PART I

To understand everything except one's own self is very comical. Kierkegaard, Unscientific Postscript, p. 316.

I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and ships have meaning. Walt Whitman, 'By Blue Ontario's Shore'.

If thou desirest peace of mind and true unity of purpose, thou must put all things behind thee, and look upon thyself. Thomas A'Kempis, Imitation of Christ, II. 5.

I will confess then what I know of myself; I will confess also what I know not of myself. St Augustine, Confessions, X. 5.

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man. Sophocles, Antigone.

We are the miracle of miracles. Carlyle, 'The Hero as Divinity', I.

The awful ultimate fact, which is the human being. A. N. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 16.

The great Pan of old, who was clothed in a leopard-skin to signify the beautiful variety of things, and the firmament, his coat of stars, -- was but the representative of thee, O rich and various Man! thou palace of sight and sound, carrying in thy senses the morning and the night and the unfathomable galaxy; in thy brain, the geometry of the City of God. Emerson, 'The Method of Nature'.

Man is man's A.B.C. Francis Quarles, 'Hieroglyphics'.

However high
Our palaces and cities and however fruitful are our fields,
In Selfhood, we are nothing, but fade away in morning's breath.
Blake, Jerusalem, II. 45.

Mountain, hill, earth, and sea,
Cloud, meteor, and star
Are men seen afar.
Blake, 'To Thomas Butts'.

You cannot shun Yourself. Troilus and Cressida, III. 2.

I have perpetrated human nature. Christopher Fry, The Lady's not for Burning.

CHAPTER I

THE VIEW OUT AND THE VIEW IN

O the riches of thine infinite goodness in making my Soul an interminable Temple, out of which nothing can be, from which nothing is removed, to which nothing is afar off; but all things immediately near, in a real, true, and lively manner. Traherne, Centuries of Meditations, I. 92.

Was somebody asking to see the soul?
See, your own shape and countenance, persons, substances, beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands.
Walt Whitman, 'Starting from Paumanok'.

There is in the universe an Aura which permeates all things and makes them what they are. Below, it shapes forth land and water; above, the sun and the stars. In man it is called spirit; and there is nowhere where it is not. Wen T'ien-Hsiang (trans. H.A.Giles).

In being aware of the bodily experience, we must thereby be aware of aspects of the whole spatio-temporal world as mirrored within the bodily life. A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p.113.

Matter is where the concentration of energy is great, field where the concentration of energy is small. Einstein and Infield, The Evolution of Physics, p.256.

I felt no dross nor matter in my soul,
No brims nor borders, such as in a bowl
We see. My essence was capacity,
That felt all things;
The thought that springs
Therefrom's itself.....
It acts not from a centre to
Its object as remote,
But present is when it doth view,
Being with the Being it doth note
Whatever it doth do.
Traherne, 'My Spirit'.

I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)
brought in upon a platter.
T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.

As a beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome by far,
But my face -- I don't mind it
For I am behind it.
It's the people in front get the jar.
Attributed to Woodrow Wilson.

"Now, I give you fair warning," shouted the Queen, stamping on the ground as she spoke; "either you or your head must be off, and that in about half no time! Take your choice!" Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

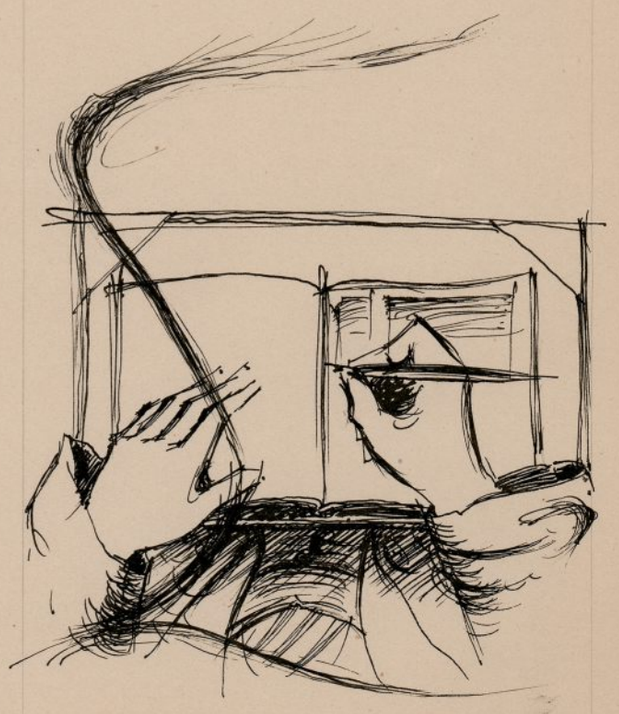
1. THE MISSING HEAD.

"It is an extraordinary blindness to live without investigating what we are." Pascal, Pensées, 495.

What am I? That, for every thinking being, is the question. Let me then try to answer it as truly and simply as I can. I shall try to forget the ready-made answers, and discover what I am to myself at this moment.

My common sense tells me that I am a man very much like other men (five-feet-ten tall, thirty-eight years old, weighing about eleven stone, and so on) and that I am now sitting at my desk writing a book about myself. Common sense isn't concerned with philosophical subtleties, but is quite certain what it is like, here and now, to be me, writing on this sheet of paper.

So far, surely, nothing can have gone wrong. But has common sense really described what it is like to be me? Others cannot help here: only I am in a position to say what I am. And what I find is that common sense is utterly wrong in supposing that I am much like other men. For I have no head! There on the desk are my hands; there are the sleeves of my jacket, and between them hazy areas of my sweater and tie; if I look under the desk I shall find my feet



--- but what has become of my head? It is missing. I am headless. And I had never noticed the fact.

What exists in place of my head? Let me attend carefully, and with an open mind, to what I may find. I find that there are, instead of my head, a brown desk-top, some sheets of white paper, a fountain-pen, an ink-bottle, the carpet and walls and chairs of the room, a window, some lime trees and grey-brick houses, and a patch of cloudy sky above them. My head has gone, and in its place is this vastly different collection of objects. They have happened to me.[x]

It seems that to be me is to be unique, the one man on earth, and surely the one creature in the universe, who is built to this astounding plan:-- where the rest carry small rounded body-terminals, fairly constant in shape, and furnished with hair and eyes and mouth, there is for me a boundless, lively, and infinitely varied world. I alone have a body which fades out so that the only hints that remain of it above my shoulders are a pair of transparent shadows thrown across everything.[†] (I am in the habit of calling the shadows my nose, but surely a nose is not a fuzzy transparent object, quite detached from any face, that can be swung from side to side almost as if it were a trunk? If this is a nose, then I have one -- or a pair of them. If it is not, then I have no nose.)

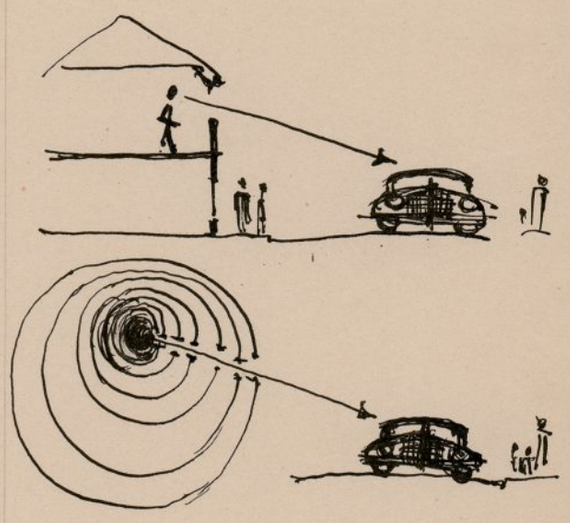
Common sense suggests a simple explanation. A man cannot look out of the window of his house at the street, and at the same time see his own house with the window in it. This inability of his to face both ways, however, does not mean that he has no house. In precisely the same way, the reason I cannot find my head is not that I lack one, but that I happen to be looking out of it.

Is this common-sense explanation good enough? Where am I, where do I actually spend my time? Do I inhabit a house of flesh and blood, and gaze out upon the world through openings in its walls? Do I live inside an eight-inch ball, enjoying the view that can be had through its pair of portholes? And if I do, what am I, the ball's tenant, like? Have I a little head of my own, with another pair of eyes, and a still tinier tenant to peer through them? And so on, indefinitely?

No. It is certain I am not shut up in the gloomy interior of any object, and least of all in a rather small tightly-packed sphere, somehow managing to live my life there in its interstices. I am at large in the world. I can discover no watcher here, and over there a thing watched, no peep-hole out into the world, no window or window-pane, no barrier, no frontier.[°] I do not <u>detect</u> a universe. It lies wide open to me. At this moment ink marks are forming on this sheet of paper. They are present. There is nothing else now but this blue and white pattern, no screen here (where I imagined I had a head) upon which the pattern is projected, no aperture through which it is glimpsed.[*] There is only the pattern. My head, eyes, brain --- all are a fiction. It is incredible that I ever believed in them.

[x] <u>Alizon</u>: Show me daffodils happening to a man!
<u>Richard</u>: Very easily.
These lines from Christopher Fry's play recall J. B. Leishman's translation of Rilke's 'Der Tod des Dichters':
"For these: these shadowy hills and waving grasses
And streams of running water were his face."
In place of my head, not even a <u>caput mortuum</u>. And it is not only my head that is sublimated: Rumi, the Sufi poet, needlessly exhorts me:
"Dissolve your whole body into Vision: become seeing, seeing, seeing."
(R. A. Nicholson, <u>Rumi, Poet and Mystic</u>, p. 38.)

[†] In Professor J. B. S. Haldane's story <u>My Friend Mr. Leakey</u>, one of the characters, having been made invisible, remarks: "Everything looked slightly odd, and at first I couldn't think why. Then I saw that the two ghostly noses which I always see without noticing them were gone."



[°] When we are coming out of an anaesthetic we are liable to experience a curious identification of the seer and the seen. This is lost at the level of ordinary waking life, but may be regained, in a different manner, at the level of St Bonaventura's epistemology: "All knowledge indeed is, in the strict sense of the term, an assimilation. The act by which an intelligence possesses itself of an object to apprehend its nature implies that this intelligence likens itself to the object, that for the moment it clothes itself with its form, and it is because it can in some way become everything that it can also know everything." Gilson, <u>The Philosophy of St Bonaventure</u>, p. 145.

[*] Many primitives regard the soul as a mannikin inhabiting the head or some other part of the body. (See Frazer, <u>The Golden Bough</u>, Abridged Edn., p. 179.) The same notion is implied in Walt Whitman's line: "As I have lived, as I have looked through my windows my eyes". ('Song at Sunset')

How is it that for thirty years and more I had never noticed that between myself and other men there is literally a world of difference? I have for head this tremendous universe, of which they are particles. I can move the sun at will, obliterate the universe, turn the world upside- down, make all things revolve about me; they can do none of these things. At least, when I watch a man shut his eyes, or stand on his head, or turn round, I fail to discover any notable changes in the rest of the universe. And no wonder --- he is only one man, body and head, whereas I bear upon my shoulders all the world of men and things. I am Atlas and his burden; the other man is a fraction of that burden. Between myself and my fellows there is an absolute distinction. This is not a matter of argument or of theory, but of observation. A discrepancy that is so startling (once it is seen) ought surely to have been evident every second of my life, from early childhood onwards.† But in fact I realize it with difficulty, and only for a few moments at a time. Then back I am again in my old habit, and as unconscious as ever I was of the plain fact that I alone amongst men carry no head on my shoulders, that I am another species of animal, another order and class and phylum altogether, and indeed right outside the animal kingdom in a realm all my own. I am as unlike these things with heads that are called animals and vertebrates, mammals and men, as it is possible to be. To give the same set of names to me and to them is the grossest misuse of language. I have been properly taken in, and by nobody else but myself. What reason can I have for thus suppressing the facts about what I really am?

Ernst Mach ('The Analysis of the Sensations -- Anti-metaphysical', The Monist, i, p.59.) makes a drawing of himself as he sees himself through his left eye: "In a frame formed by the ridge of my eyebrow, by my nose, and my moustache, appears a part of my body, so far as it is visible, and also the things and space about it." See also Karl Pearson, Grammar of Science, II. 12.

