

Tuesday Evening, March 24, 1931
at 254 West 54

Went for the first time to O's beginners' group, which had been meeting weekly for a month or two.

Before putting down notes of this meeting, I will indicate what had evidently been said before. I gathered that the previous week O had asked the group to try to imagine two portraits, one on each wall:

Portrait No. 1, on your left, is of yourself as you are: your actual self.

Portrait No. 2, on your right, to be filled in later, is of yourself as you might be: that is, the full, normal development of which Portrait No. 1 shows only a stunted growth.

Portrait No. 2 is of yourself as you "should" be. The essential "should" of each being is to actualize what is now potential in him. O had evidently spent some time trying to disassociate in the minds of his listeners this use of the word "should" from any use based on codes of morality, social suggestion, conventions, doctrines, etc.

He had warned his listeners that Portrait No. 1 was hard to arrive at: No. 2 extremely so.

At the present meeting O said:

Important to keep two things in mind:

- 1) the subject we are discussing at these meetings; and
- 2) the purpose for which we are discussing it.

Otherwise, what is said will be of no value, except as random remarks which may have an incidental interest: things heard "by the way."

The subject is ourselves. We are using this word now not in any metaphysical sense; but to mean the actual concrete body that goes by our name. Asking each person to think of himself as he thinks of other people: an object that can be felt, heard, seen, etc.; whose behavior can be observed; and about whom certain deductions can be drawn from his behavior (which includes his feelings and thoughts).

We habitually form deductions about others from their behavior. Unfortunately, all our conclusions are twisted both by

our inadequate data and our own bias; our personal reaction to them. We see others in relation to ourselves, not in relation to their potentialities.

Yet we continue to form these conclusions and act on them, out of necessity.

An Exercise: Call up before your mind's eye some person you know well who is not present in the flesh. Ask yourself:
What type of person is he? or she?
Is he doing the things that are wise for his own happiness?
Would you feel safe in trusting him, when something of importance to yourself was at stake, with
a) power over others?
b) success?
c) money?
In what important enterprise of your own would you invite him to take part?
How would you feel if you were condemned to spend a year alone with him?
Do you find, generally speaking, that he is:
a) reasonable?
b) dependable?
c) strong?
If his essential wishes were gratified, what sort of person do you imagine he would be?

etc..... etc.....

It is true that your answers to all these questions will be of limited value, because you have only a few scraps of evidence to go on, and your personal bias will intervene even in considering those.

But ask yourself these questions, and find out whether, if it came to a matter of very close relations, with something dear to you at stake, your opinion of him then would confirm the light opinion you fall into when nothing is at stake.

For example, Wilkins, the explorer, is now picking companions to go with him in a submarine under the Arctic ice to the North Pole. He has had hundreds of applications, but can take only a handful. What tests does he apply? He may reject people whom he personally finds congenial for light companionship. He must consider the seaworthiness and danger-worthiness of his personnel. Would you invite Wilkins' judgment, in such circumstances, on yourself?

It is necessary in testing persons in your mind, to apply questions relative to them about a large variety of situations in which you may never have had a chance to see them.

Your answers, of course, will not be objectively true, but

the effort to make them will force you to focus your own impressions and boil them down.

Now, from this visualized image of someone else, turn to yourself. Try first to call up a picture of yourself, as you appear externally, walking, sitting, talking, etc. -- that is, the same sort of picture that comes into your mind when you think of someone you know. Then ask yourself all the above questions, and try to answer them as candidly as you would about some one else.

This gives you the beginning of Portrait No. 1 -- the actual.

Portrait No. 2 cannot be started until No. 1 is vivid, solid, and can be seen by you as if it were a portrait of some one else.

For example, O added, I can call up before my mind's eye a picture of my sister. It never occurs to me to identify myself with that picture.

Similarly, I can call up a mental picture of O, without identifying myself with that.

No. 1: the actual;

No. 2: the potential, or "ought".

O, again warned his listeners to disassociate this "ought" from the pseudo-oughts held up by society.

A dog can be house-broken: it is a process of implanting an artificial conscience in him by the use of punishments and rewards.

Similarly, we have a house-broken civilization. And the "progress" of civilization is ordinarily measured by the relation between punishments and rewards. Primitive societies lean more heavily on punishments; the more a civilization "progresses", the more it uses rewards, the various forms of rank, title, distinction, approval, esteem, etc. By these devices a moral code is implanted, as an artificial conscience and kept effective.

When we are members of a minority, we usually flatter ourselves that we are immune to these influences, without realizing that our indifference to the dominant code is merely the result of our having fallen under the hypnotic influence of a different code, which for us is stronger.

Imagine the present as the center of a circle. Here you stand, the person you are today. Now describe a circumference which will represent a time, say five years hence. From the present moment to that circumference are many radii, by one or another of which you may travel; but five years hence you will be at some point on the circumference.

Now, of all those points, one represents the fullest possible development of your potentialities. Will you be going towards that, or will you be deflected, and end up at some other point? All the points represent actual potentialities of yours. What usually happens is that we go a little way along one radius, then jump to another, later to another, zigzagging continually.

The value of trying to arrive at a conception of our full development (Portrait No. 2 or: the point on the circumference mentioned above) is that, to the extent that it can be formulated, it will exercise a magnetic influence on our course.

The material out of which this Portrait No. 2 will eventually be made is "the truthful formulation of essential wishes."

It must not be imagined that this can be done at once. A thousand non-essential wishes, entertained under the suggestion of sociological influence, will first have to be stripped off.

education, training, moral codes, etc. By the time we grow up we are spoiled.

How are we to be brought to recognize this deformed condition? By self-observation.

But it is practically impossible to tell another person how to perform a psychological act; for the words in which I try to tell it have different content for each hearer. The content that each word has for us is the result of all our personal associations with it up to date. If I have encountered the word "consciousness", for example, in one book, or in one discussion, and you in another, it will have different associations for each of us. Nor can we get around the difficulty by "defining our terms", for the very words we use in our definition will themselves have a different content for each of us, etc. We live in a Tower of Babel.

In the case of a concrete act, it is relatively easy to instinct. For example, I can get on a bicycle, demonstrate how to sit and pedal, and then say: "Now, you sit in the saddle and do the same thing....."

But what happens when I try to convey the idea of self-observation is often no more grotesque than if, when I said, "Get in the saddle," you should go in the house and bring me out a sandwich. I say: "No, that's not what I meant. Here, this is the saddle; now sit in it the way I was sitting." You think a moment, then exclaim, "Oh, I see!" and fetch me an umbrella.

In contemporary psychology, there is no definition of self-observation. The nearest to it was in one of Wundt's books. He used the term "apperception", and the meaning he gave to it was, (a perception of the external world accompanied by a perception of the organism perceiving it.) This is perhaps as near as we can come to it. But Wundt himself did not follow up the idea, and his disciples soon changed the meaning of the word beyond recognition.

Note that this use of the word apperception involves a double perception. When I look through a telescope, I get an image of the external world, and at the same time I remain aware that I'm looking through an instrument called a telescope. I don't identify the telescope with myself. But in looking through the eye, we forget that the eye is also an instrument.

In self-observation we receive the ordinary image accompanied by this image of the instrument. It's as if the ordinary image were received with an aura around it, and this double image, being different, will have a different subsequent history in us.

It is easy to understand why Wundt's followers did nothing with the idea he had hit upon. In the first place, they found it practically impossible to produce the psychological state at will:

and consequently could not collect data to work on. In the second place, even if it could be produced, the state was obviously of very rare occurrence; and being committed to the point of view that the normal is what is common, they were bound to consider so rare a state abnormal or pathological.

As an analogy of self-observation, take the old-fashioned stereoscope. The picture placed in the rack was a flat picture, but by use of the double image and lenses, it was seen in perspective, as a three-dimensional view. S.O. is a double lense.

In a state of self-consciousness, there is perspective, - a double image:

- a) of the external world.
- b) of the organism perceiving it.

Since it is unavoidable in these discussions that we should use the word "consciousness" (in our Tower of Babel), let us try to have as similar a content for the word as possible. We will use it in the following sense:

Our reception of images constitutes our continuing consciousness.

Thus, if in imagination you will shut off one by one each of the channels by which images arrive (i.e., all of the senses), until there is a total absence of images, the result will be an unconsciousness.

At this point I introduced a digression by raising the point that the unconsciousness will not be complete unless we have eliminated not only the images currently arriving but those already present in memory.

O then discussed memory from the following point of view: You are familiar with what is called a "dying sound". This is caused either a) by the receding in space of the source of sound - for example, a train whistle getting farther away; or b) by the diminishing of the sound - for example, a note struck on a piano. Now, the strength of any image at the moment we receive it is its maximum strength in our consciousness. But it immediately begins to run through a series of octaves, becoming less vivid, until it passes out of conscious recognition. But it remains permanently in the vibrations of the organism. A new image entering is like a radio wave entering an ether field already filled with vibrations. With some the new one has affinity, and it revives them, This is the evocation of ideas through association.

When this digression was finished, O asked: Do you remember the exact point from which we digressed? It is always important to keep in mind, during a digression, the main path we set out to pursue, and the point at which we left it.

This is true not only in an intellectual discussion, but in everything. The aim is to be able to digress - recreation, calls on one's time, social obligations, etc., etc. -- and to be able, when the digression is finished, to return at once to the main purpose at the point where we dropped it. A "logic of life". Otherwise no aim can ever be carried out.

The point at which we digressed was the definition of consciousness as awareness of images.

Self-consciousness = consciousness plus awareness of the organism perceiving.

The first is automatic. That is, images from the external world strike us without any effort on our part. But it requires an effort on our part to be aware of the instrument perceiving them. And the significant point is that this effort also has consequences, which are unexpected and appear to be quite unrelated to the images obtained by this effort.

To take a childish example, it's as if a youth on a South Sea Island could get food either by picking up a cocoanut that is lying on the ground at his feet, or by climbing to the top of the tree to get one there. Now let us suppose that the cocoanuts at the top of the tree are better. If he climbs up there for his, he not only gets better cocoanuts but incidentally he develops the ability to climb, - a new power. So, in self-consciousness, the images are of a different kind, and consequently have different subsequent history; the effort of climbing to get them is the beginning of the development of psychological will. These double causes induce the sense of self (individuality).

April 7, 1931

It is important to keep the sequences of these talks in mind. And to make an effort between meetings to digest what has been said, remembering that the brain is also a stomach. Otherwise ideas go in one ear and out the other.

Nothing is so rotting to the brain as to let a stream of images pass through it with no effort to digest them.

The digestion, or assimilation, of ideas is brought about by comparing, contrasting, and measuring them with ideas already current in the mind.

Even if this is done, the idea may not be fully grasped, but as a result of the effort made you will have extracted the ideas from it that are of personal value to you in your present condition

and these ideas, or food for the mind, redound to your general health and well-being.

A man requires 3 foods:

- 1) what is ordinarily called food: liquid and solid;
- 2) air;
- 3) impressions.

Of the first we have a pretty complete digestion; of the second we get only a few of the grosser elements, unaware that we are not getting the important vitamins; of the third we have hardly any digestion at all.

The first evidence of emotional well-being is impressionability; the capacity to respond to a new situation, or to a person, or an idea, in what is ordinarily called a naive, or boyish way. One who is always bored, incapable of delight, is emotionally senile, or paralyzed.

