An historical study of the changing concepts of mind.

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An Historical Study of the Changing Concepts of Mind

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AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF MIND

By

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INTRODUCTION

In the following essay an attempt has been made to examine certain aspects of those philosophies whose theories of mind have contributed to the riches of philosophical thought. The essay deals with some of the main contributions in the study of mind. We consider the endeavours of those philosophers who have boldly faced an incredibly complex problem and have speculated concerning the most amazing wonder of all--the human mind and its place in nature.

Is mind something aloof from nature, endowed with a divine capacity for forming judgments and attaining to a knowledge of truth, or is mind nothing more than a part of the physical structure of things?

This question has impelled philosophers to range themselves into different schools of belief which can be roughly divided into two groups. Those whose speculations take them into the metaphysics of mind as soul, unique in a physical cosmos, and those who see mind as a phenomenon of nature, very wonderful but tinged with a certain melancholy, for by mind man is not only aware of himself, but is aware of his own fragility and of his own ultimate extinction.

Our problem is to review some of these philosophical sources and to try to determine how (if at all) these several divisions converge and flow into a common channel of belief.
What is the nature of mind? Some philosophers maintain that to resolve this problem we must first ascertain what it is that mind does and proceed in the light of this knowledge. Others although not disparaging the activities of the mind, believe that we are dealing with two distinct realms of being and our task is not to attempt to determine the nature of mind from what it does but to determine the nature of that rapport which exists between them.

In the light of this problem our essay deals with these several beliefs and attempts to evaluate their conclusions.
CHAPTER I

GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

The early Greek philosopher Heraclitus was led to what he considered to be the universal nature of the cosmic process, that of opposition and the elimination of opposition. The whole of life was in process, wherein, "Nothing ever is, everything is becoming". Life was purely transition in which strife played a major role.

In the world of ideas the same universal form is applicable, for ideas are the result of a complicated process of elimination. One idea contends against another until the more durable concept finds a permanent place for itself in thought. One alternative process of reasoning eliminates another. It is a "continual flow" or strife.

The problem implicit in his reasoning is basic to all ages and to all stages of philosophical enquiry. Can we resolve the nature of this seeming conflict, not only in nature as a physical phenomenon, but also in the realm of metaphysics?

We shall start with an attempt to understand the Platonic theses regarding man's ability to apprehend reality and the reliability of such apprehension.

THE PLATONIC THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Much of our knowledge of the external world is mere opinion for it is a passive acceptance of sense experience. It is without thought and is deceptive. The evidence of a tutored mind is to be seen in the ability to distinguish the real from the imaginary. This faculty of understanding prompts one to seek reasons for one's opinions. To wonder, and to try to find out why certain things are as they are or why they behave as they do is the beginning of philosophy. Thus man takes his first step in the pursuit of knowledge. He ascends from the particular objects of sensory experience to the apprehension of universal laws and relationships.

It is true that knowledge begins with sense experience, but the senses alone cannot attain to a knowledge of truth. The senses contemplate only imperfect copies of reality. We are like prisoners in a cave, who, watching by firelight, see the flickering shadows upon the wall of the cave and believe them to be real. Nor is it simply a matter of turning around and looking upon the substance of the shadows which they see, for their eyes would be dazzled and blinded by their long sojourn in the gloom of the cave.

"The entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison house in the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according
to my poor belief, which at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows".

It is the intellect which is able to move in a wider range than the senses which grasps the truths which sensible experience cannot perceive. It is intellect which is able to discern the universal forms which lie outside of sensible experience and gives to us a world whose construction is intelligible. It is not an unordered flux of sense data but is made up of ideas which are discernible in the forms, verifiable by reason and possessing real existence.

Without this belief, knowledge is reduced to a fluctuating and indecisive experience of the senses and nothing is stable. Plato takes this up fully with young Theaetetus.

"Soc. Now is the wind, regarded not in relation to us but absolutely, cold or not; or are we to say, with Protagoras, that the wind is cold to him who is cold, and not to him who is not?

Theaet. I suppose the last.

Soc. Then it must appear so to each of them?

Theaet. Yes.

Soc. And 'appears to him' means the same as 'he perceives'.

Theaet. True.

Soc. The appearing and perceiving coincide in the case

of hot and cold, and in similar instances; for things appear, or may be supposed to be, to each one such as he perceives them?"

Thus Plato shows how the reliability of sense data can be questioned, and indeed, can be reduced to a series of contradictory phenomena. He repudiates the claim of Protagoras that "Man is the measure of all things", because of the fallibility of the phenomena of sensations. As Plato points out, the theory that knowledge is identical with sense perception is merely to substitute an individual for a universal standard of truth. Nor is it possible to test the veracity of sensations per se, for such phenomena cannot be tested as to their truth or falsity. The phenomena can only be referred to the mind and the question becomes, not, are the senses themselves fallacious, but are the judgements formed by the mind as to the meaning of the sense phenomena valid.

Plato believed that the mind can not only compare one series of sensations with another, but can compare sensations in retrospect and belonging to past experiences. This is possible because the sensations are referred to some stable criterion of judgement which is implicit in a theory of ideas as a theory of Being.

THE PLATONIC THEORY OF IDEAS

Plato in his theory of ideas attempts to classify true

knowledge and to separate it from mere opinion. Knowledge therefore, as distinct from opinion must be knowledge of reality itself. The fundamental principle of the metaphysical epistemology of Plato is that there are two distinct worlds which must be distinguished. "...that which is and has no becoming; and...that which is always becoming and never is."

Here we have this dualistic conception of the world of reason on the one hand, and the world of perceptual relationships only, on the other.

It is interesting to note that Plato developed his doctrine of ideas from the failure of Heraclitus and the philosophers of Elea to explain Being and Becoming. Heraclitus taught that Becoming alone could be postulated as having existence, while Being never is. The Eleatics on the contrary were equally adamant that Being does exist while Becoming never is.

Plato took the obvious step in assuming that in this changing world, that which is unchangeable and absolute must be real. It is the idea which is the ground of ascertainable knowledge and the reality of Being.

"Which of the patterns had the Artificer in view when he made the world—the pattern of the unchangeable, or that which is created? If the world be indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to

that which is eternal; but if what cannot be said without blasphemy is true, then too the created pattern. Every one will see that he must have looked to the eternal; for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world has been framed in the likeness of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable, and must of necessity, if this is admitted, be a copy of something. Now it is all-important that the beginning of everything should be according to nature. And in speaking of the copy and the original we may assume that words are akin to the matter which they describe; when they relate to the lasting and permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and unalterable, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and immovable—nothing less. But when they express only the copy or likeness and not the eternal things themselves, they need only be likely and analogous to the real words. As being is to becoming, so is truth to belief.

The idea is the core of unchangeable reality which underlies the surface qualities of perceptivity. We cannot deny an idea without denying existence itself. To say that the ideas of goodness, justice, being, etc., do not exist, is to say that anything which possesses the qualities of

goodness, justice, being, etc., does not exist and possesses no reality.

The idea transcends the world of concrete existence. Its abiding place is apparently in the heavenly spheres and yet this... "colorless and formless and intangible essence is visible to the mind...".

It is the property of mind to interpret for us the world of appearances. Thus the function of mind is an exalted function for it is the link which joins us with the world of reason and reality. Were the mind inadequate to apprehend, however dimly, these eternal essences, the way of man would be the way of all unintelligible matter.

THE SOUL

Plato is concerned above all things with the soul. It is the soul which elevates and enobles man above all living things. Plato's prime purpose throughout the Dialogues is to be found in the repeated references and allusions to man's soul. He was consumed with a desire to make the soul as living and as vital a thought to others as it so patently was to him.

The soul is immaterial, imperishable and real. Its real habitat is in the world of ideas and ideal forms. This has striking verification in the doctrine of recollection which

in turn presupposes the doctrine of pre-existence. It is because of the essentially divine nature of the soul that we are enabled from time to time to catch an intuitive glimpse of the ideal world of truth. The body, useful though it is in this sensible existence, is nonetheless a distracting influence and likely to obscure, if one is not vigilant, the real nature of truth.

"Is there not an absolute justice?
Assuredly there is.
And an absolute beauty and absolute good?
Of course.
But did you ever behold any of them with your eyes?
Certainly not.
Or did you ever reach them with any other bodily sense?
And I speak not of these alone, but of absolute greatness, and health, and strength, and of the essences of true nature of everything. Has the reality of them ever been perceived by you through the bodily organs?...He attains to the purest knowledge of them who goes to each with the mind alone,... who has got rid as far as he can, of eyes and ears and, so to speak, of the whole body, these being in his opinion distracting elements which when they infect the soul hinder her from acquiring truth and knowledge".

It is the soul which is the centre of knowledge and it is the soul which is continually striving to achieve wisdom, to recapture its former unclouded vision. The soul is all—it is not only the animating source of life and movement of the body—but it is a cosmic principle, an intermediary between the eternal forms and the sensible world.

The soul, uncreated and changeless is a restless sojourner in a world of change.

SUMMARY

Plato uses the two words mind and soul, indiscriminately. Does this imply contradiction or confusion of thought? It is clearly not a matter of confusion so much as a denial of any real distinction.

