it implies the possibility of disbelief, or of certitude; it also involves a kind of detachment from the substance of what is believed, a detachment

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which allows the individual to ask himself *whether* he does believe (rather than, say, disbelieve or withhold opinion), *why* he believes what he believes, and *what* it is that he believes. And this is clearly not true of the primitive mentality we are discussing. But we must remember that we are not dealing with actual people, but with an extreme and therefore an ideal case. There are, and have been, people living in societies which would normally be called 'primitive', of whom it would be quite possible to say that they had beliefs. Anthropologists naturally deal with actual people of this kind. But they insist that, even where there are more or less articulate beliefs, these beliefs are the effects, rather than the causes, of the practices in question. This sounds startling to modern ears. It does not seem possible that a belief can come into existence as a result of a certain type of behaviour becoming prevalent. This is because the modern tendency towards abstraction and reflective thinking makes it normal for our conscious actions to be guided by beliefs. We expect people to think before they act, not afterwards. We are told to look before we leap. This is the expression of our standard of rational behaviour. We first form beliefs, then act on them. If I believe that Smith has committed a felony, my attitude towards him and my actions concerning him will be determined accordingly.

But this kind of conduct is not at all so universal as we may like to think. We cannot help accepting the standard, and so we dislike being reminded of the occasions when we disregard it. But we often form a belief as a result of acting in a certain way, even though our standard of rational behaviour requires us to put it the other way round. Such a belief is called a 'rationalization'; though this is perhaps a misleading expression, containing the suggestion that the procedure involved is rational, whereas it is in fact, of course, irrational. I may, for example, refuse to give the price of a cup of tea to a down-and-out, and then persuade myself that I did so

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because of my belief that such persons are undeserving. But, in fact, I have probably just formed that belief in order to justify my action which might otherwise appear discreditable. This is not the place in which to give further examples of this very common trick; many more will be found in Crawshay-Williams's *Comforts of Unreason*.

Since we often close our eyes to this sort of thing, we are quite ready to assume that actions are always the effects of beliefs, and to agree with the older anthropologists in interpreting burial customs in terms of beliefs. We like to be told that the Greek practice of putting twopence in the mouth of a corpse was the result of a belief in the mechanical details of the underworld, which included a ferry crossing where the fare would be needed. We overlook, however, the fact that this interpretation is a comparatively recent and sophisticated rationalization of a practice that has origins very much older. We must, in fact, go very much further back even than the invention of coinage, for we find that the twopence is only a sort of token representing the allowance of food, tools and other equipment which was buried with the dead in much earlier times. Again we must not be tempted to say that the provision of stores and equipment for the dead man is the result of a belief that the surviving element of the dead engages in the same sort of everyday activities as the living. For this would be equally misleading. The provision of food is part of a standardized activity on the part of men whose personal relations with the dead man have not been profoundly modified by his death. It is not that they *believe* that in some way he is still with them. It is not even that they *act as if* he were. It is just that, for them, he actually is.

2. *The Logic of Interpretation*

At a later stage, no doubt, such behaviour may come to be regarded in a slightly critical attitude, as a practice requiring

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some justification, and beliefs may be formulated. But this stage represents an immense intellectual advance from primitive behaviour to conscious self-criticism. At the primitive level, there are no articulate beliefs. There are myths. Now it is tempting to say that the myths 'express' beliefs in some way or other. The myths about the underworld which we find in Greek literature, for instance, might be said with a show of plausibility to represent an attempt to formulate, in a concrete and personal medium, beliefs which modern scholars express differently by *interpreting* the myths.

But this would be a serious mistake, though one that is seldom noticed. Let us consider the ancient Jewish story, in the book of Genesis, that the world was created by God in six days. No one but a Fundamentalist believes that this account is literally true. A modern Christian may say, for example, that he does not believe every word of Genesis, but that he believes there is a divine purpose in the working of the universe. But he does not say that the ancient Jewish tradition is entirely mistaken. It is a myth, which he interprets. The ancient Jews 'really' believed the same thing as he does; only they 'expressed' it differently. They 'expressed' the belief in the divine purpose by means of the Creation myth.

The mistake is this. It is implied by this sort of account that what people say can be systematically different from what they believe, except in the case of modern man. Modern man, apparently, is specially privileged with a faculty for directly expressing his beliefs, whereas primitive man can do so only in a roundabout way. Modern man says what he believes; primitive man says something else which is a sort of clue to what he really believes. Of course, I am overdoing the crudity of what is implied by the account. No one who saw the implications clearly could accept them. There is, however, an implied contrast between the directness of the relation between speech and belief in modern

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man, and an indirectness in primitive man; and this might be accepted by some 'interpreters'. That is why it is important to show up the mistake. If anything, there is a case for reversing this contrast and saying that the relation between speech and belief is peculiarly direct in the language of primitive man. But I shall be content to argue that there is really no case for a contrast at all. It is simply false to say that primitive man 'really' believes something which is different from what he says, in myths for example. For all that we are entitled to say is that if we were in primitive man's shoes (or rather, perhaps, his skin) we should express ourselves differently, namely as we do today in a 'straight-forward' way without any mythical trappings. Of course this is absurd, since if we *were* in primitive man's skin we should also be using his mental equipment and not our own, and hence our way of putting things *would* be different after all. What it really comes to, I think, is that we cannot imagine ourselves using primitive man's mythical language and meaning it, whereas we can imagine ourselves in a situation exactly similar to his except for the presence of our own intellectual powers which we cannot easily hold in abeyance. Hence we can only imagine ourselves saying what he says and *not* meaning it, but meaning instead the kind of thing we ourselves should say.

Interpretation, in fact, is only the process of expressing in one kind of language what is actually expressed in a language of another kind, less familiar than the first. For us, who are engaged not in interpreting, but in talking about interpreting, there is nothing to be gained by taking either kind of language as a criterion by which to judge the other as inferior, as we should be judging mythical language as inferior if we said that people who use it 'really' believe something else ('the ancient Jews really believed that there was a divine purpose . . .'). The point I am making is very obvious indeed in that special case of interpretation which we call

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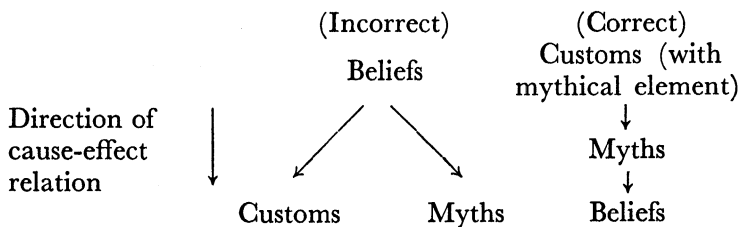
translation. Here the languages of different kinds are simply languages of different grammar, syntax and vocabulary. When we translate Pascal's saying 'L'homme c'est un roseau pensant' as 'Man is a thinking reed' we are interpreting what Pascal said by expressing in English what he expressed in French. Nobody ever says: 'Pascal said "L'homme c'est un roseau pensant"' but what he really believed was that man is a thinking reed.' We reject as inappropriate the 'but' and the 'really'. We know that, if we did say such a thing, a Frenchman would have exactly the same right to say (in French): 'Hume said "Reason is the slave of the passions"', but what he really believed was that "La raison c'est l'esclave des passions".' Applying this to the case of myths, we might say that the ancient Jew would have as much right as the Biblical scholar to claim his own 'interpretation' as correct: to say 'You say "there is a divine purpose in the working of the universe"', but what you really must believe is that God created the world in six days'. Only here the difference between the two languages is not merely, and not primarily, a difference of grammar, syntax and vocabulary; it is a difference between the language of abstract thought and reflective speech and the language of the concrete and the personal. Beliefs are expressed in language of the first kind; myths are examples of language of the second kind.

The myth is not an expression of belief at all, but is part and parcel of a joint activity. We must remember that the myth, as it exists for us, is a formalized record, very different from the actual utterance of words as an essential, dynamic element of a ceremony or ritual. These two aspects of the myth are about as different as a marriage notice in *The Times* and the spoken words 'I now pronounce you man and wife'. Underworld myths are associated with burial customs, in the sense that the ceremony includes, as an inseparable element, the utterance of words and expressions from the appropriate myth. Harvest ceremonies will be associated with other

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myths, and so on. Such ceremonies also include, of course, much more than the utterance of words; there may well be dancing and gesticulating as well as speaking and singing. In this discussion we are principally concerned with language; but we should notice how little distinction there is between spoken language and other forms of expression, and how closely the use of language is dynamically integrated with such other forms of activity.

We may, if we like, call the myth a 'rationalization' of the activity, so long as we bear in mind that this would ignore most of the essential features of the actual myth, all the non-linguistic elements, that is, and the dynamic aspect even of the linguistic element. We may, with these limitations, call an underworld myth a 'rationalization' of certain burial customs. If we interpret the myth itself in terms of belief about the nature of the after-life, we shall be performing a 'rationalization' of a second order. This, I think, should make it clear that beliefs are to be regarded as the effects of practice rather than practices as the effects of belief. What I am putting forward can be summarized schematically as follows:—



The mistaken view is that beliefs are causally prior to customs and myths: customs are the effects of beliefs, and myths are the expression of beliefs. The correct view is that customs are causally prior to beliefs and myths. Customs include certain mythical features, in the sense that the living myth is integral with the customary activity; myths, in the form in

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which they are transmitted, represent an attempt to articulate and integrate the more verbal aspects of custom and ritual; beliefs are a final interpretation or 'rationalization' of the myths.

We must tie this up with the original discussion. I think it should be less of a puzzle that we can profitably examine the concept of personality in the context of a primitive society, even though the concept has no meaning for people living in such a society. For, firstly, we do not need to attend to what they think and say, but to what they do. Thinking and talking are, after all, only certain forms of doing. But it is in the context of primitive man that we are best able to grasp the significance of this facile truism. Secondly, in order to understand what people do, and how they behave, it is necessary to draw on intellectual powers of a higher order than those involved in the doing and the behaving. A set of concepts is required which do not find a place in the doing, but only in the understanding of the doing. The concept of personality is one of these.

VI

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§ I PERSONALITY AND THE SELF

I. *'The Self' as Bad Grammar*

A DISCUSSION of personality is bound to come up, sooner or later, against the problem of the self. I am going to ward off the difficulty by saying dogmatically that the problem of the self is one of those spurious problems which confuse the issue on any philosophical question unless they are painstakingly disentangled from the genuine problem. There are several reasons why the 'problem of the self' is often and easily confused with the problem of personality. Many people think of the self and the personality as more or less identical. Knowing a person thoroughly is knowing him to his inmost self. Reflection may yield a rough distinction, but my personality is still thought of as 'belonging' in some very close, if mysterious, way to myself, as that which distinguishes *my* self from other selves. A nodding acquaintance with contemporary trends in philosophy may corroborate this; for it can easily be seen that for some philosophers, at least, there *is* a 'problem of the self', since they have discussed it under that very name. Hence it may look as if the 'problem of the self', discussed by such philosophers, is just another way of describing the problem of personality. And if discussion of the problem of the self were to result in the decision that there is such a thing as the self in any intelligible sense at all, then this will have an obvious bearing on our problem, since we shall have to see how a particular self is related to a particular personality.

Nevertheless, I am asserting that the 'problem of the self'

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is, firstly, not a genuine problem, and, secondly, that whether genuine or not, it is irrelevant to the question of personality. I shall repeat and enlarge on this not only in regard to the common notions of the self to which I have just referred, but also in regard to the philosophical notions. The notion of the self held by most ordinary people and by some philosophers does not give rise to any genuine problem, because it is very largely a mistaken notion based on bad grammar. The common notion of the self, as the carrier of personality, is the concept of a kind of entity 'inside' me which has certain qualities and performs certain functions. Few people actually formulate such a view, for its crude literalness is absurd, just as absurd as the crude literalness of the view that my mind is an entity 'inside' my brain. We can only infer, from the way in which many people, and some philosophers, talk about the self, that they think about it in some such way as I have described, even if they would reject an explicit formulation of the view. The kind of talk I mean is that involving such expressions as 'other selves', or 'the Self and the Not-Self'.

I say the concept of an entity called the self is based on bad grammar, because there is no precedent for the use of the word 'self' as an independent noun, capable of being the subject of a verb. The proper use of the symbol is not as a word at all, but as a suffix. It is a suffix attached to a personal pronoun which is not the subject of a verb. There is no such formula as 'heself' or 'theyselves' but only 'himself' and 'themselves'. The symbol '-self' occurs properly as a suffix to a term in the accusative or other non-nominative case, and its function is to denote reflexivity. Of course, there is the formula 'he himself', but this is a totally different use, where it is not a case of a suffix denoting reflexivity, but of the whole word 'himself' which emphasizes the pronoun 'he'. It is obvious that in the sentence 'he himself stabbed the policeman' the word 'himself' is quite a different word from

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the apparently similar word 'himself' in the sentence 'he stabbed himself'. And, anyway, in expressions of the type 'he himself' there is no tendency to detach and hypostatize the 'self'. But where '-self' is genuinely reflexive, there is this temptation.

One might well speculate on the possible origin of this temptation. Two possibilities occur to me. One is this. Expressions like 'he stabbed himself', 'she controlled herself', 'they washed themselves', differ in everything except the presence of the suffix '-self' plus the fact that they all refer to some action which is reflexive. It is easy to believe that what there is in common is that in each case the agent acts on the 'self' of the agent. But in fact, of course, it is nothing of the sort; in the first and third examples what is acted on is just the body of the agent; in the second it is certain feelings or impulses of the agent. And in every case where we speak of a person doing something to himself, we can always substitute for the expression 'himself' something more precise as the object of the verb. It is merely a convenience of language that allows us to use the same term on different occasions; it is not the existence of a special kind of entity labelled the 'self'.

The other suggestion arises out of this one. I have spoken of 'the body of the agent' and 'the feelings of the agent'. The temptation for me to speak also of 'the self of the agent' occurs because of my understandable preoccupation with *myself*. The transition from 'myself' to 'my self' is all too easy, and since 'my dog' implies that I have a dog and 'my body' that I have a body, so 'my self' seems to imply that I have a self. But 'my self' is nonsense. It is plausible nonsense only because the word 'myself' is a freak. For conformity with other pronouns, and other languages, demands not 'myself' but 'meself'. It takes quite an effort to realize this. But it's only fair to withdraw the accusation of egoism against the English by pointing out that the same is true of 'thyself'

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and 'yourselves', which ought to be 'theeself' and 'youselves'. However, this still remains an eccentric Anglicism, and the bane of English-speaking children, whose striving for consistency, resulting in 'hissself' and 'theirselves', goes unrewarded.

2. *'The Self' as Bad Logic*

But of course it will hardly do to brush aside all talk of the self as due to bad grammar. Philosophers talk of the self, and indeed the word hardly ever occurs except in at least a quasi-philosophical context. How often in a day's (or a year's) conversation does the bare word 'self' occur? These philosophers are not simply committing elementary grammatical errors. Or, to put it more precisely, they are committing them, but they are doing so under a pretence of improving ordinary language. Such a pretence is not often explicit. But it is, in general, a justifiable pretence. If scientists are justified in producing new terms and new usages to meet new situations, as they in fact do, surely philosophers are equally justified in inventing new expressions and uses of words for the purpose of formulating new ideas which could not be expressed adequately in the old terms. I have already quoted 'sense-datum' as an example of a new technical term in philosophy; perhaps the philosophical use of 'self' is an example of a new use for an old term.

'To the contemporary English philosopher,' says a recent reviewer, 'the problem of the self presents itself primarily as a problem of logical analysis.' We cannot follow contemporary discussions of this problem, but I think I can point to one or two typical features of such discussions which will show up the confused thinking involved in the problem of the self, as well as its irrelevance to the problem of personality. Logicians and epistemologists have often conceived the problem of 'other selves' as if its solution depended on

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the solution of the problem of the self. They have, for instance, asked questions like 'How am I justified in believing in the existence of other selves?' Questions like this imply by their very form that our awareness of other selves is secondary to, or dependent on, our awareness of our own self; for 'other' suggests the query 'other than what?' to which the only answer is 'other than *my* self'. Further discussion of such questions usually confirms this. Such answers as are given refer to 'analogies' between the observed movements of other bodies and those of my own, and 'inferences' as to the probable existence of other conscious beings 'like' myself. It is seldom noticed, of course, that the analogies and inferences are so extraordinarily weak that in any other context whatever no sane person would accept them. To infer that other 'selves' must be like myself is about as good a piece of inference as that of the child who 'infers' that because his own nursery has blue curtains and ducks on the wall, every other child's nursery must be identically equipped. But we need not waste time on the value of the analogy. For there is a more important mistake. The whole argument implies that there is first self-awareness and then other-awareness; that awareness of the self is at any rate *logically* prior to awareness of other selves.

This is a point at which logic, if divorced from psychological and 'behaviouristic' considerations, leads to absurdity. The same thing can be seen if we look at the distinction between the 'Self and the Not-Self', which occurs in some metaphysical and theological discussions. There mere formulation of this distinction seems to imply one or other of two possible views, both mistaken. The first is that the universe, from the point of view of any given individual in it, consists of two kinds of entity called the 'self' and the 'not-self' which are somehow related. We may call this relation 'knowledge' and say that the self knows the not-self. We may call it something else. But whatever we choose to

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call it, we shall be committing two elementary blunders. One is the elementary grammatical mistake of making 'self' the subject of a verb (the verb 'to know', or whatever else it may be). The other is the elementary logical mistake of hypostatization — of elevating a grammatical expression into a subsistent entity. The second view, which avoids one of these mistakes, is that the experience of any given individual contains two kinds of object, the self and the not-self. This avoids the grammatical mistake, because we are now using 'self' in a genuinely reflexive way: the individual experiences, or knows, himself. But we do not avoid the logical mistake. We still talk as if what we meant to say were 'his self', like 'my self'. We still imply that the self (and, of course, the not-self) is an object of which we can be aware in pretty much the same way as we can be aware of a body, or of feelings, or of thoughts. Finally, the Self and Not-Self distinction may involve, like the talk of 'other selves', a further mistake, namely the view that self-awareness is prior to awareness of others. For we cannot be expected to understand the meaning of the expression 'not-self' unless we already understand the meaning of 'self', just as we cannot understand what is meant by saying that cows are not carnivorous unless we already understand the meaning of 'carnivorous'.