As our body depends on the thorough digestion of food, our emotions depend on the thorough digestion of air. Higher emotions are possible only through the assimilation of the "vitamins" of the air. This assimilation is the result of a certain kind of breathing, for which there is no name in current physiology.

Physiology has the two names, respiration and expiration. But there are two other forms, which are aspiration and inspiration. But these cannot be done mechanically. This kind of breathing comes about, and is possible only, when one is in a certain attitude.

Compare psychological attitude with physical posture. Everyone knows that posture affects breathing. An attitude is a "psychological posture". In certain attitudes aspiration and inspiration are more possible.

If you are trying to aspire to something above your ordinary plane -- e.g. a higher state of being -- you will find that you will be breathing differently.

The lungs are the organ for the digestion of air.

The brain is also a stomach, but the food of the brain consists of ideas. An idea is the expression of relationships between sense impressions.

It is hard to think that these are food for our growth as real as ordinary food and air.

Ideas have the same range as foods: good, bad, spoiled, neutral, poisonous, etc. One can have a plethora; or have two few to sustain intellectual life. Or, ideas may be so badly mixed

by association that they become collectively poisonous to us. We are familiar with the idea that ordinary food can be taken in good order or in bad order, and we arrange our meal accordingly. The same is true of ideas.

The ideas discussed at these meetings, for example, compare with foods of which a small quantity gives a strong effect. If taken too soon after talk on light, trivial subjects, or followed immediately by such talk, bad effects result. Compare the care taken in religious services to surround the consideration of divine subjects with relative quiet. The kneeling and praying on entering the church is to provide a moment of "fast" before the intake. Similarly on leaving the church, to provide another moment of fast during which ideas may be absorbed, -- or the impressions settle to their level before being mixed with impressions of a different specific gravity. I remember the custom in the village church that he knew as a boy, of keeping silence until one was out of the churchyard. If this "silence" is complete -- i.e. not merely on the lips but in the mind -- the impressions have a chance to be absorbed while still unmixed.

In these groups we come to the discussion fresh from the affairs of every-day life, and turn back to them immediately afterward. It can be seen that it is hard to maintain a state of intellectual health. Almost no one succeeds. One must know when to feed.

Each of our three healths thus depend on food selection.

Distinguish between letting ideas pass through our heads, and entertaining them. In first entertaining a new idea, one abstains temporarily from other ideas. One is not making the new idea one's own, nor agreeing with it, but finding out how it feels in the mind. What is for you in it will be absorbed; what is not will drop out of your memory. What drops out is not for your present mental health. A while after thus entering an idea you will find yourself intellectually stronger (like the invigoration after a meal).

Try to put yourself in the attitude of aspiring, and note the effect on your breathing. Any aspiration to excel, to become more, etc.

Aspiration is hope plus effort. Neither one alone constitutes aspiration. It is because of this double nature of aspiration that it was symbolized in ancient times by the two wings of the eagle on the ox. One wing was hope, the other effort.

We live three lives simultaneously. Our first stomach is in passable condition, but our emotional and intellectual stomachs badly deranged. An invalid stomach needs an invalid diet.

Now let us apply what we have been saying to the two portraits begun at the preceding meetings. Last week we formed the external portrait; now internal.

Instead of the external picture, imagine the three-story diagram.

- 3 -- intellectual
- 2 -- emotional
- 1 -- physical

In each of these there is a stomach. The first receives food, digests, excretes. The organ has taken what it could from the food received. Perhaps it has been accustomed to cheap food of little nourishment value; or perhaps it is in a normal condition and accustomed to the best.

We won't go into the question of the first food except to remark in passing that it is dangerous to eat if, during the process, you are psychologically depressed. But the care suggested here is not meant to be that of a valetudinarian, picking at food; and afraid of quantity, or strange dishes, or irregularity. A "robustiousness" that is not rash, but adventurous.

Now think of Portrait No. 2. It is No. 1 in a state of good health. The physical stomach is working well, selecting its food. "Good taste" is the normal selective faculty of healthy organisms.

Postponing consideration of its emotional stomach until later, look at its intellectual stomach. The brain is at its best. This does not mean that it is changed. It is still your brain, not somebody's else. That is, there is nothing supernatural, or mystical, about this matter. The brain will still be yours, not Newton's; but it will be yours at its maximum. And the result of this maximum functioning would be a sensation of satisfaction. Satisfaction is the result of normality.

It is true that you would give the impression both to yourself and to others that you had become very different, although you would not be.

Now to return to the emotional stomach, and to explain why we left it to last.

Remember the conception of three forces: positive, negative and neutralizing.

What is the neutralizing force?

Take as an example the play of Macbeth. The positive force

is Lady Macbeth, the negative force Macbeth. The word negative does not here mean weak; the negative force is a force but only in resistance; is not self-initiating. (Compare Othello and Iago, neither one weak.) The neutralizing force is the play.

Another example: evolution (pos.) and involution (neg.). This can be taken to any profundity, but for example, growth and decay. An organism grows to a certain point, then merely changes, then begins to decay -- the organism involves.

All life consists of the opposition of these two forces. Any object at any moment is growing, changing, or decaying. Chemicals in it differ in what may be called "age", i.e., they are neither ascending or descending their own scale.

Modern physicists, Jeans, etc., agree in stressing the negative force, as if the positive force had been applied once for all at some previous moment, and then withdrawn. They say that the universe is running down -- only by decay. Impossible that this should be true.

From the widest point of view, the neutralizing force is the universe itself.

Any given note is always in process of decreasing or increasing its number of vibrations. What keeps it at the note? The balance of the two forces.

We are notes. In each of us Othello and Iago work. The will to live, to excel, to aspire -- to try to become more -- susceptibility to new ideas, et., versus the will to resign -- to cease to make effort -- to become inert. The neutralizing force in each of us (as in every object -- and the universe consists exclusively of objects) is our body. Every body is a field.

Apply this to Portrait No. 1. The three forces. We can change the neutralizing -- i.e. the person -- not directly, but only by changing either the positive or the negative. We change the play by changing either Othello or Iago. Once given the two characters, the play follows.

But all three are inter-related. Where does the impetus start? With the brain; that is, through the effect of a change in the brain, in relation to the body. Mind without body doesn't make change of emotion; and body without mind doesn't make change of emotion.

But the neutralizing force must not be thought of as merely the result of the other two. The play had to be created according to its own reason. Shakespeare is in the emotional center. And every time the brain is opposed by the body, Shakespeare writes

a play, which is our emotional state.

The technical definition of Man is the emotional center. He is at every moment a neutralizing force to these two practically cosmic forces.

April 14, 1931.

It must be born in mind that these talks are preparatory to practice. Theory is discussed only that it may be put into use.

No muscle can be developed by watching some one else practise; -- nor by understanding what should be done.

Development pre-supposes effort.

The effort here indicated is calculated to give the maximum effect in the minimum time, and with the minimum effort.

There is a danger in understanding too much if it is not accompanied by the desire to put the understanding into practice, if only experimentally.

We are familiar with the distinction between the hearers of the word and the doers of it. The first are the intellectuals, the second the practical ones.

The danger of the second type is that they try to practise before they understand what it is that is to be done. Nine out of ten rush out with a false impression of what is involved and come to grief.

The danger of the intellectuals is that although they may acquire such a clear understanding that they can even pass it on to others, they are not moved to lift a finger to put it into practice.

Ask yourself to which type you belong. Look back over the actual events of your life, and ask yourself candidly in which way you have behaved. If you will do so, you will know which is the danger you are exposed to. This is a simple illustration of the relation that should be kept between theory and practice.

What is your own picture of yourself? Let us suppose that you have enough imagination to forget who you are, and what you have done, what you have been, etc. Then imagine that you meet

yourself. What impression would yourself make on yourself? How would you estimate or judge this creature? What future would you think probable for him?

This is important because most of us live in the anticipation and hope of a future for ourselves that is in fact impossible. It wouldn't bear five minutes' scrutiny. A false hope, which is merely the projection of our wishes, with no relation to our potentialities. This false hope keeps us living in a state of what is ordinarily called optimism. Yet anybody else, looking at it objectively, could pronounce it impossible.

If you will try to do this, you will be on the track of an important psychological exercise, which will develop insight.

Contrast the future to which you look forward by hope with the future you would forecast objectively if you were somebody else.

When the false -- illusory -- impossible future has been eliminated, it will still leave open several futures based on possibilities.

Among our possibilities there are some which, from our own point of view, are more desirable than others. A desirable future is one that we would find, in the deeper sense of the word, agreeable to pursue, and which we would close with satisfaction. Each of us also has the possibility of several disagreeable futures.

Many people from middle age on suffer from various agonies, which might have been avoided, and also might have been forecast by any objective observer. Attachments to one's children, or money, or even health, etc., of such a kind that the creature suffers. These are the result of the failure to employ, while the future was still moldable, the means to direct it.

We are not speaking now from the point-of-view of merely day-by-day happenings. The future is the rest of our lives, or perhaps longer. The factors involved are being determined now.

What kind of a future would you regard as agreeable? Ask yourself honestly. It will fall into one of three types:

1) Is it doing something? Is there some particular achievement the doing of which you imagine would make you happy? Do you say to yourself, - If I could do that, I'd die happy?

2) Or is it knowing, or understanding something? Do you say: If I could once understand such-and-such, I'd die happy? People of this type are numerically fewer than the first.

3) Or is it becoming something? Having become something as a

result of the experiment we call life. People of this type, especially in the Occident, are very rare.

These three kinds are all. It is these or nothing. That is, nothing practicable, or even definable.

Suppose you have discovered the desire in yourself -- what are the prospects of arriving at that future?

Imagine a straw floating in the middle of a lake of many currents. On which bank will it eventually land up? Call that bank its future. But the straw is making in no direction; it has no port in mind, no motive power, and no compass. Hence we can deny it, strictly speaking, any conception of a "future" whatsoever.

Now imagine a sailing boat in the hands of a skipper who is ignorant of the art of sailing. He may propose one of the three banks as his objective; but he doesn't know how to take advantage of winds, currents, etc. For all his efforts, in the absence of knowledge, he lands up on one of the other banks than the one he had proposed.

Now imagine a steamboat (an integrated person) with a skipper who knows the art of navigating. He has his own power on board, the steam. He also will encounter adverse winds, currents, storms. But he has the power plus the knowledge of direction and ports. He can guarantee that sooner or later he will arrive at his port.

The steamboat alone can be said to have a "future" -- calculable in point of port and power, if not in point of time. He may suffer delays, take longer to beat up against certain currents than he expected -- steamers are often delayed by storms. The time of his arrival will be determined by chance, the rest is calculable.

For the other two types there is no future.

Now let us confine ourselves to the one with a future. We began by saying that there were only three kinds of future, from which to choose.

From one point of view we may say the choice doesn't matter; it is made automatically according to type, not objectively.

But what counts is that the skipper should define his port. Is it doing? knowing? being?

1) If it is doing, what do you propose to do? Without an answer to this question, you are a straw, condemned to drift.

In the effort of asking, you will find that you will eliminate several impossibilities -- squeeze out some illusions. This in

itself will be healthy if not pleasant. But ask yourself still more candidly. Use your imagination. Try to picture the day of your death. From having accomplished what would you pass contented out of this existence?

It may be something very simple that you want to do; such as having learned 15 or 30 languages; or brought up your children; or written a unique book; or accomplished some work in art; or have influenced your contemporaries; -- a thousand things.