The soul shares the temporal experience of the body but is not condemned as the latter is, to ultimate dissolution. The soul has that nexus with the world of reality which is denied to the body. Indeed, the soul is embarrassed to a very great extent by its physical ties. Nonetheless, the soul is able to overcome the barriers of sense and perceives reality.

Reality is not something which is inherent in any material structure but rather is it discerned by a capacity of the soul to aline with every object its ideal form. The soul confers intelligibility upon the object, not by reason of any conscious effort, but because it is the soul's natural reaction so to do. It is the instantaneous recall to memory, for the
soul has once gazed upon the eternal forms and it recognizes the material copies of the immaterial realities. Throughout its earthly sojourn, the soul is constantly involved in this process of reminiscence.

It is only logical to suppose that if pre-existence is one pole of the soul's circle of existence then immortality is the other. This is basic to Plato's thought and the soul's captivity between pre-existence and the return to its ideal realm is a form of punishment. Plato believes that the rational part of the soul alone is immortal for it is through dialectic that truth is reached and the veil of perceptual experience pierced. Although it is possible for the mind to be led astray by false data the innate nature of the soul is beyond delusion. It is one with reality.

ARISTOTLE

We are led from the study of Plato to that of Aristotle whose ideas tended to dissipate some of the obscurity which is implicit in much of the former's thinking. Their methods of reasoning were diametrically opposed in that the one reasoned deductively from a priori principles while the other went far to establish the inductive method, which came to claim so unique a place for itself in the subsequent history of philosophical speculation.

Aristotle sought to explain those principles of mental activity by which the mind could apprehend objects, translate
perceptions into intelligible form and from thence to speculate concerning them. His task was that of defining some middle ground between the extremes of philosophical thought. Protagoras, Empedocles and others were apparently emphatic in their denial of absolute reality. There could be no fixed standards of thought. Everything was dependent upon perception and perception was a variable factor which could never be accepted for adducing invariable principles. Plato on the other hand was concerned with a hypothetical world of self-existent ideas which implied an external world of shadows and unrealities.

SENSE PHENOMENA

Aristotle sought to find some way or some method which would, within the scope of man's reason, be logically self-sustaining in its transition from the known to the unknown. This meant for Aristotle a necessary belief in the reality of sense phenomena, which Plato, as we have observed, refused to entertain.

"Since according to common agreement there is nothing outside and separate in existence from sensible spatial magnitudes, the objects of thought are in the sensible forms, viz. both the abstract objects and all the states and affections of sensible things. Hence, no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of sense."

Aristotle accepted experience as valid and rejected the idealist theory simply on the grounds that it was not proved and explained nothing. By it we are afforded no knowledge as to the origin of things and far from helping us to understand existence, it robs us of what little we have and reduces our evidences to shadows of the unknown. The relationship of mind to matter must begin with the acceptance of sense experience, faulty though our conclusions may be. We are constrained to make use of such instruments as we have and gain little by disparaging our primary means of contact with reality. The mind should occupy itself in attempting to glean from objects as they appear, such information as it can, rather than to think of them in terms of reference to imaginary archetypes, the existence of which is one of conjecture.

Aristotle was concerned as to how far the dependence of mind upon body went. He did not hesitate to recognize that such a dependency existed and yet he sought to establish the separate and unique place of mind. Perhaps this is where the platonic influence is most noticeable. Aristotle conceived of the soul as the entelechy of the body. It is both dependent upon and superior to, the body. Knowledge is acquired through experience and experience is conveyed through sensation. It is the concern of the body to derive from the individual perceived object its sensible qualities, while the mind is concerned with the universal and intelligible form. Although
sensation is relegated to a subordinate position, it in no sense loses significance, for in the absence of these sensible qualities there is no possibility of the soul's penetrating to the quiddity or form, which is at the core of the perceived object.

IMAGINATION AND MEMORY

What part does imagination and memory, so much a part of mental activity, have to play in Aristotle's theory of mind? The answer is that their place is subordinate rather than primary. Imagination is a kind of "inward sense" while memory is the indistinct and lingering impression which is still retained within the mind.

What then is the content of imagination? Strictly speaking it has no real content but is an extension of the senses revealed to mind in the form of imagery.

"When the mind is actively aware of anything, it is necessarily aware of it along with an image; for images are like sensuous contents except in that they contain no matter".

Aristotle is quick to point out that imagination is a direct consequence of the senses and does not exist apart from them, nor does it involve any intellectual effort.

"It is clear then that imagination cannot, be (1) opinion plus sensation, or (2) opinion mediated by sensation, or

11. Richard McKeon, op. cit., p. 595 (De Anima, Bk. III, Ch. 8.)
(3) a blend of opinion and sensation; this is impossible both for these reasons and because the content of the supposed opinion cannot be different from that of the sensation:...to imagine is therefore identical with the thinking of exactly the same as what one in the strictest sense perceives".

Does it colour our thinking? Yes of course it does, for memory is "retained impressions". That is to say, when we can trace an image back to its original impression we have memory. The more compelling some past incident is, the more reluctant is that impression to fade. It lingers on as a sort of guardian of our actions, easily recalled and prompting the mind to fear, delight and so on, as it recaptures the sense experience of past acts. It creates desire and appetite, and anticipates the pleasant and the unpleasant.

We are, it seems, back again to our dependency upon the senses. Our thinking cannot be wholly free from sense experience either in the present, or from our past history.

"As sight is the most highly developed sense, the name phantasia has been formed from phaos (light) because it is not possible to see without light. And because imaginations remain in the organs of sense and resemble sensations, animals in their actions are largely guided by them, some (i.e. the brutes) because of the non-existence in them of mind, others (i.e. men) because of the temporary eclipse in them of mind by

12. Ibid., p. 588. (De Anima, Bk. III, Ch. 3.)
feeling or disease or sleep".

INTELLECT

The distinction between the senses and that part of the soul that thinks and knows is stressed most emphatically by Aristotle. The senses deal with a world of concrete objects but the mind has for its content the abstract and the universal. We might ask the question, what is it (i.e. the mind)? The answer is that mind is not an entity but a possibility or capacity.

"If thinking is like perceiving, it must be either a process in which the soul is acted upon by what is capable of being thought, or a process different from but analogous to that. The thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible, capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, must be potentially identical in character with its object. Mind must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible...

"It follows too, that like the sensitive part, it can have no nature of its own other than that of having a certain capacity. Thus that in the soul which is called mind is, before it thinks, not actually any real thing".

In other words the senses deal with potential knowledge

13. Ibid., p. 589 (De Anima, Bk. III, Ch. 3)
14. Ibid., p. 590 (De Anima, Bk. III, Ch. 4)
while the intellect brings it into actuality. The intellect is naturally dependent upon the senses for its information, but having received such information it proceeds, by a process of unfolding, to bring into existence, out of the potential knowledge inherent in the sense data, the idea of intelligible form. It is this capacity for taking the potentially intelligible and making it actually intelligible which is the crowning achievement of mind.

The intellect has a selective function and will exercise this function commensurate with its degree of development. Thus we can discern here the entrance of responsible choice. Every mind performs the two processes of selection and evaluation but every mind does not arrive at the same conclusion. The test of true knowledge then must be by some method of reasoning which will eliminate error and determine whether or no the selective and evaluative functions have led the thinker into truth or fallacy. It was to obviate the apparent hopelessness of uncertainty which impelled Aristotle to create for our guidance the syllogistic method.

**THE SOUL**

Aristotle was not able to accept Plato's world of separate ideas and yet he conceded the reality of universal forms. The difference however, lay in the fact that forms had no existence apart from matter. The ideas of Plato were real and had a completely separate and substantial existence. The logical
conclusion with Plato was that the idea of the self must imply an even greater degree of reality for the human soul. Aristotle on the other hand considered the soul as being the form of the body and apart from the body could not be thought to exist.

Yet both Aristotle and Plato were in accord in observing that the world of sense was indeed a world of change and it was necessary to go beyond this in order to reach the basic reality of things.

Despite his emphasis upon the sensory nature of knowing, Aristotle was alive to the incorporeal nature of thought and the distinctive qualities which separated thought and matter.

He was loth however, to relinquish his conviction that the body and the soul were inseparably bound together. If this is true then how does it come about that thought can transcend the limitations of space and time? The soul, he answers, has a number of different faculties and reason is one of them.

Reason is both a metaphysical process and an organic one. By reason, that which is potential in meaning becomes actually meaningful. Reason actualizes into consciousness the immaterial structure of things—or those thoughts and concepts which make up the actuality of things.

We can discern here an Aristotelian idealism which differs only in kind from that of Plato. For he maintains that behind all forms, all matter, is pure thought or pure actuality.
In this illuminative all pervading nous are the eternal truths of things which makes up the intelligible structure of the universe.

It is through the mind that man is able to apprehend some of these truths. In the vast realm of thought man has the capacity of limited discernment. Surely this alone would give to the soul some superior position in relation to matter. If it does, it can bring to us little satisfaction for the mind itself is only that which is actualized. The substance of reason is immaterial and impersonal. It floats into the mind of man and departs from him with equal facility. The soul is not a thinking thing in its own right. It is a vehicle, an instrument, a means to an end.