†Donne was aware of this discrepancy, but regarded it (I think perversely) as a defect. He wrote:

"Thou art too narrow, wretch, to comprehend
Even thy selfe: yea though thou wouldst but bend
To know thy body."
'The Second Anniversary'

Here, surely, is the biggest hoax, the greatest illusion, the silliest farce --- that a man should scrutinize the world for a lifetime and never once see that his own head is missing. It is said that a wasp takes so little notice when his abdomen is snipped off that he will go on drinking syrup as if nothing had happened, while the liquid collects in a globule at his waist. The insect has lost his abdomen and his vivisector has lost his head, and neither is the wiser. The cleverest are deceived. Descartes, recounting the things he holds "true because perceived by the senses", begins: "Firstly, then, I perceived that I had a head..."° It is odd that one of the acutest of minds, with all the world to choose from except one spot, should alight on just that spot --- as odd as the fact that Chesterton, parodying our latter-day prophets, should complete his list of crazy future wonders with the crowning absurdity: men without heads!*

°Meditations, VI.

*The Napoleon of Notting Hill, I. 1.

2. THE HEAD FOUND.

Common sense cannot let this portrait of myself as a headless body pass. Admittedly there are big differences between myself as I am to myself and myself as I am to others; nevertheless the fact remains (says common sense) that in neither case can I do without a head. Or, if I can, what is a headache? And where do all the sensations belong that go with the play of the muscles of my eyes and tongue and face, if not in my head? What does my voice issue from? What do my hands feed? ---- No, my head does not "stand so tickle on my shoulders" that a philosopher can talk it off. I am not off my head, nor am I going to lose it, says common sense.

No doubt common sense is right thus far --- that something is going on where I thought I had a head. It is equally certain that this something is not a head. Whatever they are and wherever they are, these aches and tastes, these sensations of warmth and cold and pressure, are not furnished with hair and eyes and ears. They are not spherical and eight inches across. They are wholly different from the dictionary definition of a head.°

But I can always reassure myself (common sense replies) by looking in a mirror.

So I have found my lost head --- not here on my shoulders where I thought it belonged, but over there in the mirror, and in every reflecting surface within range. Thus, while I have no head at all where I ought to have one, I have innumerable heads in places where I ought to have none. What is more, these heads have apparently been tampered with: they are twisted back to front; they are smaller than the head I thought I had; they shrink and swell unaccountably. I am a decapitated body watched from the middle distance by its severed head, now made elastic, turned round to face its trunk, and multiplied times without number.

It is true, of course, that I cannot find the missing head wherever I look, but that seems to be because it is concealed rather than absent. If I give the thing I happen to be looking at a polish, there is my head in it. I can only suppose that it was somehow there all the time, and that the polishing brought it out. (Is this, perhaps, no less than the overworked Freudian explanation, the point of the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp? And are not we who, unlike Aladdin, find no magic in the polished and reflecting surface, the victims of a profounder illusion than his?)*

Common sense inquires about objects that will not take a polish.

Well, a man is such an object. And he will prove to me, in words or in sketches if need be, that he no less than my mirror has my features in their minutest detail, with all their subtle and momentary changes of expression. He has them where he is; concealed from me, they are open and evident to him.. In fact, the face with which he confronts me is a mask for mine: he cannot take off this mask, but he can tell me what it hides.

Common sense has a further objection. These things that either reflect light or are alive are special cases. The rest, dull and dead things, hide no missing heads. Consider this sheet of paper on which I am now writing: does it contain my head?

Certainly it does. But it contains much else besides. If I can keep out most of these other irrelevant things by putting a box, with a small hole in it, over the paper, then my head will appear. Now all I have done to the paper is to shield it. I have revealed the presence of my head by subtracting from the paper's condition, not by adding anything to it. Why then should I not say that my head was there all the time, blurred by the other things that were there along

°"Head. Anterior part of body of animal, upper part of man's body containing mouth, sense-organs and brain...." Concise Oxford Dictionary.

*These preliminary remarks concerning the mirror will be corrected and amplified in Chapter III.

Of the sun and heavens, trees and mountains, as seen in a mirror, Traherne says: "Which were it not that the glass were present there, one would have thought even the ideas of them absent from the place." Centuries of Meditations, II. 78.

The beauty that is borne here,
  in the face,
The bearer knows not, but commends itself
To others' eyes: nor doth the
  eye itself
(That most pure spirit of sense)
  behold itself,
Not going from itself; but eye
  to eye oppos'd
Salutes each other with each
  other's form:
For speculation turns not to itself,
Till it hath travell'd, and is
  mirror'd there
Where it may see itself.
  Troilus and Cressida, III. 3.

with it? Make a hole in any box, point the box at me, and you have my head trapped inside --- a head perfectly formed, though very likely no bigger than a pea. And remember that your camera is hardly likely to fake anything. It is honest about that part of me which it contains. It cannot be credited with the power of grasping what is going on elsewhere; it reveals what happens in the place where it is. If it could describe me as I really am, here, it would, as a camera, be a failure; for its photographs of me would show me beheaded, with a camera mounted on my shoulders.

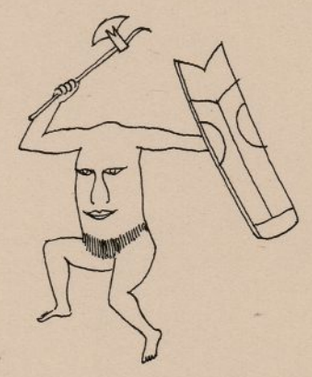
(In fact there is precisely such a camera, whose business is to behead the subject. When the device, sometimes known as the first-person camera, is used in the making of a film, the audience sees, not the actor, but what he sees. A good example is the scene in the film Mine Own Executioner, where the airman starts to trek through the jungle, but is captured by the Japanese; the audience shares the airman's visual experience --- including his arms as he thrusts aside the obstacles in his path, and later his legs as he is dragged along the ground by his captors. But not his head. The body with which the audience is to identify itself is headless. The effect is startling in its realism, but very few cinema-goers can be aware of how it is achieved. In the film studio, either a headless dummy is used, with the camera placed where the head should be, or the camera has to be mounted as near as possible to the living subject's head, and to face the way he faces.)

This business of detachable heads is not common sense, but it is not far from being common knowledge. There is in man a deeper apprehension which grasps the essential point. For example, according to a work of the fourth century A.D., there lived to the south of China a people whose heads could leave their bodies, and, using ears for wings, could fly to great distances. There is an account of a certain female slave whose head flew about in this fashion every night, returning to the trunk at dawn.† Plato has a famous description of the head, before it was given limbs, rolling about on the ground, and finding itself unable to climb out of hollow places.× Flying heads -- often they are vampires -- appear in the folklore of a number of peoples, and headless monsters, or "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders"° were commonly believed to inhabit outlandish parts of the earth.* Perhaps also the mediaeval fondness for martyrs who walked (even if they did not, like King Charles, talk) after their heads had been cut off, owed something to the unconscious knowledge that we are all in much the same condition.

3. THE HUMAN REGION AND ITS CENTRE.

When I am being photographed the camera is in the place where I keep my head. The camera has to adopt certain of the peculiarities of its location, of which my head is one. For to visit space that is saturated with my head is, in some fashion, to take on my head. Not all space is thus saturated. An approaching camera comes to places where my head gets bigger and bigger, then to places where my head gets vaguer and vaguer, and finally to places where I have no head at all --- neither camera nor photographer will register it. They have reached my inner

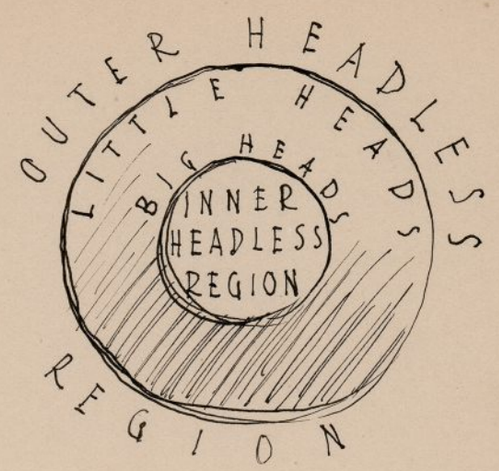
Cf. Coventry Patmore, The Angel in the House, I. xi. 2; II. iii. 2:
"Become whatever good you see,
Nor sigh if, forthwith, fades from view
The grace of which you may not be
The subject and spectator too.
. . . . . .
With whatsoever's lovely, know
It is not ours; stand off to see,
Or beauty's apparition so
Puts on invisibility."



A headless monster from T'u Shu Chi Ch'eng, after G. Willoughby-Meade, Chinese Ghouls and Goblins.

†Willoughby-Meade, op. cit., p.11. Cf. J. A. MacCullough, Celtic and Scandinavian Religions, pp. 33, 57, 112.
×Timaeus, 44 D.
°Othello, I.3.

St. Denis, from a painting on the rood-screen, Grafton Regis, Northants. After Francis Bond, Dedications of English Churches.
*"There are men with no head", a voice says to Paphnutius, in Anatole France's Thaïs; "Can you honestly believe that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of these men?"



headless region. Conversely, when they recede from the centre, they come to regions where I keep my smaller heads. These eventually shrink to nothing. Photographer and camera have reached my outer headless region. Here I no longer make my presence felt.

It is as though this mysterious centre which I call myself here were a magician who casts a spell over the surrounding space, whereby visitors entering it are in some degree transformed. All who come near obey his conditions, and his system of magical defences is perfect. The spell, however, is neither arbitrary nor of unlimited range. It works only inside a belt extending from a few inches to a few hundred yards of the centre, and only near the inner rim of this belt is the spell really binding.†

"Just as a stone flung into the water becomes the centre and cause of various circles..... so each body situated in the luminous air is spread out circle-wise and fills the surrounding parts with infinite images of itself and is present all in the whole and all in every part"×--- except (Leonardo should have added) at the centre itself. Not here, but out there, I am an ordinary man-with-a-head. Or rather I am innumerable such men, and they are not so ordinary after all: they are giants and dwarfs and homuncules, two-eyed and Cyclopean and eyeless, sometimes with four limbs, often with only two or three, occasionally with none at all. Each specimen of me that fills the 'luminous air' has its own peculiarities, which the camera will record. This is what it is to be a man --- in detail a menagerie of monsters or an asylum of cripples; in general conformation a hollow sphere°; in dimensions far exceeding the whale; in substance as airy and penetrable as a cloud, so that my whole frame is laid wide open to all comers. Or, if common sense objects that this spell-bound sphere is not my human shape, but only the region which that shape haunts, I shall not disagree; I shall merely point out that I remain infinite in number, telescopic, and protean. Either way, to be what common sense is pleased to call an 'ordinary' man, a man-with-a-head, is evidently no common-sense matter.*

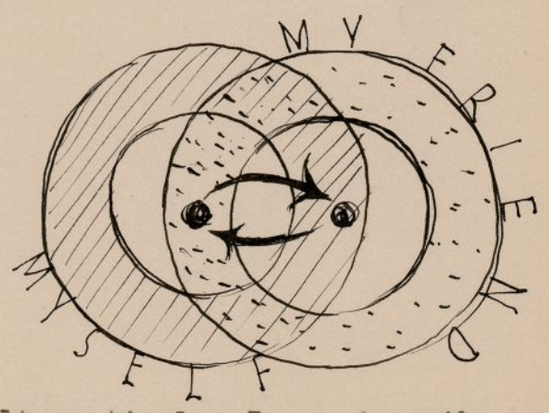
But I have only begun to discover the complexities of the situation. The spell I cast over those who enter my human region has the peculiarity that they shall disown its influence, and shall reflect back on to me at the centre the effects that radiate from me. The friend who tells me how well I am looking can only get his information from the place where he is. But this he denies, claiming that he describes the state of affairs where I am at the centre. It is useless for me to tell him that only I am in a position to know what is here, and that all his comments apply to the regional me. He insists on applying them to the centre of the system. And, of course, I am equally stubborn about the spell he casts over me. Though it is true I register his head because I am where he keeps a head, I am quick to return it to the spot where I consider it belongs. And this I do regardless of the fact that if I were to check my opinion by moving towards that spot I should soon find out my mistake. As I approached he would vanish, like

†The magic circle and the sacred circuit are found in the folk-lore of many lands. Protection against evil may be had, for example, by drawing a circle about oneself to the right; against this the devil in his various disguises dashes vainly. (See, e.g., J. G. Campbell, Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, p.247.) In this, as in so many 'superstitions', there is a good deal of sense. Cf. Knuchel, Die Umwandlung in Kult, Magie und Rectsgebrauch.

×Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks, (trans. McCurdy) p.56. See also pp.117, 217, 218. Leonardo's doctrine resembles the Ionian theory of sense impressions, particularly as it was developed by Epicurus. The latter taught that an object sends out in all directions a stream of images, which impress themselves upon our sense organs.

°In the Nibelungenlied, Wotan places round the sleeping Brünnhilde a protective ring of fire, which anyone who approaches her must penetrate. The fact is that Brünnhilde typifies us all: each of us is similarly extended and protected.

Whether or no he arrived at the idea independently, A.E. suggested that everything in nature is "a continual fountain of phantasmal effigies of itself". The Candle of Vision, p. 110.



*Alternatively, I may describe myself as an elastic globular cavity with a coloured and noisy lining -- one of Eliot's "Hollow Men", but without their stuffing, or "headpiece filled with straw".

Eurydice in the underworld when Orpheus looked to make sure of her presence,° or like a faint star when we gaze directly at it. My friend (and all the world besides) exists for me because I do not push home my inquiry into his existence. And I exist for him because he does not inspect me too closely. Each of us realizes the other in himself, and himself in the other. To look for the self in the self, or for nature in nature, is to come up against a blank, because they belong in each other. "For the division of man from the world is his division from himself, and when he shuts himself up within his own soul, he finds there nothing but emptiness and vanity."+

°Or like Hera, when Ixion went to embrace her, and found himself embracing a cloud.

Cf. H. H. Price, Perception, p. 319: "An individual sense-datum, though it is an event.... happens nowhere....The characteristic of being an event in Nature, like the characteristic of having a spatial position in it, is a collective characteristic which no individual sense-datum can possess."

+Edward Caird, Hegel, p.205.

Many philosophers and poets have known this. John Scotus Erigena (for example) taught that, since knowledge and being are one, to know a thing perfectly is to become it. In knowing himself a man knows the essence of all things: they are 'divine apparitions' within his mind.× A millennium later, Walt Whitman begins a poem with the words:

"There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object that he look'd upon, that object he became."

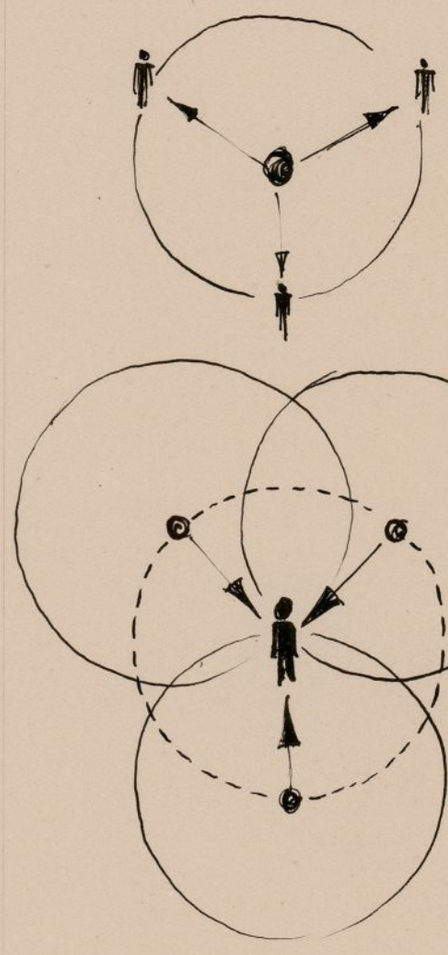
Everything in the world is elsewhere, out on a visit. It is the universal calling day, but nobody meets anyone because nobody stays at home to be met. We keep our distance by changing places.

×Richard McKeon, Selections from Medieval Philosophers, i, p.103.

As Bradley points out, though I disclaim these 'external' things, I cannot do without them, and any serious change in them upsets me. Their alteration may produce a self-estrangement that kills me. See Appearance and Reality, p.80.

"Unheard-of thing," Victor Hugo exclaims, "it is within us that we must look for the external. There is in the heart of man a deep and sombre mirror. Therein is the terrible chiaroscuro."° What then am I? And where am I? If, on the one hand, I take myself as I am to myself, I find sky and clouds, trees and houses, furniture, this sheet of paper and its ink-marks; and all of these, though primarily belonging here at the centre, I scatter as if by a centrifugal machine, leaving the centre itself unoccupied. If, on the other hand, I take myself as I am to others, I am a host of creatures of all shapes and sizes; and all of these, though they belong out there, I pull in to me here as if by a centripetal machine, leaving not one of them at large in the world. Which of these two pictures, equally odd and yet (it seems) equally unavoidable, is the true portrait of me?

°Intellectual Autobiography.



Each is a half-truth. My condition is that I am not simply all the world except that tiny central fraction of it which bears my name, nor am I simply that fraction: I am both at once. I am not simply here at the centre, nor simply out there in the surrounding spaces, but in both places simultaneously. In Emerson's words, "everything refers".* It is impossible to pin me down to one spot, or to describe me as one thing. When I am located I do not stay for closer inspection, but retire elsewhere, like a rainbow or a mirage. The world is the field in which this game of hide-and-seek is played; in it I have room to get sufficiently away from myself to be myself. The content of the centre is despatched to the circumference, and the content of the circumferance is drawn in to the centre. Pascal's "It is not in Montaigne, but in myself, that I find all that I see in him",† is no more than half the story: what I find in Montaigne is in-me-from-him, but also in-him-from-me. Objects are always somewhere else. Everything is inside-out.

*'The Method of Nature'.

†Pensées, 64.

Common sense says I cannot be in two places at once; reflection says that is the only way I can be anything at all. I must be the nothing in the middle of the web of regions, with my whole existence poured out upon the fly caught at the web's edge; I must be the nothing at the web's edge, with my whole existence poured out upon the spider at the centre; and I must be spider, fly, and web at once.

There are, Bergson tells us, "two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first implies that we move round the object; the second that we enter into it."[+] When that object happens to be myself, I do both. For I do not live here at the centre only, contemplating the objects which (as I imagine) are around me. Equally I live out there at the centres of those objects, contemplating the view towards this centre. As Whitehead puts it, I see myself as mirrored in other things.[×] Indeed there is a sense in which I am far more at home out there observing my human shape through other men's eyes, than I am at home here observing myself as the world mounted on the fragments of a human trunk. Reversing Burns' prayer, the gift I need is the power to see myself as I see myself. "Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" Thoreau asks[°]. In fact we do so all the while, and the real miracle occurs when for a moment we look through our own.

Here, then, are the makings of a new portrait of myself. It is not what was expected, but it is drawn from the life. What if it were to become for me a living reality, instead of an occasional insight or a mere intellectual puzzle? How would it be to live in the realization of the fact that this place, of all the places in the universe, is the one spot from which I am absent? How would it be to know that all the world is in me, and I am in all the world[ϕ]--- and to know this not as I know the binomial theorem, but as I know the lay-out of the furniture in this room? Common sense may find this self-portrait too surprising to be true, and cold reason may find it too true to be surprising. But only when I find it both true and surprising at once, does it come home to me. Real knowledge is half wonder.[†]

4. THE VIEW OUTWARDS FROM THE CENTRE.

Sir Thomas Browne says: "The world that I regard is my self; it is the Microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on.... Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and Fortunes, do err in my Altitude; for I am above Atlas his shoulders. The earth is a point not only in respect of the Heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us."[*] To say so is one thing, to know is another. Realization does not come for the asking. Meantime I can at least fill in some of the details of this sketch portrait. I shall begin with the view outwards from the centre. What do I find presented for inspection?

I find a world, rich, confused, in a turmoil of change. Within this wealth of material I distinguish certain relatively permanent objects, which I sort out into trees and houses, stars and men, and so on. Now these objects may be arranged

According to the Schoolmen's doctrine of 'intentional inexistence' it is of the essence of the soul that it shall refer to something other than itself. We can only know ourselves in terms of other things. In the 19th century this doctrine was adopted and developed by Bretano, in his Psychology.

[+] Introduction to Metaphysics, p.1. In other words, we may look upon a thing as an It which is bounded by other Its, or as a Thou which is boundless.

[×] Science and the Modern World, p. 185. Whitehead (in the same book) distinguishes between the intrinsic and the extrinsic reality of an event -- the event as it is in its own prehension and as it is in the prehension of other events. ~~Cf. the saying of Plotinus: "Everything contains all things in itself, and sees all things in another."~~

[°] Walden, 'Economy'.

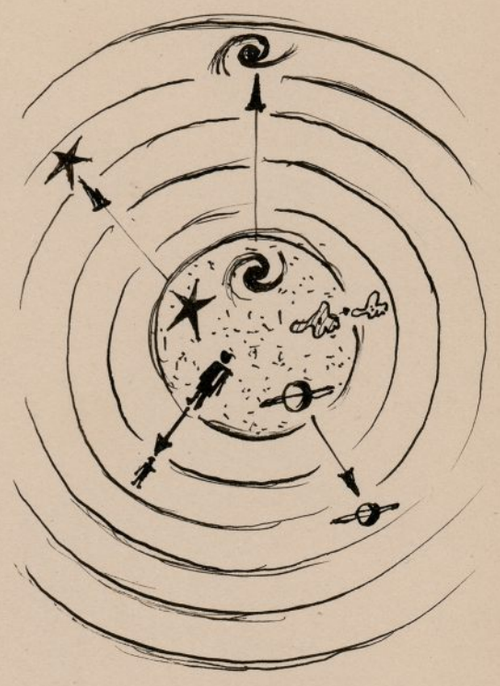
"If water is in a state of tranquility, then it shows up the hairs on a man's chin and his eyebrows.... If still water remains clear, how much more with the things of the spirit in relation to the mind of the sage! He is the reflection of heaven and earth, the mirror of all creatures." Chuang Tzu Book, XIII.

[ϕ] "All things to Circulations owe
Themselves; by which alone
They do exist; they cannot show
A sigh, a word, a groan,
A colour or a glimpse of light;
The sparkle of a precious stone,
A virtue, or a smell; a lovely sight,
A fruit, a beam, an influence, a tear,
But they another's livery must wear:
And borrow matter first,
Before they can communicate."
Traherne.

[†] "The sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher." Plato, Theaetetus, 155 D.

[*] Religio Medici, II. xi.

according to many types of order, but the type that concerns me at present is their order in depth. Somehow (just how remains to be seen) I am able to sort objects in respect of what I call their distance from me here at the centre. Thus I relegate a certain whitish patch to a distance of twelve inches and describe it as my hand, another to a distance of eighteen inches and describe it as an ink-bottle, another to a distance of a mile and describe it as a cloud. Tonight I shall probably relegate a large number of whitish spots to distances of many millions of millions of miles. In every instance the thing presented here is pushed out, by some almost irresistible agency, to what I take to be its proper station in outer space. And clearly the nature of the object has much to do with the length of its journey. Everything despatched to a distance reckoned in billions or trillions of miles is a star or starlike; everything despatched to a distance reckoned in millions of miles I call a member of the solar system. If a man is to present himself to me as a man, he must keep his distance --- not too many yards nor too few. If he comes nearer than a yard or two of me, he turns into a head or a hand; nearer still (provided I am equipped with the necessary apparatus) into a community of living animals, which I call cells. Then, so science assures me, he turns into molecules, and atoms, and electrons. In the end, little, if anything at all, remains of the object, and if I want to find the man again I must retire from him. Even <u>outside</u> the looking-glass world there comes a point when, to get to the Red Queen, Alice has to walk in the opposite direction.



Do I see things there where they are, or here where I am? Language, faithful to experience, gives the cue: I see them there, from here.

I am 'bounded in a nutshell' and yet I am 'a king of infinite space'. This universe of cells and men, of planets and stars and spiral nebulae, is concentrated here at the kernel, yet scattered in all directions.[+] It seems that I am able, without committing gross errors, to put these things where they belong. (In details I go wrong, but not to the extent of supposing that the stars are stuck on the window-pane, or that the tree-tops are brushing the moon.) My guests -- an ill-assorted company -- refuse to stay. Do I see them home, so that my boundaries include all their destinations to the furthest visible nebula? Or do I stay behind here, content to see them off, after having made sure that their labels are properly attached? It is too soon to try to answer these questions definitely, but at least it may be said that, centred on the place I know as <u>here</u>, is a system of zones or belts which contain the home addresses of the beings I entertain here; and that the class distinctions I discern amongst my guests correspond to residential distinctions. The superior ones live in the outer suburbs of the universe. If you are a star, you belong in my star-belt and nowhere else. If you are a man, you cannot go far away. There is no trespassing, no social climbing.[°]

[+]Cf. Bergson, <u>Matter and Memory</u>, p.127: "Reflective perception is a <u>circuit</u>, in which all the elements, including the perceived object itself, hold each other in a state of mutual tension as in an electric circuit, so that no disturbance starting from the object can stop on its way and remain in the depths of the mind: it must always find its way back to the object whence it proceeds."
And Traherne, <u>Centuries of Meditations</u>, II. 78: "And no man would believe it (your soul) present everywhere, were there no objects there to be discerned. Your thoughts and inclinations pass on and are unperceived, but by their objects are discerned to be present: being illuminated by them. For they are present with them and active about them."

