

what we do not now intend. The new meaning, however minutely we may analyze the conditions of its appearance, must be looked at as a gift; it is not made simply out of the whole cloth of the old. It can not be predicted therefore. It can be known only *a posteriori*. For this new meaning the past is no longer except as it has been transmuted and lives in the present meaning, as looked at from its point of view. In it is the hope of the future which can only come through the death of the present, 'when we dead awaken.'

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### SELF AND NOT-SELF IN PRIMITIVE EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>

IN our earlier and cruder experiences there is no clear-cut distinction of self and not-self, and hence no definite consciousness of the boundary-limits and the relations of these two constant factors in human experience. The child's earliest consciousness is void of any well-defined sense of self or not-self. The materials which will later supply the basis for a distinction between these two poles of experience are present in *feeling* or *sentience*, but have not yet been differentiated and compared. On the one hand there are the warm and vivid feelings of the organism, *i. e.*, vague uneasiness, appetites, pains, satisfactions, etc. On the other hand there is a dim and growing sense of extra-organic factors in their relations to the vital organic feelings. The primitive self's first vague idea of itself is framed in terms of its organic needs, and its first idea of the not-self is simply that of a means or hindrance to organic satisfactions. The first felt self is stomachic. This basis of distinction and relation between self and not-self does not wholly vanish in adult life, and some adults never get very much beyond it. They remain sunk in sensuous appetites. They oscillate between organic desires and satisfactions.

Experience thus begins without any reflective consciousness of either the distinction or the relation between self and not-self. The latter is first known in an immediate reaction or experience of the self as organic and appetitive. Knowledge has its roots in a state of *psychical immediacy* in which self and not-self meet and blend.

The most rudimentary judgments, *viz.*, those involved in the simplest state of sentient experience, are the direct contact-points of self and not-self. When the child or the savage exclaims, 'It is hot,' 'It is cold,' 'It tastes good,' or even when he makes such a simple exclamation as 'Ugh,' he affirms his own pleasurable or

<sup>1</sup> Considerations introductory to epistemology.

painful organic state in relation to a state or occurrence in the not-self. And in these simplest qualitative *judgments* we have at once the very first beginnings of knowledge and the germs of all its later developments. For we have, even at this point, not an absolute datum of knowledge passively received by the self, not a raw fact thrown into the mind from without. It is impossible by any reach of psychological analysis to get down to an absolute rudiment of knowledge—a purely given datum of raw ‘unmentalized’ experience—in whose constitution the self has not participated. The very first stage of psychical immediacy in experience involves the *reaction* of the self to a stimulus. And our so-called simplest datum of sense, perception, is the result of a judgment or reaction of the self in which the latter relates its own state in some vague indefinite fashion to the not-self. If we were to begin with the wholly gratuitous assumption that the first step toward knowledge must consist in the intrusion into consciousness of a rudimentary datum wholly unaffected by the self’s intellectual activity and coming from a not-self wholly disparate in kind from the self, we should thereby make it impossible to take a single step towards understanding the development of knowledge. Moreover, we should be setting up a hypothetical atomic datum of mind which has no foundation in experience. We must begin with self and not-self as mutually involved factors in a common experience. *Now the conditions of that immediate experience or simple judgment of sentience in which self and not-self are found together can not be determined at the outset of an epistemological inquiry.* At present we can only note and emphasize the fact that knowledge begins in a simple judgment of immediate experience—a judgment of feeling or sentience as yet devoid of explicit conceptual relations, but involving both self and not-self, and therefore containing the germs of conception and all other functions of thought.

The immediacy and unreflectiveness of the earlier mental processes in thought may be illustrated by that prevailing philosophy to which Mr. Tylor has given the name of *Animism*. In the mental attitude represented by this view it is the immediate and unreflective character of the relation between self and not-self which leads the savage to attribute life and sentience to inanimate objects as well as to trees, plants and animals. Struck by some phenomenon of shape or movement apparently analogous to those shown by men or animals, he immediately refers his own general conscious state in a vague fashion to the objects concerned. He spontaneously *ejects* his sentient selfhood into them. It would be the first business of epistemology, in giving an account of knowledge, to trace the rise of the principal forms of reflective thought out of this immediate

psychical life, to inquire how discursive knowledge becomes interposed as a third term between the immediately felt soul-life and the world of the not-self, and how, through discursive thinking, the primitive and apparently homogeneous immediate experience of the sentient self becomes differentiated and organized.

The first impulse towards reflection arises from the shock caused by a felt discrepancy between those elementary desires of the self which tend to issue directly in impulsive activities, and the incoming experiences of pain, disappointment, etc., resulting from a failure of these impulses to bring the satisfaction desired. The impatience of hunger may lead the hunter to seek his quarry incautiously and to lose it. The discrepancy between desire and fulfillment makes necessary the *inhibition* of some of the primitive impulses. The self must hold desire in leash until some measure can be taken of that part of experience which signifies disappointment and the balking of the self's impulses and so arrests attention and compels thought. It is first in this sort of experience that conscious *attention* can properly be said to come into play. The child impulsively grasps the candle. The resultant pain compels the concentration of attention on the nature of the object. And *attention* to an experience means *retention*. The earliest thought, then, is directed predominantly towards the world of the not-self. This is the first object of sustained inquiry. The first practical need is to get adjusted to that objective existence (not yet known as an *order*) which so conditions and interferes with the satisfaction of the felt needs of the self. The primitive idea of nature is the product of hunger and fear stimulating the self to reflection as well as to action. And so, too, cosmology and physics, the sciences of the objective order, precede psychology and ethics, the sciences of the subjective order, in the development of systematic thought. And cosmogonic myths and stories of descent from animistic nature-powers antedate history.