**SUMMARY**

The mind according to Aristotle is superior to sense knowledge but is dependent upon it. The sensations come to us as they are, neither variable nor delusive. They impinge upon the mind and unfold into ideas concerning them. Because of the capacity of mind to modify perception, these ideas can differ according to the perceiver. Imagination and memory are extensions of the senses and differ only in so far as imagination is sensory imagery and immediate, while memory is the lingering impression of certain past sense experiences.

All thought is somewhat coloured by these activities.

Intellect takes potential knowledge inherent in sensations
and makes it actual. It has a double function in that it acts selectively and according to its range of development and it makes awareness possible.

Mind to Plato was a thing in itself but mind to Aristotle is a temporal sharing in the eternal nous. To the former, the continued existence of personality was assured, to the latter it is but a brief aspect of impersonal reality.
CHAPTER II

MEDIEVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

AUGUSTINE

Augustine's philosophy is not always readily disengaged from his theology and religious beliefs. Indeed, one is persuaded that he himself saw no reason why any real line of demarcation should be drawn. One writer suggests that Augustine did not possess a didactic mind and found it difficult to think in terms of scientific methodology. Certainly he gave free rein to his thinking irrespective of the conflicts incurred in systematizing his philosophy.

KNOWLEDGE AND CERTITUDE

Augustine maintained that certainty could be attained by the human mind. This is possible despite the fact that the results of Adam's sinning have been the dulling of our native powers of reason. It follows that the light of reason and the acquiring of knowledge is revelatory. How do we know that certitude is possible? We are led to this belief by reason of our own assumption of the probability of truth. If there is no truth, there can be no probability of truth, which

is palpably false. Moreover, whatever else may be called in question, our own mental states are beyond the region of doubt. One may doubt the veracity of a given judgment but one cannot doubt that one is thinking. By my doubts I prove my existence.

His epistemology is demonstrated in this confidence in the capacity of mind to attain true knowledge. The latter is possible in two ways. First of all the mind derives its data from the senses, and then, by reason of the divine element within the mind, is able to discern with intelligence. The second method is for the mind to contemplate itself in retrospection. For truth is indwelling within man in the form of a divine element of understanding which goes beyond sense perception.

"R. Does it seem to you that material things, that is those appreciable by sense, can be wholly apprehended by the intellect?

A. It does not.

R. What then? does it seem to you that God makes use of the senses for the cognition of things?

A. I dare affirm nothing rashly concerning this point but so far as I am permitted to conjecture, God in no way makes use of senses.

R. We conclude then that consciousness is possible only to the soul".

We should bear in mind that in the philosophy of Augustine God is postulated as fundamentally necessary to thought. God is the source of truth and it is He who illumines our minds, so that out of the material world of objects, the mind is able to comprehend.

The contemplation of one's own inner consciousness is first to subjugate the body and then to move from a pure introspective knowledge of oneself to the knowledge of higher truth. Augustine puts it as follows:

"R. What then, do you desire to know?
A. I desire to know God and the soul.
R. And nothing more?
A. Nothing whatever".

It is the light of God indwelling which is our standard of ultimate and immutable values. We rise therefore from the contemplation of sensible objects to the inner contemplation of our minds and hence to a certitude of knowledge through the illumination of God.

**ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUL**

Augustine was not wholly uninfluenced by Plato, for whom he had high regard, and he upholds the platonic concept of archetypal forms, with a difference.

"...the angel that brought God's word to Moses, being

asked what his name was that bade him go free the Israelites out of Egypt, answered his name was 'I am that I am: and thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I am hath sent me to you': as if in comparison of that which truly is, being immutable the things that are mutable, are not—a truth which 18 Plato held strongly, and commended it highly'.

God, according to Augustine, could never create irrationally. Everything which was created, emerged from the divine wisdom. There must therefore, be a reason for all things, (i.e. in the mind of God) and it is this reason which is the essence or archetype of the object. These prototypes do not have their locus in a separate intelligible world but only in the wisdom of God.

It is the activities of the soul which enable man to reach a knowledge of things. Of these activities, that of consciousness is paramount, for it functions, according to Augustine, by a co-operative principle between the mind, the senses, and God.

The potentially intelligible of Aristotle can become the actually intelligible, only through the illumination of God.

Sensation is part of the soul's activity in the body. Through sensation comes the sensible experience of the sensible world which is the material of consciousness. The body is a

vehicle for that material. It is the soul however, which permeates the whole of man and gives to him the consciousness of being.

To attempt to define soul is hardly possible since it is spiritual and immaterial and like truth cannot be defined in terms of extension. It is this same immaterial quality of truth which impels us to postulate its imperishable nature.

Augustine's belief is that God is the source of all knowledge. The need for some standard of what is good, true and beautiful is apparent if we are to make judgments and determine what is the contrary. Such a standard must be immutable and immanent, in a word, God. The existence of God is, therefore, the essential condition for the attainment of knowledge. To seek knowledge is to seek God. One must first believe, in order that one may know.

SUMMARY

Augustine makes a courageous admission of man's inability to explain the transition from the mechanical to the illuminative without bringing the presence of a third factor, God, into his reckoning.

Certitude is possible but not from the senses alone. The senses are faulty and are handicapped by a heritage of human sin. Truth, however, is part of the divine and may be intuited by the mind, in the presence of sense experience, through the light of understanding which is vouchsafed by God.

To Augustine the mind is the apprehending soul of man,
which having been created by God is functionally dependent upon its creator. Undoubtedly the possibility of human error led Augustine to consider the fact of self-consciousness as the most valid metaphysical assumption. This was beyond error as it was both the evidence of self-existence and the revelation of the divine creativity.

The mind to Augustine is conscious awareness and the latter like the New Jerusalem is a gift from God. One may analyse the processes of reason to some profit but the simple act of "knowing" is the supreme mystery.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

The epistemology of St. Thomas is bound up with a revival of Aristotelian method. He was explicit in his belief that all knowledge begins with sense knowledge. It is from this latter sense knowledge that we are enabled to arrive at intellectual knowledge. Unlike the idealist position, he believed that we first perceive, not the mental process from within us, but the immediate experience of the external world.

MIND AND SOUL

Mind, according to Aquinas, is the highest function of the soul. It is the capacity which enables the soul to grasp and to unite in an intelligible way the formal structure of objects, with the objects themselves. These forms, or ideas of God, are inseparable from their objects but can be abstracted
by the active intellect.

The beginning of knowledge is sense perception. Sensation however, is not knowledge until it is responded to by consciousness. It is this latter active phase which transforms sensation into knowledge. Nothing is added to the sense image but its stimulus brings to light the intelligibility of the object. This capacity of the mind to separate, select and form judgments is the process of understanding. The impressions or forms of the objects which the mind receives are not identical with the objects themselves but are only such elements of thought as are necessary for the mind to know. The ability of the mind to do this is inherent in the fact that mind is but another faculty of the soul.

"The agent intellect....is something in the soul. In order to make this evident, we must observe that above the intellectual soul of man we must needs suppose a superior intellect, from which the soul acquires the powers of understanding".

Not only are we to suppose that the intellect derives its power of understanding from God but we are also led to believe that its power to comprehend incorporeal things is evidence of its own incorporeal nature.

Aquinas does not stress the superiority of the soul over body to the point where one might regard the latter as a mere

instrument. On the contrary, the soul is the form of the body, and is incomplete without the bodily senses as a necessary aid to intellectual knowledge.

Is the knowledge so acquired reliable? Aquinas says that much of it is truth. But it is laboriously attained because man's vision of truth is only partial and is intermittent. In this respect we are made cognizant of man's status as lower than that of the divine intellect.

"The human intellect must of necessity understand by composition and division. For since the intellect passes from potentiality to act, it has a likeness to generable things, which do not attain to perfection all at once but acquire it by degrees. In the same way, the human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge of a thing by the first apprehension; but it first apprehends something of the thing, such as its quiddity, which is the first and proper object of the intellect; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and various dispositions affecting the essence. Thus it necessarily relates one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it necessarily proceeds to another, and this is 'reasoning'.

"But the angelic and the divine intellects, like all incorruptible beings, have their perfection at once from the beginning. Hence the angelic and divine intellect have the entire knowledge of a thing at once and perfectly..."

20. Ibid., Q. 85, A. 5, p. 415.
The intellect we observe transcends the sensible world only as it accompanies it and is dependent upon its data. It is this dependency which leads Aquinas to postulate some way of obviating the seeming indignity imposed upon a spiritually superior power. The body, a material and perishable organ, could not be found acceptable as dictator of the knowing and immaterial spirituality of the mind.

It is here then, where the innate superiority of the soul comes into its own. God is the source of all truth and not only does He enable us to acquire knowledge indirectly through sensory perception but He also conveys knowledge directly. Knowledge according to Aquinas may be either natural or revealed.

The domain of faith is certainly distinct from that of reason but it does not contradict reason. On the contrary, it both strengthens and supplements it.

We are introduced into a realm of truth which is beyond our powers of sensory experience to take us. Knowable truth is enlarged by revelation which takes us beyond the limitations of human reason into a new kind of knowledge.