At this point O remarked that he might paraphrase this idea in innumerable ways, but that the effect would be the same in the absence of any effort on the part of his listeners to question themselves, either at that moment or at some early time.

Note that the definition of your goal is not imposed on you from without. Ask yourself explicitly what you are aiming to do.

Arrival at the port presupposes that:

- a) you have steam on board;
- b) you know how to manipulate the vessel;
- c) you have a compass.

The psychological correspondence of steam is will.

This implies that, having set your objective, you can compel yourself, in the face of all the hypnotic suggestions you may meet, to employ the means necessary for this end.

The accomplishment of the work you have set yourself will require that abilities be trained in yourself.

And for this there must be power, or will. For only this enables us to choose when two propositions are presented to us.

And our whole lives are a series of choices between two alternatives. We travel along a series of continually forking roads.

When the port is defined, and the will exists, the choice becomes relatively easy. For one is then immune to suggestion.

People make a great mystery of will, forgetting that it is atomic in structure, not a straight line. It is composed of particles, having in this sense an affinity with all matter.

All substance, however continuous it may appear, is made up of particles. These particles, in their final analysis, are charges of energy.

Will is a congeries of moments -- the moments at each forking. At each forking there is a choice between this or that (occasionally this, that, or that); at each of these points an atom of will exists.

The development of will is brought about by the repetition of choices. We imagine that once we have willed, the rest will follow of itself, forgetting that will is an atom of time as well as of energy. A line is a series of points; and psychologically speaking each point equals a moment of choice between two possibilities. Alternatives.

Now let us assume that we have that power. For none of us is without a single particle of will. What we lack is enough to make a line. But ninety-nine times out of a hundred we don't know which to choose. The absence of knowledge makes it impossible to make a straight line. Consequently will is not called into play.

Have you ever been in a maze? The next time you are in London, go into the one at Hampden Court. A series of lines in which you might wander for hours, making the wrong choice at the forkings.

What would be the criterion of right choice?

Suppose, for example, there were an arrow painted at each forking -- you could go through the maze without hesitating, and get out in a minimum of time.

The clear definition of a part -- an aim -- is the beginning of the making possible a choice. Choices bring into play will, and it then becomes possible to develop linear will.

Yet this will is not automatic. The other road will always have attractions. The arrow is usually found on a road that at the outset appears a little forbidding; on the other road (inclination) there are, at least at the outset, primroses. The primrose path is merely the downhill road of wishes.

Even with arrows it is necessary to choose between the in-appearance-more-desirable and the in-fact-more-desirable.

Wish vs. will:

Wish is in relation to an object; or, strictly speaking, an image of an object. This image evokes in us a wish, strong in proportion to our polarized affinity with the object. No object (or image), no wish. This is purely mechanical, and in relation to the object we are negative.

A negative electricity is produced in us by the presentation of a, to us, positively charged object. "Positively charged" means, in psychological language, possessing desirability.

In relation to the object, we are like an iron filing to a magnet. If the iron filing could speak, it would probably say,

"I'm crazy about that magnet. I simply must possess it." The magnet is the cynosure of every iron filing's eye.

The filing is negatively charged; but to itself it gives the psychological impression of a great and driving passion.

Will is choice (according to reason and not according to wish). In wish (drawing the filing towards the magnet) there is no choice.

The essence of will is the calculation of means; that is, to what extent (a) is preferable to (b) in reference to an aim. Will is cold.

At each forking of the road, there is will vs. wish. It's as if, down one road there was a strong draught; a positive charge of desirability. Arriving at the fork, this sets up in us a negative charge, which we interpret as a wish.

We must stress the necessity of aim; because without aim no exercise of will is possible.

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2) If the port you have chosen is knowing, ask yourself explicitly what it is you wish to know. May be still unknown to yourself; but if you are one of those whose future is of this type, you may be sure there is something you have an ambition to know.

Your happiness depends on discovering what it is.

Happiness is the experience of being on the way towards the goal you have in view.

Ask yourself, therefore, is there something to be known, the possession of which would be bliss, progress towards which happiness, for you.

As an example of persons of this type, take Bacon, one of the few in the western world with what could truly be called a passion to know. Eventually he incurred his death in the pursuit of knowledge. In his case, what did he wish to know? He defined it himself. We will not say that his goal was possible to reach in one human life, but at least he clearly defined it. It was "to know the mind of God."

He regarded the world as an intelligible structure, created to serve some use, and he asked himself: What was the motive of the mind that created it? He used the analogy of a machine, which is defined by its use, and each part of which is intelligible only in

relation to its use. In his attempt to understand the world, he studied physical laws, psychological laws, and what we would now call spiritual, or what he called "alchemical" laws, his ultimate purpose being to grasp the intent of the inventor.

Considering the altitude and intensity of his passion, we can only feel ourselves -- as minds in relation to such a mind -- African savages, and our little passions for knowledge trivial.

There are few men living today with even a fraction of the passion for knowledge that quite a number of men, for no apparent reason, had in the time of the Renaissance.

Yet, even though not at this altitude, we can each of us develop in our own octave.

For each of us belongs to a certain scale, which may be different for each of our centers. It is important to try to realize on which scale each of our faculties is.

For example, in the field of doing: Napoleon. Relative to the little enterprises in which most of us engage, his activities were on a gigantic scale.

In the field of emotion: Francis of Assisi. And on a still higher scale -- at least according to the portrait we have, which may be fictitious -- Jesus, whose love for others included in a wise affection not only people unknown to him but people not yet in existence. This is a scale of emotion that is impossible to us.

Thus, it is important to try to allot ourselves on our own scale. For it is possible to move up or down on any scale. And happiness consists in moving up, or towards an aim. For an aim is always a little higher than our present condition.

With the end defined, happiness thus depends on the effort to rise. And complete happiness results from the maximum progress towards the aim.

In using the term "complete" happiness, think of a row of pots, from one pint to one gallon size. If they are all filled to the brim, each one experiences the sensation of fullness, although they contain different quantities. That is, we are not comparing happiness with happiness, but completeness with completeness.

At present, we are half, or quarter, or less full. As we move up the scale of any one of our three pots, we experience more or less fullness.

Returning to the question, What do you wish to know?

God spare us the experience, common in fairy tales, when a fairy godmother offered to gratify three wishes. Could we answer promptly - for presumably the fairy godmother was not to be kept waiting - we may be sure that we should no sooner have enunciated our wishes -- long before they had been granted -- than we should bitterly regret them, and run after her, crying, "No, no, that's not what I want."

A true passion to know might perhaps assure us of a series of lives. We have no *raison d'être* to galvanize our lives, force left over from unfulfillment. If we had a passion that only a series of lives could satisfy, and if at the end of each there was some passion left over, then there might be something in the nature of immortality.

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3) Now, if you are one of those whose choice of a future lies in the field of Being.

This is the hardest category to discuss because of the obscurity of the words. Practically everybody has wrong associations; and even with the right ones the words often have no meaning.

Yet the idea can be fully explicated in four words. And each of them has an exact meaning to O. The words are:

Being -- Becoming
Actual -- Potential

To take the simpler pair first: a) actual and b) potential.

(a) A thing is actual when it acts. And the proof that it is acting is always that it can cause impressions.

For example: why is there a dispute as to whether ether actually exists? Experiments have been made to try to detect the effect of the passage of the sun through ether, causing what is called "drift", analogous to the wake of a boat passing through water. If this drift or friction could be perceived, it would be evidence of the actual existence of ether. Since the experiments have as yet had no result, ether remains an hypothesis.

O then lifted a glass ashtray from the table. This acts. It is made up of particles containing energy, which affect the optic nerves, etc. We assume that the ashtray is there only because of its effects.

Similarly we may take any object, including ourselves.

(b) Potential. A potential is anyone of the actuals that

any present actual may become.

If brought into contact with another actual, this ashtray might become an amorphous mass of molten glass. But it could never be, say, a billy-goat. In other words, a potential is not something abstract.

The ashtray has a use for me: the mass of glass would have none. Thus we can classify potentials in a series, or an order, of superior or inferior values, defined relative to use.

The only reason for transforming glass into an ashtray is that this form has a use value. In economics all work is the transforming of actualities of inferior order into actualities of a superior order. Raw materials are manipulated by intelligence and machinery; the product is the same thing in a new form. Wealth consists of the selection from the potentialities of any given material for the production of actualities of a higher order.

To a non-valuing creator, such as is ordinarily assumed in current thought, any actual world is as good as any other. Eddington ends his book on the question of value. The contemporary school of science which maintains that there is no value can deal only in permutations and combinations of this pair, actual and potential.

Now let us oppose to this pair the other: being and becoming.

With these words we enter a different world, where "becoming" presumes an end. We can now measure relations between one actual and another relative to an aim regarded as desirable. For only when there is a more desirable object, can actuals be arranged from the point of view of becoming. This introduces a scale for determining progressive values in the actualizables of a being.

The ashtray was at one stage a mass of glass; that form was converted by art into its present form, because this, compared with glass, is an object of superior desire.

Take ourselves also as beings. As such we are susceptible of other actualizations. If it is a matter of indifference to you, or to anybody else, what you become, then there is no becoming -- that is, no value, no meaning.

But if one potential can be selected as more desirable, then relative to that, coupled with an effort to actualize it, you can be said to be in a state of becoming.

In the absence of any such end you are becoming nothing; and the next actual into which you are transformed will also be nothing.

Maybe you have no passion to do, or to know. Have you any to become?

Imagine yourself in the center of a circle of time. The center of the circle is this moment. The circumference represents the moment of your death, say five, or ten, or fifty years hence. When that time comes you will be occupying some point of that circumference, and it will be a concrete definite you that will be buried. You will then be actualizing one of the potentialities of the present you at the center of the circle. Will it be the one you essentially wish to be? In relation to this there can be striving, and in becoming one figure there is good riddance to others. Can you say, This is what I wish to be? You will find also that it is what you were designed to be, and by your wish you are magnetically attached to it. This is the potentiality, the becoming of which is for you the condition of happiness, and the attainment of which is bliss.

In the effort to make the two portraits we have talked of before, this potentiality will emerge. To reach the port steam (will) is necessary. One can then be in a "posture of advance" - but everything is contingent on the definition of the goal.

April 21, 1931.

Let us go back to the time diagram. Let the center represent now, and the circumference ten years hence. At that time you will be actualizing some present potentiality. But which one will it be? Among all the possible ones there is one which you would regard as most desirable. We are not concerned now with what others would wish us to be. There is no satisfaction in being that. It may be useful on occasion, but it gives no gratification to our innermost self. The one that we would truly wish to be (after the water of our illusions has been squeezed out) is attached to us, by this very wish, by what we call a magnetic tie.

This constitutes conscience, which we may define as follows: conscience is a sense of right direction from where we are to where we would most wish to be.

Whether we become this depends on many things:

1) accident. The chances are a million to one against our drifting to the one desirable point on the circumference. It might be that we would end up in a state of being we should regard as ideal, but the betting is not good.

2) the alternative is design, or will. By projecting definitely the most desirable future, its attraction might then make us work towards it. It will still be hard, because we will be

forced at every moment to choose, and other goals will look temporarily desirable. But the only sporting chance is on effort in that direction.

This presupposes a more or less concrete image of what you prefer to become.

- 3 -- intellectual
- 2 -- emotional
- 1 -- instinctive

Consider yourself as this diagram. You wish, because it is impossible not so to wish, to be relatively well-functioning in all three centers.