Of all the spheres or regions which have me for centre, there is one in which I take a lively interest --- the sphere of men. If I do not accompany the stars home, at least I see human beings to their destinations, since I am able to turn round when I get there and share their view of me. In this human sphere I am very much at large, thanks to my ability to get into the homes of its inhabitants. As for the other spheres, there is nothing except poverty of imagination to prevent me

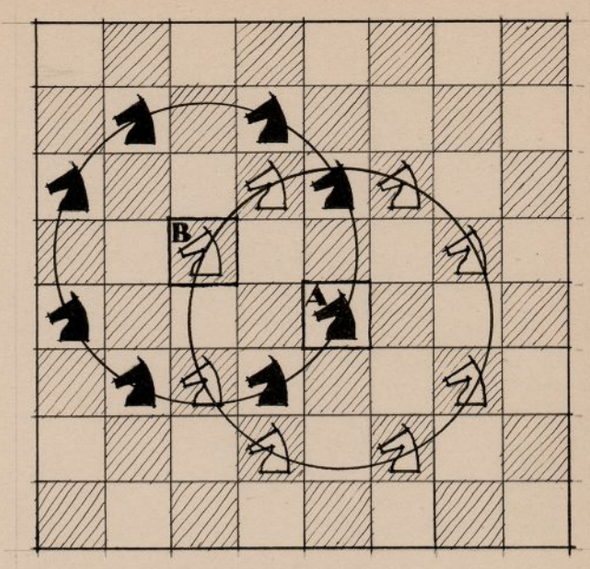
[°]Cf. the doctrine of St Bonaventura: "The more powerful a being is, the more the effects which it can produce are by nature separated from one another, and the more it is able to establish a certain communication, order and harmony between such different things." Gilson, <u>The Philosophy of St Bonaventure</u>, p. 201. Aristotle's distinction between celestial and terrestrial matter has (in spite of Galileo and modern physics) a basis in fact: celestial objects are remote or they are not celestial, and as remote thay have very different characteristics from those of all earthly things.

from taking my stand in them and observing myself, and the world in general, from their respective viewpoints. For the most part, however, I enjoy the company of my non-human guests without inquiring closely into their home life. My business is their accommodation here.* And I am all accommodation. My life is the life they live in me. Take away these visitors of mine and I disappear; alter the least of them and I am altered. The fluctuation of a variable star is a fluctuation in me. I am different because of the cloud that is now sailing past my window. For the cloud is not white, or swift, or beautiful, in itself, but in me. To be beautiful is to beautify. Do I not own the stars that become stellar within me here? Can a picture, a face, a poem, a symphony, a universe, come to themselves in any other way than this way --- the way they arrive in me? Without some such lodging, or home-from-home, they amount to nothing. Truly I forget in what my wealth lies, and how inexhaustible it is, and how poor I am apart from these riches that are so abundantly showered upon me from outside.

They are mine to enjoy, and in some degree mine to use. I seem to exercise a certain curious power over the objects that I accommodate. I can bring one or another of them into vivid and clear existence, and dismiss the rest into obscurity. I can obliterate them all for a time. Over some I seem to wield a precise and detailed control. For instance, I am at this moment initiating very complicated movements in a leaf-shaped object, a large pink cinquefoil at the end of a bending branch that springs from the central trunk --- I say, of course, that I am 'moving my hand', but this is only my way of deceiving myself that I know what is really happening. And this same mysterious power of mine (particularly if I have some money to spend) is extended over other and remoter portions of the world, so that I can move them much as I move my nearer branches. (Or so it appears --- I suppose I should not rule out the possibility that I am merely acquiescing in what is occurring.)

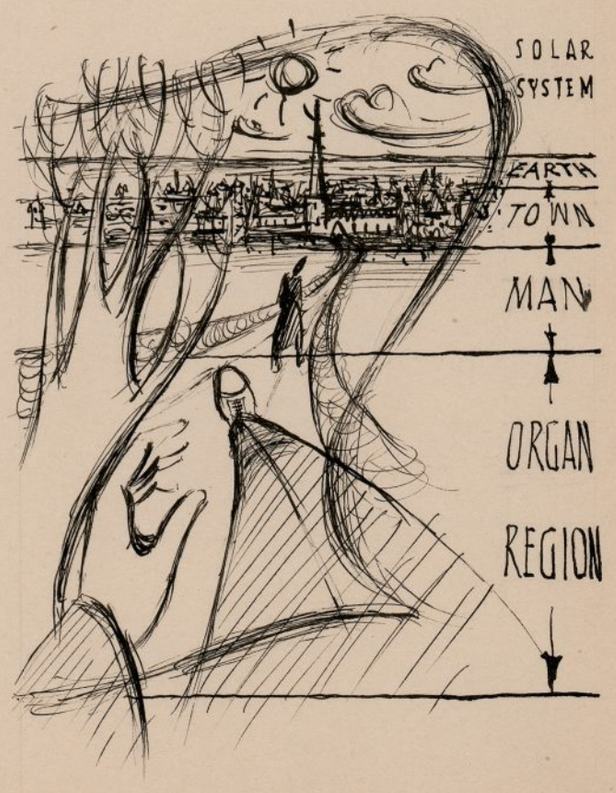
It is useless for common sense to point out that these limbs of mine are privileged parts of the scene, uniquely permanent, uniquely obedient, uniquely sensitive. The line I draw between my body and the world is no more than a convenient fiction;° for I am more liable to feel the pinch in my goods than in some portions of my flesh; I have more control over my dog than over my circulation; my town is a more permanent organ of my life than my hand is. There is no valid criterion whereby my body may be marked off from my world. If, then, as I consider the view out from the centre, I have a body at all, that body extends indefinitely in all directions, embracing all things upon which I depend, and all things which I can affect. In one of its aspects, the world is for me a set of branches or limbs radiating from a headless trunk, limbs that are increasingly numb and increasingly beyond my conscious control as they recede into the distance.

Certainly I have a peculiar body. And perhaps the oddest thing of all is how its limbs are all drawn in to the centre, yet immensely protractile. This greater



*Even a chess-man obeys much the same rules. A piece may be said to be where it acts. It is present regionally in the squares it covers; while centrally, in its own square, it becomes accommodation for other pieces. Thus the white knight on square A covers a circle of 8 squares, one of which is square B, on which the black knight stands. In effect, the knights' regions overlap in such a way that the pieces change places --- just as if they were real men. Chess is an exercise in double location. I suggest that part of its fascination lies in its ontological character. It is a schematic version of the universal constitution of things. After all, Alice's "It's a great huge game of chess that's being played --- all over the world" is very sensible nonsense.

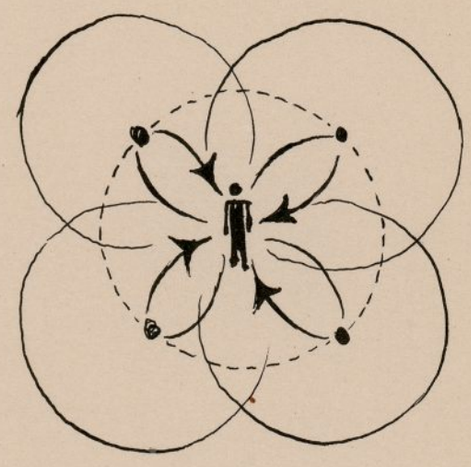
°The continuity of body and environment will be fully discussed in later chapters, but perhaps I should say here that in one sense there is no such continuity. My act of distinguishing a limb is an act of amputation: perceived body is, in fact, environment for the time being. What John Webster calls "that curious engine, your white hand", must cease to be anything of the kind before it can become really your own.



headless body is all gathered into the place where the head would have been, and at the same time it is thrust out into every region of cosmic space. I own it all, and I disown it all. It is all here, and it is all there.

5. THE VIEW INWARDS TOWARDS THE CENTRE.

My common sense tells me that this self-portrait is strange only because I am facing the wrong way, and that if I turn about and look towards the centre, I shall see that I am not so mysterious and unusual after all, but an ordinary human being. And (common sense goes on) it is because I take this sober view of myself -- the view inwards -- to be the true one, that I am so much out there, looking at myself through my observers' eyes. The view outwards is arbitrary, irrelevant to my nature, and for ever changing -- one moment I accommodate a galaxy, and the next a speck of dust -- whereas the view inwards is constant. It alone is true of me, representative, of practical importance. By it I am known. Whether I am contemplating an elephant or a mouse, a star or an atom, makes no difference to my tailor. Philatelists do not take smaller hats than astronomers. In short, according to common sense, the view out is the accident, while the view in is the essence of me.



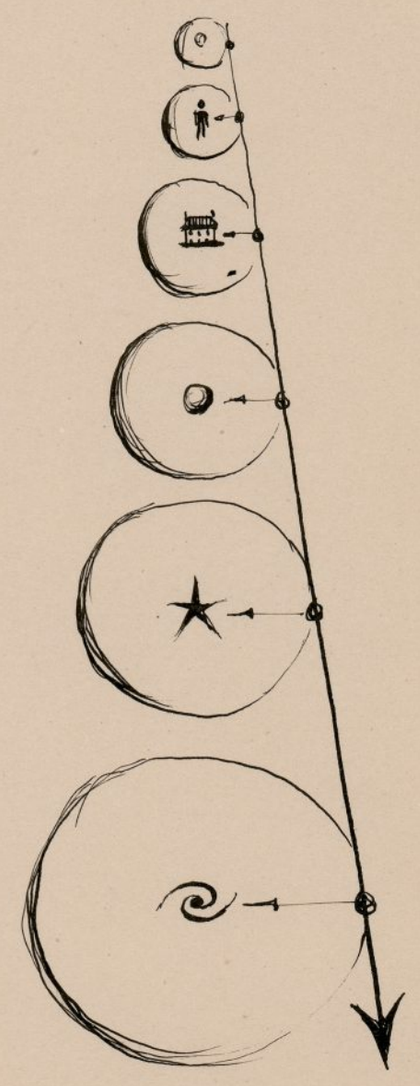
"The perfect man," said Wu Jên, "soars up to the blue sky, or dives down to the yellow springs... without change of countenance." (Giles, Musings of a Chinese Mystic, p. 58) But this, I add, is only true for the observer to whom Wu Jên is stationary.

But is it a fact that I always look more or less the same to the outside observer? Is the view in practically constant? Let me call in a really efficient witness. Here I am seated at my desk, writing. He moves round the room. Every position reveals a new me: there are large discrepancies between front view and side view and back view --- not to mention the views from the ceiling and the carpet. Which of these is true, and by what criterion?

At its most general, the principle of relativity means that one thing (or event or system) has as many aspects as it has observers, and that each aspect, however unlike the others, is a part of the truth about the thing. Physics cannot ignore the subject for whom the object exists, and the 'object in itself and apart from any observer' is a meaningless form of words.

The problem is not a difficult one, common sense explains. What the observer has to do is to combine all his pictures of me in a composite portrait. I am what I seem to be from every viewpoint.

In that event my observer is free to add to his points of view by travelling as he pleases, provided he does not take his eyes off this place. This time, therefore, instead of moving round me, he moves away from me. He retires out of the window into the garden and the street, into the world at large. What does he make of me now?



I dwindle. I lose my shape and my colour. I turn into a house, then a street of houses, then a suburb, then a town. My observer has unlimited travelling facilities. Very soon I appear as England, then the earth, and eventually as a star --- that developed star known as the solar system, or the sun with all its planets. If he still goes on, I become the galaxy, our own island universe, which in its turn shrinks to a point of light in space and perhaps vanishes altogether.

Common sense protests that this will not do at all, and that the only true aspects of me are those which lie near at hand --- the nearer the better. Our

language has the right idea: to find the truth your inspection must be close, and indeed penetrating; you must go into the thing.