SUMMARY

The facts of consciousness teach us that the soul and the body are substantially united while the nature of thought leads us to infer the immateriality and immortality of the soul. Soul and body are co-principles in one unit and neither
is complete without the other.

St. Thomas does not depart from the Aristotelian point of view save when he finds himself forced to do so. The mind is indeed functional but it can rise above its temporal limitations and attain to a more direct knowledge than that afforded by the senses. It is the soul which makes man a rational being and it is by reason of the immaterial nature of thought that the subordinate status of the body is inferred. Moreover, the body is destroyed with the loss of the form which gives it being. The converse is not true for the form is incorruptible. It is independent of the body in the highest reaches of thought. Death perfects rather than destroys the soul. We are now led to believe that if the soul can rise superior to the physical limitations of the body, then it can in no wise be the product of material forces. Matter cannot produce immaterial effects. The soul therefore was created and is the radical principle of all vital functions (primum principium vitae.). Thus, St. Thomas grounds his philosophy in his theology. God created the soul for the body and the latter is vitalized by its presence. But the soul is ever seeking perfection through knowledge and virtue until death separates the soul from matter.
CHAPTER III

MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES

RENE DESCARTES

Descartes does much to establish confidence in the unique nature of mind. His heretical method of doing this is perhaps rather devastating to philosophical progress but certainly it arrests attention and forces one to re-examine the validity of his beliefs. Descartes begins by discountenancing all claims to truth other than those which are so clearly and distinctly perceived as to be self-evident. All else, however, must be rigorously analysed and submitted to a dialectic of methodically reasoned enquiry.

CERTAINTY AND DOUBT

It was necessary to establish the validity of some premise which would be beyond doubt. There must be some unequivocably acceptable truth which would be the pre-supposition of all knowledge. The finding of such an incontrovertible truth was fundamentally necessary as the starting place for the acquisition of scientific knowledge.

Descartes here takes up the Augustinian argument of the subjective certainty of the knowing self. I may doubt the validity of the external world, it may be a dream, and I may question the reality of objects, but I cannot doubt that the dream is mine or that I apprehend the objects. I cannot doubt
that I am a thinking conscious being...(Cogito, ergo sum.).
I cannot doubt my capacity to think, though my conclusions may be open to question.

"This alone is inseparable from me. I am—I exist; this is certain; but how often? As often as I think; for perhaps it would even happen, if I should wholly cease to think, that I should at the same time altogether cease to be. I now admit nothing that is not necessarily true: I am therefore, precisely speaking, only a thinking thing, that is, a mind, understanding, or reason,—terms whose signification was before unknown to me. I am, however, a real thing, and really existent..."

So it is, that, from the basis of the mind's ability to apprehend its own existence, all subsequent knowledge is derived.

**CARTESIAN DUALISM**

Descartes proceeds to establish the antithetical nature of mind and matter. He has intimated that the nature of mind is that which thinks, and, by so doing has demonstrated consciousness as an immaterial substance. What of the external world of material things which we so clearly perceive? Such a world is conveyed to our minds via sense phenomena. Can we doubt the evidence of these phenomena? The answer is both

yes and no.

The senses record such perceptual information as colour, sound, shape, texture and so on, and these are real qualities. It is only when we choose to go beyond our certain knowledge of extension that we are likely to draw false conclusions. Whenever we depart from those certainties of extension which have been vouchsafed to us, the responsibility is ours entirely.

That extension is real, there is no doubt, for geometry which depends upon extension for its data, remains the clearest of all sciences. The fact remains however, that we do fall into error and this is due to our will which tends to form judgments from inadequate knowledge.

"But now since we know that all our errors depend upon our will, and as no one wishes to deceive himself, it may seem wonderful that there is any error in our judgments at all. It is necessary to remark, however, that there is a great difference between willing to be deceived, and willing to yield assent to opinions in which it is found that error is found".

Apart from this will to err, we are confronted, according to Descartes by a distinct dichotomy of mind and matter. There is a gulf between the essential nature of mind, which is thought, and the essential nature of matter, which is extension. Mind and matter are antithetical and as created

substances exist independently.

"I do not observe that aught necessarily belongs to my nature or essence beyond my being a thinking thing, or a substance whose whole essence or nature is merely thinking, and although I may, or rather, as I will shortly say, although I certainly do possess a body with which I am very closely conjoined; nevertheless, because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in as far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and as, on the other hand, I possess a distinct idea of body, in as far as it is only an extended and unthinking thing, it is certain that I, that is, my mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it".

Descartes has herein established a dualism which ever since has vexed the minds of philosophers.

SUMMARY

Descartes believed mind to be a capacity of the soul. It was because of a mechanical union that some measure of accord was established between the soul and the body, that is, between thought and extension, two antithetical substances otherwise incompatible.

His primary search was to establish some valid form of truth. This he believed to reside in his own intuited knowledge.

of personal existence.

His belief in God as absolute perfection was founded upon the supposition that the idea of perfect Being implied the existence of such a Being. It is obvious that perfection is not to be found within any finite thing and yet its conception is within us. Its cause, therefore, must lie outside ourselves.

Descartes rests the reliability of thought upon the reliability of the perfect nature of God. For since the perfection of God involves His veracity, it is impossible that He could so have created us as to contribute to our deception. We can depend upon our cognitive faculties because we can depend upon the nature of God.

Descartes however, still leaves his meaning none too clear. How are we to bridge the gulf between the two worlds, corporeal and incorporeal?

**DAVID HUME**

Descartes created a problem which subsequent philosophers have endeavored to resolve. The materialists have reduced mind to matter while the idealists have made matter into mind. Hume's approach to the Cartesian dualism was unequivocal. He maintained that it could not be rationally justified.

Hume adopted the attitude that apart from the contents of mind we could assume nothing. If I perceive some individual concrete object, then I apprehend its reality through sensation
and apart from this sensation (or series of sensations) I have no other grounds for belief in the objectivity of the thing in question. If it were possible for one to take inventory of the mind's contents we should probably find that the result of such analysis would disclose the presence of sundry perceptions, the aggregate of which produces a continuum of consciousness.

"The only existences, of which we are certain, are perceptions, which being immediately present to us by consciousness, command our strongest assent, and are the first foundation of all our conclusions". 24

How do we obtain these perceptions and how much reality do they possess. Hume seems to assume objective reality even though he tends to confuse one by the subjective nature of his deductions.

THE NATURE OF PERCEPTIONS

The mind is a locus of impressions and ideas and these are to Hume the constituents of consciousness. Apparently our impressions vary a good deal in intensity and relevance. Those which most effectively influence us are significant for their greater degree of liveliness.

"...we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their

different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated thoughts or ideas. The other...Impressions. By the term impression, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions.25

What is herein meant by thinking?
The capacity to think is seemingly the ability to recall and re-arrange in a selective pattern, earlier ideas and to do this at will. Hume describes the mind as,

..."a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations".26

..."a heap or collection of different perceptions".27

The substantiality of the mind can no longer be affirmed for every faculty of the mind which has occasioned man to compliment himself is razed to the ground. All his knowledge and beliefs are fundamentally reducible to perceptions and the simple structure of their relationships. Man cannot exceed the bounds of his own nature, even his most imaginative and abstract efforts are thus simply defined.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

..."when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure.

27. Ibid., p. 247.
I can never catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.... If any one upon serious and unprejudiced reflexion, thinks he has a different notion of himself. ... All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular....

The whole process of ideation is one of successive images, or perceptions. Consciousness is never consciousness of self but of related perceptions and even the belief in coherent relationship cannot be justified.

Hume saw no valid reason for supposing a necessary relationship of causation, without which we could not have coherence, save on the basis of experience alone. Yet germane to all intelligent thought is the property of coherence. The reason for this, according to Hume, is because of a 'flowing' process, in which any series of perceptions, are related to each other by resemblance and contiguity. It is this stream of resemblances which creates the illusion of constancy and coherence making for consciousness.

The inner world of the "self" can tell us nothing of itself for as an entity it does not exist.

What then can be said of objective reality? Very little, for its substantial nature is lost in its reduction to perceptions and the continued existence of any object is problematic. What we actually have is a stream of rapid perceptions.

which, though not identical, bear such close resemblance to each other as to create the illusion of both fixed existence and coherent connection. This pan-phenomenalism allows us little within the context of consciousness save our perceptions and these are suspect.

SUMMARY

David Hume has reasoned that the nature of mind is merely its contents, that is, it is impermanent and dependent upon sense phenomena. The process of ideation is but a succession of different perceptions related and cemented together by their resemblances to each other. The mind or consciousness is the sum of its impressions and is so conditioned to expect a "cause and effect" procedure that the necessity of such an order is the basic structure of thought. It is this same inner necessity which impels us to confer upon the external world constant identity within the framework of an ordered pattern.

Hume has reduced mind to its contents and has then analysed its contents. The mind is able to view the world as it does because of a fixed mode of behavior. It has certain presuppositions of beliefs which govern all mental processes. Externality is one such belief and necessary connection is another. Upon these hinge the nature of thought.