Knowing this, one would think that we would set about studying the questions of diet, etc., of the other two cubes (centers) with which we are not so familiar.

Let us assume that civilization, although crudely, has more or less understood the digestion of the bottom cube. But there is no tradition of diet in reference to air; and as for thinking, our understanding is so undeveloped that there is not even any discussion of right and wrong forms of the digestion of impressions. Yet both are relatively simple.

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Now let us consider the time diagram again, but using it for a larger idea. The world we live in is an actual world, as concrete as ourselves; in other words, it is also a body.

At the center of the diagram put the present world, and let the circumference represent the state of that world a million, or ten million, or a hundred million years hence. Obviously it will then be different.

The radius seems long in comparison with the span of our lives, but the principle is the same. If we can use the word God -- meaning whatever vital principle animates the world -- his situation is like ours in reference to potentiality. It may be one of a million things, depending on (1) chance (the point of view adopted by science), or (2) will. We will only suggest now that, as there is a magnetic tie between ourselves as we are and that most desirable potentiality whose actualization is our secret wish, so it is with the world. This is called the will of God.

Having chosen our own point on a circumference, it becomes the object of the will of Man.

This parallel is given for future use, but setting it aside

now, we will go back to the three cubes.

We can arrive at an approximate picture of our present status. This diagram is the creature bearing our names and occupying the center of the circle in the time diagram. Now imagine another diagram of three cubes on your right. Let this be the creature bearing your name at the point you wish to reach on the circumference of the time diagram.

It will not be hard to see that the creature at the center functions badly in some respects. But be specific: use concrete terms, not abstractions. The creature on the circumference will be the same one but functioning differently. And (it will be you, not some fanciful figure, ten years hence.)

(Try to see, understand, feel clearly what kind of being ten years hence you would most desire to be.

a) What will your physical state be? Will your digestion be good, or will you be chronically dyspeptic, tired, and unable to do, or enjoy doing, many things you want to do?

b) What will be your emotional condition? Will you be bored, incapable of any enthusiasms, that is, half sick? Will life present itself afresh to you every day, or will it be just one damn day after another? Will you be capable of real (though perhaps not shown to others) enjoyment of beauty, love, etc.?

c) What will be your intellectual state? Will you have preserved your keenness for ideas? Will you enjoy the expectation of knowing more tomorrow than today, or will you have grown dull, and given up any interest in ideas?)

The transition may be imperceptible, but it is obviously important.

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First let us examine how our Portrait No. 1 has been arrived at. Are you capable of looking at yourself for a few moments and passing judgment? What are the materials of your judgment? What you find, compared with what you would wish to be (remember again that it is not what others would wish. The measuring rod is not public opinion, or the opinion of your friends, or any moral code, etc.....)

We come to be what we are through the inter-play of two factors. We are the product of heredity and environment, meaning by environment the total series of influences to which we have been subjected through our whole lives.

Looking at the columns of cubes forming other people you know, we may see the world as a strange picture. Two thousand million of these pillars, upright by day and toppling over as the sun goes down.

Among these are a number of varieties, not infinite, but according to type, of which there are twenty-seven. These varieties are irrespective of color; races do not count in relation to cubical structure.

What does count is the distribution of contents. One race may be excellent in the bottom cube; another relatively good in the emotional; and a third yields occasionally an individual who is not completely sick in the intellectual.

In general, among all races, there are individuals who approximate the normal in at least one cube. A few with good digestion in either the first, second or third.

Each of these types becomes distinguished for all other people by reason of being normal in one cube. Unfortunately this almost never happens in two cubes in the same individual; and it can safely be said that, thanks to heredity and environment, never in all three.

This suggests the beginning of a classification. If one cube alone is developed, we have one of three pronounced types:

1) "Weak yogis", or tame intellectuals. These are thinkers without common sense.

2) "Silly saints." In these the top story is usually empty, and the bottom story in bad shape. Their emotions are divine, but their digestion is very bad.

3) "Stupid ascetics." They are masters of the physical body and can use it supremely well, but unfortunately they have the emotions of a rabbit and the mind of a babe.

These are the three main types. There are three more, much rarer, in which two cubes function relatively normally, giving us six types. Remember that each of these is what we ordinarily call extraordinary. These individuals invariably stand out as exceptional men.

But the majority are those in whom no one cube is fully normal. There are, of course, degrees

We must distinguish here between normal and average. We are using the word normal in reference to those few in whom the distribution of functioning is relatively harmonious. They cannot be said to be average, nor usual; but they are normal because they are beginning to approximate efficiency.

The transition depends on our ability, after having correctly judged Portrait No. 1, to adopt such measures as will lead towards full functioning ten years hence.

First set of cubes -- subjective
Second set of cubes -- objective

Let us try to define the terms subjective and objective. They are often used by everybody and seldom twice running in the same sense. The distinction is not that between subjective and real; nor between imaginative and concrete; -- If I dared, I should use another pair of words, saying that the difference is that between a personal and a universal point of view.

What constitutes the material that has entered into the first set of cubes from birth to now? What we call experiences. We are the sum of our experiences; and these fall into three kinds: physical, emotional, intellectual. Each cube is a container. Its contents are the sum of the corresponding experiences from birth.

But where did they come from? Who regulated their number or quality? Obviously no one.

The frame work, crazy or well-built, we owe to heredity. The contents we owe to our chance contacts with the world.

Wouldn't it be strange to imagine -- yet this is a current superstition of our civilization -- that any one cube, under these chance conditions, should nevertheless yield a good distribution at the end? No law of probabilities would point to it.

Yet the three cubes, that is our whole body, react as a whole to any new experience. It cannot help it. The three are linked together. One touch, and there are reactions in all three. What kind of reactions? This depends on the contents of each cube.

No two sets of cubes are identical either in point of heredity or environment. The inference is that each of us is unique, and consequently that our reaction to each new experience is peculiar to ourselves. What I pronounce to be good, or beautiful, or true, may be on my part genuine. I am not lying, but I am stating something only about myself. I have said nothing about the object in question except the effect it had produced on me -- not necessarily on you. This reaction we call subjective because it reports only the nature of the subject undergoing the experience.

There is no possibility of discussing what is good, beautiful, true, etc., not for lack of sincerity or truthfulness, but because it is impossible that our reports should coincide. They will differ because we differ.

Yet we use certain words in a subjective sense that have the possibility of a different meaning, which we will call objective.

Take the words good, beautiful, true.

Let us try to get down to the common sense of each of these words in relation to each cube.

The word "good" belongs to the bottom cube, and is used to describe what gives that cube its own state of well-being.

The word "beautiful" belongs to the second cube and is used to describe what produces good working order in its emotions. When it can say, I would not have the world different, - when the world appears beautiful - we call this the sensation of beauty; in its highest form it is the ecstasy of beauty (this is not aesthetic beauty, which is a ghostly, valetudinarian beauty).

The word "true" belongs to the third cube and is used to describe the experience we have when the brain stomach is working well. Remember that, even in using the word true, we are relating it to centers, and having no truck with metaphysics. This experience of truth is the result of occasional moments of good digestion.

But the individual good is often bad for others. This is the dilemma of ordinary morality, which says, "Pursue the Good, but do no bad to others."

Emotionally also, my good may involve a bad state of emotions for others. Thus Napoleon is said to have remarked that his happiness required to be nourished on the deaths of thousands of other people.

Similarly in the case of truth: all discussions in politics, art, morality, etc., arise from the conflict of subjective truths; and in the hurly-burly that follows it is usually the loudest voice that sets up its truth.

It is not because, as individuals, we are good or bad that this happens; but because we are compelled to see things in this way.

We use these three words as if they had a common meaning for all...forgetting that they must have a meaning peculiar to each of us.

Now recall the idea of what the world aspires and wills to be. With this emerges a good, beautiful, and true, which apply to all. But instead of taking a vote of the whole world and letting the majority decide, we must inquire of each idea what constitutes its principle, -- what in itself, and sooner or later for every normal individual, is acceptable as a standard.

The difference begins in the area explored by Plato but without result. Plato assumed that the ideas of good, beautiful, true, exist absolutely on some plane of ideas without relation to any being; and that therefore they were unsusceptible of having been created or changed. His inquiry was without result, because it was impossible to prove this assumption, which is contrary to all psychology, and has no parallel in our experience. Yet it was an inevitable deduction from the ideas then present in Plato's mind, although demonstrably false.

With the time diagram for the world, having its radius of a hundred million years, in mind, draw a parallel between this and the same diagram for any person. Suppose that I have chosen my particular point on the circumference as my objective. In one sense my choice is arbitrary; in another, it is magnetically determined. My preference is "loaded", as a result of my nature, which in turn has been determined by the nature of the world from which I emerge (or of which I am a part); but having chosen my point, it then becomes the object of my will. Everything that conduces to its realization is good, beautiful, true. It is my guide in relation to any other potentiality or set of potentialities.

But the larger circle in which we are contained is the universal circle. It is all there is. Don't fall into the Hindu fancy of trying to imagine other worlds. There is only one (the very simplicity of this makes it hard to grasp), and this one cannot have unlimited possibilities: it can only actualize one of its present potentialities (if there are other dimensions, they too are potentialities of the present three).

In the world diagram there is also a magnetic tie, which we can call for convenience the will of "God", determining a universal good, beautiful, and true, as in the case of the individual. This represents God's most desirable potentiality; and because he, by will, has selected one potentiality, he has at the same time defined, among all the possible goods, beautifuls, and trues, one of each.

This may be called "absolute", not in the metaphysical sense, but because it refers to the whole.

The word absolute, in these discussions, is used always to mean "the whole taken as one."

Our "objective" is God's subjective. Conscience is awareness of his desired future, the actualizing of which corresponds to service.

Individual right or wrong is measured by its approximation to this universal aim. If an individual's will coincides with the will of God, he is astride his proper instincts, and becomes part and parcel of the process.

Let us take certain more definite illustrations. The figure on your left (Portrait No. 1) aims to have universal values. But what are his present values in:

- 1) economics;
- 2) art (using this word in its widest possible sense);
- 3) science.

In economics our subjective good is whatever contributes to our well-being, whether it contributes to that of others or not. We must try to arrive at the conception and practice of an economics good for all; this is the secret of the attraction and value of such proposed systems as socialism, communism, etc. Their impulse is in the right direction, since they seek to replace a personal good by a universal good; but, unfortunately, they are lacking in ideas.

In art, the individual is satisfied with his choice, and his judgment is dogmatic. But his sense of beauty is determined by heredity, etc. An individual who arrives at will, will form judgments coinciding with the universal will.

In science the objective truth to be reached is what is true in fact, and ultimately appears true to everybody... These second and third cases are hard to conceive, but it is not so difficult in economics. There, few know how to bring about the desired aim, but many can recognize it. As a result of impartial self-observation, students of this method should eventually acquire at least some glimmering of objective beauty and science.

This is the magnetic tie. For if there were no desire, there would be no possibility of transition, but only drift. When each cube is working well, it dreams of, reaches out toward, this aim.