My observer takes the hint. Instead of rotating around me or retreating from me, he approaches. What is his story this time? First I lose my limbs, then my trunk. Only my head is left. For him I am now a bodiless head, just as I am for myself a headless body. I become an eye, or a patch of skin. From now on, he provides himself with instruments that enable him to get a clear view of me at a distance of inches and ever smaller fractions of an inch. Thus fitted for his task, he continues to come closer, and presently reports that I have become several extremely primitive animals, then one such animal. The picture is getting increasingly obscure, and my observer has to supplement his meagre sense-data with theoretical constructions. Now his tale is of molecules, of atoms, and electrons. In reality (he explains) I am not limbs, or cells, or even molecules, but something imperceptible, and indescribable --- in words, at least. Finally my observer 'makes contact', and there is no view of me to be had. I have gone. Like the ingenious cockroach that escaped from the tortoise by taking refuge inside its enemy's shell, my observer removes himself from my presence by making for the very centre of it, and the one place in the universe where it does not exist. A

Whether my observer moves away or draws near, the consequences are much the same. I am transformed into a series of objects as unlike the common-sense version of myself as possible, and I end as a blank, an emptiness.

6. SOME COMMON-SENSE OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

The travelling observer (says common sense) is as unsatisfactory as the Guard in Through the Looking Glass, who looked at Alice "first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass. At last he said 'You're travelling the wrong way,' and shut up the window and went away." That is not the way to inspect anybody seriously. When my observer registers my cells or my molecules, or on the other hand my country or my planet, he has ceased to register me: he has left my presence. I have disappeared. I have been superseded, and to be superseded by something is emphatically not, in common sense's opinion, to become that thing.

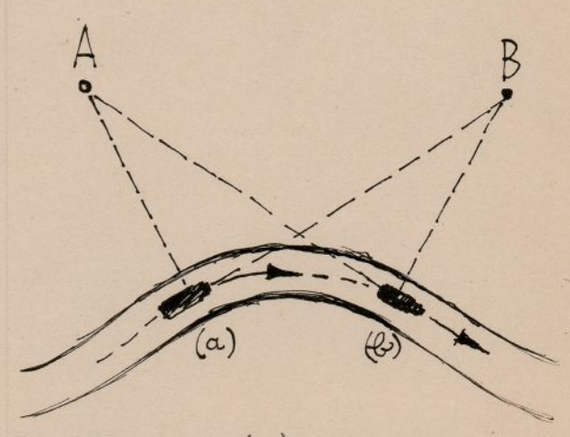
But observe common sense's method. Having settled in advance that I cannot change into something else, then having been shown just that transformation, common sense insists that the something else cannot be me --- because, of course, I cannot change into something else! Anyhow, am I really superseded by my town and my country, my planet and my solar system, if I still lie at their centre, and if countless centrifugal and centripetal processes unite and maintain the whole? It might as well be argued that the acorn cannot become the oak, because the oak is a different sort of thing altogether, which can only replace the acorn. Or it might as well be argued that, because two observers tell two utterly different stories about my speed along a winding road, they must be watching two motorists. Actually they are both right, and the truth combines their stories. The difficulty is not that my common-sense self is too stupid to grasp the point, but that it is

"Out of all the visual magnitudes of each known object we have selected one as the 'real' one to think of, and degraded all the others to serve as its signs. This real magnitude is determined by.... practical interests." William James, Textbook of Psychology, p.344. Much the same is true of the 'real' shape of the object, and the innumerable other shapes which we choose to regard as less real or as unreal.

Whatever additional meanings are read into the following anonymous nursery rhyme (from Walter de la Mare's anthology Come Hither) it represents with incomparable charm the experience of the 'approaching observer' who finds, at the centre which is his goal, emptiness: but emptiness which is found to be accommodation for a beautiful object.

"This is the Key of the Kingdom:
In that Kingdom is a city;
In that city is a town;
In that town there is a street;
In that street there winds a lane;
In that lane there is a yard;
In that yard there is a house;
In that house there waits a room;
In that room an empty bed;
And on that bed a basket ----
a Basket of Sweet Flowers:
Of Flowers, of Flowers;
A Basket of Sweet Flowers."
And the 'retreating observer' ---
"Flowers in a Basket;
Basket on the bed;
Bed in the chamber;
Chamber in the house;
House in the weedy yard;
Yard in the winding lane;
Lane in the broad street;
Street in the high town;
Town in the city;
City in the Kingdom ---
This is the Key of the Kingdom.
Of the Kingdom this is the Key."

Cf. the well known nursery rhyme about a walnut, beginning:
"There was a little green house,
And in the little green house
There was a little brown house..."
Also Wilfred Rowland Childe's 'A Song of the Little City', in The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse, p. 606; and Chhandogya Upanishad, VIII. i. 1.



When I am at (a), observer A reads my speed as 30 m.p.h., but B reads it as nil. When I get to (b), their readings are reversed.

A (p.12)

"I think I'll go and meet her," said Alice....

"You can't possibly do that," said the Rose: "I should advise you to walk the other way."

This sounded nonsense to Alice, so she said nothing, but set off at once towards the Red Queen. To her surprise, she lost sight of her in a moment....

altogether too clever. It will not humble itself before the facts, and take them as they are given. The vision of me growing into a town, a planet, a star, a universe, is impossible only if I have made up my mind beforehand that it is impossible. If common sense could find something immutable about me, some clearly defined object that is myself once and for all, then, indeed, the case would be altered. But the truth is I am not the man I was a second ago, nor identical in blue light and in red, nor the same to one person on two occasions, nor the same to two persons on one occasion. In what sense can the man be said to have been the baby? Am I certain that the self who gets up in the morning in the self who went to China in his dream, and that both are identical with the foetus of thirty-nine years ago? If I am going to be thorough in this matter of self-identity, let me be really thorough, and admit that change is of my essence, and that it is sheer prejudice to lay down in advance just how much change is permitted in me before I am said to disappear.*

Unpersuaded, common sense makes another point: consider the observer's behaviour. He is not content to watch. He acts, putting distance between himself and his object. Then he makes the mistake of attributing to his object the consequences of his own action.

This argument will not do either. If my observer may move round me to find out what I am, why may he not also move away from me, or towards me, for the same purpose? Besides, he would be entirely justified in assuming that he is motionless, and that it is I who am rushing away from him or towards him. I for my part am equally entitled to the opinion that I am motionless and he is moving. In fact, there is nothing to choose between us: we are both right. And precisely what, in any case, is the act of putting distance between oneself and another, but the observation of certain changes in the other? What is this distance that common sense is so sure is something? My observer does not register it. He registers only me, and I am as open to his inspection at thirty million miles as at thirty inches. It is as if nothing intervenes. For something that comes between observer and observed, distance is singularly unobtrusive and self-effacing. But my observer does not speculate about anything so elusive. What he is sure of is that first there was a man, then a series of remarkable metamorphoses, and in the end nothingness.

Common sense, constrained by science, cannot altogether reject the observer's picture of me. At least the near view is allowed some validity. It can hardly be denied, for instance, that I am atoms. Why then reject the far view, and deny that I am the solar system? Atoms and solar systems have a good deal in common, and they are equally unlike the ordinary notion of what I am. Surely it is unreasonable to accept the one version and reject the other. Common sense will retort, of course, that the solar system includes so much that is not me. My observer might be tempted to reply that the atom excludes so much that is me, and that the sin of omission is as serious as its opposite. But that would be to fall into the trap which common sense is always setting for itself: it would be to

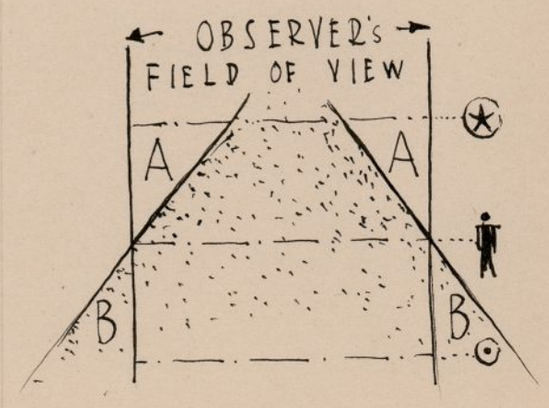
The mutability of the observed object is well brought out in Berkeley's Alciphron (IV):
"Euphranor. Tell me, Alciphron, can you discern the doors, window and battlements of that same castle?
Alciphron. I cannot. At this distance it seems only a small round tower.
Euph. But I, who have been at it, know that it is no small round tower, but a large square building with battlements and turrets, which it seems you do not see.
Alc. What will you infer from thence?
Euph. I would infer that the very object which you strictly and properly perceive by sight is not that thing which is several miles distant.
Alc. Why so?
Euph. Because a little round object is one thing, and a great square object is another."

*The problem is a very old one. See Plato, Symposium, 207-8, on the mutability of all temporal things, and in particular of man, who, though called the same person, is every day a new creature: body and soul, he is always changing, for ever ebbing away and being renewed.

My receding observer might well make use of Whitehead's dictum: "Space-time is nothing else than a system of pulling together of assemblages into unities." Science and the Modern World, IV.

We can hardly, says Professor H. H. Price, treat Space as if it were an object or substance --- "the truth surely is (to put it paradoxically) that there is no such thing as Space but only spatial objects." Perception, p. 109.

"Empty space --- space without some quality (visual or muscular) which in itself is more than spatial --- is an unreal abstraction. It cannot be said to exist." F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p.38.



A-A represents that part of the solar system which (according to common sense) is not me. B-B represents those of my molecules and atoms which the nearer views leave out.

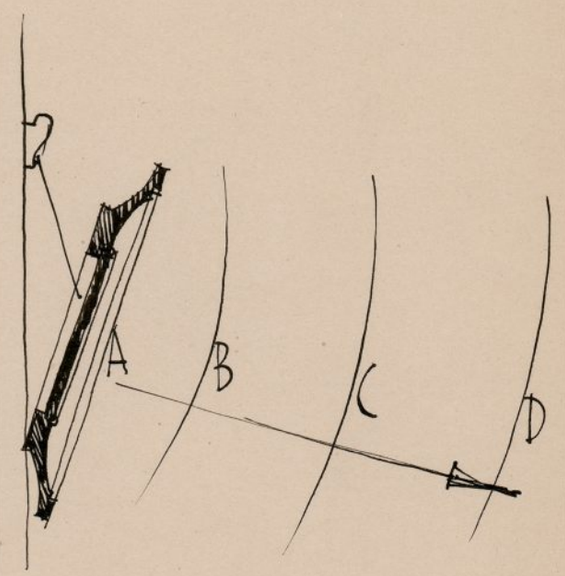
allow a preconceived idea of what I really am to come between the observer and me his object. So far, his report is this --- I am not a man who is more than atoms and less than the solar system, but I am, in some queer fashion not yet revealed, at once atoms, and man, and solar system, and a great deal besides.+

A man is a partial view of something more, and the way to discover that something more is to take up new positions. Common sense already recognizes this principle in saying that I am more than front view, or back view. Who is to say that this place and not that place in the universe shall qualify as an observation-post for the investigation of my nature?

But if all things (says common sense) are in fact what they seem to every beholder of them, and nothing has just one status, the danger is that all individuality, all distinctions, will vanish in a universal fog of opinion.

My answer is firstly that the differences made out by the various regional observers, so far from being arbitrary and chaotic, are the very architectonics of nature, the prime structural principle of the universe. Secondly, though it is true there are two viewpoints where every object loses its separateness or individuality altogether (I refer to the nearest observation-post and the furthest, to the observer's terminuses), the intermediate viewpoints are what make all the difference. The experience of the receding or approaching observer is full of varied possibilities (lying within the system of regions), even though he is bound at the start and at the finish to find what all observers of all objects find. Every finite object marks out a unique path from centre to circumference, and it is that long trail of observation which establishes the object's individuality. But if I am asked why the view along one path differs so much from the view along another, I have to confess my ignorance. The scenery has to be accepted with natural piety. Why the track from one centre should reveal a stone, from another a tree, from a third a man, before all three merge into a planet, I do not know. What I do know is that each centre has its system of regions (partly shared with other centres, partly its own) conforming to a general and ordered geography, and that no peculiarity discoverable in the regions may be simply attributed to some peculiarity of the centre. For the centre is in itself without peculiarities.