Just as philosophers have accepted the principle that we can have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities, so also in regard to mind, we can have no notion of it, distinct from particular perceptions.
Henri Bergson, whose treatment of the Heraclitean dictum "everything changes", has done much to stimulate contemporary philosophy, begins by denying the ability of mechanistic philosophy to define mind adequately. The proponents of such philosophy have failed to prove that the psychical is determined by the physical. True they have described how, but they have not been able to prove how, nor have their explanations been entirely satisfactory.

David Hume himself, whose efforts were at least as thorough as most, expressed himself as far from satisfied with his explanations.

Bergson was emphatic in his belief that consciousness and the physical functions of the brain were not identical. Undoubtedly there is a distinct relationship, but just what the nature of this relationship is, has not yet been established.

An analysis of consciousness indicates that the conception of mind as a stream of conscious states is no longer tenable. These states of consciousness are themselves continually undergoing change, and our conception of constancy must be reconsidered. We are in a never ceasing process of change. We are indeed, change itself. Herein then is a condition wherein we cannot say that anything changes because outside of change there is no category of description.

Nonetheless, we do discern by the intellect a seemingly static and dependable world. This is both the evidence of our senses and the basis of our intellectual concepts. Reality 29. David Hume, op. cit., pp. 260-263.
is represented to us as a constant. It is obvious then, that something is wrong somewhere, for we are being presented with a world of constancy which actually does not exist as such.

**UTILITARIAN NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

We gain our knowledge of things through experience and we accept as real only the evidence of experience. The mind is a storehouse of such experiences and its function is to feed into consciousness those values of past experience which can usefully serve the present situation.

"Thus is ensured the appropriate reaction, the correspondence to environment—adaptation, in a word—which is the general aim of life. And a living being which did nothing but live would need no more than this. But, simultaneously with this process of perception and adaptation which ends in the record of the past in the form of motor habits, consciousness, as we have seen, retains the image of the situations through which it has successively travelled, and lays them side by side in the order in which they took place. Of what use are these memory-images? Preserved in the memory, reproduced in consciousness, do they not distort the practical character of life, ....? They would, no doubt, if our actual consciousness....did not set aside all those among the past images which cannot be co-ordinated with the present perception and are unable to form with it a useful combination".

Thus apparently is man able to survive and make progress in a highly developed behavior pattern. It is this combination

of memory and experience which is the consciousness of man.

It is a vital part of the adaptation of the species to environment. What of our ideas? These too can be similarly accounted for. Ideas arise when memory and perception commingle and emerge as a constructively useful form of concept. The purpose of which is practically motivated.

**INTELLECT AND INTUITION**

The purpose of intellection is one which has its roots in the soil of useful necessity and it is shaped by the categories in which it works.

"...intelligence is the faculty of constructing unorganized—that is to say artificial—instruments. If, on its account, nature gives up endowing the living being with the instruments that may serve him, it is in order that the living being may be able to vary his construction according to circumstance...".

Intellection is a faculty whose primary purpose is that of achieving ends and these ends are the satisfactions of the organism.

It is at best a faulty instrument. Does it not present to us a world of static and dependable qualities when the truth is that the universe is a continuous flow?

However necessary it may be for us to live in a stable world, we cannot allow the utilitarian tendency of intellect to obscure the true nature of reality.

Behind the eternal and continuing change of things is a

powerful upward surge—

eral vital—a creative and vital force, in which we share and of which we are a part. This dynamic urge is inherently a part of the whole universal structure. We see it in the constant change of nature—the emergence of new forms and the bewildering diversity of life.

What does this notion of Bergson imply? It carries with it a teleological significance and the implication of mind in a major context. Although he detracts from the human mind any real value as an entity, he infers from the ebulliency of nature an idealistic and purposive vitality. The role of the human mind is to Bergson a minor one in the great drama. It is but an incident in the workings of the creative urge.

It is by intuition alone that we transcend our own natures. What then does he mean by intuition? It is the direct and immediate apprehension of knowledge, which the intellect, of itself, cannot achieve. It is through intuition, which has a divining sympathy with reality, that we are able to penetrate to the essence of things. Bergson believes that intuition completes, rather than overthrows, intellect. It is by intuition that we are able to discern this vital impulse which permits nothing to be, save that which is change.

**SUMMARY**

Bergson defines mind as that which is useful to the organism in the constant challenge of environment. In this world of change it is the function of mind to give to the organism a sense of dependability, to fuse the endless change of things into an apparently stable form. Mind is a means
to an end and the end is the life of the organism.

Can this be the whole story of mind, a purely physical function and a fallacious witness as to the true nature of things? Bergson, however, having shown the limitations of mind, resorts to intuition. But is not intuition a function of the mind? True it may be regarded as an involuntary activity but if Bergson is right then intuition is the highest function of the mind and superior to conceptual ability. Is true mind that which serves the organism or that which brings us into touch with reality?

It is not the intellect which enables us to reach the heart of experience for the latter is falsified by the intellect. We intuit the reality of experience from within and not from without. True mind is not that which serves the organism in its efforts to survive but that which interprets the true meaning of the efforts involved.
CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

REALISM

"Realism holds that things known may continue to exist unaltered when they are not known, or that things may pass in and out of the cognitive relation without prejudice to their reality, or that the existence of a thing is not correlated with or dependent upon the fact that anybody experiences it, perceives it, conceives it, or is in any way aware of it". 32

Hence realism confines much of its study to the establishing of the reality of externality. It ascribes reality to more than the tangible, concrete evidences of our senses, but goes further and ascribes reality also to values of judgment, the universal forms of our thinking becoming "subsistent entities".

Can realism help us in our study of mind itself? We may establish to our satisfaction the reality of the objective world around us, but what of the mind by which it is apprehended?

In realism we face a doctrine of pluralism which not only separates mind from matter fairly conclusively but which

also separates universals, physical laws, mathematical constants and moral values. All are individual levels of being, for the objective world is real, the conscious apprehending mind is real and the experience itself wherein the conscious mind and the objective world interact is real also.

According to Bertrand Russell, reality is one in essence but pluralistic in manifestation. The world of reality is made up of neutral stuff which is arranged in differing combinations of reality. In one form it is matter, in another it is mind.

Modern science has proved rather conclusively that matter is not a stable element at all and psychology has also demonstrated that mind does not have the substantial quality which was once assumed for it. Matter and mind are merely derivatives from some common source stuff, or as Russell calls it "relative particulars".

It is the apparent fluidity of these particulars which not only creates objective reality but is responsible also for mental states.

"Physics and psychology are not distinguished by their material. Mind and matter are logical constructions; the particulars out of which are constructed, or from which they are inferred, have various relations, some of which are studied by physics, others by psychology". 33

We are left with a definition of mind which robs it of any peculiar distinction, save in a purely functional sense—certainly not in regard to status or quality. The mind can lay no claim to superior status in the universe. It is but an aspect of the constant flux of reality at work within "logically ordered systems". The conscious mind exercises a function which is neither transcendental nor supernatural for it has its place within the economy of nature like any other function. It is a presumptuous suggestion that consciousness is confined exclusively to the human mind. Consciousness pervades nature in a much wider sense than is commonly understood. It is a matter of definition. It is moreover, the task of the naturalist or the empiricist to explore this consciousness and to determine the conditions under which it works.

It seems that although most realists are prepared to recognize the human mind as an aspect of reality, they do little to enhance its prestige. The realist says, in a word, that human awareness is a mode of consciousness, nothing is determined by mind, for mind is only part of the scheme of things—or in case scheme implies a schemer, and to those who object to such an implication—the order of things. Yet mind does appear to be extant in the universe and is an incredibly wondrous thing. Its place and purpose in the universe is surely most inadequately explained by a doctrine, which, while admitting its reality, denies its pre-eminence.
Even if the laws of mind are as fixed and determined as are the laws of growth which govern the growth of a cabbage, the fact remains that the mind knows that it exists, and it knows that the cabbage exists. It is hardly likely that the reverse is true.

However, not all realists are committed to determinism nor indeed are they all in sympathy with the neo-realism of Bertrand Russell.

The realist knows that he is real and one must suppose that he is prepared to accept the reality of other minds also. This supposition alone opens up an interesting field of enquiry. Where there is a multitude of minds there must certainly be as many aspects of reality. Each mind differs and agrees in many particulars with all the other minds. It is not too difficult to appreciate the divergencies of thought. These can be readily understood on purely arbitrary grounds. But what of the measure of agreement, how did it arise?

We are here close to an understanding of the realism of Plato in his world of ideas. For it is a necessary postulate of thought to infer an even greater reality beyond, if only to account for those agreements which allow many minds to converge along a common highway.

The dominant disagreement among the ranks of the realists who are opposed to this view is probably due to an overconfident belief in natural laws. The world is to them a material system determined by physical laws and mind is not
above but within the range of these laws. Whatever of
seeming superiority mind claims for itself, at best it can
only be taken for granted. However plausible this may be,
one should not overlook the fact that the absolute rejection
of all possible reality outside the limits of finitude is
indefensible. It is an example of dogmatism which is equally
guilty of trespassing beyond the boundaries of human knowledge.