What is the bridge -- the means of transition? Will is not enough; it must be instrumented. A means, or way for a will, must be found. Here I shall not repeat the method of self-observation, but recall to your minds the three forms of food. Each cube hungers and thirsts after rightness, its universal good, or beautiful, or true. This presupposes an absence of food, and a method of digestion when the food is supplied. The food for the emotions is described as "ideals" peculiar to you (not supplied by society). They are what you wish. When you have made concrete what you find desirable, you begin to breathe towards it; aspiration is "breathing towards". This changes the character of the breathing; the lungs function differently. This phenomenon, which is obvious to anyone who has ever experienced it, is described many, many times in the Mahabharata, where the heroes are said to be "sighing like serpents".

The food for the third cube is no longer desire but thinking

(or trying to think) in universal terms. Let me remind you of the exercise that has often been recommended to students. Imagine the globe of the earth, the distribution of its total population, the status of that population from the point of view of biology, economics, race, interests, etc., etc. Assemble together as many as possible of the facts you already know but which lie scattered in your mind and focus them in a simultaneous picture. Then spin this globe. Try to get a sense of the nature of this being, mankind, which is divided into two thousand million cells. This is thinking in terms which are universal but concrete (not what are ordinarily called universals, such as time, space, etc.). The type of mind capable of this sort of perspective is sometimes called the statesman's mind, and it differs in kind from the mind of a politician or journalist, which gossip. And the effort to think in such terms produces a change (change ?) in being.

Finally, this evening, I shall leave with you the memory of an ancient symbol, the Sphinx, which was calculated to lie between a temple and a pyramid. The pyramid represented objective good, beauty and truth; or, an integrated individual. The temple was a place of preparation; in other words, a school for becoming pyramids. Between the school and the pyramid stood the Sphinx, a perpetual reminder to the pupil of what he needed to make the transition. He would require the wings of an eagle (aspiration), the body of a bull (ability to work), the legs of a lion (the assurance necessary to defend himself against waves of depression, which would set him back farther than he had advanced), and the head of a virgin -- sometimes represented as the head of an old woman -- that is, impartial love. When you aspire, remember the Sphinx.

April 28, 1931

In these talks the stress is laid partly on ideas as such, and also on a practical attitude toward old and new ideas.

A mere feeding of the intellectual center may induce not only no inclination to put the ideas into the other two centres, but eventually an inability to do so. Devotion to ideas as such results in the weak yogi, who has lots of logical understanding, no emotional ability, and no practical technique. We are trying now to connect intellectual appreciation with the necessity of practise.

It is for this reason that so much emphasis is laid on diagrams, to balance a previous overstressing of the intellectual point of view. The diagram which O considers particularly useful in this connection, and which was given to him to be passed on at

these meetings, is the time diagram of a circle in which the center represents the present and the circumference a given number of years hence.

This future point of time may be five or ten or twenty years. Let us call it ten. On the circumference we can conceive a certain number of actualities of yourself as you will be, or may be, in ten years. There is nothing metaphysical about this; it is yourself ten years older.

From the center you have at least theoretically a choice as to what part of the circumference you will reach. It is a sort of Dantean circle of hell, in which every conceivable figure may be horrifying.

Among these some are more agreeable, some less, and of them all there is one to which we are magnetically attached.

Last week we drew out illuminating and practical consequences from the analogy of our circle with the wider circle of the world. We shall now return to the personal use of the diagram.

Any move in the circle is bound to be along some radius; time passes, and we cannot stand still. Assuming a sense of direction, movements toward the end in view may be chosen, and one finds questions of good and bad automatically decided by the test of advantageous or not advantageous relative to that aim.

In the absence of a definition of the aim, one will zigzag from radius to radius. The same time passes, but at the end of ten years one will be at the terminus of a different radius than that on which one started. Such a person has one aim today, but tomorrow or next year loses sight of it, or is incapable of finding things to think and do leading toward it. The same ten years have elapsed.

Since we are all in that state, by what means can we discover what is in fact the sympathetic figure ten years hence to which we are magnetically attached?

We can at least say at once that it differs for each of us, because each of us has different potentialities. And we can say that each of us will necessarily be contented with a choice based on his own potentialities. The definition of contentment has nothing to do with "that which" contents; it is the satisfaction of a secret desire.

What may be your ideal may not be ideal for me. "Better your own dharma though devoid of merit in other men's eyes than another man's dharma though held by all the world to be meritorious."

Nor can one construct a figure which is merely a composite of

sociological suggestion.

The figure we are seeking must be:

- 1) within you;
- 2) one that in your secret heart you would most wish to be;
- 3) one that, in point of becoming, is the condition of your happiness.

There is no question here of praise or the world's approval. What would it secretly delight you to have become?

Nor can we answer as is ordinarily done in "uplift" literature. We might search all the books of ethics in the world without finding the material for the portrait of this figure.

Nor is it a question of average; the norm, the superman, etc. All of these terms have been corrupted by society. It is your secret image, and if it coincides with others, that is pure coincidence. And it is a matter of indifference if, in realizing it, you appear to be running counter to popular morality -- serviceability to the world -- etc.

All these are suggestions of collective morality. For the time being, let collective morality look after itself. As before God, who presumably is responsible for the effect that my sincerity produces on the world, what is it that ten years hence I would wish to be?

We have now dismissed one most frequent answer: the figure cannot be "constructed".

Nor can we succeed by trying to figure an ideal man or woman. All models must be ruled out, as suggested by sociology, and inadaptable to a self-initiated ideal: the will of God in the will of man.

If we abandon general methods -- the holding up of ideals, etc. -- to what can we turn?

Let us turn to the first portrait, on your left. This is you at the present moment in the light of your best objective judgment -- such a judgment as you would give of another with whom you were intimate and about whom your most serious judgment was invited. Not a snap judgment, nor a clever one, nor one for personal interest; you are not giving it to please him, nor to amuse us, nor to get profit; but having reviewed all the knowledge at your disposal you weigh it, and still hesitate

In comparison with this standard you will discover how superficial and malicious your judgments of people are.

This judgment (we are still speaking of your judgment of

another person) will not be the truth; but it will at least be yours.

Now with the same sincerity put yourself on the stand before yourself. This is, put yourself in such a perspective. The means for attaining this perspective is self-observation. Try to get such a picture of this person who goes by your name as you would have of another. Call upon yourself with a seriousness that will evoke the effort necessary to tell the truth.

This is the center of the circle: the figure is now actualizing one of its potentialities. It is not static. We must try to discover the direction in which it is moving in time.

About many people we can prophesy what will become of them, barring accidents, if they are still alive at a given time hence. Such a man, we can say, at forty or fifty will be living intellectually on his past, his emotions will be pre-adolescent, and physically he will be living for comfort. Or of this woman we can say that she will be practically without friends, acid in temperament, unhappy, with no interests in life, and driven to seek company that today she would be shocked to seek.

Most people at fifty or sixty become something that, had it been presented to them at twenty or thirty with the knowledge that that was what they were going to become, would have seemed not worth living for, and would have awakened thoughts of suicide.

The portrait on your left is moving along a radius of time, bound for a certain end. It should be possible to foresee that end with at least as much certainty as that with which we foresee the lives of others.

But even this does not get us much nearer to a full sense of the kind of being we would wish to be. To answer that question let us turn, while bearing Portrait No. 1 in mind, to Portrait No. 2 on our right.

This portrait is on the circumference. It is separated from the one on the left by ten years, but we are magnetically bound to it. This is what we know we "ought" to be. And it is one of our present potentialities (or else the world is a madhouse).

Can we choose a radius and stick to it? Along this line is to be found the "way" spoken of by all religious teachers; the way, or the path, or the shortest cut, or the radius, between the present actuality and a future actualizable.

Remember that we have dismissed the composite. Arjuna once asked Krishna: "What is the type of this Ideal? How does he walk? How does he speak? What does he do?" -- And Krishna answered:

"I cannot tell you."

We must distinguish between a model and an example. Arjuna was asking for a model; some conception to imitate -- somebody whose behavior he could model his own on, with the certainty of producing the same results.

But there is no model. It is impossible that there could be actualized in flesh and blood any being that could be a model. Each circle of time, or time diagram, is unique. If yours could hold for me, God would be guilty of what he has never been guilty of: dividing where divisions are unnecessary -- that is, one of us would be superfluous. In the economy of consciousness every individual is unique. A model presupposes that two or more have the same potentialities: are identical.

This applies equally to founders of religions, not one of whom is a model. How ridiculous, for example, to try to make Christ's life and external behavior a model. His behavior was specifically that of a teacher. At that rate we should all take in each other's washing.

Or Buddha, to whom the same applies. No life, however full of vitamins, is a model.

But each of these may be exemplary. An example illustrates the way a thing should be done; not the thing done. For example, in learning arithmetic; examples are useful only for bringing out the principles involved.

We often pass from model to example without realizing that a model is to be slavishly copied (e.g. an art student copying a master); an example in order that the principle may be seized.

We should see now why we refrain from general terms in connection with Portrait No. 2. Examples might be given, but at the risk of leading to mistake.

We fall back on a principle difficult to explain unless we bear in mind the existence of a magnetic tie.

The portrait on the right is cast, and only becomes actualized by what may be called breath. To breathe into it the breath of life. Last week we called this aspiration: running along the magnetic tie and producing action, itself induced by something that at first sight may appear a paradox.

Ashiati Shimash abandoned the idea of producing action by Faith, Hope, or Love, because of the corruption of these functions under sociological influence. Your wish alone to develop will avail nothing. It may remain a dream. You may intellectually judge it worthy but lack the corresponding emotion; or you may

approve intellectually and feel correspondingly, but have no practical ability. The same is true in the case of love, if it does not induce the three-fold activity necessary. And still more so, especially in these days, of Faith. No one of these three can any longer evoke Sphinx-like action.

On what then can we count? If archangels were to describe your potentiality to you, still you would not actualize it. Nor could all the propaganda in the world lead you to do so. Nor the inducements in the object itself, however adorable, would make you undertake the discovery and labor of becoming it. O realizes this about himself.

What situation is there that alone can evoke the resolution sufficient to enable us to choose and then move along the right radius, making constant choice between it and radii in other directions?

The answer is: self-hatred. This is the most powerful, and for us the only surviving, motive force. So far this is all merely a theory. The only proof can be by experiment. And as for the results of the experiment we will only say that it is impossible to make such a judgment of yourself as described, and to set down impartial statements about yourself in your present form without two things occurring:

1) A correspondingly vivid sense of the nature of the portrait on the right. This is filled in by lights corresponding to dark on the left; not by deliberate effort on your part; the complimentary colors (green-red) begin to be built up in your imagination in the figure which you feel you ought to be. As the qualities in No. 1 are denoted, those in No. 2 emerge.

(This, you will see, avoids dependence on a model. The warning should also be given that it is impossible to conceive what the portrait on the right should be without having done the one on the left. O tried for months to set down his Portrait No. 2 on paper, and found himself utterly unable to make the qualities fit. He was as much at a loss as a novelist who, in the absence of a realization of his characters, sets down incompatible traits.)

2) The second result from such a judicial inquiry into our actual status may also be tested by experiment. It is not a picture this time, but a wish of a three-fold character to become it. It is neither primarily intellectual, nor emotional, nor instinctive; but the union of all three: it is in fact what we call will -- that state when three wishes are so blended that no one element is distinguishable. This is technically called conscience; the voice of God in essence; the magnetic connection between two different actualities in time; what Shelley called "the spirit of the years to come yearning to mix itself with life."

This may now be only a ghost. As an interesting fancy we might imagine all potentialities as ghosts wandering not in space but in time; each wishing to be actualized; but of these there is one which we wish, and when our wish and this one come together the maximum effort is produced on both sides.