+Cf. A. N. Whitehead, Principles of Natural Knowledge, 61.9: "Our experiences of the apparent world are nature itself." And The Concept of Nature, p.185: "Nature is nothing else than the deliverance of sense-awareness." Whitehead loyally accepts what is given as what veritably is.
C. H. Richardson, Spiritual Pluralism, p.100, discusses the question whether a thing can be defined as the class of all its appearances, or of some of them. Bertrand Russell's Our Knowledge of the External World (III) is one of the most important of the many studies of the subject. From Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy onwards, phenomenalists have defined an object as a system or 'family' of regional sense-data (actual or experienced on the one hand, and possible on the other), and have dispensed with a nuclear solid, or central physical object. (Cf. C. D. Broad, Scientific Thought.) My only criticism is that the phenomenalists do not push their own methods far enough. A 'family' is very much larger than they realize; its members are more widely scattered, and their status is more varied. To pick out a small part of this cosmic organization and treat it as the whole will not do.



At A there is nothing to be seen, but the observer travelling to D discovers a picture. Where, then, is the picture? At D? But without A (and B and C) there is no picture. The picture is at D from A. In Whitehead's phraseology, the picture is not simply where it is perceived at D, nor simply where it is perceived as located at A. It is present at D, with mode of location in A. Cf. Lloyd Morgan, Emergent Evolution, p. 49.

7. THE VIEW INWARDS AND THE VIEW OUTWARDS BROUGHT TOGETHER.

I have now filled in, subject to correction later, a few of the details of the two portraits. At first the one contradicted the other; in fact it was precisely what the other was not --- what have a bodiless head and a headless body in common except their need of each other? But note the fundamental likenesses that have now been brought out. Looking at me, and looking with me, come in the end to much the same thing. The two portraits are built up along the same general lines. Both are based upon a set of concentric spheres which embrace the universe. It will be my task in Part II of this book to define these spheres, and the inhabitants by which they are known, much more exactly. For the present

I have indicated a rough lay-out, ranging from the electron region very near the centre to the remote galactic region, with the human region midway.

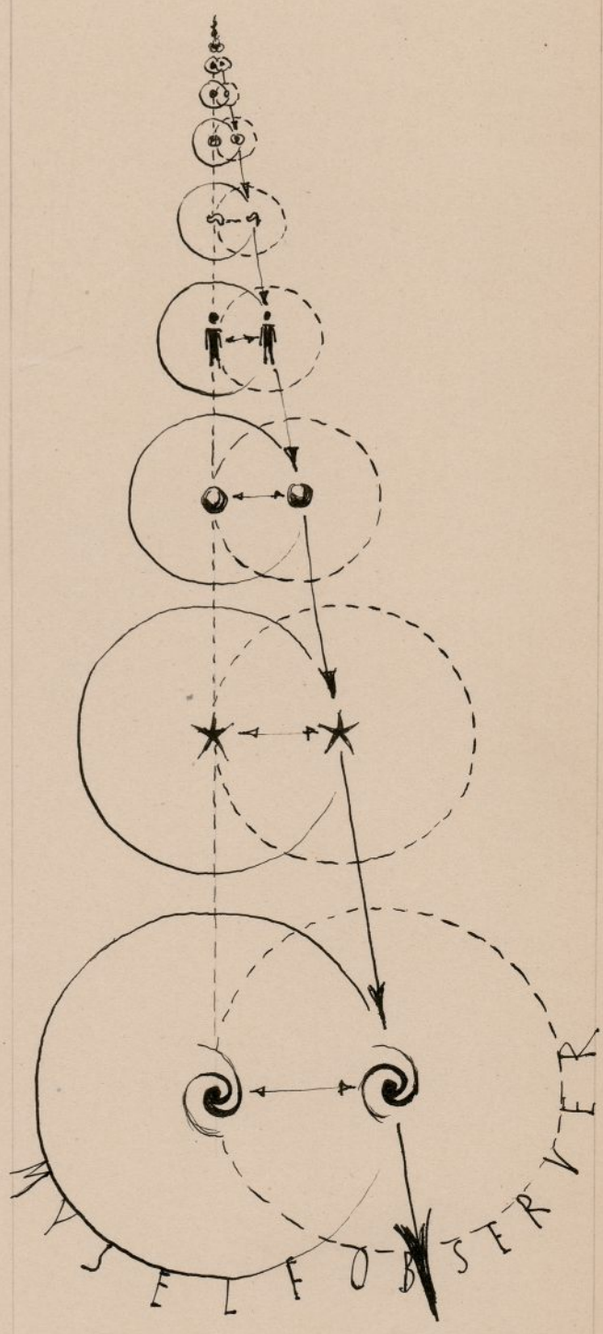
"How could I have seen you save from a great height or a great distance?" asks Kahlil Gibran. "I hunted only your larger selves that walk the sky." The Prophet, 110-1.

The two versions of myself involve one system of regions, but put them to different uses. There is two-way traffic between centre and circumference. Looking outwards, my regions are the places upon which the characteristics of this centre are projected; looking inwards, they are the places from which similar characteristics are projected upon this centre.

There is another most important difference. Whereas the view inwards from the regions reveals me and mine -- my head, my human body, my house, and so on -- the view outwards into the regions reveals what is other than me and not mine -- the other man's head, body, house.... Of course I get glimpses of my head and my body and my house (all allocated to their proper regions) but I cannot see these things whole from here. Here at the centre lie all men but myself, all planets but this planet, all things but my things. I have all save what I claim. The view out completes the view in. So far from cancelling one another, the two portraits demand one another.

Let me then combine them. I have recorded my observer's impression of me: what about my impression of him? Suppose I am watching him as carefully as he is watching me. We experience one another first as heads, then as men. Provided conditions are favourable, when he has arrived at the town across the valley he is for me that town, just as I am for him this town. Continuing his journey, he arrives (say) at the moon. We are now a pair of heavenly bodies. And so the tale goes on. When my travelling observer sees me as a star (that is, as the sun with its planets) he is a star to me; when he sees me as a galaxy or island universe he also is a galaxy or island universe.

If, instead of retreating from one another, we had approached, our findings would have been in principle the same. However near, however far apart, we are always equal --- that (as I shall show) is the great law. I deal only with individuals of my own rank. The more I find in things the more I have in me. The status I attribute is my own, and I adjust my grade as each occasion demands. I am like one who, to avoid all offence, is all things to all men, simple to the simple, great to the great, learned to the learned; or like a king travelling incognito, who adopts the appearance and the manners of the people he happens to be among. I can only meet another on equal terms. If I am where he is human, then he is where I am human. My centre, my here, lies in his human region, as his lies in mine. If I am centred in the place where he is molecules, he is centred in the place where I am molecules. This rule of symmetry is never violated. Only stars can see stars; no man has ever seen such a thing.* ~~A cat cannot look at a king.° It takes a poet to tell a poet, and a man to understand a man.~~ "You can only behold that which you are", says Evelyn Underhill (echoing the great mystics), and this is doubly true. For you are what you behold inasmuch as you accommodate and own it, and have no other possessions; and you are the equivalent of what you behold inasmuch



"We think not better of Others, than we do of our selves." Whichcote, Aphorisms, 716.

The principle that what interests us is the key to what we are, is recognized by Marcus Aurelius. The common people (he says) admire inanimate things, mere goods; a higher grade admire animate things, as flocks and herds; a still higher grade are interested in men as skilled in the arts; best of all are the men whose concern is with men as reasonable souls. Meditations, VI. 13. ~~The principle~~ "Like can only be known by like" is (pace Leonard Hodgson, The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 139) no mere a priori dictum, but has an empirical basis.

*The first line and title of one of Siegfried Sassoon's poems (in The Heart's Journey) is "In the stars we have seen the strangeness of our state".

as every view out implies an analogous view in. The doctrine of equality is more than a political catchword, more even than a religious dogma: it is basic. I see what I bring to my seeing, and swell and shrink with my object. The saying of Plotinus that the eye cannot behold the sun unless it be sunlike,+ is true. As Traherne is never tired of insisting, "Objects are so far from diminishing, that they magnify the faculties of the soul beholding them. A sand in your conception conformeth your soul, and reduceth it to the size and similitude of a sand. A tree apprehended is a tree in your mind; the whole hemisphere and the heavens magnify your soul to the wideness of the heavens; all the spaces above the heavens enlarge it wider to their own dimensions."×

+Cf. Plato, Republic, VI. 507 ff; Plotinus, Enneads, I. vi. 9; Inge, The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought, p. 59.

×Centuries of Meditations, IV. 73.
Cf. W. Macneile Dixon, The Human Situation, p.70: "The universe slumbers in the soul.... In proportion as we come to know it we come to know ourselves."

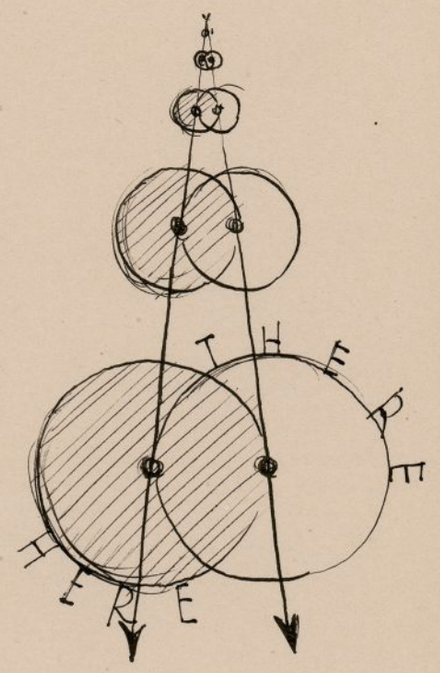
Qualifications and elaborations will follow in their place; meantime it is the principle that matters. I see myself in things because they fill my 'soul', and I am nothing without them; I see my equivalent in things because the view out and the view in are symmetrical. All my looking is looking in a mirror --- in a mirror which has the trick of showing me, not this face, but its likeness, which is often by no means human. My arm is too short and my hand-mirror is too small: I cannot hold it out in the spaces beyond the region where I am a man, to discover what I am there. Nor, seemingly, can I ask of the stars and the planets their estimate of me. If I could do so, I should not need to call in my travelling observer, and my earth-hood and sun-hood would be as obvious to me as my manhood. But all I really need is that other sort of mirror -- simple sight--- to tell me, in terms of others, what I am.

According to I John, III.2., the reason "we shall be like him" is that "we shall see him as he is." Empedocles taught that a man recognizes Fire by the fiery element in himself, Water by means of the watery element, and so on. The Aristotelian doctrine of the 'sensible species' involves some assimilation of the eye to what it sees.---- These are a few of the many variations on the theme of equality.

8. THE ELASTIC SELF.

At this point I find my common-sense self (C) and my philosophical self (P) arguing thus:

C. When I cease looking through the window at the sun, and attend instead to a speck of dust on the window-pane, the changes I detect in myself are trivial. If I am what I seem to myself to be, then I remain a man. My objects may expand and contract, but I do not. My there is elastic, my here constant.



P. Consider the word here. What do I mean by it? When I tell my dog to come here, I want him to come to the spot where I am standing; when a football team comes here, it comes to this town; when a foreigner comes here, he comes to this country; if Martians were to invade the earth, I should say they had arrived here even though they were to alight in Australia. In short, my here is infinitely elastic, swelling to gigantic proportions and shrinking again to next to nothing in an instant. It always matches my there.

C. Our language is full of ambiguities.°

°Mr. C. S. Lewis has pointed out the 'ambiguity' of the possessive pronoun (and deplored it): thus I say my hand, my town, my country, and even my God, subsuming all these in the same class, as if they were comparable objects. I say that here is just one more eloquent witness to the elasticity of the self. "It is never safe", C. C. J. Webb well says, "for the philosopher to neglect the testimony of ordinary speech." God and Personality, p. 110.

P. Language is commonly wiser than its critics, and in this instance it certainly is. Do I not identify myself with my telescopic here? A single conversation may find me taking up the viewpoint of my solitary human self, of my family, of my nation, of my race, in turn. My here is what I have behind me in my deal-

ings with the objects there. It is the 'backing' I take to be mine, and it is on a par with what I am 'facing', or 'up against'. In other words, I have the body fit for the work in hand --- a body that is sometimes much less than a man's and sometimes much more than a star's. "Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect integrity," says Blake;* "At will Contracting into Worms or Expanding into Gods."+

+Thus I am in one sense always travelling at immense speeds throughout the universe (by expansion and contraction); while in another I never budge, for I am a worldwide nest of concentric sieves whose contents -- stars, men, atoms, and so on -- always keep their places.

*Jerusalem, 55.