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It is not possible to arrive at a conception of mind
which would remain true for all realists. There is no united
front on this matter. To the skeptical realist, mind is a
phenomenon which needs no special reference. To the theistic
realist, mind is an evidence of a more complete reality beyond
our knowledge. To both skeptic and theist there is one bond
of unity—mind is real.

The realist recognizes values, laws, moral and ethical
compulsions, as realities—the skeletal structure of human
life and conduct, but the cognition of such does not confer
upon the knower any perpetuating quality. We have a record
of what the mind does and have no reason to suppose that what
it is, is of any more significance than that of any other
phenomenon of nature.

To the realist mind is a process, that it is any more
than this, has not yet been established.
**INSTRUMENTALISM**

John Dewey is perhaps the most vigorous proponent of Instrumentalism and sets forth the tenets of that philosophical approach most suitably for our purpose.

The human mind possesses for John Dewey no unique significance. It is a highly organized and acutely developed organ whose chief purpose is to link up experiences in specific ways. The mind has the task of instrumentally connecting one experience to another and creating a coherence out of a series of experiences.

The mind then, is a responsive agent whose function is only valid as long as it deals with specific events. The evolutionary ascent of man has demonstrated the paramount necessity for adaptation, or responsiveness to environment. In this way the more organized brain of the higher animals has enabled the survival of the fittest to become the law of nature.

The fittest does not imply the most worthy to live in a moral sense, but the most capable of adaptation and of responsive behavior to fear, danger, and changed situations. All this demanded not reflective powers but responsive powers. Specific situations calling up specific reactions.

Thus, according to Dewey, the true and primary function of mind is not reflection, which can conjure false situations and lead to false judgments, but it is an instrument of relationship, moving from one experience to another.
The inner life is primarily concerned with the impulse or desire of the organism and only secondarily with thought or reason. The basic purpose of thought is that it might further the organism in its attempt to realize its desires. The impulse provides the motive power when desire is centered around an object and gives rise to action in a particular way.

The essence of such a doctrine is found in the words commonly associated with Instrumentalism, "To know, is to know how to do".

The mind has been reduced to a biological phenomenon whose duties are prosaic and mundane. We will examine this more fully in the light of Dewey's further considerations.

A DEFINITION OF MIND

According to Dewey, philosophers have made the grave mistake of creating a false dichotomy of mind and body. Yet, there is no real separation possible for mind is a natural outcome of a highly developed physical organism, an organism which has evolved over an incredibly long period of time, amidst a variety of environmental challenges. It is disastrous to thought to try to separate the various activities of body and mind. It creates a problem which inhibits any possibility of attaining a true picture of things. Mind and body should not be divorced from each other for they are one, and as one, express themselves in action.
"When we take the standpoint of action we may still treat
some functions as primarily physical and others as primarily
mental. Thus we think of, say, digestion, reproduction and
 locomotion as conspicuously physical, while thinking, desiring,
hoping, loving, fearing are distinctively mental. Yet if we
are wise we shall not regard the difference as other than one
of degree and emphasis. If we go beyond this point and draw
a sharp line between them, consigning one set to body exclusively
and the other to mind exclusively we are at once confronted by
undeniable facts. The being who eats and digests is also the
one who at the same time is sorrowing and rejoicing; and it
is a commonplace that he eats and digests in one way to one
effect when glad, and in another when he is sad. Eating is
also a social act and the emotional temper of the festal board
enters into the alleged merely physical function of digestion
......What the facts testify to is not an influence exercised
across and between two separate things, but to behaviour so
integrated that it is artificial to split it up into two

34

Thus Dewey asserts that body and mind are not two distinct
entities seeking to influence each other, but two integrated
parts of one whole, united in the common function of living.
It is true that our knowledge of psychological processes has

34. Joseph Ratner, editor, The Philosophy of John Dewey,
demonstrated that the body is not wholly free from mental states nor mental states from bodily conditions. Mind is a psycho-physical phenomenon, not to be despised because of it, but to be appreciated as such. All our attempts to separate mind and body are misguided and spring from our unhappy disposition to see things as separate parts and functions instead of as operative wholes. It is the amazing fitness of many parts and functions into intricate wholes which is the puzzle and delight of nature. Each part fits into the life of its neighbour and each is dependent and instrumental in the life of the other. The whole is a process and the function of each object, animate or inanimate, is its part within that process. The body-mind relationship is an example of this interlocking order of nature.

"The world seems mad in pre-occupation with what is specific, particular, disconnected in medicine, politics, science, industry, education. In terms of a conscious control of inclusive wholes, search for those links which occupy key positions and which effect critical connections is indispensable. But recovery of sanity depends upon seeing and using these specifiable things as links functionally significant in a process. To see the organism in nature, the nervous system in the organism, the brain in the nervous system, the cortex in the brain is the answer to the problems which haunt philosophy. And when thus seen they will be seen to be in,
not as marbles are in a box but as events are in history, in a moving, growing, never finished process". 35

CONSCIOUSNESS

Can we attain to some definition of consciousness which will enable us to see mind as something more than an adjunct to physical life? Dewey seems to imply that we can. Consciousness as differentiated from the totality of mental experiences which we call mind, is the locus of attention in any given moment.

"Mind denotes the whole system of meanings as they are embodied in the workings of organic life; consciousness in a being with language denotes awareness or perception of meanings, it is the perception of actual events, whether past, contemporary or future, in their meanings, the having of actual ideas. The greater part of mind is only implicit in any conscious act or state; the field of mind—of operative meanings—is enormously wider than that of consciousness. Mind is contextual and persistent; consciousness is focal and transitive....Mind is a constant luminosity; consciousness intermittent". 36

We observe that consciousness is not mind as such, save in a limited and focal sense. For mind is discursive and

36. Ibid., p. 303.
has for its content the wide hidden backgrounds of once conscious states. Consciousness however, is like a spot-light which illumines where it falls and leaves its surroundings, not entirely erased, but submerged in the shadows.

But what of this illumination? It is the easiest thing in the world to describe the fact of awareness without explaining a thing. Dewey is aware of this anomaly and he seeks to find something to say about it which will help to elucidate his problem. He asserts that the nervous system has been tracked down to the cortex of the brain but so far it has not been possible to say which part of the cortex is the seat of consciousness. But, he warns, we should beware lest we forget to think in terms of whole results rather than in specific parts. The problem he avers is no problem at all when viewed in this overall perspective. It is like trying to explain a piece from a Jig-saw puzzle, which, when seen as a whole, needs no such explanation.

One cannot help but feel that the problem is still very much with us. It has been frequently said by instrumentalists that consciousness has been exaggerated out of all proportion to its real place and significance in the life of the organism. There is enough truth in this for it to warrant consideration.

Undoubtedly we tend to overlook the fact that life is lived, not in the fleeting momentariness of consciousness, but as a result of the many psycho-physical processes which are going on all the time and of which we are not conscious. We
have only to think of growth, digestion, breathing, and the many involuntary acts of the body to realize the extremely complex nature of life, a very small part of which enters into consciousness. The instrumentalist is here faced with an unavoidable dilemma. If the conscious mind has evolved in such a way as to facilitate the aims of the organism, what of the hidden processes of life which account for so much and yet are without conscious motive?

We have a very strong case for unconscious motivation as a power which is apparently responsible to a large extent for what we are and even for our survival.

It is perfectly patent that this unconscious motivation has ends after which it strives and it is equally plain that it achieves these ends with amazing success.

We need but to widen our concept a little to see quite readily the working of such an unconscious motivation behind the whole order of nature. Even our conscious awareness is accompanied by the unconscious and lightning play of many physiological functions.

The instrumentalist does not convince when he asserts that mind is only a means of facilitating ends. He implies that the end of the organism needs to be known. In most cases the ends are not known, they are simply achieved. If nature can get along very well without consciousness and obviously does so, then out of what necessity did consciousness emerge and what are the specific ends which demand that the object
Mind as a means to an end is not herein repudiated as an unworthy purpose but rather does it indicate that our sights should be raised to cover those ends which lie outside the range of the unconscious. The unconscious mind, which governs most of our living has for its purpose the survival of the organism and the satisfaction of its desires, but the conscious mind has a far higher purpose to achieve. It is a purpose which will make for the moral and spiritual maturity of man, and this is the essential property of consciousness.

**IDEALISM**

Idealism has its emphasis upon the absolute nature of mind and in some instances has gone so far as to reject the reality of all existence apart from the knower. This is not entirely true of the objective form of idealism which does at least posit the existence of objects outside of the human mind—existent in the mind of God.

Consciousness, according to the idealist, is the most important problem which the philosopher has to encounter. It is fundamental to an understanding of both the knower and the known. The problem is a unique one in that consciousness is both subject and object at the same time.

It is this capacity however, to indulge in such a remarkable feat, according to Josiah Royce, which leads us to believe that the infinite must be a person. He assuredly cannot
be less than we ourselves.

Through the finite we are able to discern him imperfectly and our difficulty becomes acute when we try to describe him in terms of personality—terms which are essentially human.

"What is a person?", is not easily answered, for although we may feel very sure of our knowledge in this respect it is not easy to define adequately. We invariably begin by enlarging those virtues and those values which we ourselves possess in a more limited degree and positing their absolutes in the person of God.