3. *The Psychology of Self-awareness*

Such philosophers, then, have often appeared to be treating the 'self' as if it were prior in our awareness to other 'selves'. I am arguing that this priority is claimed only as a logical priority, and that the logic is faulty. Even if it were not, such a logical claim would be unimportant for our purpose, which will be better served by turning back to psychology. Psychologists have not troubled about logical relations; in dealing with objects of awareness, they have stressed the dynamic widening of consciousness, not, as the

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spatial metaphor misleadingly suggests, outwards from the individual's 'self' to the 'selves' of others, but the other way round. Spatially, of course, one individual is 'narrower', not 'wider', than the circle of his acquaintances; but this must not be allowed to obscure the fact that self-consciousness is a more highly developed form of consciousness than all other forms, including consciousness of other persons. Animals are not self-conscious, nor are young children. Self-consciousness is the climax of a progressive maturation of consciousness which starts from the simple awareness of external stimuli and proceeds through the developing power of distinction between persons and things to the ultimate recognition of the relations and differences between oneself and others.

This process can be studied in the mental development of children. It is a complete mistake to say, as psychologists and anthropologists have sometimes done, that 'every child goes through the solipsist stage'. Solipsism, in so far as it can be formulated at all, may be defined as the absence of belief in the existence of anything other than one's own feelings and sensations. As a philosophical theory, it is admitted by nearly all philosophers to be logically irrefutable, though a good deal of time and effort is wasted on the uninteresting question whether it is true or false. But whether true or false as a philosopher's creed, it is certainly not a useful hypothesis for interpreting the behaviour of children. For children who have not yet learnt the value of philosophical scepticism certainly do not behave as if they were solipsists. If a child can be said to have any beliefs at all, it certainly believes in the existence of a seemingly all-powerful and benevolent being which can be produced at will by the magic formula 'Mama'; and it believes this long before it comes to believe in its own existence, if it ever does. What is called 'recognition of the self' comes only as a mature awareness of a unity informing the various activities of the

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agent. Self-awareness is not awareness of something which, in these various activities, does the acting — that which walks and talks. To say this would be bad grammar. It is awareness of a unity *informing*, rather than *performing*, all the activities in which the agent is conscious of being active rather than passive. It is almost certainly recognized in other people earlier than in oneself: for one cannot even form the concept of a person without the idea of unity and permanence belonging to his behaviour. This unity is the unity of the living organism which I described in Chapter iv. Every organism has this unity, but it is only a highly developed consciousness, that of adult human beings, which can have awareness of it, firstly in others and finally in itself. In other words, self-awareness, self-criticism, self-appraisal, and all the self-regarding attitudes are achieved only by exercise of those higher intellectual powers I spoke of in the last chapter, which are used whenever we are not merely behaving, but understanding behaviour.

But the self-awareness I have been discussing so far is not awareness of oneself as a person, but merely as an active, conscious being. I have not yet mentioned awareness of personality either in oneself or in others. This is a short-coming which the psychological account shares with the logical. The logical analysis I mentioned earlier doesn't account for the awareness of other persons as *persons*, but only as conscious beings having certain analogical resemblances to myself. However many of their movements I observe, I can only point to general characteristics which they may have in common with my own and with one another's. In other words, by following this procedure, I can become aware of persons only as entities having certain general properties. And, as we have already seen in Chapter II, an entity having certain general properties isn't a person. The psychological account I have just outlined puts things the other way round, but doesn't get any nearer to per-

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sonality. It doesn't account for awareness of myself as a person, but only as a conscious being having certain analogical resemblances to other conscious beings. However many of my movements I observe, I can only point to general characteristics which they may have in common with other people's. I can become aware of myself only as an entity having certain general properties, including the property of organic unity. And this sort of entity isn't a person.

What it comes to is that I can never, in my capacity of observer, recognize what it is to be a person. It is only by entering into personal relations with someone that I can become aware of personality in others. And it is only by doing this that I can become aware of personality in myself. Our inquiry into personality, then, calls for an inquiry into the nature of personal relations. But is this possible at all?

§ 2 A LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONAL RELATION

1. *Logic and the Unique*

HAVING put this question, I want to attempt an answer by trying to see if the problem of personality, like the 'problem of the self', can be made to present itself as a problem of logical analysis. It may seem that I have no hope of doing this, since I have thoroughly burnt my logical boats. The problem of personality, it may be felt, has certainly presented itself as a problem of psychical research; to a lesser extent, as a problem of psychology; to a still lesser extent, as a problem of ethics, politics and social philosophy; but not at all as a problem of logic. And I have already exploited psychology pretty fully and rejected the assistance of logic on the 'problem of the self'. I have indeed just suggested that the secret of personality lies in actual personal relations, not in the abstractness of logic. Still, I

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think that there certainly is a not very strained sense of the term 'logic' in which we can treat the problem of personality by a logical method. This is a method which I might be inclined to call behaviouristic, except for the misleading suggestions of that word which have reduced it to little more than a term of abuse. At any rate, it is a method which is concerned not just with what people say and think, but with what they do. We have already been following this method and shall continue to do so. A conspicuous example of its use was Chapter v.

When it is proposed, as here, to subject personality to logical analysis, the first question to meet is this. Why is it generally supposed that personality and personal relations are beyond the pale of logic? Logic and language are concerned with the generalities of things, and cannot therefore be concerned with personal relations in all their uniqueness. I have already stated that the personal life is not talked about, but lived. Perhaps, after all, the logicians I criticized were right, when they discussed the problem of our awareness of other people, in confining their attention to the observation of general characteristics. But not completely right. There is a sense in which it isn't quite true that logic can't deal with the uniqueness of personal relations, for no other reason than that they do involve uniqueness; and this is the point I want to develop. For to the extent to which it isn't true, we shall be justified in trying to extend the field in which the various aspects of personality can be logically analysed.

I am going to maintain that personality can be regarded logically as simply a special case of particularity, or, as I prefer to call it, individuality. First, then, I want to analyse the notion of individuality. Things, as well as persons, are unique individuals, with which we can become acquainted, and we shall find that our personal relations with things will throw much light on our personal relations with persons. We

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have already discussed what is involved in the notion of being acquainted with something. Here I want to go on to look more closely at what is involved in the notion of uniqueness or individuality. We can start from familiar ground.

The traditional problems of perception are concerned with questions of the type: 'How can there be a world of public objects?' 'How can you enjoy the same perceptions of material objects as I do?' or 'What is the analysis of "A and B are seeing the same table"?' Taking the last question, it is easily noticed that, for geometrical reasons, the table can't look the same from A's point of view as from B's. But perhaps allowance can be made for the 'accidental' fact that no two persons' eyes can occupy the same point of view, that is, the same point in physical space. If B's eye could occupy the same point of view as A's, would the table look exactly the same? But possibly either A or B is colour-blind, and then the table won't look the same; but even if it is decided that they are not, the only evidence for this decision is that they both satisfy tests of colour vision, and this only means that they arrange colours in the same order, they may not *see* the same colours: so can we, after all, say that the table will look the same? There is no possible method of finding out the answer to questions like these. Whatever answers may be given, there is no possible way of verifying or refuting them. Accordingly, most philosophers are agreed in dismissing such questions as either meaningless or, at best, unprofitable. The facts are that A and B agree in ascribing certain general characteristics to 'the table'. They both satisfy any tests we may devise for establishing whether they are aware of the existence of an object having certain defined properties. But these properties, or general characteristics, even if they could be exhaustively listed, cannot actually constitute the table, any more than a list of the general properties of some human beings could actually constitute a person. We saw this in Chapter II.

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The list of characteristics, however complete, is an abstraction from the concrete situation, which consists of *the* table, and is different from the list of properties in having uniqueness.

What makes the table *the* table? Perhaps it is the fact that at least one characteristic is uniquely applicable, at any rate within the context of the particular situation. (The characteristic in question might be one which is, in other contexts, multiply applicable — for instance, ‘three-legged’ — but if the particular concrete situation included no other three-legged table, then ‘three-legged’ would uniquely characterize one individual table.) In other words, the table has individuality, and its individuality consists, on this suggestion, in its having properties which distinguish it from certain other, but not necessarily from all other, tables and things.

But this is not enough. We are still speaking in terms that are too general. We are making a distinction between characteristics which assimilate the table to other objects and those which differentiate it. Now even the differentiating characteristics are general. For what differentiates one table from every one of nine others may not differentiate it from every one of ninety-nine others. It won’t do to say, as I said at the end of the last paragraph, that the table’s individuality consists in its having properties which distinguish it from certain other tables and things but not necessarily from all. Must we say, then, that its individuality consists in its having properties which do distinguish it from *everything* else? But this would involve the apparently paradoxical notion of a completely unique property: a property which would be uniquely applicable not only in a given context (such as the ten tables) but in the entire universe. Now this is apparently paradoxical, because if I say of a certain object that it has a certain property (if I say, for example, of a certain horse that it is grey, or of a certain building that it is square), I automatically exclude the possibility of the property in question

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being unique; because I use a word ('grey', 'square') which has meaning only because it *is* applicable to more than one situation.

Are we to say, then, that there are no properties which are unique? It might seem, in spite of what has just been said, that some relational properties, at any rate, can be unique. For example, is not the property of 'having written *Emma*' a property uniquely applicable to Jane Austen? But generality creeps in even here. From a purely logical viewpoint, to say that Jane Austen wrote *Emma* is to imply that anyone or anything else could have written *Emma*, just as to say that a particular horse is grey is to imply that any other horse or other thing could be grey. It is just a matter of 'brute fact' that other horses and other things *are* grey, whereas no other person or thing happens to have written *Emma*, nor do we think it likely that anyone or anything else ever will. But, logically, it is possible.

In any case, we do not really feel that a list of properties like 'having written *Emma*' constitutes uniqueness. It is interesting, I think, to examine the logical explanation of this. There are two elements involved in a relational property which make it less simple than a 'qualitative' property like 'grey' and 'square'. These two elements are the relation and the other term of the relation. In this example we have the relation of *writing*, which is a dyadic or two-term relation between a person and a book. If we wish to express this relation by ascribing a relational property to one of the terms, we construct this relational property by combining the relation of *writing* with the other term. In this way we can describe *Emma* by asserting of it the relational property of 'having been written by Jane Austen', or we can describe Jane Austen by asserting of her the relational property of 'having written *Emma*'. Now of the two elements constituting the relational property, at least one is general and not unique, that is to say, the relation. *Emma* may be unique,

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but the relation in which it stands to Jane Austen, the relation of *writing*, is not unique: for there are any number of writers standing in this relation to any number of books. Of course, if *Emma* is unique, and we can exclude the possibility of joint authorship, we know that whoever is described as 'having written *Emma*' must also be unique. For if the relation of A to B is a one-to-one or a one-to-many relation (but not a many-to-one), and B is unique, then it follows that A is unique. For instance, if the relation of A to B is the relation 'wife of' (in monogamous societies) or 'father of' (but not 'child of'), and B is a unique person, then it follows that A is too. 'Writer of', excluding joint authorship, is a one-to-many relation, like 'father of'. Nevertheless, even when we can infer from a relational property that A, its possessor, is unique, its uniqueness does not consist in its having this relational property. For having this relational property only gives it formal uniqueness, or the fact that it can be represented as a mathematical unit. We are, in fact, dealing with the logical concept of cardinal number as applied in the special case of unity.

This point is worth special emphasis, for it brings out the logical difference between uniqueness and unity, or between qualitative and numerical identity. A unique, living person, or even a unique, familiar object, is more than the sum of its characteristics, properties and relations; a mathematical unit is very much less. Mathematical unity is got by leaving out every property and relation except the one-to-one relation which is basic to the concept of number; uniqueness is not got at all, in thought or language, but only approached, by giving as exhaustive a list as possible of all properties and relations. That is why Jane Austen's uniqueness, or individuality, does not consist in the possession of relational properties, however many, of the type 'having written *Emma*'. Are any other kinds of property unique?

I think it's fairly clear that, once relational properties are

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disposed of, no other properties can be unique. Every describable property must be multiply applicable, otherwise it could not be described. It has sometimes been thought that this position can be escaped by the following device. It may be suggested that, even though Brown and Jones both use the word 'red' to describe a property of a pillar-box, nevertheless there is no means of knowing whether the experience prompting Brown to say 'red' is really identical with the experience prompting Jones to say 'red'; the experiences might be quite different. But this won't do, because even if, *per impossibile*, we could know that the experiences were different, or even that Brown's 'red' experience were identical with Jones's 'green' experience, we still could not conclude that the property of *being red* wasn't multiply applicable. To say that the pillar-box really had different properties, in respect of colour, for Brown and Jones, would be to use the word 'property' in a decidedly quixotic sense. Moreover, it isn't possible to say that, even if every describable property must be multiply applicable, there are, or may be, indescribable properties which may be uniquely applicable. Because, again, the notion of an indescribable property is paradoxical. What is indescribable isn't a property.

Now there undoubtedly is something indescribable about every perceptual experience. Firstly there is the fact, very often overlooked, that perception is essentially dynamic, as I pointed out in Chapter III; this is what makes it impossible to get a 'still' of the sense-field and enumerate every distinguishable detail in it: for it is changing all the time. This was one of the objections I had to make against the sense-datum terminology. Then there is the logical impossibility of describing the unique. Every perceptual experience is different from every other, and therefore unique. Any description must represent an abstraction from the concreteness of detail. And 'concreteness' is a rather outworn metaphor roughly synonymous with 'particularity' or

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'individuality' or 'uniqueness'. This is the point I want to dwell on, because this is the point where analysis usually stops. 'Logic can't deal with the indescribable' is a plausible attitude, but it is too easy-going. Logic cannot describe the indescribable, it cannot analyse the unique; but it can find certain things to say about the indescribable; it can analyse the situations in which the awareness of individuality occurs; or, to adopt the 'form and content' language, it can examine the formal aspects of experiences whose content is unique and indescribable.

2. *The Individuality of Things*

What is indescribable about every perceptual experience is, partly, what is loosely called its subjectivity, or that element in it which consists in its being experienced by me and nobody else. This is the aspect of the problem of individuality with which I'm not principally concerned. What I'm interested in here is the individuality of the *object*, whether the object is another person or not. Awareness of individuality in objects is most difficult to express, for reasons which I shall suggest later. This is the best way in which I can express it. Take the example of the table, and try to ignore its general properties which, of course, are abstractions from the concrete situation. It's obvious that we can't *describe* the features in the situation which make it a concrete one, because this would also be a process of abstraction and hence self-defeating. But I think we can point to the *kind* of features which are more closely associated with concreteness than with abstraction. We can do this by considering examples which, while individually relevant to one particular situation, do illustrate the kind of thing which happens in every situation. The table may be proportioned in a way that I find peculiarly satisfying; it may have a deep scratch which I made when a child; it may have

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belonged to a dead friend; I may be contemplating it with a view to chopping it up for firewood, or wondering whether it needs fumigating against woodworm.

Am I making an outrageous muddle between the properties of an object and my emotional attitudes to it? It's true that we should hesitate to call some of the features I have mentioned 'properties' at all, and should like to feel that they were features of me rather than of the table. But we are trying to take a synoptic view of the whole situation, and from this point of view we must once more reject the 'cognitive heresy' against which I had to protest in Chapter III: the heresy that attitudes can be neatly divided into 'cognitive' and 'emotional'. For the distinction between properties of an object and emotional attitudes towards it on the part of the subject, which I may be accused of muddling, follows directly from this heresy. I have rejected the heresy by insisting that perception is never, or at least very seldom, purely 'cognitive'. Of course, I have not denied that it's very instructive, for certain limited purposes, to dwell on the 'purely cognitive' side of perception: I only want to emphasize that there are also purposes for which it is definitely misleading. And just here my whole point depends on viewing the perceptual process from a wider angle, giving equal weight to the 'cognitive' and the 'emotional' sides: to the one, as emphasizing the general or abstract features of the situation, to the other, as emphasizing the particular or concrete ones. The attitude against which I want to protest is the attitude of regarding analytical problems primarily as 'cognitive' problems or problems of 'theory of knowledge', and of dismissing everything that can't easily be dealt with in this way as 'emotional' phenomena which are fit subject-matter, perhaps, for psychology, but not for logic.

Going back to the table, I think we are now in a position to say in what its individuality consists. It consists, not in any property or relational property, but in the unique one-

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to-one relation in which it stands to myself. (The analysis of 'self', as I have already insisted, is immaterial. I am using 'myself' merely as an emphatic 'me,' not as 'my self'. I am not postulating a 'self' as one term of the relation.)

A difficulty may arise here. If individuality is being analysed in terms of a unique relation, and if the 'uniqueness' of the relation between the table and myself means that the table can stand in it only to me and not to anybody else, then it looks as if the table will have not one individuality but several — one for each of the people who are acquainted with it. And in that case can we properly speak of *the* individuality? Can we speak even of 'the individualities', since even the same word suggests some common factor? The difficulty disappears if we remember that, in discussing individuality, we are not talking about properties of the table, which can be regarded as common to several observers, such as its colour or shape, but about whatever is *not* common to different people. When we speak of 'the individuality' of the table, we take up temporarily the point of view of one of the persons acquainted with it. But we cannot talk at all without using words, and words have common meanings. The relation between the table and myself is unique; but I am able to talk about it. Its uniqueness does not prevent its being comparable with the relation between the table and somebody else. What the two unique relations have in common is what is needed to justify the use of the same word 'individuality' of the table. And to speak of *the* individuality is justified by a further consideration, namely, that from my point of view the unique relation is not necessarily transient but may be relatively permanent: there tends to be much more in common to the successive conscious manifestations of the relation (the different occasions on which I am aware of the individuality of the table) than there is between any of these manifestations and those of the (comparable) relation between the table and other persons. All this is

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involved in the phenomenon of familiarity, which we dealt with in Chapters III and IV.