By chance we have the notes this evening of some one who has set down the beginning of an attempt to survey his behavior. These notes may be considered as an example of the tentative trial; not as a model. O then read some of the notes:

"Reviewing my actual behavior it is evident that I have never really tried to do anything since leaving school, when I did try to get on the football team; what has come to me has come easily or not at all. There is nothing I have wanted hard enough to make effort for it. I never think about what I shall be or do in the future, but trust to luck. I read a good deal and remember practically nothing. Last night I reviewed the thoughts that had occupied my mind during the day; any child could have thought them. At heart I love nobody. I must be a good deal of a squirt, but I'm continually manoeuvring to impress others as a good fellow. I like to think that I am a dangerous man to women, but in fact I have never wanted any woman enough to run a risk. In discussions with men I am usually cagey, waiting to side with the strongest. No idea ever touches me deeply. I am never indignant except at some offense to myself. I have never lost any sleep over other people's troubles, and usually think that those who do are showing off. I give lots of free advice which I haven't taken the trouble to think out and which I wouldn't, or couldn't, take myself....."

This represents only an attempt at a detached attitude which each of us should aim at being able to assume toward himself. In doing this one should avoid the assigning of motives and try so far as possible to remain concrete, describing actual behavior.

From this we derive both a compensation and a task. The compensation is that we begin to realize Portrait No. 2 in brighter colors. The task is a sense of obligation, arising from conscience, and manifesting itself in a three-fold wish to become that figure.

Our way of going to work at this must be characterized by two things: ruthlessness, and a curiosity for the truth.

This is all we have in the way of assets. Our possible future lies within us. Neither gods nor powers nor angels can help. It is one's self against the world -- not that the world is bad but that it offers many radii. From some absolute point of view -- or say from the point of view of Einstein -- this may not matter. But if there is a design in us and the world, then one radius has greater value than others, and there is predilection. (Eddington

speculates that this world may have been a choice among many possible ones.)

We are less concerned here with theory than with practice, and tonight we have combined theory with experiment.

May 5, 1931

O began by saying that he was going to read a chapter from a novel, "Success", by Lion Feuchtwanger. This chapter, called "Some Historical Data", represented an attempt to begin doing what had often been recommended to students of this method: i.e., to realize the environment in which they find themselves, not only on this planet but in the rest of the universe at any given time.

According to certain theories of time, it is permissible to imagine every moment of time existing simultaneously. But we can perceive each of these moments only in one dimension -- as long as our cinema lasts. Everything that exists is in process of change; if nothing else, time is at work. The direction in which time is working may be determined.

In our experience there are two directions in which time works: 1) towards being, and more being; 2) towards less and less being. Everything, in point of being, is continually en route toward moreness or lessness.

We have certain criteria of the direction of movement. Movements toward more being have a different taste. It's as if one of the possibilities of the will of God is towards Being, and an experience associated with this we call "positive". In the opposite direction, we have an experience we call "negative".

Positive gives pleasure; negative the reverse of pleasure (not, however, necessarily pain, which is sensational, not emotional. Some emotions more painful than pain).

This is brought up, O added, in response to questions he had received:

- 1) what is the nature of the emotional center?
- 2) how may positive emotions be brought about?
- 3) how is emotional health maintained?
- 4) what is the nature of the air required for feeding the emotions?

Last week we spoke of aspiration and inspiration. The attitude in which these forms of breathing are possible are mentally

induced. The other attitudes, of respiration and expiration, are induced by the body. People often say that they are "on top of the world," when they are still far from it, being merely in a state of good health on the plane of respiration. Excellent animals, but not yet human. This depends on the digestion of substances whose intake depends on the alternate rhythm of aspiration and inspiration.

To induce in the lungs the rhythm in which breathing changes from respiration to aspiration, it is not necessary to have any particular state of the body. It is induced by presenting to the emotional center certain ideas, or images, which are associated with "the promise of more being".

There are two states of pleasure: anticipation and realization. Given a reasonable prospect of success in any enterprise on which something for us hangs, and the mere prospect is pleasurable. Now let us consider ourselves for the moment simply as emotional beings -- and theoretically at least we may separate ourselves into 3 beings. With the intellectual and emotional centers drugged, or put to sleep, we would only be instinctive; or with the physical and intellectual centers put to sleep, we would become beings run purely by emotions, etc. The point is the possibility of taking the emotional center as an entity, of whose experience we are only partially aware. We may often, for example, give a report from the mind that we are "happy", when in fact our emotions are suffering. In this sense the emotional center can experience that which promises more, or less, being to itself. This accounts for the effect of two different kinds of images; those promising more, which create pleasurable anticipation, or hope; and those threatening less, which induce disgust, despair, hatred perhaps -- all the negative states.

Negative states = fear of less being;

Positive states = anticipation of more being.

But the emotional center is virtually the sole controller of the movements of the body. In the old analogy, the intellectual center plays the role of driver; the instinctive center, or the body, the role of cart; the emotional center the horse. Of these, two elements are inert: the body by inertia, the brain by the fact that though it can direct, it cannot move. The emotional center is the motive power.

Now the emotional center is made to move exclusively in relation to the images presented to it. It knows nothing of the existence of the body or mind; but is aware only of the succession of images passing before it.

These images arising in the brain, are derived from two sources: 1) through the body; 2) in the mind itself.

One may ask, what sort of images are those that originate in the mind itself, having no sensuous origin? To use Eddington's word, they are "relata" -- i.e., the sum of the relations in which objects stand to each other.

For example, the idea of a constellation, - say the Belt of Orion. We know that there is no Belt of Orion; there are simply a number of stars whose accidental positions suggest an enclosing relationship. The constellation is an idea; all its parts -- i.e. stars - are sense impressions, but the constellation is not a part of the sense impressions. It is superimposed by the mind.

Thus, the emotional center is presented with two types of images: those from ordinary sense impressions, and those from the effort of the mind to arrange ordinary sense impressions in certain relations. Or: images of objects, and the mind's own ideas -- (patterns).

Now, recall that the body is inert save for the activity of the emotional center; that the emotional center in turn is driven by the thinking center. The effect of activity in the emotional center, whether from images or ideas, is to transfer this activity from itself to the physical body. An emotion instantly affects the behavior of the body. The medium is from brain to brain; i.e., from the emotional center directly to the organization called the lungs; in other words, emotions affect breathing.

Consequently, the rhythm of the lungs, feeding upon air, depends upon the emotional center, which in turn depends upon the images presented to it by the brain. In this way the three centers are linked up.

So long as the images presented to the emotional center refer only to sense impressions and not to relations, the breathing will be respiration. The person breathing will have, in relation to air, a restricted ability to digest. This person, naturally, is breathing the same air as anyone else; we all breathe all the air there is; but whether certain substances in it will or will not be digested depends on the emotional center, which determines the quality and rhythm of breathing.

One of the difficulties of music is the existence of overtones. How is it that a piano, for example, by the vibration of one string alone, can produce one tone and at least seven overtones? In theory, the mechanical explanation is this: when the note is struck, the whole string begins to vibrate -- if it is, say, middle C, at a rate of 256. But while the whole string is vibrating at this rate, it also begins to vibrate in two halves, each half vibrating at double the rate of the whole string, or 512. At the same time, each half is halved into quarters of the whole

string, vibrating at double the rate of the halves, or 1024; the quarters into eighths, etc. ... All of this is taking place simultaneously.

The atoms composing a piece of wire, or a violin string, also beat such complex rhythms.

But man is also a mechanical instrument, and no part of any of us is vibrating at only one rhythm. There are also overtones in us: heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter. We hear only the tones, not the overtones, although every part of the body is at every moment beating into complex rhythms, and one of the possibilities of the lungs is the simultaneous breathing in more than one rhythm: a) the set of rhythms induced by images from sense impressions, referring to the body; and b) the set of rhythms induced by the activity of the emotional center under the influence of images, or ideas, of relations. Aspiration and inspiration induce different results in the body, by the digestion of different substances in the air.

The recipe for better (or, as used to be said in the old days when the word was in more repute, higher) breathing is to think in terms of relations.

This is because the promise of more being is pleasurable; a greater activity is presented with the images of a higher type of thought. Only "relata" induces the promise of more being. Even in ordinary expectations of material success or advantage, the effect on the breathing may be noticed. Compare the breathing when one is discouraged and when one is confident; one breathes more rapidly in a confident mood. On the plane of ideas proper there is not only acceleration, but a change of kind.

All the above is in preparation to repeating the advice often given to try to see the constellation in which we exist.

Some people are incapable of seeing a picture; they see the daubs of paint, etc., but a picture is something we make by training. So with our environment. Try to realize the constellation and our relation to it. The facts are not imaginary; the points for the centers of any constellation are concrete, not abstract; but a different mode of thought is required for contemplating relations instead of merely the concrete points.

There is nothing fanciful about this; we need merely to name the points and form the constellation, if we can realize it. You can point out to a child, for example, each star in the Belt of Orion, but the child may still not see the constellation. Or, to take another analogy, we have all seen puzzle pictures, in which a face or some familiar object is hidden among many details. We can look at the page for a long time, turning it in various ways, and when we suddenly get a certain focus on it, the face stands

out clearly. The environment in which we live may be such a puzzle picture, and by turning it, we may find it not only intelligible but familiar. For, theoretically, at least, there is no reason to suppose that the world may not be as complete an organism as any of its parts. In fact, it would be odd if man, evolving out of this world, had no relation to the world that bears him. The world is a being in process of being. And we may hope to take the pattern by surprise.

For we have the material, if not the mental ability to constellate. The points are all familiar objects:

To begin with, we are on a planet, which has a subordinate planet, the moon, whose possibilities are limited by its association with the earth. Superior to ourselves there is obviously the sun; superior to it the galaxy of which the sun is a constituent part; and beyond that thousands of other galaxies with myriads of suns, about some of which there may also be other planets. These are objects which may prove to be a constellation, if we can take them so. That is, take them as a whole. But it requires a genuine effort of the mind to consider all these as a constellation and simultaneously be aware of their relations:

- 1) their spatial relations, and
- 2) their relations of order.

Their spatial relations involve questions of distance and size. The relations of order involve the distinctions of subordinate, equal, and superior. The moon, for example, is subordinate to the earth for the simple reason that what happens on the earth is more important to the moon than what happens on the moon is to the earth. Similarly as between the earth and the sun; the slightest protuberance on the sun has great effects on the earth.

This is still continuing the question, "What is our environment?" and the first answer is the largest that can be given -- our widest possible environment.

For the moment we will drop the question of spatial relations. In general, relations of space may be said to be more subtle than relations of order. Order is always defined by the test of "reciprocal influence".

If you are doing what you should, you will be instantly applying this idea to a number of other fields. This definition of order applies also to people. Beings differ in order, according to the influences they exert; for example, by inducing fear, love, or any emotion that activates the organism as a whole.

In the various orders of society what is called government is

established on influence. In primitive societies this is based chiefly on fear of pain (consider the brutality of primitive societies). In periods of superstition witch doctors, of various kinds, exercise superior reciprocal influence through the fear of the unknown. In our days certain classes exercise it through the fear of starvation; this is called the economic weapon.

Now let us suppose that each of these monopolies for inspiring fear has been destroyed. There would still exist differences of order by virtue of being. One being is superior to another by the fact that his reciprocal influence is greater. For what passes between them we have a word, but no corresponding image. The word is emanation.