C. It is one thing to associate yourself with a person or a group, but another to become that person or group.

P. How is it that I take to myself so unquestioningly the praise, and resent the blame, and suffer the humiliations, and enjoy the triumphs, which belong to the more inclusive wholes? I am always feeling, and thinking, and speaking for them --- or as them. If the hero who dies for his country or for mankind does not count the larger body more his than the smaller body which he sacrifices, then what is the point of the sacrifice? Of course I do not permanently become any one of my many bodies large or small, for it is my nature to spend my time passing from one to another of them. I am not less a man for being also a planet that contains the man, and a star that contains the planet. On the contrary, my manhood, instead of forbidding me to become much more and much less than a man, positively demands that I shall do so. And the recipe is simple: subject equals object. In other words, my 'body' (by which I mean that taken-for-granted part of the world in which I am, for the moment, ubiquitous) is made to the measure of my 'mind' (by which I mean that not-taken-for-granted part of the world which, for the moment, I exclude and contend against).×

Pope, in his Essay on Man, uses the 'regional diagram'. The human soul, he says,
"Must rise from individual to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first will it embrace;
His country next; and next all human race;
Wide and more wide, th'oerflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind."

×Cf. James Ward, Essays in Philosophy, p.303.

C. I might agree that my body grows to become more than human, but not that it shrinks to become less than human. While I may possibly take on more body, I cannot shed this human minimum of mine and still live.

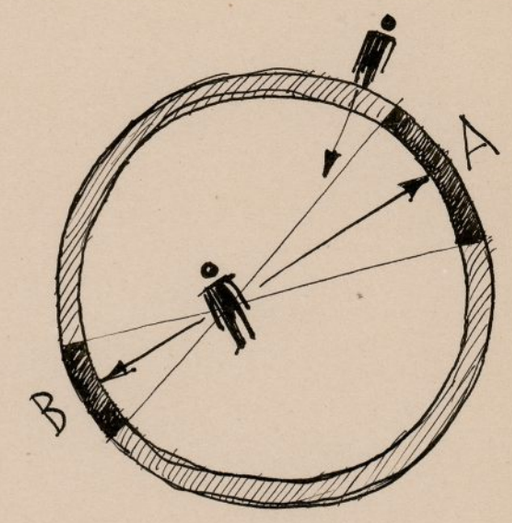
P. I am always losing limbs and regenerating them --- in this art even the reptiles have little to teach me. I am now observing the hand that is writing this sentence. Where is it? It is there-from-here, externalized, projected away from that taken-for-granted nucleus which is my body for the time-being, amputated. What remains here is then something less than the whole human body. A pain in my hand does not stay here at the centre, but is referred out there. Even a general feeling of well-being or discomfort, in so far as I become aware of it, is felt as somewhere: it is regionally located. The here is by nature a blank, but an infinitely capacious blank. It is my cap of invisibility. It is the top hat of a master magician, from which every conceivable object is produced (to become something there), and to which it is returned (to become nothing here again). In other language, organism becomes environment; environment becomes organism. They are relative terms. Every region of mine is capable of incorporation and extrusion. I wrap it around myself as a cloak of nothingness; when I wear it I include it in my own nonentity; I abolish it along with all that is here. The one infallible way of escape is to become the menacing object. In this fashion I can take on all men and all life, the earth and the solar system, the galaxy itself,

Modern physics, with its doctrine of matter as an unlimited field of energy, confirms the view that I fill all space: Traherne and Einstein are agreed here. Moreover, according to Petrucci, Natural Origins of Ownership, an object must be looked upon as the true owner of the space it occupies.

placing myself at the centre of each in turn, and bringing it to naught. How can I do this? Only by occupying myself with the other, the not-self, at every level --- with my fellow men, my fellow species, my fellow planets, and so on. It is for this alone that I make myself nothing, that they may come to themselves in me.

C. This is all far too vague, far too much a matter of unverifiable feeling, to be taken seriously. If only there were objective evidence, of the sort that science can recognize, showing that I can nullify the effects of an object by transferring it from my <u>there</u> to my <u>here</u>.....

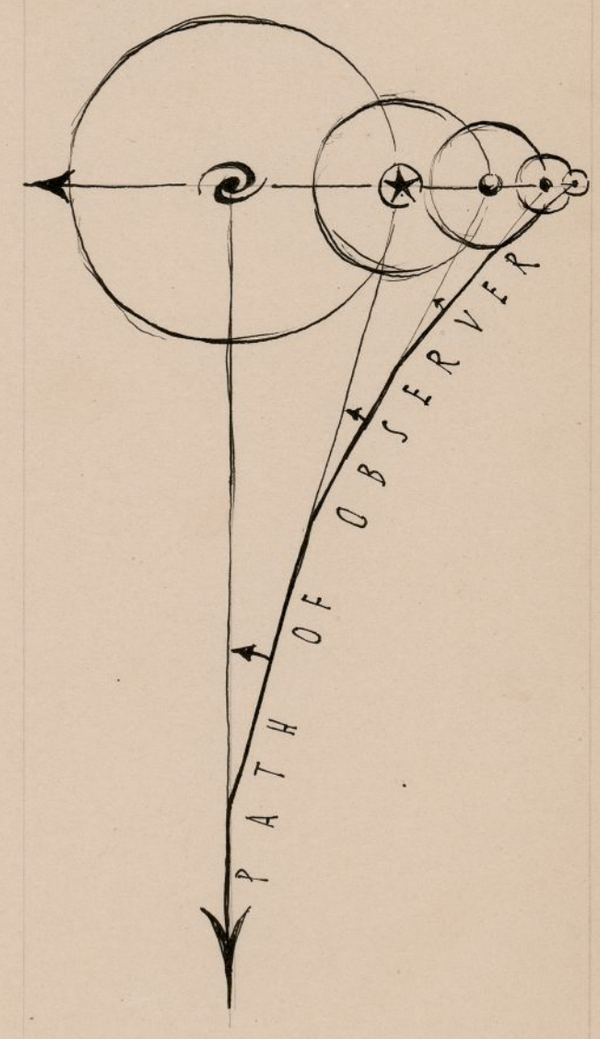
P. There is plenty of such evidence. Consider Newton's hypothetical hollow sphere. A man on the outside of it is subject to its gravitational pull, but once he goes inside the pull ceases. In effect, the sphere no longer exists for him. He does not fall in any direction, but remains poised wherever he happens to be.



Newton's hollow sphere: the man inside does not fall towards A or towards B, because A's pull is the same as B's. A's mass, though greater than B's, is offset by A's greater distance from the man.

C. But note that the man, to abolish the sphere, has to shift centre --- which fact brings me to one of my main objections. The observer retiring from me, and reporting at intervals what I have become, is dishonest. For he alters, from time to time, the direction of his gaze. It is centred upon a cell, a man, a planet, a solar system, a galaxy, in succession, and at each stage the compass-bearing of the new whole shifts, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the eccentricity of the previous part. (For instance, if the cell chosen for inspection happens to be on the left side of my body, the observer will, when the whole man comes into view, turn somewhat to my right. At a later stage there will be a similar shift from the centre of the planet to the centre of the solar system, and another from the centre of the solar system to the centre of the galaxy.) But if this is so, the observer can no longer be said to be <u>my</u> observer. He has allowed his attention to be diverted from me.

P. The turning of my observer's attention from one centre to another is a fact; but it is a fact that, instead of disproving my thesis, lends it valuable support. My observer sees truly when the mutations of his object force him from the centre of the part to the centre of the whole, and again to the centre of a still more inclusive whole. For that is precisely my own experience here. The view in matches the view out. When for a time I abandon my private interest, and identify myself with my town, or district, or country, or with some international organization, I do, in fact and in feeling, transfer my allegiance. I acknowledge new headquarters, and the larger the unit to which I am attached the more remote its headquarters are likely to be. Initially eccentric, I can only grow by correcting this condition, and shifting centre. My observer finds this out in his own fashion, as I do in mine.



C. Sometimes I do not have this sense of reliance upon a distant centre, but seem to be at the very heart of the greater whole that commands my loyalty. In other words, it may happen that I am posted to headquarters. But in that case my observer, with his centre-shifting methods, does not see me as I am.

P. Why not? He can always bring two of my centres into line, making them -- so far as he in concerned -- coincident. There is no eccentricity so great that it it cannot, by lateral motion on the part of my observer, be entirely overcome. He is a reliable observer, and he sees me truly. Whether he sees me as the offshoot of some greater whole, or as contained within it, he sees aright --- man is at once the very hub of the world and the rim; central, yet a mere excrescence. On the one hand, philosophers like Nicolas of Cusa and Bruno tell me that the centre of the universe is just where I happen to stand in it; on the other, scientists are constantly reminding me that I am peripheral, or rather without privileged position of any kind. Both are right. To ignore either aspect is to misunderstand my nature.

"Here we're as dull as unwashed
plates; out there we shine.
We shine. That's a consideration.
Come
Close to paradise, and where's the
lustre?
.....
Minarets, gasometers, and even I
Fall into space in one not unattractive
Beam. To take us separately is to
stare
At mud; only together, at long
range,
We coalesce in light."
Christopher Fry, Venus Observed, I.

C. There is still some danger that I shall think more of myself than I ought to think, and entertain illusions of grandeur.

P. Any tendency that way is checked by four considerations: first, that my base, to which I must always return, is my merely human phase; second, that if I am more than human I am also less than human; third, that it is only by sinking myself in my object that I attain its status; and fourth, that while the not-me (being there from here) is something, the me (as only here) is nothing but room. Cardinal Bérulle describes the greatness and the nonentity of man when he says of him: "He is a nothingness surrounded by God, indigent of God, filled with God, if he so wishes."+ To say the least of it, any high estimate of myself at this stage would be premature. I am a decapited body on the look-out for a head. The choice is unlimited. I may imitate Bottom the Weaver, or the masked devil-dancers of Tibet. I may place on my shoulders heads divine or human, animal or diabolic, vast as universes or mean as pin-heads, as sublime as the heavens or as mundane as a pork chop. Every one of them fits as perfectly as if it had grown there. Having the whole world for a head comes as naturally to me as having another man's head, or a mountain, or a tree, on my shoulders. The condition is that it shall be on loan to me. I may have whatever I like --- so long as I really do like it, and do not merely like myself. The moment my attention wanders from my object to myself and my equality with my object, the spell is broken, and I revert to a lower status. Self-congratulation is self-defeating.×

To the common-sense objection that I have exchanged an ordinary head for an absolutely swelled head -- for a species of cosmic onion -- it may be replied that I have in fact exchanged it for an absolutely empty head, for a hat which fits every head but mine, for a pillow on which all others may rest.

+Cf. William Law: "God Himself cannot make a creature to be in itself, or in its own nature, anything else but a state of emptiness. The highest life that is natural and creaturely can go no higher than this; it can only be a bare capacity for goodness and cannot possibly be a good and happy life but by the life of God dwelling in and in union with it. And this is the twofold life that, of all necessity, must be united in every good and perfect and happy creature."

×It has several times been pointed out (e.g. by William James, The Will to Believe, pp.97 ff.) that there are two kinds of world-view --- the naïve, which ignores the world-viewer, and the philosophical, which finds a place for him. A defect of the former is that the subject is unaware of his equality with the object. A defect of the latter is that the subject, becoming aware of that equality, is apt to become self-occupied, destroying by his insistence the very thing he insists upon.

9. THE DEPTH OF THE PICTURE.

And, after all, there is nothing obscure about these basic facts of my nature, nothing that a child cannot comprehend. If I am in difficulties it is because I am vitiated with learning, full of preconceived notions, too sophisticated to notice what is staring me in the face. The world is, primarily, flat. My field of vision, to the ideally innocent eye, is two-dimensional. Objects are present to me and not absent, presented to me here and not over there. Nothing comes between us. Yet it is true, of course, that the depth and the distance of things are just as real to me as their breadth and their height. Depth is a secondary or derived dimension which, though attaining equal rank with the others, is unique in the way it reveals itself to me. When I turn this pen through an angle of 90

degrees, it shrinks from a long rectangle to a small circle; yet I have no fear of losing my pen --- it has been absorbed only for a time by this mysterious third dimension, and will presently be restored intact to me. Why this curious procedure? Why is depth given so differently from the other dimensions? It is not as if the distance of things were somewhat beyond my capacity, as if it were only arrived at with great difficulty and were easily overlooked. On the contrary, the astonishing fact is that I do not ordinarily notice any peculiarity about depth, and my estimate is for most practical purposes almost as adequate as my appreciation of height and breadth. What, then, is the significance of this peculiar mode (so apparently simple in operation, yet so complex in analysis) of presentation?