We need to give a little more content to the rather jejune statement that the individuality of the table consists in its standing in a unique one-to-one relation to myself. This is best done by drawing attention to the commonest way of 'expressing' such a relation; the use of the word 'my'. (I put the word 'expressing' in inverted commas because the relation, being unique, is literally inexpressible. But personal pronouns do draw attention to the existence of such a relation.) The name given to words like 'my' — possessive pronouns — suggests that the relation is the relation of possession, which is not unique. But a moment's reflection on the variety of situations in which I can speak of 'my X' shows us that possession is only one of a large number of possible relations between myself and something else, to all of which the word 'my' is appropriate. And even 'possession' means a great deal more than the possession of property, or ownership, which is just a local social institution. It would require a good deal of research to classify and docket the different ways in which the word 'my' is used. A considerable variety is recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

All that is needed here is to try to observe what differentiates my table from your table and all other tables. There is no formula for expressing this differentiation, other than the ordinary use of personal pronouns. But we are all familiar with the facts, and it is in these non-verbal facts that the individuality of 'my' table consists. I said the word 'my' is only the commonest way of 'expressing' the unique relation: we must not forget that the relation is not really 'expressed', and that there are cases in which the pronoun isn't applicable at all, but which are still cases of individuality. For example, if I see a strange table I may be strongly aware of its individuality. I may equally well be quite unaware of it, if, that is, I am concerned only with its 'cognitive' aspects, such

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as the presence of brown colour or three-leggedness. Once, however, I begin to feel an 'interest' in the table I may be said to be becoming aware of its individuality. 'Interest' is one of the other words which, like 'my', calls attention to the existence of a unique relation between the object and myself; but, again like 'my', its being applicable is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of the existence of such a relation.

3. *Personal Relations with Things*

What remains in order to fill in the jejuneness of my account of individuality in the object is to describe the unique relation between myself and it as a personal relation. There has always been a reluctance on the part of philosophers and psychologists to describe as 'personal' the relations between myself and non-personal objects, especially material objects. There is a deeply-rooted dislike of admitting personal relations, except in a metaphorical sense, between me and a material thing. There is, as I shall show, some justification for feeling that personal relations ought to be fully reciprocal and can therefore exist only between persons and persons. But there isn't enough. In the main, the reluctance to admit personal relations with things arises out of the cognitive heresy, with its (often) unconscious assumption that personal relations are outside the field of logic and epistemology, whereas the relations between the observer and the material world are inside. And the observer and the material world, as I've suggested, are abstractions of a pretty high order compared with the concrete personal situation. It is because we have been so much concerned with abstractions of this type (which, as I shall mention later, have very high practical value) that we tend to lose sight of what would otherwise have been a very obvious fact, namely that our world is primarily a personal world — a world built up out of personal relations, not an 'objective' world built up out of

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quasi-scientific observations. A few writers (for example, J. S. Haldane, *Science and Philosophy*, p. 252) have mentioned personal relations in connection with material objects; but they have been very few, and one wonders whether this is because written and printed language is, as I remarked in Chapter v, so overwhelmingly concerned with the abstract that it is difficult to write about the concrete except in literary forms which deliberately imitate everyday speech.

But in spite of the insistence of the vast bulk of literature, it is still true that every material object I am acquainted with, however slightly, does possess individuality in virtue of its relation to me. There is certainly a significant resemblance between whatever makes Jones my particular friend and whatever makes Fido my pet terrier, and whatever makes an iron contraption my old bicycle. We can't get away from the fact that everything we do and think, except for high-level abstract thought, is coloured by our personal relations with the things we act upon or think about; and although it is possible, for theoretical purposes, to eliminate the colour by a process of abstraction, nevertheless every concrete situation is and always will be so coloured. And so there is an important sense — the most important, in fact — in which personal relations exist between myself and material objects, as well as between myself and other persons.

This is also a matter of experience. There are some objects which are not persons and yet which, it is very hard to deny, do stand in an avowedly personal relation to someone. This is especially true of animals like Fido. A certain philosopher has recently had the courage to state that even a woodlouse has certain moral rights. And although, as I shall show in Chapter VIII, a moral relation is different from a personal relation, anything which has a moral claim on me is the sort of thing that either has or could have a purely personal relation to me. If a dog or a woodlouse, why not a fountain pen or a bicycle? I certainly feel a deeper personal attach-

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ment to my bicycle than I should feel towards a woodlouse, even if I were to keep it in a matchbox and call it George. Of course, the 'can-you-draw-the-line' argument is a precarious one and I should hesitate to ascribe moral rights to a bicycle. All I am saying is that when I am aware of something as possessing individuality, I am recognizing the existence of a personal relation between myself and it; and that ordinary life is very largely made up of such relations.

Is there no essential difference, then, between things and persons in their relations to us? Is 'personality' to be analysed simply as a relational property, the property of standing in a personal relation to someone? What will be the logical consequences of such a view, and shall we be able to accept them? The first consequence is that a 'person' having no personal relations to anyone (or anything) would have no personality. The second is that things as well as persons will have personality. The first of these consequences is, I think, true enough: such a 'person', having no personal relations with anyone, would not *be* a person, he would have no personality. The second consequence is, however, hardly acceptable as it stands. If things have personality, the distinction between things and persons, which has at least a practical value, will be obliterated. In cases where we do speak of the 'personality' of objects — for example, of scenes we are familiar with — we like to think that we are speaking metaphorically or analogically, but not literally. What the analogy is, if there is one, will be the subject of a later discussion. Here we must see whether we can reach an analysis, of personality which will allow us to confine the word, literally understood, to persons while still leaving room for personal relations between persons and things.

We shall have to say, I think, that individuality can be analysed on the lines of the analysis I have given, as the relational property of standing in a personal relation to

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someone, but that personality requires, in addition, that its possessor stands, or can stand, in the converse relation. This condition, required specially for personality, supplies the 'reciprocity' which is felt to be needed in personal relations between persons and persons.

For this analysis we require only the fundamental concept of the personal relation, together with some of its formal properties, which I shall try to elucidate. If the elucidation appears barren in the extreme, an explaining away rather than an explanation of the phenomena of personality, it must be remembered that we are at the moment concerned only with the logical aspect of personal relations. This means that what we are elucidating, in this chapter, is rather the way we talk and think about personality, the way personality enters into our everyday discourse, than the actual experiences which we call personal. I hope to be able to demonstrate the usefulness of this logical spadework when we come to discuss these experiences more directly.

To return to the concept of the personal relation and its formal properties. The concept itself cannot be defined, except ostensively (that is, by drawing attention to the relevant features of the personal situation, as I have tried to do). The formal properties needed are those that make it possible to distinguish between the relation and its converse. By 'converse' of a relation we mean this. If X stands in a certain relation to Y, then the relation in which Y stands to X is the converse of this relation. If Mr. Smith is related to Tom Smith in the relation of father to son, then Tom is related to Mr. Smith in the converse relation, that of son to father. In certain cases a relation is the same as its converse: for example, the relation of brotherhood in which I stand to my brother is the same as the converse relation in which he stands to me. It is important to decide whether the personal relation is of this type: for when we say that personal relations exist between X and Y, it is commonly assumed

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that the relation in which X stands to Y is the same as that in which Y stands to X; whereas, if I am right, it is possible for personal relations to exist between persons and things, where the relation is obviously not the same as its converse.

If Mr. Smith is the father of Tom, it is logically impossible for this genealogical relation to be the same as its converse, in which Tom stands to Mr. Smith. If Tom Smith is the brother of Jack Smith, it is logically necessary that this relation should be the same as its converse, in which Jack stands to Tom. But if Tom Smith is in love with Joan Brown, it is neither logically impossible nor logically necessary that Joan Brown should be in love with Tom Smith: for there is neither a necessary difference nor a necessary identity between the relation 'being in love with' and its converse.

The personal relation is of this last type. My pipe stands in a personal relation to me, and I stand in a converse relation to it: but the relations are not the same, as those of brothers or mutual lovers are. Its relation to me is what gives it its individuality; in a box of other pipes at the tobacconist's it has no individuality. Its relation to me, besides giving it individuality, is also part of what gives me personality: for if there were no objects (including other persons) standing to me in this kind of relation, I should not be a person.

Someone I know stands to me in a personal relation, and I to him in the converse relation: but, unlike the case of the pipe, this time it is possible for the relation and its converse to be similar. (Since such relations are unique, they cannot be identically the same.) If he knows me, if we are mutual acquaintances, the relations will be similar; if not, at any rate there are other persons (and things) who do stand to him in the same relation as that in which he stands to me and other persons. His relation to me is what gives him individuality, as in the case of the pipe; but, in addition, the

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converse relation in which I, or other people, or other things, stand to him is what gives him personality.

We may sum up as follows.

(1) For anything to have individuality, one condition must be fulfilled: it must stand in a personal relation to somebody.

(2) For anything to have personality, a second condition must be fulfilled: not only must it stand in a personal relation to somebody, but, also, it must stand in the converse relation to something — or, in other words, something must stand in a personal relation to it.

On this view, personality is being analysed in terms of the personal relation, which is itself undefined. I'm not denying that there may be other aspects of personality which lie outside the scope of this analysis. If there are, they are subject-matter for psychology, psychical research, or theology. But as subject-matter for logical analysis, I should be prepared to claim that personality can be analysed as I have suggested. I now want to prove that this analysis is not as barren as it looks. It is not merely an academic exercise, but an instrument for solving certain outstanding puzzles. Here is one example.

4. Solution of a Philosophical Puzzle

I recently heard two philosophers disagreeing about 'our knowledge of other selves'. One, A, was maintaining that, in the last resort, I can never 'know what it is like' to be another person. The other, B, asserted that, on the contrary, I can. A held a somewhat elaborated version of the basic argument that, since all my experience is *my* experience, I cannot possibly know what it would be like to have somebody else's experiences. B held that facts such as friendship, sympathy and the 'sharing of emotion' indicate that I can have a real insight into the feelings of other persons. Neither party was much impressed by the arguments of the other,

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and the discussion was inconclusive. But our analysis of personality can help to solve at least this puzzle. It will show that the disagreement between the two philosophers was only superficial, and not at all the insurmountable obstacle that it appeared. A and B are tacitly agreed on the fundamental issue. Their disagreement is only a matter of overemphasizing one or other of the two main factors involved. The first of these is the fact that personal relations are unique and the second is that, nevertheless, they have something in common. Their uniqueness is something which makes nonsense of the formula 'know what it is like' to be another person, or, indeed, 'know what it is like' to be myself. It just isn't *like* anything. For likeness is resemblance, and resemblance entails the possession of common characteristics. But knowledge of common characteristics — knowledge *about* a person — is not what is being asked for. Putting a question of the form 'What is it like to be another person?' betrays an abuse of the word 'like'.

But personal relations are not completely unique. For they have in common at least the fact that they are personal. One, or both, of the terms related is a person. 'Person' and 'personal' are general terms, after all, which implies that there is something recognizably common to the objects they refer to; this common feature can only be 'personality' in the sense in which I have analysed it in terms of the personal relation; personal relations are unique, but they possess at least formal characteristics which enable me to infer that there are personal relations between terms neither of which is identical with myself. If this is so, there is certainly a sense in which I *can* 'know what it is like' to be another person (while recognizing that 'like' is being used in a queer way). I can 'know' that X stands in a personal relation to Y because I myself stand in a personal relation to Y. This may, indeed, be rather an abstract kind of knowledge; but if the relations between X and Y and between myself and Y are

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sufficiently close and 'emotional', the knowledge I have of 'what it is like' to be X becomes less abstract and richer in content, and it becomes proper to speak of 'shared emotions'. It is worth noticing, that on this view a common object is more effective in creating 'mutual knowledge' than a strong reciprocal personal relation. If X and myself both feel strongly about Y, we are more likely to get to know each other than if we feel strongly about each other — other things being equal. This is the obvious beginning of a useful psychological discourse, but it is interesting to see that we have been led up to it by purely logical considerations.

Of course, I have had to take, for purposes of exposition, an artificially simplified example. In practice, I come to 'know what it is like' to be other persons because I have formed the concept of personality from my experience of personality in others, based on my personal relations with them. I know that the whole world of my experience is built up out of personal relations, and I suppose that the same is true of other beings whom I call persons. It is important to notice that I am not saying something closely similar: I am not saying: 'I know that I am a person, and I suppose the same is true of other beings I observe.' I have already argued the falsity of this. But it is one thing to know that there are persons, and quite a different thing to 'know what it is like' to be someone else.

In using the formula 'know what it is like', I have been aware of its inadequacy, and I think I have shown how radically ambiguous it is. Once this ambiguity is shown up, I think we can see now the disagreement between A and B as merely one of emphasis, not of substance. The fundamental facts were the uniqueness of personal relations and the possibility, nevertheless, of finding something in common. A overemphasized the first fact, B the second.

VII

PERSONALITY AND ART

§ I FALLACY OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY

NEXT I want to enlarge on a further consequence of my statement in the opening of the last section, that personality is only a special case of individuality. If both alike are constituted by the existence of a personal relation, and if personal relations exist between persons and things as well as between persons and persons, then I think we shall have rather a new point of view for considering certain kinds of behaviour and attitude which may conveniently be regarded as cases of the so-called 'pathetic fallacy'. I suggested that we do not normally attribute personality to objects which are not persons, and that, when we do, we like to think that we are speaking metaphorically. But metaphors always arise out of a resemblance, real or imaginary, between the situation to which the metaphor is applied and the situation which would have been described if the expression constituting the metaphor had been used literally. Abundant examples can be found in literary clichés. If I say that a certain speaker let loose a torrent of words, I am able to use the word 'torrent' because there is a striking resemblance between the manner of speech and the behaviour of turbulent water, which 'torrent' would literally describe. Now if, when we use words like 'personality' about objects, we are speaking metaphorically, what are the resemblances implied by the use of this particular metaphor?

Some people cannot bear to cut flowers, or to have cut flowers in the house. Suppose that I am such a person. Quite a common attitude towards my behaviour might be

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expressed by someone saying: 'Flowers don't really suffer when they are cut. Your repugnance is irrational.' He might agree to tolerate my irrational repugnance; we must, after all, respect other people's feelings, however irrational. Such a person is really making the (by now) familiar distinction between the 'cognitive' and the 'emotional' sides of a personal situation, together with a proposal that I should act in accordance with the cognitive side rather than the emotional: that I should listen to reason rather than my feelings. What is implied by this distinction and this proposal is that if I acquiesce in cutting the flowers, I shall be acting as if a certain state of affairs is the case, when it actually is (that is, that flowers don't suffer) and that if I persist in refusing to cut the flowers, I shall be acting as if another state of affairs is the case, which it isn't (that is, that flowers do suffer). And, of course, if it is a case of choosing between the two alternatives here presented, I shall probably be persuaded to choose the first, on the ground, for instance, that there is no scientific evidence that flowers do suffer, and that since flowers do not exhibit the symptoms which animals and human beings exhibit when they are in pain, it is highly probable that flowers don't suffer. But if it is a case of choosing between these two alternatives, the deliberate choice of either will be a 'cognitive' decision; whereas the real choice is not between one cognitive decision and another, but between a 'cognitive' and an 'emotional' decision. The recognition that a certain state of affairs is the case is a 'cognitive' act. But if I do refuse to cut the flowers, my decision is 'emotional' and it is misleading to suggest that I am acting as if a certain state of affairs is the case. I may of course, 'rationalize' my decision, for example, by saying 'Flowers do suffer', and perhaps giving reasons for this assertion; such as 'The scientific evidence that flowers don't suffer isn't conclusive': but that does not make the decision itself 'cognitive'. We must remember, as I

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pointed out in Chapter v, that we are very prone to invent reasons for our actions after we have done them, and that it is not at all true that our actions are always guided by our thoughts.

To drop the unsatisfactory antithesis between the 'cognitive' and the 'emotional', I shall suggest that the proper way of distinguishing between the two possible attitudes or courses of action is to say that one is motivated primarily by a consciousness of the situation which selects the general, abstract characteristics (for example, the general properties of flowers and plants as objects of scientific study, or the general properties such as colour and size which are relevant to the purposes of interior decoration) — whereas the other course of action is motivated primarily by a consciousness of the situation which emphasizes the personal relations involved. My refusal to cut a particular flower arises directly and immediately out of my personal relation with it. I may, of course, 'rationalize' my refusal, as I have just suggested; or I may generalize it into a principle of the form 'I dislike cut flowers', or 'I am to act as if flowers suffer when cut', and then treat particular cases as falling under the general rule; but the fundamental thing still is the existence of a unique personal relation between myself and an individual object whose individuality consists in that personal relation.

I cannot, of course, express such a relation except in general terms which convey nothing of its peculiar uniqueness. If I express it in terms of 'suffering', this means that I experience, associated with the relation, certain emotions, such as pity, which are qualitatively similar to emotions I experience in association with personal relations with persons. In the case of persons, I have, no doubt, independent evidence that they are in pain. But my pity for their suffering is not the result of a process of empirical inference from the evidence, nor is it even the direct result of knowledge, however obtained, that they *are* in pain. It is not a case of

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'he is in pain; therefore I pity him'. If we choose to believe that the emotion of pity results from the knowledge that someone is in pain, we are once more committing the 'cognitive-emotional' heresy. It is quite impossible to separate my knowledge of someone's pain from my emotion of pity. Both are elements in one single experience. Emotion doesn't 'follow' or 'result from' or even 'accompany' knowledge; they are both parts of the same process.

In the case of persons, then, my most direct knowledge of them and of their suffering, and my sympathetic emotion, all arise directly out of my personal relations with them. In the case of objects which are not persons, such as the flowers, my personal relations may give rise to emotions closely similar in quality, if milder in degree, to the emotions arising out of my personal relations with persons; and if the emotion is, say, the emotion of pity, and the similarity is close, it seems quite irrelevant to object that the flowers 'don't really suffer'.

§2 THE PERSONALITY OF PLACES

THIS kind of view seems to me to apply to all cases of the so-called 'pathetic fallacy', literally defined in some such way as 'the fallacy of believing, or assuming, or acting as if, objects which don't feel do feel'. We have often read in the work of poets and novelists such expressions as 'angry sky', 'lonely as a cloud', 'the aloofness of the mountains', and all these and similar expressions agree in attributing to non-sentient objects the feelings and emotions experienced by ourselves.

But these objects are only an introduction to the more interesting cases. We do not attribute personality to them, but only individuality and sentience, the capacity of feeling. There are other objects, generally more complex, to which we often do attribute something much closer to full person-

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ality. The most important of these objects are, I think, places. Most people know one or more particular places in the world which seem to exercise a certain influence over them altogether out of proportion to the obvious, or enumerable, characteristics of the places. The most universal example, of course, is the particular place called 'home'. But home is, for most of us, so rich in associations of the most various kinds, that I prefer to take the much simpler and more striking cases in which a scene possessing no recognizable associations exercises this peculiar effect on the individual. This is the kind of experience which induces people to use such expressions as 'mysterious presence' or 'indwelling spirit', when what they really mean is that the place has something remarkably like personality. It won't do to dismiss this attitude as emotional or subjective. Apart from the general objections to the 'cognitive-emotional' heresy, there is here the additional objection that 'emotional' is a blanket-term so comprehensive that it conceals the fact that the 'emotions' aroused are of an altogether peculiar and characteristic kind. This is what gives the element of permanence to the 'personality' of places: there is a permanent possibility of experiencing the same kind of emotion. 'Subjective' is another blanket-word which ignores the fact that the relation involved is a two-term relation: there is object as well as subject. And there are plenty of possible pseudo-psychological 'explanations' of the phenomena. 'Projection of one's own personality on to the object' is, for example, an 'explanation' I have heard; but this is, of course, in no sense an explanation. It is merely a description, which fails to be an illuminating description because it leaves unexplained the queer metaphor of 'projection'. And if we were going to accept such an explanation about places, we might just as well accept the same explanation about persons and say that other people's personality is just a 'projection' of our own.