There is a distinction between emanation and radiation. Emanation implies immediacy of contact between beings. Radiation is by an intermediary; i.e., another body.

This idea of order is important, because in our environment, both large and small, we are constantly encountering beings whose relations to us are either superior, inferior, or equal. And do what we may -- since we can't change our being on the spur of the moment -- the effects are in proportion to the differences of the two that meet. The superior being affects the inferior more than the inferior affects the superior.

(You should have in mind here all that is traditionally implied in various codes of morality, from noblesse oblige to the Confucian idea of the superior man: the mark of superiority is always inaccessibility to effects from inferiors).

If the earth were equally affectable by the moon, the two would be equal. Or take the relations between the moon and the galaxy: what happens on the moon is of slight importance to the galaxy as a whole; but the slightest change in the galaxy and the poor little moon is all in a flutter.

Between the earth and the sun there is no doubt of communication. All life, force, movement, on this planet depends on solar energy. As beings we are joint products of earth substances and solar energies. This we take for granted.

But we may also speculate that forces are exerted by the moon upon the earth, by other planets upon the earth, by the galaxies, etc.

The theory involved here is that the substances of our air are complex but numerable. Assuming the relations of planets, sun, galaxy, the substances will be: lunar; planetary (our planet and others); solar; and galactic. And since these substances are of different origin, they will have different influences. And since the origins differ in order, the substances differ in order.

Solar substances will have greater power than planetary, etc. Only as the particles enter our body and become part and parcel of us are we subjects for corresponding experiences.

In respiration, generally speaking, we assimilate substances from the moon, the earth, and other planets. The substances from the sun and galaxy are digested only when the form of breathing is changed from respiration to aspiration.

Why is this so? Recall the theory of the piano string, vibrating simultaneously in several different rhythms. All substances in origin are vibratory phenomena. Matter is made up of wavicles; i.e., a focus of complex vibrations. Our body is a collection of wavicles. Every atom is beating its complex rhythms. We are aware only of those vibrations occurring in us which represent our state of being.

A being is defined by the range of the vibrations of its constituent atoms.

If we try to think in terms of relations, we induce a rhythm of breathing which sets up in our atoms no longer overtones but tones, with the result that the body acquires the possibility of experiencing effects that before were only unconscious. And since a being is defined as an entity of consciousness, that effort of thinking which affects the feeling, which in turn affects the breathing, which in turn makes possible new tones, which in turn change the state of being, leads to more rather than less.

All of this flows from the simple exercise of trying to establish constellations. We recommend beginning with our own planet. And the use of a familiar school globe often makes the exercise more interesting and easy.

O then picked up a copy of "Success" by Lion Feuchtwanger, from which he had announced at the beginning of the evening he was going to read a part of a chapter.

What interests us in this chapter, he went on, is the suggestion that the author had either heard of this exercise and practised it, or that since he was an intelligent man it had occurred to him as one of the necessities of thought. We might almost say one of the decencies of thought, meaning by that only that it was disgraceful to a human mind not to try to be aware of its environment.

This chapter occurs in the midst of a long narrative, as though the author digressed for a moment to say, "You have now heard the story so far, but remember you cannot understand a thing these people did without bearing in mind their whole planetary backgrounds." Our own lives today, for example, are affected by the present world-wide economic depression. Even if we have the

same incomes, and apparently lead the same lives, our relations to others are inevitably affected by what has taken place in the world at large. Whether the individual is aware of the changes in environment or not makes no difference. In fact, it is impossible to be aware of all of them; but the happenings are different, and we are affected, although we may be ignorant of the causes.

O then read parts of the chapter in question. It is entitled "Some Historical Data" and is Chapter XIV of Book II of the novel, occurring at page 203 of the American edition (published by the Viking Press). I will copy a little of it to indicate the tone. The story is laid in Munich in the years 1921-1923.

"In those years the population of this planet numbered 1800 million people, of whom about 700 million were white. The civilization of the white races was supposed to be better than that of the others, and Europe was supposed to be the best part of the earth; but it was being gradually ousted in importance by America, in which about a fifth of the white race lived.

"The white races had set up various barriers among themselves of a very arbitrary nature. They spoke various different languages, there were groups of a few million who had their own idiom that was comprehensible to others. As far as possible they strengthened by artifice the difference between individuals and between groups, and found the most varied excuses for making war on each other. The idea, certainly, was gaining ground that it was out of place to kill human beings; but there still existed in many people a primitive lust for slaying. They used to fight each other, for example, for national reasons, that is to say, because they were born at different points of the earth's surface. Group emotions were exploited; it was considered a virtue to regard as inferior those who were born outside one's own officially determined frontiers and to shoot them down at stated times fixed by the governing body. This virtue was impressed on all from childhood, and was termed patriotism. They also fought each other for sociological reasons, using with great effect such concepts as surplus value, exploitation, class, proletarian and bourgeois. As the lines of demarcation here, too, were purely arbitrary, it was not easy for the party leaders to define the attribute which made people supporters or opponents of any particular group.

"The manner of living in that epoch was not hygienic. People were crowded close in enormous buildings of stone and iron, badly ventilated, and huddled evilly together with few green spaces....

"In the year of the Kruger case 379,920 people died in Germany, 14,352 of these being suicides, that is four percent of the total....

"Sports and physical exercises were in high favor. The chief

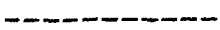
aim of sport was to establish a record, and extraordinary trouble was taken to specialize in physical achievements. The most popular sport was boxing, which consisted of a combat, according to certain rules, between over-trained and powerful men. But the so-called six-day races were also popular These professional followers of sport could not exercise for long their powers of foot and fist, for their over-trained muscles consumed their own strength, and these men aged and died prematurely.

"The culture of that epoch was based in essentials on the ideals of the Renaissance, that is, on the literatures of ancient Greece and Rome romantically interpreted. The wisdom of the East insofar as it was embodied in books and works of art, in history and forms of life, was known by only a few hundred scholars of the white race. In the schools for children, by far the greater part of what was taught had no practical value. The events of past years were classified on an unintelligent system, based on wars and other hostilities.

"Of congenital idiots and cretins, there were in Germany 36,461, of whom 11,209 were in Bavaria. The German Empire's expenses for its army amounted to 338 million gold marks, for literature, 3000 marks, for the campaign against venereal disease, 189,000 marks.

"The practice of justice in Germany at that time had little relation to ordinary life, and none at all to the best opinion of the age. It was based

"Such were the white races whom the planet whirled through space during those years, and who comprised two-fifths of its total human freight."



Having finished reading, O remarked that, as last week he had given an example of the kind of statements one should aim at being able to make about one's self, so this week he had happened to be able to give an example of the kind of statements one must try to make about one's environments. Only when both can be done will it be possible to arrive at a true picture of one's own norm.

Last week he had spoken of the diagram of time, in which the present was represented by the center, and a given point in the future by the circumference. Along one radius, and one alone, does movement produce in our emotional center that pleasurable anticipation associated with the promise of more being. Along all others pleasures are merely the passing pleasures of the body.

But why is it so difficult to discover one's own magnetic

line leading towards one's own normal actualization? The answer is to be found in the world situation at the given moment. Thanks to the total environmental effects, our judgment is warped, and we are directed under the influence of mass suggestion -- or, and this is equally fatal, by resistance to mass suggestion -- to actualize an inferior, non-soul potentiality.

According to the nature of the total environmental influences to which we are subjected we suffer the attraction of the forked paths, which occur at every moment. At each fork, one is our magnetic path; but -- thanks to the environmental influences -- the other becomes at that moment overwhelmingly attractive. The chances are a million to one against our choosing the magnetic one, and arriving at our normal actualization.

But if, at the moment of choice, you pause, so to speak, "to take a breath", the character of the substances digested will decide the choice. If it is merely respiration, it is equally certain that the planetary substances will remain overwhelmingly influential. If you preface the attempt by making an effort to realize your situation in regard to your environment, you will by that very fact become a little less under the influence of the environment. Not merely by the mental effort, but because the type of images presented induce a new order of breathing, which results in the digestion of new substances, etc. From this will result:

- 1) some degree of separation from the environment;
- 2) hence, some possibility of realizing our norm apart from the coloration of the environment; and
- 3) the establishing in one's self of the experienced difference between an environmentally originated wish and a magnetically realized, essentially felt wish.

This was the end of the talk, but O said he might add one or two suggestions for further thought. It may be, he went on, that in our environment (the sum of which constitutes the existing civilization on this planet), there occurs a succession of seasons, which may be very long -- so long as to correspond to changes in our zodiac, and determined by the relations of our solar system to other solar systems. This idea was known in ancient India, where these vast seasons were known as the Yougas (spelling) and it was announced that the death of Buddha had inaugurated the Kali Youga, or winter. In this long winter the total environmental influences are such that it is practically impossible for any individual to arrive at normal development. It is only in this state that such difficulties are encountered as we encounter; we are unlucky to have been born in water.

Against this somewhat gloomy prospect, we can, however, perhaps set two ideas: one, that even in winter growth is possible; and secondly, that in any case, the maximum of happiness for any individual is still to strive for normality, even against the season and his contemporary environment. In earlier ages, according to an old tradition, normality was natural, and failures not more common than the failures among us to arrive at any ordinary physical development. This was the age of gold, followed by the age of silver, then the age of bronze; ours is the age of lead.

In this connection try also to think how the environment came to be what it is, and what its possibilities are for the future. Try to fit what geological, biological, and chemical facts you already know into the picture of the past of the earth. In the simian age, what was happening on this spot where we are now gathered? Then what are the potential actualizations of this planet in the future? The answers themselves are of no importance; we are abysmally uninquisitive about the earth a million years ago or a million years hence. We are interested in the present; in the past only as we try to read in the present environment what must have happened; similarly to read what will happen. Not the answers but the activity important. These are merely exercises designed to bring about that exhilaration in the emotions which is the anticipation of more Being.

May 12, 1931.

The meeting began by someone asking for a recapitulation of the idea involved in the two portraits. O recalled the time diagram in which we let the circumference represent ten years hence. The radii are many but not infinite in number because the center is our present state of being.

Remembering also the three cube diagram, bear in mind that the totality of our life is made up of three orders of experience. There is a certain life in each cube; certain tests of the degree of fullness of each, and the rate at which each is developing one way or the other. None is ever stationary: each is always moving toward more being or less being: developing or involving: bringing in more varied and rich experience, or more monotonous.

Each radius is the line of one of the possible actualizations of each center. There are thus three possibilities at the end of each radius. One center may at that time be practically obsolete; no longer actively functioning.

Ten years ago a similar diagram might have been drawn for each

of us. Our present center would then have been a point on the circumference. Today you are no phantom, but flesh and blood; if ten years ago you could have foreseen yourself today, the figure would have been imaginative but not imaginary. The you today was not present in time, but none the less real for that. The diagram represents the second dimension of time. Each potentiality exists in time only; whether it is to exist in space also, is to be determined by the individual.

There is one radius to which we are magnetically attached by a sort of compass within ourselves, and even when the steering apparatus is broken the compass still points north.

There is no common north for all of us; but looking at your own compass, ask yourself if you are moving towards what you would wish to become if you controlled your fate.

Nor is it utterly impossible to stake out a few guide posts in Portrait No. 2. Taking it by cubes:

1) Are you perfectly satisfied at present with the health of your intellectual brain or stomach? Do you derive delight from its activity? Will it think about the kind of problem that really interests you, or is it like a monkey picking up one little thing, dropping it, and jumping at another. Can you make it think for you?