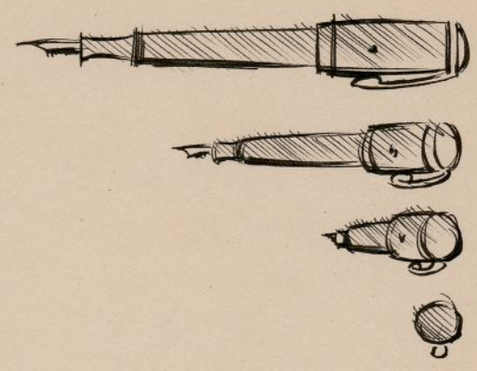
Common sense suggests that the uniqueness of depth may be coincidental. Or, more probably, that it arises out of the necessities of the case: there is (so to say) no room for depth, which has to fit itself into the picture as best it can, by means of every kind of innuendo. It is difficult to imagine how depth could have done otherwise, and contrived to manifest itself to the beholder at the same time and in the same manner as the other two dimensions.

It is a sound rule to regard few things as coincidental, none as impossible, and all as improbable. Familiarity with a two-dimensional field is no explanation of it, and a hundred-dimensional field is no more improbable. The fact that I cannot picture my field with the depth of its contents given just as their height is given, is no more to the point than the fact that I cannot imagine a dozen primary colours. What I actually find has to be accepted in a spirit of humility, and some significance extracted. And the significance here is indeed tremendous. Not without awe, I realize that any distance which separates me from my object is distance of my own making. A line turned endwise to the eye (as Hylas remarks to Philonous) is for that eye no line at all. A more striking demonstration of the hereness of my objects could not be imagined. I am Fortunatus with his wishing-cap, triumphing over space.+ Between a pair of stars I see an interval, but between myself and them there is no interval. I have no need to check this fact by means of a tape-measure, because it is obvious that, end-on, it would not cover an inch. The speck on the window-pane coincides with the star.

"A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie."

And the moral that George Herbert draws is that "All may of Thee partake".× Or, as I would say, the whole is here.°

Distance is no object. At least it is not objective to the degree that shape and number (for example) are objective. Leaving aside the question as to how far depth is given and how far it is inferred, it is clear that I share responsibility for my object's range, in a way that I do not share responsibility for its form. If I do not actively put distance between us, making myself (and it) scarce, at least I am party to the deed. Its range is our range, whereas its height is not our height.



Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop (p. 294), has an interesting passage on the "unspeakable mysteriousness" of the third dimension of depth.
The first notable attempt to explain the perception of depth was Berkeley's New Theory of Vision (1709), in which he holds that distance is suggested by such 'ideas' as the sensation arising from turning the eyes, the apparent magnitude and clearness of the object, the straining of the eye, etc. Since Berkeley, much research has been devoted to the question. One school (the Gestalt psychologists) reacting against the view that we infer distance (or reach it by a process of association based on past experience) try to show that the total primary brain-response to the situation gives the facts directly. But experimental psychology in general cannot thus dispose of the problem. At present the tendency is to stress the visual cues of distance, rather than the tactile-kinaesthetic. See Woodworth, Experimental Psychology, p. 680.

+The 15th century book of Fortunatus is a collection of tales about the adventures of Fortunatus and his son, with their inexhaustible purse and wishing-hat --- the wearer of the hat, wishing himself anywhere, found himself there. An instance of truth embodied in a tale.

×'The Elixer'

°Professor H. H. Price writes: "It is obvious that all visual sense-data have the characteristic of depth or 'outness'. This characteristic of them is just as much 'given' as colour or shape, whether we can explain it or not." Perception, p. 218. I would qualify this. Only the data of one narrow belt seem to have their depth given with any discrimination. Collapse of planes is the general rule --- nebulae, stars, planets, and even the light on the hill, are all lumped together; and microscopic data are generally not

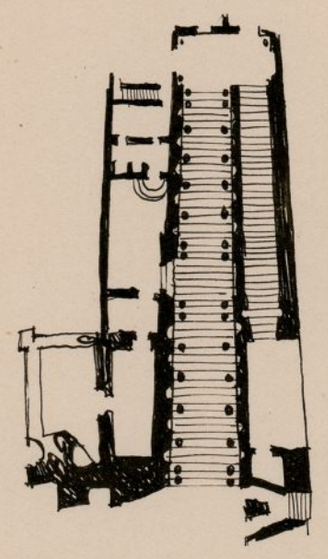
(over

We cannot live in a flat world, but must impute depth. We do not do so as automatically as might be supposed. Consider how seldom a view is mentioned by classical writers, or how many centuries of primitive painting preceded the discovery of the principles of perspective by Leonardo and others. The depth of our world is normally very slight, with the result that our lives are impoverished. The people living in the neighbourhood of Everest and Kinchinjunga are markedly indifferent to their surroundings. And even Dr. Johnson and his contemporaries considered mountains uncouth objects, while precipices were 'horrid'. But our forbears knew the value of the third dimension in the nearer regions. In architectural design, the approach has always been reckoned important. The long avenue of sphinxes leading up to the Egyptian temple, the Gothic nave converging upon the high altar, the colonnaded piazza and Trasparente and Scala Regia of the Baroque, with their faked perspectives, the vista of trees before the country house, the corridor-like chamber designed to put one in awe of the functionary presiding at the far end of it --- these are a few of the means by which a man is made to read depth into the picture. In order that he shall attribute the right degree of otherness to the object, there is arranged between him and it a graduated series of subordinate objects which serve, like the figures in the foreground of a Turner landscape, to stimulate his depth-creating activity.

Why (common sense asks) all this machinery of deception --- if it is deception? What is the truth of the matter? Is depth illusory, or is it real?

It is not illusory, neither is it the final fact. There are three 'moments' or stages, all of them necessary:--- (1) the flat world here, undifferentiated from myself; (2) the same world projected over there, seen in relief, made other than myself; (3) the same world seen as both here and there, both myself and other than myself. Without the second stage (of self-alienation) the first stage (of self-identity) is null and void. Again and again in this inquiry I shall come across the paradox of the self that can only recognize itself when it is wearing the disguise of the not-self. The self self-occupied is really a cipher.° The failure of the flat or non-regional world of the centre is that the varying status of its contents is unrealized: there is no distinction between the star and the candle, between the moon and green cheese. The failure of the projected or regional world, on the other hand, is that the distinctions between its contents are emphasized at the expense of their unity here in me. The first stage suffers from an excess of oneness, the second from an excess of multiplicity; the third corrects both by uniting them. It sees centre and regions as implicated in one another.ϕ

It is not enough that I live in a room with a view painted on the window; the prospect's depth is indispensable. Scenery that is on top of me does not satisfy. I must lose it to gain it. In thrusting away from myself these fields and clouds and sunsets and stars, I do not surrender them; on the contrary, I make them my stereoscopic. Yet we construct an elaborate system of depth-regions, into which objects are suitably projected. I say that both the 'method' and the depth of the projective activity are relative to the hierarchical grade of the subject-object; and that the lowest grade do not project at all. In our stellar capacity, we relegate stars to their region; as human, we relegate men to their region. But initially all are here.



The Royal Staircase in the Vatican Palace, designed by Bernini, c. 1665. Not only does the staircase narrow in plan so as to exaggerate the apparent length, but the height of the vault decreases. Such devices were commonly used by Baroque architects.

°"The Soul without extending, and living in its object, is dead within itself." Traherne, Centuries of Meditations, II. 56.

ϕCf. Lotze's dictum that "it is not we who are in space, but it is space which is in us." Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion, p. 53.

own. John Cowper Powys rightly says that "there is a primeval necessity, harsh, inhuman, rugged, formidable -- not in the least 'artistic' or sentimental -- about keeping our eye upon sun, moon, earth, sky, sea, and letting our nature grow 'native and indued' to these solemn powers."+ And the reason is that we are not ourselves without them.

+Philosophy of Solitude, p. 122.

In more than one sense it is true that, as Emerson says, "The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are never tired so long as we can see far enough." 'Nature' (1836), III. On the intolerable strain of focussing upon near objects all the while, and the lack of remote perspectives in our life, see Gerald Heard, Pain, Sex and Time, pp. 220 ff.

10. EPILOGUE TO CHAPTER I.

I have outlined the self-portrait which later chapters will fill in. Many features will need amplifying and correcting. To mention only a few, I have so far ignored all the senses but vision, left unexamined the paradox of the mirror, been intentionally vague about the number of regions, and glossed over many seeming exceptions to my generalizations. My references to such 'higher wholes' as planets and stars need much explaining. Above all, I have not yet done justice to the dynamic and purposeful character of man: he is much more than the passive contemplator of presentations which some parts of this chapter, taken alone, would suggest. All in good time --- every picture has to begin somewhere, and no artist can be (or, for that matter, should be) fair to details from the start.

(On the whole, I think it is better to begin an inquiry of this kind with a large-scale sketch whose bold lines are corrected and filled in later, rather than to try to build up the picture by the slow accumulation of details that are correct from the start. It is true that the method I have chosen lays me open to severe criticism on many issues by experts. There are, for example, many questions concerning sense-data, perception, and the like, which I may be said to have improperly avoided. But there is a good deal to be said for this omission. (1) I doubt whether I can usefully add to the immense literature which treats directly of such problems.° At least there is the possibility that the indirect and unorthodox method of this book will contribute something fresh and of value. Accordingly I become involved right away in cosmological questions, so that my epistemology is from the beginning cosmological (so to say). This procedure is not so illogical as it may seem, however. For even the most cautious students of sense-data and perception make metaphysical and cosmological assumptions which are apt to pass unexamined; and, in any case, it is quite impossible first to lay a safe foundation of pure epistemology, upon which to rear, storey by storey, the philosophical superstructure. Not only is work going on at all floor-levels at once, but every change at the higher levels requires some alteration in the foundations: indeed, you cannot design the foundations till you have designed the building that is to stand on them. And your methods are likely to work better if you are honest about their lack of precision. (2) The results of the orthodox approach to problems of sense-data and perception, though often important and stimulating, are certainly not conclusive. In fact, while some philosophers make sense-data (patches of colour, raps of sound, and so on) the basis of all experience, others deny that they exist at all, and declare that they are a philosophers' invention, or entirely artificial abstractions.× So long as the discussion stays on a high philosophical plane, and ignores the concrete data of sci-

°Notable works are C. D. Broad's The Mind and Its Place in Nature (particularly Section B), and H. H. Price's Perception.

×Idealists hold as a rule that there is in experience no datum that is presented by itself or self-contained; but all that is found is already the product of mind or interpretation. It is suggested that the analysis of experience into sense-data etc. is a part of the general tendency of modern man to break up the whole into fragments that become more and more empty and unreal as their vital interconnections are cut. See H. J. Paton, The Idea of the Self, University of California Publications in Philosophy, vol. viii, pp. 76-77; and H. H. Price, Op. cit., pp. 5-6.

ence, there seems little chance of settling anything; but once we determine to make full use of science, co-ordinating its findings (concerning which even philosophers are frequently in agreement) into something like a cosmology, the prospects for philosophy in general, and for epistemology in particular, are markedly improved. This would be 'putting the cart before the horse' only if, in philosophy, carts were incapable of becoming horses. (3) The justification of my method -- or lack of it -- must lie in the results, which I think will be found (as this inquiry goes on) to co-ordinate very large and diverse areas of our experience. This remains to be seen. But I may perhaps anticipate the results by mentioning one of them. It is that 'perception' and 'sensation' become relative terms --- relative, that is to say, to hierarchical grade: roughly speaking, what an individual of a certain grade 'senses' is 'perceived' by its subordinates,° and our experience involves experience at every hierarchical level. The process of perception, which is generally discussed as if it happened 'horizontally', is for me essentially 'vertical', many-levelled: it is cosmological, and can only be understood as such.)

William James wrote to one of his correspondents: "I am a-logical, if not illogical, and glad to be so when I find Bertie Russell trying to excogitate what true knowledge means, in the absence of any concrete universe surrounding the knower and the known. Ass!"

°More accurately, what may be called 'pure sensation' occurs only at the lowest level, and completed 'perception' only at the highest, while intermediate levels are concerned with 'working up' the data. This does not mean that man, as half way, is capable only of middle-grade perceptions: for he is capable of moving up and down in the hierarchical scale. But it is too soon to discuss these matters in detail.