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The proper way of describing the experience is to say that it is an awareness of a personal relation, peculiar in that it is, like knowledge of personality, a special case of awareness of individuality. Unlike knowledge of personality, however, there is not the recognition of full reciprocity (the possibility, that is, of the object's standing to me in the same relation as that in which I stand to it) but only, I think, of partial reciprocity. The recognition of at least partial reciprocity must be involved in the kind of experience which tempts us to attribute personality of some kind to objects which, nevertheless, we know not to be persons. I think we can distinguish two elements in the situation which tend to bring it into line with the fully personal situation. One is the sense of passiveness in the fact of what I can only describe as 'power' or 'potency' — the feeling that the object exercises a positive influence over me. It will be remembered that we spoke of this kind of situation in connection with primitive man, where it was the normal relation between man and the objects of his environment. The other element is the complexity of the personal relation. Both these factors make the situation less like the 'flower' situation and more like the fully personal one. In the 'flower' situation, for instance, I don't feel passive, but active. Secondly, there is a complexity about the 'place' situation which is absent in the 'flower' situation. The place is unique in a far more obvious way than the flower, the woodlouse, or even the bicycle. It is, usually, a complex combination of objects, which may or may not resemble each other and other objects, as flowers do; but the combination as a whole doesn't resemble other combinations. Even the abstract mathematical rules of probability tell us that complex sets of objects are likely to differ from each other in more ways than simple objects. The uniqueness of a particular landscape is more obvious and striking than the uniqueness of a particular flower. Consequently my personal

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relation to it tends to be of a different type. But the uniqueness of a particular landscape is not much less obvious and striking than that of a particular person.

'Complexity' is perhaps a misleading term. It suggests both the possibility and the difficulty of analysing the complexity into simpler constituents. But in the case of the complex personal relation, this is not even a possibility. Perhaps this sort of personal relation can best be described by pointing to further differences which exist between the 'flower' and the 'place' situation. In the 'flower' situation, I said that the actions and attitudes arising out of the personal relation can be, and often are, both rationalized and generalized. Neither is possible in the 'place' situation, because both would require a consideration of the general features of the cases, the features in which it resembles other cases; but there are no other cases which have anything in common beyond the mere fact that there is awareness of 'personality'. Besides, what is rationalized and generalized is an action or attitude, and in the case of the place there is, as a rule, no action whatever on my part, but only simple passivity.

§ 3 SUMMARY: PERSONALITY AND THE POET

I CAN now state more systematically the conclusions I have reached so far in this chapter about personal relations. I have taken the personal relation between myself and an object as fundamental, and distinguished four cases of awareness of individuality analysable into such a relation. The extreme cases were, firstly, the simplest case of awareness of simple individuality in an object, and, secondly, the most complex case of awareness of full personality in another person. In between I distinguished the case in which we attribute individuality plus a little something, which, for the sake of simplicity, I called sentience or the ability to

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feel; and the case in which we attribute individuality plus a kind of partial personality, the case, that is, where awareness of the personal relation includes awareness of partial reciprocity in the object. Of course, these four cases are not so neatly distinguishable in practice; one merges imperceptibly into another. They can be arranged schematically as follows:

<i>Type of Personal Relation</i>			<i>Type of object</i>	
(1)	Involving simple individuality		unique object	
(2)	„ „	plus sentience	„ „	of 'flower' type
(3)	„ „	plus partial reciprocity	„ „	of 'place' type
(4)	„ „	plus full reciprocity	person	

Before leaving the 'pathetic fallacy', I think it will be of interest to illustrate the four cases I have distinguished, with examples taken from the poets who have generally been accused of committing the 'fallacy'. Let us try to reconstruct Wordsworth's attitude to each of four objects which are mentioned in some of his most familiar poems. Each of these objects represents one of the cases outlined above.

Case 1 is 'my couch' on which I lie thinking of daffodils. Case 2 is the 'violet by a mossy stone'. Case 3 is Tintern Abbey. Case 4 is Lucy. If my analysis is on the right lines, each of these examples represents an object which stood in a personal relation to the man Wordsworth, but in which he was aware of different degrees of individuality ranging from simple uniqueness to full personality.

It is perhaps the most important question in the philosophy of poetry to ask how it is that the poet communicates something of his intense consciousness of individuality in objects. When I spoke of communication in Chapter II, I said that the possibility of communication involves generality, since it

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depends on the possibility of description, and what is unique is not describable. But there, of course, I was speaking of literal communication of the type which is potentially scientific. Poetry, as we all know already, is quite a different medium of 'communication'. And it looks, from what I have just been saying about poetry, as if the poet is able to communicate his awareness of the unique. We can't go into the question very far, but we must at least note its relevance to the discussion between the two philosophers, A and B, on the 'communicability' of personality. There I suggested that the existence of a common object related in a personal relation to X and myself is a possible condition of such communicability. In rather the same way, I should suggest, the poet contrives to direct our attention to objects to which we stand in a personal relation. Of course, they need not be the identical objects. 'Tintern Abbey' may produce its effect on me, not because I have ever been to Tintern, but because I feel strongly about, say, Richmond Castle. This is because what the poet does is not so much to convey something of his personality, or even of his own emotions, but to provide scope for the play of our own emotions, called forth by the suggestion of our own personal relations to things. I like to think that Vergil had in mind something of this nature when he wrote the enigmatic words 'Sunt lacrimae rerum'.

§ 4 ARTIST, SCIENTIST, CRITIC AND PUBLIC

WHAT I have been saying about poetry applies to all forms of art. Art is a medium of communication which comes as near as is possible to the articulate expression of a unique personal experience. Art is essentially personal. Unlike the scientist, the artist cannot divide his time between his professional life and his personal life. Artistic activity is part and parcel of the dynamic process of living. Both

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inspiration and execution involve a personal relation. If I am inspired to paint by a certain object I perceive, such as a tree, my relation with that object will be the personal relation in which I am aware of its uniqueness and individuality; if it is a person, of his or her personality. My picture will be another object to which I stand in a similar personal relation, and it is in this relation, rather than the other, that the essentially artistic element of the situation lies. For, however strongly I feel about the tree, art requires not mere feeling but a creative activity, activated by the 'urge to paint'. Secondly, I may quite well write a poem or paint a picture without having been inspired by any actual particular object or person. The artistic feature of the case is my production of a new personal relation by the process of actually creating the object which is to stand to me in that relation.

It follows from this that, although art is a *means* of communication, it is not the *function* of art to communicate, as it is the function, for example, of scientific language to communicate. Artistic production does not entail appreciation; the artist does not demand a public, except incidentally. A picture is just as much a work of art whether or not anyone sees it, let alone appreciates or criticizes it; whereas a scientific treatise would not be what it is if it were not made public: for it is essential to the nature of science that its products should be not only communicable but communicated. Artistic production is more or less independent of criticism; in science, production and criticism are inseparable. An artist is not always a critic, and a critic is seldom an artist; but a scientist is always a critic, and a critic of scientific work necessarily a scientist. There are artists and critics, but there are not scientists and scientific critics. There are only scientists. This complete antithesis between art and science rests on the part played by the personal relation between the individual and what he has created. For art, the personal relation between the two is

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what constitutes the work as a work of art, whereas for science the personal relation between writer and work is irrelevant to the scientific aspect of the work. This is not to say that scientific work is not creative, but that the creative process in any particular scientific development is not science.

But a consideration of all the antithetical aspects of art and science is a much bigger job than we can undertake here. Something more will be said in the last chapter. Here all I need to point out is the importance of the personal relation between the artist and his work. For this provides us with a criterion of the 'genuineness' of works of art which is both more interesting philosophically and less open to dispute, obsolescence and alteration than any set of artistic canons. If there is a genuine and fully personal relation between the artist and his work, then the work is genuine art; if not, not. As test cases, we might take a fake Rembrandt and a kitchen chair. The kitchen chair is not a work of art, even if it was produced by one man, because that man did not produce it as an object individually created to stand in a unique personal relation to himself, but merely as the bearer of certain general properties belonging to the class of objects known as kitchen chairs. Similarly, the imitation Rembrandt is not a work of art, because it was produced not as a unique object, but as the bearer of certain properties belonging to a real Rembrandt, or to the class of real Rembrandts. Everyone knows that imitation can never be art; and the reason for this is simply that imitation means finding general properties in a unique object (whose uniqueness cannot, by definition, be reproduced) and reproducing them. This does not mean, of course, that works of art must not resemble one another. Obviously there could be no artistic canons at all, and no artistic criticism, if this were so. It means that the resemblance between one work of art and another (for instance, the resemblances of style between works of one artist, or between those of artists of the

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same school or period) are essentially a matter of appreciation, not of execution, and therefore irrelevant to the nature of the work as artistic. As soon as resemblance comes to be a matter of execution, we have imitation and not art.

§ 5 ARTIST AND TECHNICIAN

WE are familiar with the distinction between art and technique, between art and craft, between artist and artisan. The remarks I have been making are only an exposition of the assumptions underlying this common distinction, which is rightly felt to be fundamental to the understanding of art. Technique, skill, craftsmanship, are not art, because they are only the devising of means to ends; they involve general rules which can be learnt, general aptitudes which can be acquired and trained, general knowledge of the effects desired and of the various ways of obtaining them. All this reference to generality excludes such activities from the field of true art, which is essentially concerned with the concrete and the personal. The term 'useful arts' would be self-contradictory, if 'art' here meant *art*, which, of course, it doesn't: for art cannot be useful, that is, serve a purpose beyond itself. Of course, art cannot exist without technique; but technique can exist without art, for we can employ a means to an end and fail to achieve the end. Whether or not art exists depends on the presence of a genuine personal relation. This explains why we are not entirely satisfied with a picture or a poem until we know who painted or wrote it; conversely, we don't understand the personal life of the painter (in so far as the personal life can be understood at all by the public) until we have seen his pictures. For the one is essentially united with the other, through the personal relation.

It is often said that the Greeks achieved art but the Romans

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did not, they only imitated and debased the Greek originals and achieved nothing but mastery of technique. This is a facile distinction, easily disputable, and I am not going to discuss whether it is true or not. But the fact that this assertion is made is interesting in view of the assertions which are made about the characteristic temperaments of the two peoples. Not simply that the Greeks were more interested in personal situations and the Romans in the abstract: but rather that the Greek genius tended towards individualism in ethics and politics, and to philosophical speculation about man and the universe; while the Roman genius tended towards practical achievement in such fields as law, business, finance, military and civil organization, and the useful arts. Now the interesting and almost paradoxical thing is that, while the Greeks undoubtedly produced art, they did not understand it. They did not arrive at the vital distinction between art and technique, which is the first step towards the understanding of art. The same word, *techné*, which originally and literally means 'skill' or 'process of devising a means to an end', also means 'art'. The same word for 'craftsman' also means 'artist'. And there is no hint that the word came to have very different meanings. It is odd to reflect that Greek art flourished at a time when it existed only to satisfy a demand for ornamentation, not as an end in itself, and when, consequently, the personal relation of the artist to his work was less important than his skill in producing the required result. That his work is more personal, and more truly artistic, than that of his Roman successors is due partly to the difference of national temperament and partly to the fact that the Roman productions were designed not only for the purpose of ornamentation but also for the purpose of resembling the Greek originals, which removes them a stage further from genuine art. Restrictions on the artist are not all due to politicians and censors; they are due to conventions and prevailing tastes and the need to satisfy

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certain criteria. All these things interfere with the free personal relation between the artist and his work.

Further evidence that the Greeks did not understand art is found in the records of their attempts to understand it, such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, Longinus' *On the Sublime*, and certain passages in Plato's *Republic*. We can disregard the *Republic*, where there is an attempt not so much to understand art as to discredit and suppress it on political grounds. Other discussions (including those of Plato elsewhere, as in the *Symposium*) revolve round the concept of beauty, which is, even today, very commonly assumed to be the central nucleus, as it were, of any theory of art. The aim of the artist is to produce a beautiful object. Attempts are made to define beauty; references are made to proportion, symmetry, and other qualities. Canons are formulated. Such attempts to reach a general definition must be at once dismissed as futile, at any rate from the point of view I have taken up on the essential concreteness of artistic production. They belong only to the appreciative side of art, not to the productive or executive side. And even on the appreciative side, I am inclined to dismiss the concept of beauty as valueless. To claim that a work of art embodies beauty is to claim at once too much and too little. Too much, because a work of art may not be beautiful; too little, because other things may be beautiful too. I do not find Epstein's *Lucifer* beautiful, although it strikes me most emphatically as a work of art. The view of the Vale of Evesham from Broadway Hill is not a work of art, but I find it beautiful. Perhaps I am using 'beautiful' in a loose and popular sense. But this is just my point. Beauty is much too vague a concept to be of any practical use in describing works of art. The relation between a work of art and the spectator is much too complex and variable to be describable by any single word, however carefully and comprehensively defined. For it is, like the relation between the work of art and the artist, a personal relation.

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Art is an immense subject, and I cannot hope to give even a summary of an aesthetic theory in so short a space. Probably I have only succeeded in raising some angry protests; but I wished to follow up, in broad outline, into the aesthetic field what I believe to be the logical consequences of my account of personality. It seems to me that there is a striking agreement between the logical consequences and the actual behaviour of artists and critics. What is not so striking is the agreement with the actual behaviour of ordinary people. The reason for this is not that the agreement is less close, but that it is less obvious. Artists are conspicuous people; their behaviour calls for special comment; we have theories of art, and a theory is something we can examine to see how it compares with another theory, such as the logical one I have been developing. But ordinary people are not conspicuous — if they were, they would cease to be ordinary; their behaviour does not call for special comment — it is the standard in the light of which comments are made on other behaviour; and although there are theories of artistic behaviour, there are no theories of unartistic behaviour. For there is no simple contrast between the artistic and the unartistic. People are not divided into two distinct classes, artists and non-artists. So-called artists are only people whose artistic faculties are unusually highly developed.

All that I have said about personality in relation to the artist, then, will apply also to the ordinary man. But there are difficulties in seeing how it does, and I shall devote a short section to these.

§ 6 THE PERVASIVENESS OF PERSONALITY

I WANT, then, to try to find an answer to the question I raised earlier: why does it seem to be so difficult to talk about individuality, especially about the individuality of non-personal objects? One difficulty is the prevalence of

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the 'cognitive-emotional' heresy, about which enough has been said. I think another important difficulty arises because by far the greater part of our activity is concerned with physical objects not as individuals but as bearers of properties. We deal with most of the objects around us as objects to be manipulated for some particular purpose. When we are interested in things as things to be used, we are not interested in them for their own sakes. This point has been well brought out by Macmurray (*Interpreting the Universe*, chap. iv), one of the few philosophers who have attempted to fit the concept of personality into a consistent and systematic scheme. Now if there is an antithesis between interest in a thing for its own sake, and interest in it as a means to an end, then I agree that there is a corresponding antithesis between regarding it as an individual and regarding it as the bearer of general properties. And this is the antithesis I have been expounding at some length already: it is the antithesis between the concreteness of things and the abstractness of thought. Macmurray doesn't, however, follow up the hint he dropped that we *can* be interested in an object for its own sake, except when that object is a person (chap. vi). He observes, rightly enough, that the recognition of personality in persons is possible only so long as we are interested in them for their own sake: in so far as we are interested in making use of them, we are not recognizing their personalities (which are unique) but only some quality or other, which is a general property. And here I am tempted to refer, by way of parenthesis, to one of the specimen questions I quoted in Chapter 1. The crucial failure of Aristotle's account of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* lies in his ignoring this very point. He appears to base friendship not on a unique personal relation, but on the presence of certain general desirable properties such as intellect and other neatly classified virtues. He thus fails to distinguish between friendship and mutual admiration,

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which is a very different thing. The difference corresponds to my distinction between awareness of concrete personality and awareness of general features abstracted from the personal situation.

Macmurray fails, however, to extend his illuminating observations to the field of non-personal objects. He does not discuss artistic activity, which I regard as the paramount example of an activity concerned with objects for their own sakes. 'The main business of thought,' he says (p. 149), '... is still the task of understanding and controlling matter.' This is just an example of the difficulty of discussing the individuality of non-personal objects. Discussion and thought mean using language; language is closely related to the practical needs of living, and these are, no doubt, very largely the needs of manipulating objects, or controlling matter. These needs give rise to a language primarily fitted for dealing with the general properties of things. But there is no need to conclude that, if anyone is concerned with the individuality of things, he is either a poet or a mystic. We are all concerned with individuality. Attention to the main business of thought need not blind us to secondary matters.

And indeed, if we paid less attention to the language of the established sciences, and more to work in theology, mysticism, theory of art, and the like, we should hesitate to call these 'secondary' matters. We should, I think, hesitate even if we paid more attention to ordinary life and less to literature — to vulgar instead of to literary language. For ordinary life and language is concerned very deeply with personal relations. Language is more abstract than life, and book language is more abstract than chatter, gossip, and other forms of everyday talking. This is because books are written for certain purposes, to instruct or to entertain. Those that instruct, such as textbooks of chemistry, must necessarily be of a high order of generality. Those that entertain, such as novels, come much closer to particularity,

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since they attempt to reproduce the conditions of ordinary life. But no representation of life has the uniqueness and individuality of life itself. In some novels, for instance, the characters are all 'types'. In others they are real individuals, and in such cases the writing is art and not merely entertainment. The author has succeeded, like the poet I discussed at the end of Section 3, in conveying something of his own experience of personal relations. But novels are not poetry, and most of us still expect them to contain, in addition to the spoken parts, passages of descriptive writing where the author tells us what is going on. Such language is, of course, of the 'informative' type, and therefore abstract. It is true that some modern novelists regard the occurrence of such language as an artistic flaw, and try to avoid it, either by omitting such passages altogether, leaving the whole work in inverted commas, or else by replacing them with language of a distinctly poetic character. The first type is nearly exemplified by Miss Compton Burnett; the second by James Joyce. In such works the distinction between novel and poetry becomes harder to draw; there is a deliberate attempt to give up the traditional informative type of language, or to infuse into it a more dynamic quality; and the difficulty which many people experience in responding to these attempts is due to the inertia of our customary attachment to the use of abstract language. For the same reason, it is generally hard to grasp, on the intellectual level, just how deeply permeated with personality ordinary life is.