Hence we arrive at a super-personality, measurable and partially understood to our finite minds.

"In seeking after God, there are many who do indeed begin by asking the question, "Who am I?" but who thence proceed by offering some facile answer, such as the well-known one, "I am a thinking substance," or the still more familiar one, "I am a being possessed of free choice and volition," and on such a basis a theology is quickly built up. This theology will therefore, indeed, take a comparatively naive shape. I am a person. God, of course, is another".

We are thus compelled to go beyond the definitive powers of our own naivete. He, that is the idealist, aware only of his own fragment of self-consciousness declines to state a priori his ideas of personality in philosophical terms.

How then do we attain to knowledge? Must we not begin by recognizing the fragmentary nature of consciousness as we experience it, and draw from our own hopes and longings the inference that such a consciousness is incomplete in itself?

It is obvious then that the world of persons is made up of such scraps of consciousness, all falling short of completeness. Mind is not the complete fully conscious entity we suppose it to be. On the contrary, it is only partially aware of its world in that its experience is partial. The human mind demands some wider concept within which it will find its place, for only within such a concept can we ascribe to it adequate meaning.

It is the belief of the idealist that we are inevitably led to postulate a 'Consciousness' which is the sum of the fragments. His aim is to achieve completeness and to account at the same time for the obviously incomplete nature of human experience. This completeness cannot lie within objects in isolation but can only be found within the whole closely interwoven structure of the world.

The known demands a knower and we can only postulate existence for those things which enter into consciousness. This does not invalidate the supposition that there may be many things which are not known and which do not depend for their existence upon being known. This is not a point of issue to an idealist, who has denied nothing except such denials as may be implicit in the statement that human experience is
incomplete and limited.

The principle of completeness so necessary to the idealist provides an account of the world which can be said to be adequate in so far as it embraces all those beliefs which have been established as true beyond all reasonable doubt. It follows that the world cannot contain contradictions and the main function of reason is to reconcile apparent contradictions. Nor is there room for a belief in a separate world of material things which is the peculiar field of science.

The idealist is aiming at a monistic conception of the world which will hold together under rigid examination. It is not an idea which can be attacked by science because it finds room within it for the verified conclusions of science. It does refute the assumptions of materialism and rejects the impersonal nature of mechanical law, for the idealist maintains above all that thought precedes matter and is not merely an episode in the history of matter. Behind material existence there must be thought as the primal necessity.

One can readily understand Royce's objection to the usually facile description of personality as hopelessly inadequate to describe the nature of the universal mind. For the ultimate consciousness is a structure of thought inaccessible to our complete understanding.

What value does idealism give to the human mind? Obviously only a limited value and yet it does not disparage it. The
real value of our minds is their contributions to the harmony of the whole, in clarifying true knowledge, and in establishing those elements of truth which admit of no contradiction and which will lead us into a fuller understanding of absolute experience.

Mind to the idealist is too big a concept for the human mind to fulfill adequately. Each human individual mind is part of a larger all-inclusive mind. It would be presumptuous to describe this latter in terms of some super-personality, for a fragment of anything is incapable of describing its whole, or of having any idea as to the real nature of the whole.

Unity is a basic law of the universe. We see this born out in every field of learning and are led to believe that some larger unity, some overall harmony, in which our incomplete minds shall find their completeness, is a necessary conclusion.

How this is brought about is a matter of opinion. For idealists differ radically among themselves. It is clear that if your idealism finds its roots in a theistic, self-conscious conception of Mind, then completeness will be achieved in a very different manner than would be the case if your inclinations took you to conceive of an impersonal, non-conscious World-Mind.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

THE PROBLEM STATED

Among the divergent philosophies which have been considered there are certain distinctive trends which are marked by an emphasis upon either the functional or the metaphysical concepts of mind. It would be untrue to say that these philosophical systems were clear cut and definitive. There is a wide range of agreement among them and an equally wide range of disagreement.

Speculation regarding the nature of mind is considered in several ways: (a) that intellect is the highest manifestation of mind, (b) that the phenomenon of consciousness is all we can legitimately call mind, and (c) that the soul possesses all these faculties as diverse expressions of a single entity.

Even within these several categories there is no complete agreement as to the exact connotations of intellect, consciousness and soul. There are however, certain broad principles which are generally accepted and referred to as common sense. It is upon this latter element that we shall venture to review these three categories of mind.
THE MIND AS INTELLECT

ISSUES INVOLVED

We may begin by defining intellect as that cognitive faculty of mind which is capable of conceptual thought. If intellect, however, reveals all that is unique in mind we still have not established the nature of thought. Can we say that mind is what it does without finding ourselves confronted by the dilemma, 'just how does it do anything'?

If intellect is a purely organic phenomenon then how are we to account for the immaterial nature of ideas? The great problem is the perennial one of trying to ascertain the nature of the transition of object to subject so that it becomes knowledge. Physiology cannot explain apprehension and it would seem that this is the stumbling block, over which, those who elevate intellect as the chief quality of mind, needs must find a way.

SOLUTIONS OFFERED

The solutions offered are either metaphysical as in the case of Aristotle or instrumental as in the case of John Dewey.

I. Aristotle was convinced of the immaterial nature of thought and intellection. He saw intellect as a process at work actualizing the potential intelligibility of matter. By his postulating of universal forms he was able to bring into close relationship both the metaphysical and the physical
aspects of mind and thus resolve this dilemma. An object became actualized when it became intelligible. Just exactly what these forms were per se Aristotle could not say. They were a convenient postulate.

2. John Dewey refused to be dismayed by any apparent dualism. He simply dismissed such a contention as founded upon a wrong approach to the subject. Mind was a product of evolution and as a part of a complex nervous structure functioned in a particular way. Intellect was a means of facilitating ends and had evolved out of necessity.

GENERAL CONSIDERATION

Undoubtedly one of the most successful approaches to the study of mind is that which stresses ratiocination as pre-eminentely the substance of mind. The ability to conceive of ideas, to co-ordinate and assemble these ideas is surely of all mental phenomena most singular and unique. Will and feeling may perchance be found among the lower creatures in rudimentary form but man alone forms judgments, and man only is able to utilize his past experiences, associate his ideas and confront any present situation fortified by his ability to think 'through' his problems.

Plato as well as Aristotle were profoundly moved by this function of mind but were not persuaded to state that mind is this and nothing else. They were all too cognizant of the fact that mind could not be adequately described in terms of
intellect. Undoubtedly the intellect is a unique and majestic instrument. It is more than reminiscence and it is far more than a passive cognition of sense data. The intellect is a creative and forceful reality by means of which the phenomena of the sensible world are woven into the fabric of human existence. It is an amazing ability by means of which the self and the other are brought into coherent relationship.

It is by the intellect that we are able to evaluate, to weigh the pros and cons of any situation and to make judgments. The veracity of the judgments made is inconsequential for the fact remains that the judgments are the outcome of reflective thinking. We are able to draw inferences from what has already happened regarding what will probably happen in the future. It has been argued by Dewey that these are little more than the habits of experience rather than reflection. This is probably true in a limited degree but the fact is that we are not entirely the slaves of experience and the element of free choice is indicative of some reflective powers. However scornfully the behaviorist may reject this suggestion one is persuaded that intellect does possess certain freedoms. No previous conditioning could explain my departure into thoughts of abstract justice or into thoughts of the infinite or into the voluntarily relinquishing of my own good for some ideal end. It is intellect alone which enables me to weigh one set of ideals against another and to argue in behalf of my choice.
Why then should there be any feeling of inadequacy when we describe the mind as simply intellect? It is because there is an indefinable disquiet which permeates all our thought and forces upon us the feeling that we are not to be so analysed in such simple terms. We are composite creatures and the intellect is a part of the whole. The primacy of the intellect in the existence of the individual is without question. It is a means of his knowing and thinking and questioning. Mind however, is more than what it does. Thought is basically a metaphysical phenomenon as Aristotle discerned and which Descartes saw as the fundamental problem of philosophy. The fact is, that we move among the physical objects within experience in an intelligible way, only because of a metaphysical nexus. However strenuously this may be repudiated the fact seems plain that thought is of a non-physical nature.

It would appear then that those philosophers who reject the intellect as a means of attaining true knowledge are trying to bring thought into a rational framework wherein the only truth is that which is immediate and expedient. The first step taken paradoxically enough, is to disparage the trustworthiness of mental experiences. We use a discredited medium for the purpose of proving something which shall be accepted as true.

The thorough going skepticism of David Hume is undoubtedly a salutary thing in that it affords a disciplinary check upon any tendency towards deifying the intellect. Epiphenomenalism
is however, a sterile philosophy and leaves one with the feeling that not only is it altogether too facile but it destroys too much. Deification of the intellect is one thing to be avoided but a cynical iconoclasm is not the answer.

Despite the several ways of approaching the problem, all the philosophers whom we have considered seem to converge around one point, that the mind deals in intangibles—concepts and ideas—has recourse to memory and phantasy, and indulges in a distinct mental life. Our difficulty arises the moment we begin to speculate as to the nature of this distinctiveness.