*Experience* is a wider term than *knowledge*. The term experience expresses the unity of all conscious content, the presence in consciousness of every process and relation which belongs to the self as a living unity functioning in immediate feeling, in sensuous perception, in reflective thought, in impulsive action, in deliberate volition, in emotion and sentiment. Knowledge is a differentiated and highly organized form of experience. Whether all experience must submit to this organizing process remains to be seen. What concerns us now is that the organizing process of thought, which constitutes knowledge in all its stages from its rudimentary practical beginnings up to its most highly abstract forms in science and philosophy, must go on *within* experiencing centers or selves.

Wherever we may fetch up, we must at least begin with the principle that the *esse* of things for human thought appears to be their *percipi*. There may ultimately prove to be more in the being of things than their being for a human self, but this *more*, to be legitimately grounded, must be established in relation to the being of things for a consciousness; *i. e.*, we must use experience to transcend experience. And experience means primarily presence to a conscious self.

Experience is from the outset a totality involving both subject and object. At first this totality is of a felt and implicit character. Distinctions must be developed in it for thought before the ego and the non-ego can be brought into explicit relations with one another and the totality to which they belong be made articulate. The child *feels itself* in a vague world, but the educated man *knows* himself reflectively in distinction from, and in relation to (these are two sides of the same thing) a world which has for him an organized and articulated character. At first, then, the distinction between self and not-self is not clearly drawn. For the naïve consciousness, knowledge of the world is quite as immediate and direct as knowledge of the self, and, indeed, the former knowledge bulks larger, seems clearer and more direct. The sharp antithesis between the self and the world is the product of reflection on an experience which is at the outset only vaguely and spontaneously recognized as *trans-subjective*. The not-self represents at this early stage simply the self's practically determined judgments that things have an activity independent of the self. The self *must* recognize a not-self and qualify the latter with some elements of its own experience. The problem of the objective validity of knowledge is decidedly a product of sophistication, of a reflective thinking, which, beginning in the clash and contradictions of experiences, is necessitated to work itself out to the bitter end. Moreover, rightly understood, this problem is at the outset simply the question of formulating the relations of certain specific experiences within the whole of experience, *viz.*, the relations between that group of experiences which is suffused with the peculiar warmth and intimacy which leads me to call it my own, and the more colorless and impersonal fringe or periphery of experience. It may be that, in working out these relationships of the self and not-self, we shall be led beyond experience to its implications in a region which is not immediately given or experienced. But we must not pass beyond experience unless the growing rationality of the latter authorizes us to cross its boundaries in the very interests of its own rationality.

There remains to be noted here one important feature of human experience. As soon as knowledge begins to be clearly formulated (in the conception of *order*, *causal relations*, etc.), and an objective

world is distinctly recognized or judged to exist in distinction from the experiencing subject, this world is regarded as one which must exist for *all* thinking subjects. In other words, as soon as the self learns to distinguish between itself, other selves and an external world it recognizes that there must be a *common* or *universal* element in the experiences of different selves. And in the very first act of cognition the self implicitly makes the judgment of referring a part of its own experience to this world of a common experience which is conceived as accessible to other selves, *i. e.*, as a *social* world of experience. The significance of this fundamental principle of cognition would demand separate consideration.

This common or universal quality of judgment is embodied in the *concept*, and hence conceptual knowledge is knowledge communicable and valid for all. The concept or general notion is not antecedent to judgment. The concept is a synthesis of particular judgments, *e. g.*, the concept of a candle as that which gives forth light, heat, etc., of an orange as that which feels round, has a sweetish acid taste, yellowish color, etc. The formation of these concepts would not be possible if there were not a universal quality or relation in the most particular judgments. Analysis extracts the universal relation from the several particular judgments, and synthesis unites them to form a concept. The concept is the expression and resultant of judgments and the latter involve both analysis and synthesis.<sup>2</sup> The definition and organization of our every-day judgments in their relations to one another is the definition and organization of experience into a system of knowledge, and the unity of knowledge is implicit in the growth of experience from the outset. Judgment may be compared in this respect with *will*. At first the whole self judges or reacts vaguely and more or less at random, just as it wills at first without clear direction towards the end desired. The definition and organization of judgment in the progress of knowledge is like the growth in definiteness of purpose and mastery of means to its fulfillment, which characterizes the increase in efficiency and self-control of the human will.<sup>3</sup> We judge reality from a single and vague standpoint and imply the connections of the single judgment in a system. We will a single end and imply the system connected with this single act of will. In other words, from the very beginning of our *cognitive* life we *assume* the rationality of our world as experienced.

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<sup>2</sup> J. E. Creighton, 'Introductory Logic,' Chapters 20 and 21. G. F. Stout, 'Manual of Psychology,' Book 4, Chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup> B. Bosanquet, 'Essentials of Logic,' Section 2.