This is the same difficulty as I mentioned at the beginning of the section. Most people know roughly what is meant by the abstract and the concrete. Ideas are abstract, real things and persons are concrete. Some people have even attempted to estimate the relative importance of these two sides of life in the life of particular individuals, or of types of people. Some psychologists, for instance, think that there

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is a characteristic difference between the sexes on this point; they think that women tend to be more interested than men in the concrete and less than men in the abstract; this difference is then supposed to favour the employment of women in positions calling for tact and other qualities required in the handling of personal situations, and men in positions calling for the handling of ideas and principles. And it is certainly true that there are some women, and men too, of whom it could be said that they have scarcely ever entertained an abstract idea. For such people, personal relations are not merely important, they are the only thing in life. There is an obvious reminder here of what we were saying about the ubiquity of personal relations in the world of primitive man.

There is, however, another point on which Macmurray is, I think, definitely misleading, and which I cannot help regarding as an example of the danger of system-building. This is his reference to 'infinite personality'. It is clear that my own account of personality makes it impossible to attach any meaning to the term 'infinite' in connection with personality. Every person has personality in virtue of the personal relation in which he stands to others. There is no question of finiteness or infinity, because the notion of a limit is, as far as my account goes, just not appropriate. Its use could only be figurative, rather as the use of 'infinite' in expressions like 'infinite patience' is a figurative use replacing a literal superlative. In such a sense we might use 'infinite' to emphasize the very great complexity of the personal relation between person and person. But if there is also a literal and intelligible use of 'infinite' as applied to personality, there must be an aspect or aspects of personality which lie outside my analysis. And, of course, I have not denied that there are. But Macmurray is misleading because he implies that the sort of thinking in which it does make sense to speak literally of infinite personality is the same sort

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of thinking in which we think about mathematics or biology. He says that the concept of personality necessarily entails the concept of infinite personality, just as the mathematical concept of number, or of measurement, entails the concept of infinite number or infinite space or infinite time, and just as the biological concept of life entails (through the fact of reproduction) the concept of infinite life. Thus the parallel infinities are an essential part of the system co-ordinating these three fields, the material, the biological and the personal. No doubt such a co-ordination is desirable; but is there any independent evidence that personality can be brought into line in this way?

Macmurray has another use for the notion of infinite personality. He wishes to identify the 'infinite personality' with the Deity. We have to note, then, that there are, or may be, aspects of personality which my account has not touched, and of which the theological aspect is one. (I have also mentioned, elsewhere, the psychical aspect.) But we must be careful to keep these aspects distinctly separate, unless good reason is shown for treating them as identical; and I don't think Macmurray has shown good reason. I also think that, if he had, the consequence of identifying the 'infinite personality' with God would be a kind of pantheism. Perhaps that opinion is due to my preoccupation with the pervasiveness of personal relations in the world of our experience. In any case, the development of this point would take us too far afield.

VIII

PERSONALITY AND ETHICS

FOREWORD: DOES PERSONALITY RAISE MORAL QUESTIONS?

WE can no longer avoid discussing the relation between personality and morality. Several considerations force us to face this question. One arises directly out of what I said in the final section of the last chapter. I made the point that awareness of individuality occurs only when we attend to an object for its own sake and not as a means to an end. This was merely a generalization of a view that was already familiar in connection with personal relations between persons and persons, namely the view that awareness of personality occurs only when we treat human beings as objects of interest in themselves rather than as means to ends. Now this immediately raises an ethical question, because it reminds us of the fact that most of us think we *ought* to treat human beings in this way and not as instruments to serve our purposes. In so thinking we are following Kant. One of the principles of his *Metaphysic of Morals* is that we ought to treat human beings as ends and not merely as means. But as soon as we begin to consider, not merely two possible ways of treating human beings, but also the question whether we ought to treat them in the one way rather than in the other, we are on ethical ground.

Another consideration is this. A person is an individual, but individuals are not independent of each other. Not only are they tied to each other by their personal relations; they are also tied by extra-personal relations, such as political ones, imposed on them by the societies in which they happen

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to live. The nature of these politically-imposed extra-personal relations varies from one society to another. One society, for instance, may be called relatively 'free', another 'totalitarian'. The degree to which the interests of the individual are subordinated to those of the society in general, or to those of more powerful individuals, provides a criterion according to which a society may be judged good or bad. Here again, then, the concept of personality seems to be raising ethical considerations. And this is clearly connected with the first point; for one of these types of society tends to exemplify Kant's moral views, for instance, while the other tends to exemplify Nietzsche's.

Thirdly, there is the fact that, so far, we have been taking a comprehensive view of individuals as objects of scientific study. This was especially evident in Chapter v, but it has been implicit all along. I have spoken a good deal of behaviour, awareness, consciousness, activity and so on, but very little of *action*. Now morality is essentially concerned with the actions of individual people, which we have so far ignored. I spoke of awareness of personality, personal relations and emotions arising out of such relations, but not of the actions to which such emotions may give rise. I shall deal with this point first, because it is the fundamental one and because it leads to a rather surprising conclusion. I shall state the conclusion first, and then give the reasons for it.

§ I THE AMORALITY OF PERSONAL RELATIONS

PERSONAL relations are, literally speaking, amoral. If this appears unacceptable, it is very likely because the word 'amoral' is so often associated with the word 'immoral' that it has acquired an emotional tone of disparagement. What is meant by saying that personal relations are amoral

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is that moral questions do not occur within the framework of the personal relation, although they may arise out of it. To see what this means and why it is true, we must see how moral questions do arise.

1. *Morality involves Abstraction*

A moral problem is always a practical problem. It is always a question of making up one's mind to a certain course of action. There are, indeed, second-order moral problems concerned with the acceptance or rejection of general moral codes, but even these are practical problems in that they involve an intellectual decision committing me to certain kinds of action in future contingencies. Now the essential difference between an amoral action and a moral action is the difference between acting in a certain way and making up one's mind to act in that way. Of course, I am not saying that every deliberate action is necessarily a moral action. There are plenty of deliberate actions which are not moral. If I am making a table, I may give a great deal of thought to the problem and finally make up my mind to saw a piece of wood in one way rather than another. I am not prepared to say at this point just why such an action is not moral. We shall come to that in the course of the chapter. All I am saying here is that every moral action is a case of making up one's mind, not that every case of making up one's mind is a moral action.

Making up one's mind involves reflection and debate, whether with others or with oneself. Reflection and debate, in turn, imply an attention to the general features of the case. Here the example of the piece of wood will help instead of hinder. If I am a skilled carpenter, I may go on working at the table without thinking about it. We are often able to perform some habitual activity while thinking of something quite different, or of nothing at all. But if my automatic activity comes to a stop because of a difficulty,

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however slight, I am forced to reflect on the situation in order to find a way out. Should I saw the wood this way or that? Will it be long enough this way, or strong enough that way? My reflection and debate is concerned with the relevant general features of the situation, such as the length of table legs and the rigidity of wood. I am no longer behaving merely as a living organism in a fully concrete situation, operating on its environment, but as a human being acting in a partially abstract situation, using its intelligence for the conscious purpose of controlling its environment. Or suppose I have suddenly been faced with the problem of getting more money. I shall be forced to draw on my stock of knowledge, which must by definition be knowledge of the abstract, about various possible sources of revenue, their general features and my own general capacities. In all such cases where reflective thinking occurs in practical life, it occurs because an unreflective activity has come to a stop and cannot be resumed until reflection has provided a solution to the practical problem.

Now unreflective activity goes on in a fully concrete situation, whereas reflection immediately involves awareness of the abstract. It follows that where reflection occurs as a result of a problem arising out of a fully personal situation, it introduces abstractness and the situation ceases to be fully personal. This is what happens when moral problems arise out of a personal situation. The situation ceases to be a fully personal one to just the extent that it has become a moral one.

Let us take a simple case. Suppose one evening I want to read a book and my wife wants me to go with her to the cinema. Suppose, further, that I go to the cinema. This result is not the simple action it seems, but is one of at least three possible courses of action. I may go because, when I hear that my wife wants to go, I genuinely want to go too. Secondly, I may go because, although I prefer reading a certain book to watching a certain film, nevertheless I

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genuinely want to please my wife more than I want to read the book. In neither of these cases is the action moral. Each is a case of one desire overcoming another. But in the third case, I may go because, although I prefer reading the book to watching the film and even, as far as my pleasure is concerned, and on this particular occasion, to pleasing my wife, nevertheless I think that I *ought* to please her.

Or suppose a man asks me for a match, and I know I have only one match. Again, my giving the match is any one of several possible actions. I may offer the match without thinking of what I am doing, but simply reacting to a familiar stimulus in a habitual way. Or I may offer the match, knowing that this will put me to some personal inconvenience, but not caring, as I just 'feel like' doing the man this slight service. Or, thirdly, I may stop to think what I am going to do, and offer the match only after I have weighed up the respective merits of the two alternatives before me, and decided to choose service to a stranger rather than my own personal convenience. In this case, and in this case only, my action is moral; I think I *ought* to disregard my personal convenience.

What happens, when I am forced to reflect on what I ought to do, is that I have to abstract from the concrete situation certain general features. Instead of just acting, I have to regard my proposed action as an action of a certain kind, as an instance of a certain class of actions which are all of the same type, such as 'pleasing my wife' or 'disregarding my personal convenience'. But I have to do much more than this. Firstly, I have to abstract not only the proposed action, but also the relevant features of the situation prior to action. Before I can decide that my proposed action is of a certain type, I must have decided that the circumstances in which it is to be performed are of a certain type; for no action can be described, for ethical purposes at any rate, without taking account of the circumstances. 'Pleasing my

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wife', for example, is quite inadequate as a description of a type of action. Pleasing my wife may be a good action in some circumstances, but a bad one in others. Only the most extremely uxorious husband could contemplate pleasing his wife under absolutely all circumstances whatever; only an extreme ascetic could contemplate disregarding his personal comfort and convenience in every conceivable case. In normal cases where I think I ought to do something, I must and do take account of the circumstances. In my first example, I think I ought to please my wife, not simply because she is my wife (which is true in all possible circumstances barring death, divorce, etc.) but because, let us say, we have decided that she shall choose our entertainment on her free evenings, or because this is the last opportunity she has of seeing a film which I have recommended — which are particular circumstances that might easily be different. In the second example, I think that I ought to disregard my personal convenience, in the circumstances; but if circumstances were slightly different (if matches were very scarce) I might think I ought not. Action and circumstances are so closely united that any attempt to separate them and consider them independently involves a misrepresentation of the facts. This fallacy, incidentally, has led to endless confusion in ethics. An action cannot be described, for ethical purposes at least, without describing the circumstances. Similarly the circumstances of any moral situation cannot be described until we know to what kind of action they are relevant.

It will be seen that this view excludes the possibility of absolute moral obligation. There is nothing which we absolutely ought to do, or ought not to do. For if there were, it would have to be possible to describe the action independently of the circumstances, and to say: 'You ought (or ought not) to do this in all circumstances whatever.' Plato's *Republic* starts with a refutation of such a position. He shows

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that it is self-contradictory to assert that we ought always to keep a promise, or to tell the truth. He does this by finding examples in which we should not feel obliged at all to tell the truth or to keep a promise, but, on the contrary, to utter falsehood and withhold fulfilment. The fundamental truth underlying this refutation is the point I have been making; that an action cannot be described independently of the circumstances. 'Telling the truth' does not describe a type of action in such a way that we can at once recommend it without further qualification. For the only feature in which one case of telling the truth resembles another is, obviously, the utterance of true statements: and this is not nearly enough for ethical purposes. To think that it is would be like thinking that, since cooking fat and petroleum are both oils, they are both suitable for frying chipped potatoes.

So, although we may, with good reason, recommend to children the practice of truth-telling without specifying the circumstances, in adult life there are all sorts of rules of tact and courtesy which are constantly reminding us that we ought not to tell the truth in these circumstances or those. There are no absolute positive moral rules. With absolute negative moral rules (what you ought not to do) the case is much the same. Of the Ten Commandments only two are really commandments; the rest are prohibitions, all in the absolute style. But if we take any one of them, such as 'Thou shalt not kill', we soon see that, although expressed absolutely, they are hardly ever taken to be *understood* absolutely, that is, without reference to the circumstances. Otherwise this prohibition would make it immoral to kill enemy soldiers or to execute criminals. It is no use saying that the rule has exceptions; because the exceptions can only be defined by reference to certain special circumstances, and then the rule ceases to be absolute. What we have to say is that this rule, like the others, is a summary, so laconic as to be of little practical use, of very various types of action,

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some of which are prohibited and some not. What is prohibited is not killing as such, but unlawful killing. But in order to find out which killings are lawful and which are not, we have to attend to the particular legal or moral system in force in a particular society. Executing criminals is enjoined in some legal systems, but not in others. Killing enemy soldiers is moral for some people, but immoral for pacifists.

Thus there are no absolute moral obligations. Formulations of absolute obligations, such as 'Thou shall not kill' or 'Always tell the truth' are cases of the process of abstraction outrunning the limits of practicality. Practical ethics, as I have been saying, involves reflection on the general features of a problem situation, including as an essential element the circumstances of the possible actions. In the 'match' example, there are several features I had to take account of, such as the general availability of matches, the probable feelings of a frustrated smoker, the presence of a Non-Smoking notice; and several features I need not take account of, such as the colour of the man's eyes, the time of day, the passers-by — even though I may have been keenly interested in these before the situation became a moral one. The first set of circumstances is morally relevant, the second set is not. This is the ordinary process of abstraction, consisting of the isolation of certain features of a situation as relevant for a certain purpose, and the ignoring of the rest. But the more closely a moral obligation approaches the absolute, the fewer are the circumstances of any given situation that can be enumerated in the first set, and the more that will occur in the second set; until absolute moral obligation involves relegating to the second (irrelevant) set all circumstances whatever, except the bare fact of truth-telling, or whatever it may be. The absolute moral obligation is the furthest removed (and, as I hold, impossibly removed) from the personal situation.

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2. *Morality involves Generalization*

This is one way, then, in which a moral action implies a situation which is not fully personal, the essentially moral aspect corresponding to the non-personal element. Reflection on what I ought to do involves a consideration of my action as a certain kind of action, and of the situation as a set of circumstances of a certain type. But there is another important way in which the moral situation ceases to be personal. It is not enough to classify my proposed action as an instance of 'pleasing my wife' or 'disregarding my personal convenience'. It must be classified as an instance of 'pleasing one's wife' or 'disregarding one's personal convenience'. There is a generalization, from a particular action of mine, not only to a class of similar actions regarded as actions performed by me, but also to a much wider class of actions regarded as actions performed by *anybody*. Whenever I think that I ought to do something, it is essential to the moral nature of the case that I think that anybody else, in the same circumstances, would be under the same obligation. If I decide that I ought to give the match, it is because the circumstances are such that I judge that anybody else would have been equally obliged to do so. We cannot act morally as long as we regard ourselves as occupying any sort of privileged or under-privileged position. To do so is to commit the ethical fallacy of special pleading.

It is important to notice that I am only analysing our actual behaviour, not recommending anything. I am not saying that we *ought* to generalize our actions when we are faced with a moral problem; I am not saying that we shall best solve our moral problems by considering how we would wish other people to behave in similar circumstances. All I am saying is that, whenever we reflect morally on our proposed actions, we actually do extend the class of actions to include every possible agent. If we didn't, our reflections wouldn't be moral reflections. In this my position differs

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from Kant's, which is otherwise rather similar. Kant said that we ought always to act in such a way that we could wish our action to become a universal law. Kant uses the language of legislation, which I do not find helpful. We can amend the statement of his principle, to the effect that we ought to act in such a way that we could say that anyone else ought so to act. There is now only one difference between his position and mine. I say, not that we ought to act in this way, but that, when we act morally, we cannot help acting in this way.

This, then, is the second reason why a moral action is impersonal. It is not an action performed unthinkingly; it is not even an action performed in the consciousness that it is similar to other actions of mine in the past or possible actions of mine in the future; it is an action performed as an instance of a type of action performed by anybody whatsoever, in the same relevant circumstances.

§ 2 THE RELATION BETWEEN MORAL SITUATIONS AND PERSONAL SITUATIONS

IT may not appear strictly to the point here to try to define a moral action, since all that concerns us is to see whether a moral action can occur in a fully personal situation, or whether moral situations are quite different from personal ones. We have partly answered this question, but I think it is worth while going on to discuss briefly what it is that makes a problem a moral problem, since this will help to complete our answer.

1. *Have Moral Situations any common features?*

We noticed that every case of a moral problem involves reflection on a proposed course of action, but that the converse was not true. The problem of sawing a piece of wood involved reflection, but was not moral. Why not? I

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want to ward off the temptation of trying to answer the question, why some problems are moral and some not, by looking at the characteristics of the situations considered objectively. There is no ascertainable factor or factors, the presence of which in a situation makes it necessary for me to regard that situation as a moral one. There are, indeed, plenty of discoverable differences between the non-moral situation of the wood-sawing type and the moral situations of the taking-wife-to-cinema or offering-match-to-stranger type; but there is no universal general difference which would serve as a defining characteristic. For example, it might be suggested that the wood-sawing situation is merely a technical problem, a problem, that is, about alternative means to a given practical end. But means to practical ends do sometimes give rise to moral problems, as we saw in the case of Hiroshima. We often ask whether, in any particular situation, the end justifies the means. This is a moral question. Again, it might be suggested that the wood-sawing situation does not involve another person. But this isn't enough either. We may think that a man ought not to take harmful drugs, even though they harm no one but himself. So a moral situation does not necessarily involve a person other than the agent.