We find ourselves confronted by at least two main schools of thought. Either life as we know it is dualistic or it is somehow one. Bertrand Russell in his theory of knowledge prefers to think of matter and mind as two aspects of one substance in continual flux. It is however, no whit easier to think of one aspect of matter apprehending what it itself was or is to be. It is a peculiar weakness of most of us to feel that if we can reduce mind to matter then we have neared a solution to our problem. Nonetheless Dewey fails to carry conviction with his purely functional definition of mind, which is merely exchanging old dogmas for new. It is precisely here where idealism takes over and, as it were, turns the hour-glass upside down again. We arrive where we began as far as our problem is concerned.
The Mind as Consciousness

Issues Involved

Is consciousness a thing in itself? Is it possible to determine the value of consciousness as that which is dominant among the various activities of mind? Indeed can intellect be other than consciousness in particular foci? Self-consciousness is denied by Hume, whose contention it is that we are never aware of anything other than perceptions. The self is a pure illusion. If this is true why is the idea of the self so deeply implanted as to make its denial a matter of incredulity?

Consciousness is not, of course, confined to self-consciousness. It can have a strictly impersonal connotation, and in fact does have this impersonal meaning for a great many philosophers. The question then arises as to its nature and what relationship human consciousness has to that consciousness which seeks ends and achieves purposes in the absence of apparent intelligence?

Solutions Offered

1. Both Augustine and Descartes were agreed that consciousness is our chief means of attaining certitude. It is the supreme certainty and although we may be inclined to think of mind in more comprehensive terms, we are forced to begin with the fact of human consciousness. Both of these philosophers
believed in the soul as a personal entity. Consciousness of self (soul) was accepted, not as a probability but as our only real certainty.

2. Bergson's idea of consciousness is as an instrument of action. It is not an entity but a vital responsiveness, "Life is consciousness launched into matter". He sees consciousness as an expression of an impersonal vital urge into wakefulness, from the unknown to the known, from the quiescent to the lively.

3. Hume would go no further in his search for the self than the study of consciousness. Consciousness shows all too clearly that there is no such entity, for consciousness itself is merely the awareness of certain perceptions. Consciousness and perception are synonymous.

GENERAL CONSIDERATION

Consciousness accompanies intellect and yet it is possible for the intellect to work when active awareness is not present. By active awareness is meant the active cognizance of one's surroundings. The mind is at work a large part of the time in the absence of such awareness. It is however, this conscious "awareness" which is, above all else, the

subject of endless speculation.

Perhaps we express consciousness most pertinently when we speak of self-consciousness. What is it to be conscious of the self? It is the capacity to indulge in introspection. We are not compelled to direct our consciousness outside of ourselves. We are not dependent upon some external object to provide the locus of consciousness as we assume to be the case in animal life. We have the capacity to contemplate our own thoughts, analyse our thought processes and see ourselves objectively. The ability to do this caused first Augustine, and later Descartes, to state it as the one given certitude of personal existence. It is true that Hume dismisses any ideas we may cherish about the 'self', but the feeling or intuition of this inner unity as an entity is strong and reassuring.

It is one of philosophy's perennial problems to find some grounds for the belief in the existence of other minds, although it is generally accepted by common sense that other minds are just as real as are our own. In actual fact we rarely think of self-consciousness as concerned primarily with the self alone. Without being too analytical we take for granted that the self is capable of a vicarious existence in that it can enter into a sympathetic relationship with the consciousness of other minds. There are some excellent psychological reasons for this ability of course but these do not tend to invalidate the point at issue. The point stressed
is not why or for what reason we share the feelings and emotions of others, but the fact that we do it at all, and have so little reason to doubt its validity. Self-consciousness is in a measure hetero-consciousness.

It is on the basis of common sense that we think of 'awareness' as being in a sense diffused. The sense of oneness with our fellow creatures would not be possible were it not for this common mental background. Idealism has been quick to recognize this fact and has constructed a philosophy upon its possible implications. It would be foolish however, for us to assume that there is little else involved. Despite this common backdrop of mental states and the metaphysical merging of such mental states, there is that quality of vital awareness which is also distinctly individual. How it arises is a question open to conjecture and one answer is usually as good as another.

Augustine answers simply that it is an act of God—a divine co-operating principle vouchsafed to man alone, making him "...little lower than the angels". This is perhaps too unsophisticated an answer to satisfy many philosophers.

St. Thomas Aquinas was not disconcerted when he was faced with the inability of the mind to answer its own questioning. When we have exhausted the possibilities of reason to resolve our dilemmas then we must leap across the unknown by faith. Perhaps both St. Thomas and Augustine, far from forsaking the path of true philosophy have found the path to wisdom.
Conscious awareness is, one feels, more than the natural result of a complex nervous structure. To assume that the more complex a particular organism becomes the closer it moves towards self-recognition as a living thing is an unwarranted assumption in the absence of a teleological theology.

Self-consciousness is not however, the whole nature of mind. Mind has considerably wider implications and not only manifests itself in the phenomena of intellect, imagination, memory and so on, but even more remarkably in intuition.

Indeed the mind would be without its data were it not for the relationships provided by the intuitive function. Intuition is our link with reality and it is this same faculty which provides the stuff of knowledge which now directs our consideration of the soul.

THE MIND AS SOUL

ISSUES INVOLVED

The general tendency among philosophers has been to refer to the soul from a purely functional point of view. It is a convenient term for denoting all the various properties of the living organism. The question arises however, as to what ultimate value, if any, the soul possesses. Is the soul separable or is it doomed to extinction when the organism dies? The problem is important in that, if the soul has a value in itself and is of a separable nature, then we face the possibility of its destiny being of far more importance than its present
workings. If on the other hand it is inseparably bound up with the body, then undoubtedly, its present functions are of greatest importance in any study. The soul has come to have certain theological meanings and to use the word in any other context seems to be unwise and leads to misunderstanding. That this is the case is one of the misfortunes of philosophy.

**SOLUTIONS OFFERED**

As we have already observed the soul has been referred to in many different contexts. Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, St. Thomas, Descartes and the idealists all speak of the soul and the problem resolves itself into one of definition.

1. To Plato, Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, the soul was the self. It was immaterial and separable from the body. It implied a continuum of memory, and while it could not be narrowed down to either intellect or consciousness, it was both of these things.

2. Aristotle and Descartes use the word because it conveniently expresses a variety of functions, no one of which is capable of describing the full context of mind. The soul however is that which actualizes the body or provides the dynamic impulse. It is questionable if the soul can retain its identify after the death of the body.
GENERAL CONSIDERATION

Just as we are intuitively aware of the relationships between objects in experience, so also are we sensitive to the oneness of all mental phenomena. We do not attempt to separate intellect and consciousness, nor do we think of memory and imagination as other than the several expressions of a unified mental life. We are cognizant of the subtle connectedness of all these phases of activity within the stream of consciousness.

Plato's belief in two distinct worlds is an emphasis upon the prior place of the soul in the life of man. We apprehend more than shape, colour, texture—we discern ideas by the bringing together of all these things into an intelligible relationship. The idea which is prior to the object is of the nature of pure reality. How are we able to bring about such a synthesis? By reason of the fact that the soul is divine and able to go beyond the sensible qualities of things to the immaterial nature of the idea.

In a word, Plato was pointing out that it is the thinking reasoning, understanding mind as a whole which makes life the vital experience it is. Analyze mind as we will, the sum of its functioning is to make a body into a man, to turn a world into an object of contemplation and wonder. This is not brought about by any one particular function but by the mind at work as a whole. We are confident that man is unique in his possession of these powers of comprehension which single
him out from all sentient creatures. We may account for this fact in several ways. We may for instance account for it as having evolved through natural laws to a supernatural status, from the simple to the complex, or we may account for it by a single creative act of God. In the one case it is fortuitous, in the other it is determined. Whatever decision we come to, it must be made within the mind itself. It must be the outcome of a psycho-physical process.

Let us consider this for a moment. We are conscious of ourselves as "being", not just as bodies, but somehow as inner spectators looking out. We make the postulate that apart from this body, the soul (or mind) "is". This is a logical belief and the question "How do we know?" is irrelevant. The ontological antithesis would be that the soul "isn't" which is beyond thought to conceive. It may be suggested that the problem itself is a false one in that it is generated by physical impulses whose complexity and organization makes it possible to conjure false data. In other words the psychical is a condition of the physical.

But is it not possible that we are approaching the problem from the wrong end? May not the body (indeed all matter) be a mode of the psychical? The soul contemplates the body. It is not the body which contemplates the soul. If soul is an appanage of body then also are thought, intuition and all psychical powers. This is all the more difficult to believe in that the present trend of scientific theory is to rob matter
more and more of its solidity and even of its rational order (Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy).

The philosophers of every age have tried to resolve this problem of soul. Each has caught a partial truth and each has helped to elucidate the problem for others by demonstrating the weakness or the indubitableness of many conceptions. No one system of philosophy possesses all the truth and there is a need for an integration of those truths which serve to make for an acceptable philosophy.

Whatever the views of philosophers, one fact emerges very clearly, the nature of mind and the nature of mind's relation to matter is by no means determined. It is still the greatest of all mysteries—the most sublime creation in the universe.
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