I think this kind of attempt to define a moral action must be described as a case of something very like the 'cognitive-emotional heresy'. We met the original heresy in the form of a hard and fast distinction between 'cognitive' awareness of a situation and my 'emotional' attitude to the situation as 'cognized'. We are now, I think, dealing with an attempt to treat a moral situation in this way; to find 'cognitive' characteristics of a situation which tend to determine my attitude to it as a specifically moral attitude. The only difference is that a moral attitude is not necessarily an emotional attitude. (Some philosophers, indeed, think that it is. I shall have more to say about them soon. But if they

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were right, the resemblance would be complete.) Now in Chapter VII, I criticized the view that cognitive awareness of a situation tends to determine my attitude to it; I held that it was a complete mistake to suppose that knowledge of someone's pain, for instance, is what determines my attitude as pity, or sympathetic emotion. Knowledge and emotion, I pointed out, are two inseparable aspects of a single dynamic experience. In the same way, here, I have to hold that it is a complete mistake to suppose that awareness of certain characteristics of a situation is what determines my attitude as moral. On the contrary, my awareness of the objective features of the situation, and my attitude to it, are inseparable aspects of a single moral experience.

But, although it is true that there is no common factor among the objective features of different moral situations, this is true only so long as I fail to regard myself and my own attitude as part of the objective situation. And, in order to perform a moral action, I do not need to do so. There is a great difference between acting morally and talking about morality. We have already met the difference between behaviour and the understanding of behaviour. It is only when I want, not merely to act morally, but to know that I have acted morally, to consider myself as acting morally or non-morally, or in general to *understand* morality, that I need to regard the situation from a wider angle. From this angle the distinction between objective and subjective is superseded. When I performed a moral action in pleasing my wife or giving the match, my action, being moral, was carried out after considering the general circumstances and regarding my proposed action as an action of a certain type performed by anyone whatsoever. But when I reflect critically on my action, trying to decide whether it *was* moral, and, if so, what there was about it that was not present in the wood-sawing situation, then I have to include myself, and my thoughts and feelings, as part of the total situation.

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For it is only in this, the so-called 'subjective' element, that we can really find a factor common to all moral situations, and, hence, a successful outcome for the attempt to define a moral action. This procedure will be quite in line with our general method of analysing what people actually do, rather than attending only to what they say or think or perceive. Whenever they act morally, then, they do adopt a characteristic moral attitude.

2. The basic Moral Attitudes are Approval and Disapproval

It only remains to define this attitude, or, rather, these attitudes, for there are two. They are those of approval and disapproval. What I, or anyone else, ought to do is what I approve of. What ought not to be done is what I disapprove of. (It is perhaps worth noticing that these two attitudes are not simply opposites, but are complementary. True, to approve of something is very often equivalent to disapproving of something else, namely, the opposite or the negation of the first thing; but not always. To disapprove of football pools is not necessarily to approve of something else. And there are certain characters who disapprove of nearly everything without approving of very much at all.) We cannot reach anything more fundamental than approval and disapproval. If I am asked why I approve of something, I can only say one of two things. One is that I approve of it because I approve or disapprove of something else (something, for instance, to which the first thing is a means): for example, I may approve of euthanasia because I disapprove of the prolongation of hopeless suffering. Secondly, I may have to say: 'I can't say why I approve (or disapprove) of it: I just do.' Thus I may say this if I am asked again about euthanasia, why I disapprove of the prolongation of hopeless suffering; or if I am asked why I approve of democracy, or of the freedom of science. In both cases, it is clear that approval and disapproval are fundamental. A third

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possible answer, by invoking authority, is really only a case of the first answer. 'I approve of this because it is the will of God' or 'because it is the order of the government' is only equivalent to 'I approve of this because I approve of doing the will of God' or 'because I approve of obeying the government'. And questioning this, in turn, can only lead again to similar answers, of the first type, until the series is finally closed with an answer of the second type. No one is likely to be able to say *why* he approves of doing the will of God. I may very well be able to say why I approve of obeying the government, or the Communist Party, but even here I very soon fetch up against fundamentals.

A moral action, then, is one which involves reflection on the proposed action as an action of a certain type, together with an attitude of approval towards that sort of action, in circumstances of that sort. It should be even clearer if we accept this additional condition, why a personal situation cannot be a moral one. Approval and disapproval are attitudes that cannot occur within a personal situation, for they very definitely involve generality. A particular action can only be approved or disapproved as an instance of a certain type. I cannot approve of an action of mine without approving of a possible similar action by someone else; likewise I cannot approve of someone else's action unless I am prepared to approve of myself doing it. There is no minding your own business in ethics: a moral being is bound to pass judgment on other people's actions.

3. *Refutation of the 'Emotive' Theory of Ethics*

From this point of view, it appears quite extraordinary that certain philosophers should have claimed to identify the moral attitude with an 'emotional' attitude. Approval is not an emotion, although approval, and especially disapproval, may very often be accompanied by quite powerful emotions such as enthusiasm, anger, or hatred. Emotions

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can and do occur in fully personal situations. It is true that, in order to know whether I am experiencing a certain emotion, I have to step out of the personal situation and consider the general features of my mental state; but I certainly do not need to do this in order to *have* the emotion. On the other hand, I cannot have the attitude of approval or disapproval without going even further than this from the personal situation into the field of generality. I can have an emotion without knowing it (so long as 'knowing' is not merely synonymous with 'feeling'), but I cannot have approval without knowing it. Approval and disapproval are intellectual attitudes.

Further proof, if any were required, that approval is not an emotion, is that when I approve or disapprove of something, I commit myself to a future policy of conduct. If I just like the thing or dislike it, I do not so commit myself. Likes and dislikes, and emotions generally, are notoriously unreliable; we cannot attempt to control them in advance, we cannot decide what we are going to feel in the future. What we can and do try to control in advance, since we are rational beings, are our actions. But this attempt, if successful, must inevitably involve some conflict with the emotions; if unsuccessful, we shall live by mere whim and caprice. Since we do not wish to live in this way, we do make a more or less successful effort to plan our lives, to control our future actions by making them conform to some scheme or pattern elaborated beforehand. 'Elaborated' is perhaps too strong a word; very few of us achieve a complete system of rules at one sitting; the elements come piecemeal, many of them carried over from childhood, others created by decisions taken at critical moments. But however the pattern is produced, the fact that it exists means that sooner or later we find ourselves doing what we do not want to do and not doing what we want to do. In such cases we are experiencing the conflict between obligation and desire or

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comfort or convenience or interest. Sometimes, of course, we are tempted and yield. But what matters is that we have standards, not that we sometimes fail to live up to them. Such standards are the things we approve of. In approving of something, I commit myself just as I do when I sign a contract, and for the same reason. For if I subsequently break a contract, I am accused of unreliability. If I disapprove of public schools, but subsequently send my son to one, I am accused of inconsistency, which is exactly the same thing. But no one expects consistency in emotions. If I am fond of cream cakes, and later come to dislike them, this is treated as a curious fact, but not a reprehensible one. If moral attitudes were emotions, it would be absurd to expect moral consistency; but without consistency there can be no morality.

4. Moral Relations and Moral Obligations

So far I have been discussing the amorality of personal relations in a rather general way, as a consequence of my conclusions on the nature of moral problems. I think the point can be put rather less abstractly if we see what kind of relations between human beings do yield the possibility of moral relations, and how they differ from the personal relation. To begin with, there are all sorts of relations which exist between human beings; there are some into which we enter voluntarily, whereas others are involuntary. I enter into a voluntary relation with other persons when I make a promise, sign a contract, marry, engage a servant, join the army. Now if we want to define the relations which are set up between myself and others, when I do any of these things, we see that this can only be done in terms of the obligations incurred. The difference between marriage and personal intimacy is that in marriage certain definite obligations are incurred. When I join the army, I automatically place myself in a position of owing obedience to certain

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authorities. Again, the relation between me and them cannot be defined except in terms of these obligations. The relation between officer and soldier, for instance, is such that the soldier is obliged to obey and (what is the other side of the same coin) the officer has the right to obedience. What defines this particular relation is that the officer has the right to obedience from a soldier, but not from a civilian; and that his right to obedience from the soldier is itself strictly limited in such a way that he can, say, order the soldier to dig a trench but not to give him money.

Now my entering into a relation of this kind means that I am committing myself to a certain line of conduct. It is committing myself. Consequently it is nonsense to ask, later on, such questions as: 'Ought I to obey my officer?' — 'Ought I to support my wife?' — 'Ought I to fulfil my contract?' — 'Ought I to keep my promise?' Because, unless I am genuinely in doubt as to what obligations I have incurred, which is a question of fact, the only possible answer is that of course I ought. Having put myself under a certain obligation, I cannot very well question whether I *am* under that obligation; for of course I am. The point would not be worth making, except that a surprising number of moral philosophers have thought it quite sensible to ask, for example, whether we ought to fulfil promises. A person who asks a question of this sort is not really asking for information as to what his duties are — what he ought or ought not to do. He is asking for advice on the practical problem of deciding whether to do what he ought to do or not to do it. And this is a very different question. When Hamlet asked himself 'To be or not to be?' he was not asking whether there was a duty to refrain from committing suicide; he was trying to help himself to decide whether to act in accordance with this duty or in spite of it.

Now a promise just is an obligation, or a duty, and fulfilling it just is something we ought to do. There can be

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no question *whether* we ought. This does not mean, however, that we shall have acted rightly in fulfilling it in all possible circumstances. There may well be a prior obligation to do something else, such as to save someone's life; and if this is something we could not do if we kept our promise, we shall not be acting rightly in keeping the promise, even though there is no doubt that we are under an obligation to keep it. To ask 'Ought I to keep my promise?' is never to ask 'Am I under an obligation to keep my promise?' for this is a nonsense-question; the only possible answer is 'yes'; if I were not under an obligation, there would not *be* a promise. To ask 'Ought I to keep my promise?' is, rather, to ask 'Is there anything else which I ought rather to do?' such as to fulfil a prior and conflicting obligation to save life. Or else, if there is no such prior and conflicting obligation, to ask the question can only be to ask for help in deciding whether to keep my promise or not — if, for instance, I am tempted to retain a borrowed book. In that case, there is no simple answer 'yes' or 'no'. If I keep my promise, I shall have acted morally; if I break it, I shall have acted immorally, and that is all there is to it. There are obligations and duties, but there are no obligations to fulfil our obligations, or a duty to do our duty. It is my duty, or my obligation, to do some particular thing. To ask whether I also have a further duty, namely, the duty to do my duty, is to ask 'Am I obliged to do whatever I am obliged to do?'

Another reason why I have made this rather obvious point is that I want to stress the very close connection, amounting in some cases to complete identity, between relation and obligation. Suppose I have entered into a contract with someone; suppose, further, that he fails to fulfil his part of the contract and I am released from my obligation. The contract is annulled. This has happened because my partner has, by his act of omission, repudiated both the obligation and the contractual relation between

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us. It is not that his failure entitles me, by a sort of retaliatory justice, to refrain from carrying out my part of the bargain. It is simply that the relation between us is nothing more than the set of mutual obligations, and that the repudiation of the one automatically repudiates the other. There is no question of retaliation. It is exactly like a game of billiards, in which both parties have tacitly contracted to obey the rules. If one of them deliberately and persistently handles the balls, the game is automatically at an end; because a game involves two parties, and one of them is quite literally 'not playing the game'. The second player is then released from his obligation to obey the rules; and this means, not that he retaliates by disobeying the rules, but that he acknowledges the end of the tacit contract to play a game of billiards.

Of course, there are apparent exceptions. Disobedience in the army does not automatically lead to demobilization. But this is due to extraneous causes; the army authorities, like those of other organizations, find it necessary, for reasons which do not concern us here, to use coercion to remind a soldier of the obligations he once voluntarily incurred. There are also apparent exceptions in the case of involuntary relations — those into which I do not enter freely, such as the relation of child to parents, or of citizen to state. Are the obligations incurred in these cases involuntary? Can I be under an obligation which I do not freely accept? The answer is that I cannot. I can never be obliged to do anything I do not approve of: and approval is necessarily voluntary. But does not this upset my view that moral obligations are inseparable from relations between people? Not at all. Although I cannot help being the child of my parents, I am entirely free to decide what obligations I owe them, because the relation of child to parent, in the sense in which it is an unalterable fact, is a biological and not a moral relation. If I decide that I owe my parents no obligations whatever, I am repudiating the existence of a moral relation. If I

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decide that I ought to visit them once a year, I am affirming the existence of one. To take a rather different case: it might seem that my relations with the West African natives, none of whom I know personally, are unalterable, such as they are, but that nevertheless I may think either that I ought to finance missionaries or that I ought not. But, again, although my geographical relations are unalterable, except by travel, my moral relations are not. If I think that I ought to finance missionaries, this act will determine my relations with the natives as the relation between, say, the enlightened and the unenlightened, with its corresponding obligations of enlightenment. If I decide that I ought not, my moral relation will be different; if I decide that I am quite indifferent, it will be non-existent.

A third apparent exception to the rule that moral obligations are always closely connected with relations between people is that I may feel an obligation to 'do good generally' or to 'promote the general happiness'. Indeed, the Utilitarian moral philosophers thought that every morally good action was an action designed to promote the general happiness. But the only relation in which I can stand to the whole human race is the relation between one human being and the class of human beings, which is a logical relation of class-membership carrying no intrinsic moral obligation. If I choose to assert the existence of a moral relation between myself and the whole of humanity, I shall be committing the same error of over-generalization which I mentioned when discussing absolute moral obligation. I shall be proposing to ignore all factors of any possible situations except the mere fact of humanity, a fact which, like truth-telling, is too abstract to be of use for practical ethics. The practical difficulties of a thorough-going Utilitarianism are, of course, enormous. But they are all avoided by the view that there are no moral obligations to persons with whom I have not entered into a voluntary moral relation.

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But a relation into which I enter voluntarily must necessarily be a relation of a certain kind, it cannot be unique; its being voluntary entails that I am conscious of what kind of relation it is. Further, the associated obligations themselves are obligations of a certain kind. But the personal relation is not of a certain kind, it is unique. It is not entered into voluntarily. I cannot choose to fall in love, or to make a certain man my friend. The personal relation is not entered into, but comes into existence whenever I am aware of personality. Consequently, there are no obligations attached to it. It is amoral. As soon as moral considerations arise, the personal situation has ceased to be fully personal.

5. *'Treating human beings as ends and not merely as means': Kant's principle criticized*

We must now try to deal with the other two questions I raised at the very beginning of this chapter, and which I said forced us to face the problem of relating personality to ethics. The first of these was the significance of the fact that we think that we ought to treat human beings as ends rather than as means; or as objects of interest in themselves rather than as means to ends of our own; or as persons rather than as instruments. What is the significance of the 'ought' here? Does it not involve both an absolute moral obligation, and an obligation to the whole human race, both of which I have had to deny? If I reaffirm these denials, must I not conclude that the 'ought' is spurious? I must and do. I shall show, firstly, that the literal insistence on this 'ought' leads to self-contradictions; secondly, I shall suggest a certain residual value which this principle shares with the Commandments and other sets of ostensibly absolute moral rules; finally, in the next chapter, I shall develop a view that this 'ought', if not pressed too hard, can have an even greater value, as a recommendation not of action but of outlook.

First, then, if it were true that we ought to regard all

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human beings as persons, what would be the logical consequences of our doing this, supposing it were possible? It would mean that we should enjoy personal relations with everyone. Every human being with whom we came in contact would be related to us, not in any ordinary relation of business or society, but in a fully personal relation. We should be literally friends (or enemies) with everyone. This is by no means logically absurd. It would be, and no doubt has been, actually the case with people living in very small groups. It would be true of three people living on an otherwise deserted island. It may have been true of isolated family groups in very primitive peoples, though not in any that we know of.

But there is another logical consequence which is absurd. If personal relations are amoral, and if all my relations are personal, it follows that I can never have any moral obligations at all, except this one. But then my whole morality would consist of the single injunction to treat all human beings as persons. But if I obey this precept, so that all my relations are fully personal, I cannot know that I *ought* to obey, because 'ought' has no meaning in a fully personal situation. The obligation, then, can never be fulfilled, because the very act of fulfilling it renders the obligation meaningless. But I can never be obliged to do the impossible, and this is still more true of the logically impossible. So the principle, when developed to its logical conclusion, becomes self-refuting. It produces a morality to end morality.

But, practically, it is self-refuting long before this. Suppose I try to apply it to any given situation where I catch myself treating a human being as a means to an end of my own. Such situations are enormously common. Suppose I have asked a plumber to mend a tap. Clearly I am using him as a means to a practical end. If I feel obliged not to treat him as a *mere* means, but as an end in himself, what sort of actions on my part, over and above those relevant to the practical

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transaction, does this obligation enjoin? Am I to take steps to enter into a personal relation with him, in the sense in which we have discussed this kind of relation? Of course, there is no reason why the plumber should not be a personal friend of mine. But if he is already, I shall feel no obligation to treat him as such; if he is not, I shall find it impossible to fulfil such an obligation. For personal relations, being both unique and involuntary, as I have said, cannot be entered into at will, as contractual relations can, such as my business relations with the plumber. Personal relations develop independently of our plans and intentions. But it can never be my duty to do the impossible. Thus we find that our principle is self-refuting, not only on general grounds, but also whenever we apply it to a particular case. But this does not constitute a *reductio ad absurdum* of Kant's principle. It does so only on a mistaken interpretation of what it means to treat people as ends in themselves. I shall try to correct the interpretation in the next chapter.

6. *Protests, not Precepts*

One value the principle can claim, I think, is similar to that of the Commandments or any other list of general precepts. Such precepts, although expressed as absolute moral obligations, can never, in practice, be treated as absolute; they are too detached from the facts. This robs them of most of their practical utility; they are seldom invoked in courts of law, where more precise rules are needed. But they have the value of expressing, in a vague but emotionally satisfying way, sentiments which people of a certain society like to think are shared by everyone in that society. From this point of view, any set of precepts or principles which finds general acceptance embodies certain standards of conduct which are generally approved. The Commandments, the American Declaration of Independence, the Atlantic Charter, are all examples of this.

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I have already drawn attention to the fact that the recognition of certain standards of conduct is more often than not expressed negatively, in the form of a prohibition of the reverse types of conduct. The Commandments express disapproval of certain kinds of action more copiously than they express approval of other kinds. Similarly, the principle of treating other people as ends and not merely as means is not very useful as a recommendation of any action or conduct, but much more useful when regarded as a protest against various kinds of action of which we disapprove. These actions are not cases of failing to make friends of everybody; they are the more specific cases of ignoring other people's feelings, of neglecting to make any effort to understand their point of view, of treating their interests and wishes as less important than our own, or, more simply, of selfishness. The principle also has a value which is less obvious but more original. It can be interpreted as recommending, not a type of action, but a type of outlook. I shall take this up in the next chapter.

The final point is concerned with the political side of ethics. This has already been answered, in effect. Political relations between individuals — the fact that two individuals are members of one state — are an example of the extra-personal relations of which moral relations are another example. Personality does not raise any problems for politics which it hasn't already raised for ethics. This enables us to avoid the very large field of political theory. The problem of the relation between individual and state isn't a problem of the relation between person and state. From the point of view of political authority there are no persons, and from the personal point of view, states do not exist.

IX

PERSONALITY AND PRACTICE

§ I ACTION AND OUTLOOK

IT may be expected that I am going to gather up the loose threads of the foregoing discussion into a tidy ball, and to arrive at a conclusion of a 'synthesis' nature. But I have touched on so many various topics, in dealing with different approaches to the problem of personality, that an attempt to dovetail them into a whole would result in an artificial simplicity. I have already found occasion to criticize the tendency to subordinate accuracy of detail to the requirements of a systematic theory. Instead, I want to reach a few conclusions of some practical value, regardless of whether they amount to a completely self-contained theory. In the last chapter I shall deal more fully with the demand for a finished theory. But for the time being, let us assume that any theoretical discussion of personality must begin and end with the facts we all know. The value of the theoretical side is not the tidiness of the theory, or the discovery of new facts, but the increased power of understanding, correlating and classifying the old ones. Most of the points will arise out of the previous chapter, which again is what is to be expected; for any application of general principles to the practice of living is bound to involve morality.

1. *Qualified Assent to Kant's Principle*

First, then, I want to deal with the possibility of reinterpreting Kant's principle that we ought to treat human beings as ends and not merely as means. I showed that this principle is both practically and theoretically self-refuting; but I was interpreting it in only one of two possible ways when I said

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it meant that I should treat human beings as objects of interest in themselves rather than as means to ends of mine. For the phrase 'objects of interest' suggests the question 'of interest to whom?' — the answer being, I assumed, 'to me'. This seemed natural enough; if I am to treat people as objects of interest, the interest must apparently be my own. If I am to treat them as persons rather than as instruments, the personal relations must apparently be relations of which I am to be one of the terms. But this need not be so. I can treat human beings as objects of interest to other human beings; I can treat them as persons, not by entering into personal relations with them, but by understanding that other people stand in personal relations with them. We overlooked this possibility because of the contrast between ends and means. Normally when I am said to treat someone as a means to an end, I am treating him as a means to *my* end; and even if I treat him as a means to someone else's end (if, for instance, I get a plumber to mend someone else's tap) I do so only because I make the other person's end my own. Thus when, by contrast, I am invited to treat him as an end in himself, I naturally take this to mean, once again, *my* end. But it is only when I treat people as ends which are not my own that I am doing what I think Kant's principle really recommends, though I have been unable to discover whether Kant himself was actually recommending this. I am to treat people not as my ends, but as somebody's ends.

2. *Outlook, not Action*

One consequence of this interpretation is that we are no longer concerned with a recommendation to action. Treating people as ends of mine obviously involves doing things to them, since my ends are concerned with my actions. But when I cease to regard my own ends and consider only the ends of people in general, I am no longer considering action. What I am considering is *outlook*. By treating people as

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ends in themselves to somebody or other, not necessarily to me, I am not doing anything to them; I am 'treating' them in quite a different sense from before, a sense which is intellectual rather than practical; I am adopting not a policy of action, but a certain type of outlook. For outlook is not a matter of action, but of understanding and interpreting.

What is the type of outlook recommended? It is very difficult to describe, because of the (by now) familiar awkwardness of talking about personal relations; for terms like 'end', 'object of interest', are not entirely adequate. I can best give some idea of the kind of outlook I mean by reverting to the personal relation itself. There are two completely different kinds of attitude towards the personal relation. One is the attitude of the persons so related; in this sense, 'attitude' is a misnomer (though there is no other word) because, as I have said often, the personal relation in its essential concrete uniqueness is something lived, an aspect of the dynamic process of living, not a kind of object to which we can have an 'attitude'. The other kind, which is more correctly called an attitude, is that of a third person towards the relation of which he is not a term — of a person standing outside a personal relation. He may or may not be aware that this personal relation exists between the first and second persons; but he must, if he is a normal adult, be aware that personal relations, in general, do exist for people other than himself. The reason why this is possible at all is, as I pointed out in Chapter VI, that although personal relations are, in the most important sense, unique and indescribable, yet they have in common some property which enables me to describe them all as 'personal' and to know that such relations do exist between individuals neither of whom is identical with myself. In the technical terminology which figured in Chapter III, the first 'attitude' is 'knowledge by acquaintance', the second attitude 'knowledge by description'.

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Clearly the principle will not be self-refuting as long as it is interpreted as recommending the second attitude rather than the first. There are insuperable difficulties about being acquainted with everybody; but there is no difficulty about extending 'knowledge by description' without limit. Generality has no limits. We cannot know every human being (acquaintance), but we can know that every human being is mortal (description). In exactly the same way we can know that every human being has personal relations with other human beings. The principle recommends us to adopt an outlook based on this knowledge by description of personal relations.

3. *Symbolizing Personal Relations*

Further description of this outlook can be given by means of an analogy. We are very prone to describe relations of all kinds in terms of spatial analogies. Thus if we want to describe the biological relations between members of several generations of certain families, we do not give a verbal list of the relations between different individuals, although this would be perfectly possible; instead we draw a family tree, in which the relations are symbolized by means of a symbolism involving spatial relations. If we want to describe the relations of command between army units and formations, we publish an Order of Battle in which similar spatial relations perform the same symbolic function. Probably the reason why we prefer the spatial symbolism is that a geometrical straight line is one of the simplest possible examples of a relation between two terms (the two points marking the ends of the line).

Now there are two ways in which personal relations can be symbolized spatially, each of them corresponding to one of the two possible attitudes I am discussing. One, which I may call the egocentric symbolism, is the way of regarding my personal acquaintances as occupying concentric spheres

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or circles of which I am the centre, and of which the varying radii represent the varying degrees of intimacy in which I stand to the others. This way of regarding personal relations is probably the most obvious way, when I start from my own personal relations towards a consideration of those of others. It comes natural to talk of my 'circle of acquaintances', because from my own point of view the only factor common to each of these individuals is the fact that he or she stands in a personal relation to me, and the only factor common to each of these personal relations is the 'I' who constitute one term of each of them. In the same way, the only point common to various straight lines is the point where they meet, as the radii of a circle meet in the centre. The centre is 'I'. I may multiply the circles, so as to avoid having equal radii for the obviously unequal relations; but, so long as I am concerned with my own personal relations, I shall retain the egocentric symbolism. For the fact that other people are represented by circles, which are similar, while I am represented by a point, which is unique, emphasizes the uniqueness of the 'I'.

The egocentric symbolism can only be replaced by a symbolism which abolishes the circles. This leaves the radii, or straight lines, connecting the 'I' with other points. But this means that the point 'I' is reduced to complete uniformity with the other points. It is no longer a centre, and therefore unique. The lines do not only radiate from this point to others, but from every point to others; there is no special peculiarity about the lines radiating from the point 'I' to distinguish them from the lines connecting other points. Instead of a system of concentric circles, we now have a network, which is quite a different symbolic system. An ordinary net is a regular system of continuous threads knotted at their intersections. Our symbolic net is an irregular system of discontinuous threads, each ending with a knot. Each thread represents a personal relation, and each

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knot a personality. Some knots will be very large, uniting many different threads; some will be very small, but the smallest will be a knot at the loose end of one thread. For there can be no knot without at least one thread. This symbolizes the fact that there can be no personality in an individual who has no personal relations.

This, then, will be the 'network' symbol for personal relations. If we want to symbolize other relations between people (moral, commercial, political or legal relations, for instance), we shall have to superimpose fresh symbolic 'network' systems on the basic personal network. Every knot in the new networks occurs in the same place as a knot in the original network, but many of the threads go in different directions. What this symbolizes is the fact that any one individual may have personal, moral, commercial, political and legal relations with any other individuals, but almost certainly not with the same individuals. A very close analogy is to be found in the maps in geography books illustrating 'Rainfall', 'Distribution of Crops', 'Communications', and the like, of the same area, such as the British Isles. Here we have different symbolic relational systems superimposed on the basic geographical symbolic relational system. Or an even closer analogy to the 'network' idea would be a set of maps of the Black Country, one showing the railway network, one the main roads, and one the canals, each superimposed on the geographical map showing the simple spatial relations of the towns.

Why should we adopt this outlook rather than the other — the network rather than the concentric circles? Before I consider advantages and disadvantages, I want to look at something more fundamental — the fact that this outlook is apparently recommended as an absolute principle. If so, it may well seem that discussion of advantages and disadvantages will be irrelevant. What is the significance of the 'ought'? At first sight, it looks like an absolute moral obliga-

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tion, because no circumstances are mentioned; it's not a case of adopting this outlook in some circumstances and not in others, but in all possible circumstances. And a moral rule couched in such non-circumstantial terms is, as I have already tried to explain, an absolute moral rule. But I argued that there were no such absolute moral rules. How then can the principle stand?

The solution is found, again, in the distinction between outlook and action. Moral rules about actions can never be absolute, for the reason I gave, namely that an action can never be defined without reference to the circumstances. In Kantian language, an imperative to action is always hypothetical and never categorical. But moral rules about outlook can be absolute, since they are not and cannot be about particular actions. Where, then, is their ethical force? It will be remembered that, in the last chapter, we examined moral situations to find what were the characteristic features of such situations that made them moral situations; and we discovered that the basic ethical concepts were the relation of obligation and the attitude of approval (and disapproval). But obligations were always concerned with particular actions (as instances of certain kinds of actions) and as soon as we cease to deal with actions at all, we cease to be concerned with obligations: There is no *obligation* to have a certain outlook. But if we still want to say 'you ought to have this outlook', shall we be left with nothing more to characterize this as an ethical utterance, than the attitude of approval? Will the sentence 'You ought to adopt this outlook' be merely equivalent to 'I approve of this outlook' or 'of everyone adopting such as outlook'?

4. *The Dynamic Function of Ethical Language*

The answer is no, if 'I approve of' amounts only to a statement of fact about my mental attitude; the answer is yes, if it amounts to more than this. And in fact it does. I did not

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bring up this point in the last chapter, because it was not relevant to a discussion of the amorality of personal relations; but we need it here. When I think that somebody ought to do something, say to return a borrowed book to its owner, I generalize the proposed action and approve of it as an instance of actions of that kind. But when I utter the words 'You ought to return that book', I am not just generalizing the action and *merely* stating my approval of it. I am not saying: 'In the circumstances, there is a certain obligation, namely to return the book, which would apply to me or to anyone else in similar circumstances, and I approve of the type of action that constitutes fulfilment of such an obligation'. For when I say 'You ought to return that book', I am *urging* you to do something. In other words, when I use ethical expressions of this kind, I am not merely stating something, I am doing something, namely urging, or recommending, or persuading, or dissuading. I do three things and not two: I (a) state that there is an obligation (b) state that I approve (c) urge you to act.

It will be noticed that we have here an excellent example of the 'linguistic dynamism' I discussed in Chapter v, when I stressed the importance of the 'dynamic' as distinct from the 'informative' or 'fact-stating' function of language. This reminder should act as a warning against drawing too sharp a distinction between (a) and (b) on the one hand and (c) on the other. The sentence has not three separable functions, but one: (c) is merely an aspect of (a) and of (b). Both of these have their dynamic function. The reason for this is largely psychological. When I say that I approve of a certain kind of action, in a context where the particular instance of such action is an actual or possible action by you, I exert a persuasive or 'suggestive' influence. You may or may not react in the appropriate way to my suggestion; that depends on the relations between us, on your respect for me as an authority, or on my rhetorical ability.

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But whether you do react or not is quite irrelevant to the question of the function of ethical language. This function is persuasive, whether or not anyone is persuaded, just as the function of 'fact-stating' language is informative, whether or not anyone actually acquires information.

This applies even to the original case of 'I ought' (as distinct from 'you ought'). According to the last chapter, a moral action on my part, in which I am conscious of acting as I ought, cannot occur without generalization and reflection. But if in the course of this reflection I formulate the obligation under which I act, if I 'tell myself' that I ought to do this, then I am 'persuading myself' to do it, just as I should be persuading you if I said that you ought to do it. We must not allow ourselves to think that 'self-persuasion' is a mere metaphor, not to be taken literally, any more than we should think, for example, of 'self-criticism' as a mere metaphorical expression. Ethical language does not cease to be dynamic when it is addressed to oneself.

Now in the principle we are considering, the principle that we ought to adopt a certain kind of outlook, we have (*b*) — approval — but not (*a*) — obligation — and we have (*c*) — urging — as the dynamic aspect of (*b*). If I say that you ought to adopt a certain kind of outlook, I am urging you to adopt it, in the very act of saying so, and before I have given any reasons for what I say. Of course I, the writer of this book, am not actually saying so here and now, because I am not trying to persuade, not at least in this stark and crude fashion. I don't need to, for there are many other methods of urging and persuading. Every book which is not pure entertainment, and this one is no exception, represents an attempt to 'persuade' its readers to believe the statements of the author, or to adopt his general outlook or point of view. An author would be regarded as unsuccessful if his readers' views or beliefs were totally

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unaffected by what they read. Yet there is no direct persuasion; there is not even, as a rule, any 'persuasion' of that indirect kind which uses 'ought' and 'should'. No author ever writes a preface or postscript to the effect that he thinks his readers ought to agree with him. The reason for this is, as I said in the last paragraph, that the 'persuasive' effect of ethical words depends on the presence of authority. Authors either have not the requisite authority, or, if they have, are unwilling to abuse it. And in any case, the purpose of a book is never simply to 'persuade', in however remote a sense, but to develop, expound and clarify.

What I have quoted as an interpretation of a principle of Kant about treating human beings as ends and not merely as means appears, then, as a highly condensed version of a recommendation underlying the whole of this book. We have been actually adopting such a view, though unaware, no doubt, that we were 'persuading ourselves' to do so. We adopted it, for example, when we discussed the function of language and myth in Chapter v. For this outlook turns out to be nothing very dissimilar from the scientific attitude of objectivity: the outlook which treats everything as facts, and ignores the personal point of view except as another fact, as one of an indefinite number of other personal points of view incorporated symbolically in the personal network. If this development of the 'objective' view of personality and its associated phenomena has had any 'persuasive' value, it will have been like the 'persuasive' value of science itself.

5. Solution of a Problem in Moral Philosophy

We may or may not bow to the weight of authoritative opinion. My point is that, if anyone has followed me so far, he cannot have helped adopting, at least temporarily, the outlook recommended. I now want to give one or two examples of the fruitfulness of the principle in different fields. One example I have already given (p. 116) could

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be used here as an example of the application of the principle in the field of logical problems. My next example will be in the field of ethics. I shall take the familiar controversy over the issue between selfishness and selflessness. We all agree that selfishness is bad (this would have to be put in more concrete and detailed terms, but I assume it could be). From this point it is only too easy to proceed to the conclusion that its opposite, selflessness, must necessarily be good; and on this position some moral philosophers, as well as some ordinary people, have based their moral theories. An action is good or bad according as it approaches or recedes from the ideal of selflessness. Selflessness is the criterion of goodness, or one of its criteria. I hold that this is as completely mistaken, though not so destructive, as a view exalting pure selfishness would be. The mistake is to assume that selfishness has only one opposite, namely selflessness.

Another alternative is that taken by the philosopher who becomes dissatisfied with the ideal of selflessness either as being too negative or as demanding too extreme a sacrifice of the agent's own interests and welfare. He falls back on a modified form of selfishness called self-realization. This represents an attempt to reconcile the two extremes by eliminating the undesirable elements of both. The undesirable element of selfishness is the disregard of other people's interests. The undesirable element of selflessness is the unattainable ideal of complete self-negation. The reconciliation is thought possible because it is held that a devotion to the perfect development of all human faculties and aspirations will necessarily include attention to the faculty of self-denial and the aspiration of service and altruism. Altruism is not true self-negation, but a positive satisfaction. Aristotle held a view similar to this. A variant of this view is that a modified form of self-satisfaction is ethically valuable, because it is a necessary condition of effective altruism: I cannot know what other people's interests are, and how I

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can best serve them, until I know what my own are and have had some practice in satisfying them. Otherwise what I shall attain will be mere benevolence, not benefactions: and there is a world of difference between willingness to do good and actually doing it. Altruism means *effective* altruism. There is, of course, a lot of truth in this, though I do not myself think that the premisses are very well grounded empirically. I think that to a large extent we can know other people's interests independently of our own. But not entirely: and then the conclusion certainly follows. Kant was undoubtedly wrong in saying that moral goodness belongs entirely to the good will, and would do so even if the will were completely ineffectual in achieving good works.

A third variation on the same theme is the doctrine, associated with some of the Utilitarians, of 'enlightened self-interest' — the view that an intelligent devotion to one's own interests will automatically secure the furthering of other people's interests. This, or something like it, is the ethical basis of the economic doctrine of free enterprise; it cannot, however, as a general ethical theory, survive Hitler, unless we are prepared to call such people unintelligent. It must, I think, be dismissed as a pious hope rather than a sound theory, whether in ethics or psychology.

The trouble is that, however useful are the odd truths turned up in the process, the procedure as a whole is mistaken, because the contrast between selfishness and selflessness is an unreal one. There is a contrast here, but it is a contrast between two extremes 'both of which are opposed to the mean', as Aristotle said in a similar context, defining virtue as the mean between two vicious extremes. Entire self-devotion is bad; entire self-negation is bad (and impossible anyway): what is good is the type of action to which the idea of 'self' is not relevant at all. There must be no tendency to concentrate attention on one's own particular desires or interests, for the purpose either of furthering

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them or of ignoring and frustrating them. A good action is one of which I approve, not at all because of my part in performing it, whether this involves favouring or disfavouring my interests, but because I should approve of its performance by anyone else in the same relevant circumstances. And although I may judge that this particular situation does call for some positive personal sacrifice, such personal sacrifice is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of an action's being good.

The wrong alternative to selfishness is based on the wrong outlook, the right alternative on the outlook recommended by the principle under discussion. Selfishness is opposed to selflessness as the circle's centre is opposed to its circumference. As long as we confine ourselves to the egocentric symbolism, there is no third alternative. Preoccupation with the central 'I' is wrong, but the right answer is not preoccupation with the peripheral 'you'. Devotion to the centre blinds us to the fact that it is the centre of circles; devotion to the circles blinds us to the fact that the circles are concentric. But the network symbolism corrects these faults, because it represents the 'I' by the same symbol as the 'you', the 'he' and the 'she'. Selfishness and selflessness disappear from the picture, because the self-reference they share becomes irrelevant. What is left is the generalizing process which, as I have often stated in the last chapter, and in this, is an essential feature of all moral situations. I consider my actions as instances of certain types of actions performed by anybody standing in the same circumstances. The egocentric symbolism does not readily permit this concept, as I have to imagine the circles dissolving into points and forming the centres of other circles. The network symbolism not only permits it but emphasizes it. It symbolizes a state of affairs where Bentham's famous Utilitarian maxim is observed, 'everybody to count for one and nobody for more than one'.

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§ 2 NEW LIGHT ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SCIENCE, ETHICS AND ART

I NOW want, in conclusion, to consider together, instead of separately as hitherto, the relations between personality and certain major branches of human activity, namely art, science and ethics. This discussion may serve as my third example of the utility of the principle I am considering. I dealt with personal relations and art in Chapter VII; with personal relations and science in Chapter II and elsewhere; and with personal relations and ethics in the last chapter. In Chapter V I discussed personal relations in connection with the characteristic activities and behaviour of an idealized primitive man. It will be remembered that I found a very close connection here, and also in the discussion of art; while in the other two cases the connection was remote. Personal relations are irrelevant to scientific activity; and they are amoral.

To art I might have added religious mysticism. Although I cannot speak from experience on this topic, but only from what I have heard of other people's experiences, I take it that some kind of personal relation is essential to mystical experience. Just as an artistic experience is an intense awareness of a personal relation with an object, conferring uniqueness and individuality on that object, so I think a mystical experience is an intense awareness of a personal relation with a kind of object which can only be called, for want of a better term, 'transcendental'. However that may be, I don't think it will be seriously disputed that there is a quite close affinity between art and mysticism.

Now it is no paradox that the concept of personality ties up so closely with primitive man, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, it ties up with art and mysticism, which might plausibly be said to represent some of the highest achievements of humanity and the furthest removed from

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the primitive state. For we have to be careful about classifying such activities as 'high' levels of human attainment. We have to recognize that 'height' in these matters, as anywhere else, is a case of relativity. The 'height' or sublimity of any given type of human experience depends on the dimension chosen. (The notion of dimensions as a method of introducing metrical concepts into non-metrical fields was discussed in Chapter II, where I drew attention to the psychologist's 'personality dimensions'.) Now some people would want to draw the 'height' dimension in the direction of increasing scientific knowledge rather than in the direction of artistic development. And it is certainly true that there are strong affinities between artistic or mystic states of mind and primitive mental activities. It is also true that, historically, it is easier to trace continuities in art and even, I think, in religion between prehistoric and modern times than it is to fit science into any continuous pattern of intellectual progress on a comparable time-scale.

But ethics raises a problem here. If personal relations are amoral, we should expect that the types of human behaviour which are most pervaded with personality would be non-moral types of behaviour. In the case of art and mysticism, this is approximately true. Art knows no rules of morality, and artists as a class suffer from a reputation for a tendency to moral laxity, which is what we should expect from considering the inseparability of art from the personal life of the artist. As for mysticism, I don't think it has been claimed for mystical experience that it yields insight into the moral law. But in the case of primitive behaviour, it is certainly false that the activities so strongly characterized by personal relations are non-moral. All human societies, without exception, have moral codes. Often the more primitive peoples have moral codes which are more complex and more strictly enforced than the more 'civilized' ones. In the days when anthropology was studied as much in the armchair as

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in the field, it used to be assumed that there must have been a 'missing-link' pattern of society in which men had no moral rules and lived like gregarious animals. Morgan, for instance, in the nineteenth century postulated a stage of promiscuous mating preceding the institution of marriage. Every society we know of has some formalized marriage system with a more or less elaborate code of permissions and prohibitions. Morgan's postulated stage is simply the absence of such a system. This kind of assumption is nowadays recognized as a hypothesis of no practical value, even if it is not downright false; it is known that so far as the evidence goes there never was a time when man lived without a more or less complex code of rules. It is the same with language. Man did not suddenly develop the power of speech, and progress from inarticulate man to articulate man; although different collections of human beings have different languages, man has always had some language or other. Man is a speaking animal. Similarly, although different collections of human beings have different moral codes, man has always had some moral code or other. Man is a moral animal. Moreover, the similarity between the two cases of language and morality is not fortuitous, as I shall show in a moment.

We have to admit, then, that primitive behaviour, though intensely personal, is not amoral. But this does not contradict what I said in Chapter v. I was talking there of a model or ideal. I did not insist that actual primitive behaviour was entirely and exclusively personal. I admitted a certain power of abstraction in actual primitive mentality. The degree of abstraction achieved may be comparatively low, by the standards of our own culture, but it is sufficient at least for practical purposes such as the requirements of industry and technique. And any degree of abstraction, however low, is more or less removed from the personal situation, which is entirely concrete. Now morality involves abstraction, as we saw in the last chapter; a moral action is

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an action of a *certain type*, considered in relation to circumstances of a certain type selected from the total concrete situation, as relevant to an action of that type. No particular action can be enjoined or forbidden or permitted by a moral rule except as an instance of a type of action. If, in a particular primitive society, social intercourse between adult brothers and sisters is forbidden, then that society has a moral code of such a sort that a certain individual A is forbidden to address another individual B; but this prohibition does not arise out of the personal relations between them, but out of their extra-personal relations, that is, the general relation of brother and sister. In such a case the biological relation between adult male and female offspring of the same parent is also, according to the social pattern, a moral relation, in virtue of which certain types of action, involving the characteristic *intimate behaviour*, are forbidden. This procedure involves abstraction, both in the selection of certain general characteristics of actions (*intimate behaviour*) and in the selection of certain general features in the circumstances (biological relation between individuals).

We cannot, of course, pursue this inquiry into the origin of moral rules and restraints in primitive society. There are works of anthropology in which this sort of question is fully dealt with. Here we can only note that abstraction occurs already as a mental process in the most primitive societies known, and that its tendency is towards success not only in the control of material environment, but also in the regulation of social behaviour. It was for this reason that I said on page 160 that purely personal relations without morality do not exist even between members of a single isolated family in any human conditions that we know of. Relations between members of a family, which is the basic unit of society (though not, of course, necessarily in the form in which we know it), are never purely personal, but always moral. The father may be under an obligation to protect

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his son, the son to obey his father; these obligations are, in the particular social structure, assigned to the relation between the individuals concerned, considered as an instance of the type *parental relation*, which is very clearly recognized, in some form or other, in every kind of society.

The important difference between primitive and modern mentality is not to be found in the field of ethics, or of art, but in the field of science. Science represents a level of abstraction immensely higher than that achieved by either primitive morality or primitive industry, though its beginnings can be seen in both. It resembles primitive industry in being concerned, in the first instance, with the power of controlling material environment; but it differs from it in detaching the power of understanding from the power of controlling, and in assigning more and more importance to the former and less and less to the latter. Science resembles primitive morality in being concerned with particular occurrences not as unique events, but as instances falling under general rules; or in being concerned with particular facts not as unique individuals but as members of classes. It differs from primitive morality in the recognition of occurrences which are not actions, either of human beings or of supernatural beings, but impersonal events; and in the recognition of rules which are not moral rules but laws of another sort, 'laws of nature'. The mere fact that the word 'law' is used at all in scientific contexts is highly illuminating. The continuity between the Laws of Moses and the Laws of Thermodynamics is a record of the debt which modern science owes to primitive morality.

The continuity must not, however, be overstressed. The differences are at least as important as the similarities. The main difference is seen in the process of abstraction involved. Primitive morality abstracts from a particular situation those circumstances which are relevant to particular action on the part of some individual. Science abstracts from the

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same situation an entirely different set of circumstances — or, rather, different sets, one for physics, another for physiology, and so on — all of which are treated as completely *irrelevant* to action on the part of some individual, though highly relevant to other purposes. For science there are no actions at all, but only events. Science represents the final stage of the process of increasing generalization from the concrete instance, a process of which primitive industry and primitive morality are both intermediate stages.

Art does not represent any stage at all in this process, but is itself an activity occurring at every stage of a completely different process — the process of discovering ways of rendering articulate a concrete, personal experience without losing anything of its concreteness, without involving any generality at all. Whether this attempt can ever be completely successful is a matter for theory of art. I am concerned only with the fact that there is such an attempt. I cannot venture any further into the field of aesthetic theory than I did in Chapter VII. But it is not enough merely to see art and science as activities which cannot be measured along the same dimension: this looks dangerously like an embroidered truism. What more is needed is to trace back the two dimensions to a common origin in the field of personal relations, and to assess the difference between them in terms of the difference in attitude towards personality and individuality. It is not enough to note the discrepancy between a critic's descriptive appreciation of a picture or a piece of music and a chemist's analysis of pigments or a physicist's analysis of wavelengths. We need to relate this discrepancy to the difference between my personal knowledge of my friend Smith and a psychologist's report on him to a potential employer. And I believe we can only do this, and so achieve a more general understanding of our activities, experiences and kinds of knowledge, by first trying to understand the nature of our knowledge of personality.

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CONCLUSION

I WANT to revert to what I said at the beginning of the last chapter; I implied that I had no finished theory to offer. I may be criticized here on the ground that the only conclusion I have drawn is the conclusion that there is no conclusion. I do conclude that there is no theoretical conclusion: but not that there are no practical ones. I have not arrived at a final set of propositions about personality: what I hope to have done is to show that such a task is impossible from the start. Nor is this conclusion merely negative. It is easy enough to avoid answering a question by finding reasons for saying that the question is meaningless and therefore unanswerable. But I have not been content to point out that the question 'What is personality?' is meaningless. I have tried to show that it may conceal several important and interesting questions.

But let us first see just why the question as it stands is meaningless. A significant question, that is, one that is not meaningless, arises out of a need to fill a specific gap in a specific system of knowledge. For instance, the question 'What is nitrogen?' or 'What is diphtheria?' normally occurs in a context where the questioner is seeking to fill a definite gap in his knowledge of chemistry or of medical pathology. He is asking for further information on something of which he already knows a certain amount. He already knows, for instance, that nitrogen is some chemical substance, or even that it is a gas; or that diphtheria is some kind of complaint. (If he doesn't know anything of the sort, the case is one I deal with in the next paragraph.) Questions cannot be asked about the totally unfamiliar; for the question would not be understood, even by the questioner himself, if he did not

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already know the kind of answer he wants. What makes this possible is the existing structure of knowledge, which the question is designed to extend. In a state of total ignorance it is literally impossible to ask a question; the most that is possible is to look bewildered. Asking questions is an exercise of intelligence. In asking an ordinary question, the questioner does not know the answer to the question, but he knows what sort of answer he expects. We can tell that he does by the way he rejects inappropriate answers.

It is worth noting that the question 'What is nitrogen?' would still be a normal question, according to the above description of a normal question, even if it were asked by a small child who had just discovered the word in a grown-up's book, or overheard it in adult conversation. For the question still occurs in a context where the questioner wants to fill a gap in a certain department of knowledge. But instead of knowledge of chemistry, it is knowledge of English vocabulary. The question is not a chemical question, but a linguistic question. The request is not for information about whatever it is that the word refers to, but for information about the word itself. But this obviously does not apply to the question 'What is personality?' which is clearly not a question of this type. It is not a linguistic question.

Yet it is not a question of the other type either. For it is not a 'normal' question at all. The questioner cannot say what sort of answer he expects. And if he retorts 'Of course not, I shouldn't be asking if I did', we must point out that, unless he can be induced to put his question differently, we cannot answer it because we cannot understand it. 'What is personality?' is not at all like 'What is nitrogen?'. 'Personality' is not that sort of word. It is more like the question 'What is relativity?' or the question 'What is philosophy?' We may learn about relativity by reading Einstein and other physicists and mathematicians, but we shall not find anywhere a set of propositions saying just what relativity is.

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Instead, if we have followed the exposition, we shall have developed a technique for dealing with questions of a kind not met with before. The same would apply, in essentials, to philosophy. Similarly, we may learn about personality by reading poetry, psychology, anthropology and many other subjects, but we shall not find anywhere a set of propositions saying what personality is — not even in a book which attempts, like this one, to deal with several of these subjects at once. Instead we shall have developed a technique for handling questions about personality, for specifying and classifying, for assigning them to the appropriate fields of inquiry, for deciding how far the results obtained from the special fields can be generalized, and how far each must be treated on its own merits.

But we cannot start with generalizations. As I have already suggested, a question can be meaningless because it is too general. When it is so general that the questioner cannot say what sort of answer he requires, the questioning has ceased to be an exercise of intelligence and has become an expression of bewilderment. 'What is personality?' is more like a look of puzzlement than a proper question. Accordingly, we can dispel the puzzlement, not by providing an answer of the same degree of generality, 'Personality is . . .' but by replacing the question with proper ones. This is what I regard as the constructive, as distinct from the critical, side of my discussion. We may, for example, say that the question 'What is personality?' is to be replaced by more specific and intelligible questions such as the following. 'How is personality built up?' This can be answered by psychology and anthropology. 'What sort of awareness is awareness of personality?' This can be answered, though perhaps not fully, by biology. 'Does personality survive bodily death?' is a question which I have elsewhere relegated to the field of psychical research. But it deserves more attention, which it shall have in a moment.

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Or we may say that the question 'What is personality?' is a request for an answer to all the possible questions by which it can be replaced. This, indeed, would account for the bewilderment it expresses. For we cannot intelligently ask for an answer to an indefinitely large number of questions all at once. We must say that there are answers, but not an answer — meaning that there is no single and comprehensive answer. We may say, for example, that the question 'What is personality?' is to be regarded as a request for a description of the kinds of situation in which the words 'personal' and 'personality' are appropriately used: and we have seen that this involves a great variety of situations, including those in which several other characteristic words occur, such as 'familiar', 'unique' and 'concrete'.

Even the apparently specific question 'Does personality survive bodily death?' cannot be answered as it stands (quite apart from fact-finding difficulties), but only, if at all, when it has been replaced by questions more specific still. True, these alternative questions will very likely be rejected by the questioner with the protest that 'that's not what he means'. If, for instance, we replace the question 'Does personality survive bodily death?' by the question 'Does a person's name continue to have meaning after his body has permanently ceased to respond to its utterance and to all utterances?' the answer is quite obviously 'Yes'. But this answer is certainly not good enough for the questioner we have in mind. Although for primitive man the 'meaning' of a personal name is essentially dynamic, for us it is little more than informative and hence quite inadequate as a vehicle of personality. Next, suppose we were to answer another interpretation of the question 'Does personality survive bodily death?' by pointing out that it is possible to become quite intimately acquainted with the personality of Samuel Pepys, or of Marcel Proust, or of Vincent Van Gogh, because, although they are dead, their

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personality shines through the works they have left behind. This, again, will probably be extremely unsatisfactory for our questioner, who presumably does not find the prospect of personal immortality through works of art a very consoling one.

Survival of name, then, and survival of works, are neither of them enough to satisfy the questioner. What are their defects, and what more is wanted? There are, it seems, two defects. One is that the questioner who wants to know about survival of personality does not want to know about survival in this field or that, such as in the linguistic field and in the field of artistic creativity. He wants to know about survival in all fields. And his question is a comprehensive one; it is not enough to enumerate all possible fields and to describe separate personality-effects in them; a single comprehensive answer is required. But this is just the answer that cannot be given. For we are being invited to describe, not separate personality-effects in different fields, but a single particular personality, such as the questioner's, operating as a unit in all fields. We are, it seems, to treat fields of activity organically, that is, as parts which make up a whole. Now this is a perfectly proper way of describing a living person and his activities. But it is not a possible way of describing a dead person. For the questioner has already deliberately excluded one of the fields — the field of bodily behaviour, which indubitably ceases at death — so that we are left with detached fragments which do not make up a whole. At least, they do not make up a similar whole, and whether they make up any kind of whole at all is undiscoverable, as far as I can see. For there is another important point. The missing fragment is the very field in which organic behaviour — parts making up a whole — is normally manifested. It is the field of biological activity. Accordingly it is doubly improper to look for an organic account of survival. That is all that can be said about the first defect (as it might appear

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to our questioner) in what I have described as possible answers to the question of personality survival.

The second seeming defect is this. It may be said that, although we are admittedly in some sense acquainted with Van Gogh, he is not, so far as this account goes, acquainted with us. If this is regarded as a defect, then we must say that what the questioner meant by 'Does personality survive bodily death?' must really have been 'Does self-conscious personality survive bodily death?' In so far as self-consciousness can be defined biologically, this question is open to the objections considered in the last paragraph. We cannot talk in biological terms about something which has been by definition ('death') excluded from the field of biology. Yet 'self-consciousness' obviously represents a feature of some importance, which the questioner wants to be considered; for non-self-conscious personality, which is all we have attributed so far to the deceased Van Gogh, is an unsatisfying notion. But if we try to locate the source of dissatisfaction, I think we shall find that what remains unsatisfied is something like the hankering for personal immortality. It is the dissatisfaction expressed by 'It's no good my continuing to exist without knowing that I do'. For the question 'Does personality survive death?' is seldom, if ever, the impartial request for information which it purports to be. It is nearly always a polite dressing-up of the more interesting and often more insistent question, 'Will I survive death?' And, if I am to survive, I must know that I do so; the 'I' cannot be reconstituted out of other people's acquaintance with my surviving products, still less out of their memories. Here, then, if anywhere, is the additional feature represented by the demand for 'self-conscious' personality in survival. And it must be obvious that a question which is no longer a request for information or explanation, but the expression of a craving or hankering, cannot be answered in terms of the present discussion.

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The constructive part of my conclusion, then, is the business of pointing out how certain questions about personality, meaningless as they stand, can be replaced with others which are not meaningless. It will be noted that each of the separate answers to these other questions may well be given by a different limited field of inquiry; and indeed the arrangement of the chapters of this book has been based on this point. It may be claimed that the search for the comprehensive answer, as against the series of limited ones, is the proper business of philosophy. If it is, then the philosophy in this book will have failed. I agree that philosophy should be comprehensive, but I do not believe that its proper business is always to provide answers to questions, however comprehensive. In the present case, at least, its business has not been to find answers to certain questions, but to understand them. For the problems I set out to solve can be solved, if at all, only by supplying meanings for the questions in which they are formulated.