It is impossible for you to wish to find it worse, or no better, ten years hence; to have, say, no longer any interest in any intellectual question; no power of concentration; no discernment, no grasp, etc. Yet most people who are intelligent at thirty-five are gradually growing intellectually atrophied at forty-five, on their way to becoming morons. There is every kind of inducement to let ourselves slide into apathy. Yet nobody can wish to be a moron; why that is so we don't know, but none of us can.

2) Similarly in regard to the emotional center; how do you like to be described as incapable of any feeling? We have words which we apply to men and women whose emotions dry up; we call the women sour and the men crusty. They are incapable of a spontaneous reaction to a new situation; they cannot play.

3) Physically what sort of picture would please you? Would you wish to be, say, too fat to move? Or unable to sit up late at night, or get up early in the morning? Finding no delights in physical activity? Allowing for the effects of time under good conditions, it is possible to contrast the present picture with that at fifty, sixty, or seventy. Dying old is very different from dying prematurely in each center. As an example in the instinctive center (and not implying any other comparison) I can cite a man of seventy-eight whose name is familiar to you all -- Lloyd George. His delight in physical activity, while he cannot

do the same things he did before, is still fresh and keen. He lives, at a tempo appropriate to his age and powers, with vigor and pleasure.

Notice that we are not aiming to become fully alive in only one of these centers; i.e., to become ascetics, or saints, or intellectuals. These are the kind of ideals which, if you become, you find yourself a monster.

The contemplation of this picture of the actual serves a double purpose:

1) It accustoms us to an objective survey of ourselves. This incidentally is of great help in dealing with others. For no one can objectively define others who has not objectively defined himself.

We can look at the animal in question and define it, say, as a camel, not a giraffe, nor a horse. At this point some one asked, Can we say that it is an awkward camel? O replied, let us leave out any adjective except those necessary to define the type. There are for example, various breeds of dogs. Eventually we may learn to classify not only type but breed within the type.

2) The second consequence of this effort is one that would seem quite unexpected. It is an emotional reaction to the discovery of the breed to which you belong. Imagine a dog belonging to the breed poodle which has always fancied itself a Newfoundland. It discovers that it is a poodle. Its emotional reaction is first a dislike of being a poodle, because its most cherished pleasures in the past have come from its fantasies that it was a Newfoundland (we are not implying here that one breed is better than another; our question is, to which species does this particular individual belong? For, relative to that, we may judge its evolving possibilities: to what, as a member of this breed, it may aspire.)

It is the surprise itself that is unpleasant, regardless of any question of superiority of type. If by chance the individual finds that he belongs to a type which it pleases him to belong to, then he is still due for another surprise. For he would eventually discover that there is no difference between types as such from the point of view of objective value. He may be a military conqueror, or a savior. We think one better than the other, the healer superior to the killer, because we are subject to the effects of each, and our reaction is purely personal. But from the point of view of God it is not a question of whether a given type or individual is more pleasant for his neighbors; but whether, from the point of view of developments, - the actualization of

potentialities - he is more active.

We are now speaking not of growth but of development. Growth is merely enlargement, or the perfection of a species. Development is the transmutation of species. There are sudden transmutations of species as well as gradual evolution. During the slow process it is according to Darwinian laws; but there are crises when behavior is according to the Mendelian laws. The latter produce new species; the former variations within species.

Perhaps each of our three brains may be the result of a Mendelian jump. We can find no history to account for their sudden appearance, even germinal.

From an objective point of view, what counts is not so much the variations. Suppose any one of us, from various lucky circumstances over which we have no control, were to acquire objective consciousness -- this would be a leap. This was brought out by Jesus when the Apostles questioned him about John, the Baptist, and he replied, "Of all the sons of women there is none greater than he, yet the least of those that has entered the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

A Rolls-Royce, let me say, stands at the acme of the kingdom of machines; yet relative to the amoeba, at the bottom of the kingdom of life, has less value. The difference is not one of degree, but of kind; the amoeba has more value; value being defined as containing more, or less, potentiality of self-developer.

The question of transmutation has a relation to the two diagrams. For one, in the absence of one of these Mendelian leaps, will find the radius, or finding it stay on it.

The preceding digression arose from the two results we noted of the attempt to make a judicial survey of Portrait No. 1: (1) the ability to define ourselves and others; and (2) the induced reaction of shocked surprise.

In describing animals we make no moral judgments; or if we do, it is merely a question of agreeable or not agreeable to us. In the medieval story of Reynard the Fox, which arose in the attempt to describe human types, the animals were described. We are in the habit of saying the cunning fox or the treacherous jackal; but we should be able to say simply, "The fox or the jack is such and such an animal and treat him accordingly -- beware of him if necessary." This is what in fact we do with a charged wire we don't say it is wicked; we define its nature and its effects. The absence of judgment does not mean the absence of definition. Our judgments of others, if we have not made an objective judgment of ourselves, is made from the point of view of self-preservation. A is likely to be dangerous to me, B is likely to be congenial; call A bad and B good; and I am largely unaware that I am doing

this; but imagine that I am passing a real judgment on A and B.

The first shock is the discovery that we belong to a different type than we thought; the second that, no matter what type we belong to, the mechanicality is the same.

When the conception of pursuing a certain radius enters, then behavior is no longer purely mechanical, but purposive.

Having discovered the figure that should be the normal development of your present potentialities, and having experienced the wish to become this figure, it is necessary then to specify what characteristics must be actualized in order to pursue your radius with some hope of arriving.

All things start as a triangle, that is, an assembly of three forces. Nothing is initiated without all three; two produce nothing.

Space itself consists of three forces that never meet; it is not just "nothing". One of the difficulties of modern science is to distinguish between space as nothingness and space as the source of matter. The ancient Gnostics defined space by two words: A simultaneous plenum (all fullness) and vacuum (all emptiness). Only at the points where three forces meet is there what we call a first atom of matter.

No enterprise can be begun without the certainty of its early demise unless the three necessary elements are present.

Hence it is important to find out what they are. In the case of this ten years' course there are three alone that promise success. It is not necessary, nor even possible, that the three should be already developed. We don't require of a seed that it be a tree; merely that it contain the potentialities of normal development; given the principal, normal development then becomes a matter of environment.

Similarly, each of our potentialities exists in us as a seed of the future.

The three necessary elements are:

- 1) Some degree of understanding of what is meant by will; and some ability to try to exercise it. Will may be defined as "effort against inclination". But one must be careful, in applying this definition, that the effort against inclination is not merely an effort made in the direction of a greater inclination: the kind of effort indicated here is made for its own sake. As an example

of effort against inclination in the direction of a greater inclination, we often overcome momentary temptations to inertia to obtain a subsequent profit, say, a hundred dollar check. The hundred dollars in this case has been a magnet overcoming the inertia, and we an iron filing between the two magnets of inertia and the check, approaching the stronger. In other words, merely overcoming difficulties proves not will but the attraction of the magnet.

At this point the question was asked: Isn't the magnetic compass we have already spoken of an inclination? O answered: Not an inclination, but a direction. Our organism as a whole is unaware of this compass; its inclinations are determined by its history. This point is subtle but not hair-splitting. People are too prone to assume that any subtlety must be merely hair-splitting; but it may be making a distinction of kind. The greatest inclination differs, in kind, from the smallest will. In the case of people of whom we say that they have a strong will, the fact is that they have merely fallen under the influence of a strong magnet, such as ambition. We speak, for example, of a Napoleonic will; we say that such people will dare fire and water, etc. A life lived under the influence of such a magnet is to a single act of will as our Rolls-Royce is to an amoeba; a whole world plane, or octave, lies between them: the difference is that between mechanical and vital. It is difficult for us, mechanically trained, even to realize the nature of this amoeba. We are various types of machines, from Fords to Rolls-Royces, of varying years, models, etc., and we think we are making a distinction of kind when in fact it is only one of degree.

Will is thus acting against inclination for no other reason. (The question was promptly asked: Isn't the desire to develop will itself an inclination? O answered: The wish for being may be called an urge but not an inclination).

Inclination is the sum of our past. Our psychology is only another form of our physiology. Our report of what happens is a report of what our cells are doing. What we call the inclination is a disposition of a group of cells resulting from our history, and charged to act in a certain way: psychologically this is perceived by us as an inclination.

But from the point of view of whatever it is that becomes self-determinative, we are dealing with a cell that has as yet no history. The other three centers are passably filled, and according to that filling we experience what we call our psychology. But in regard to the three centers to be developed, no passive experience can enter. For all passive experience is of a rate of vibration insufficient to penetrate. To give an analogy, we all know that there are sounds we do not hear; our sense experience is limited in range.

We need another form of action different from passive; this is what we call conscious. And the only form of conscious activity of which we can begin to have experience is self-observation.

Now what is required of an act of will? It cannot be for any motive that appeals to any one of the existing centers. It would thus seem an objectless activity, of the nature of whim or fancy or mere cussedness.

Objective may be defined as the pursuit of objects of will; subjective as the pursuit of objects for the development of the three lower centers.

Objectivity is difficult to understand. It does imply an object, but not an object for the three lower centers. The object is to attain will. We might say it is not an object but an aim.

There is a difference between having an object in life, and being inclined to one.

In what has been said above I have tried to point towards will; it is impossible to realize its nature from a definition. It is to be developed by self-observation.

Will is thus the first of the three necessary elements, and is the positive force.

2) The passive element is consciousness. The word passive is misleading, for it is assumed that it means negative; that is, nothing. The difference between positive will and passive consciousness is that consciousness aims only to be aware of what is happening. Will initiates activity against inclination; consciousness is aware of the degree of will acting and the effects produced by it in our psychology. It is important to remember that it is also an activity, but the activity of awareness of an activity.

Try always to be aware of what in fact you are doing, and when it occurs to you to act against inclination, be especially aware of how it feels and what happens.

3) The third force is the neutralizing (see notes of April 7th, pages 10 and 11). This is not to be regarded as a compound of the first two; nor a resultant. It appears only when the other two are present, but at the same time is a force in itself.

This third force is equally necessary as the others; in one sense a resultant of them, in another quite different from them.

We may define it by saying that consciousness of will constitutes individuality.

In the absence of will there is nothing of which to be conscious; in the absence of consciousness the will is not in existence; in the absence of will and consciousness there is no possibility of individuality.

It is assumed by most people that we already have will, consciousness, and individuality; but what we have as the result of passive experience are shadows of these things:

When people speak ordinarily of will, they mean inclination according to history (desire);

When they speak of consciousness, they mean the passive awareness of happenings in the body (waking consciousness);

When they speak of individuality, they mean a series of happenings according to type (personality).

We must equip ourselves with these three forces at the outset of the radius. But it is only in regard to the first two that we can do anything directly. The first may be developed by self-observation and opposing inclination for no reason; the second by the effort to be on the qui vive when doing so; and let individuality look out for itself.

Occidentals are often deceived by the misleading character of most of the Indian doctrines when popularly presented. For centuries they were handed down orally, and only when India was conquered were the schools compelled to write their doctrines. Under compulsion they subtilized maliciously, so that the doctrine, as written, was both wholly right and wholly wrong. An instance: in a state of aspiration (a mental -- emotional attitude) the lungs tend to breathe in a certain rhythm. Among other things, they breathe through alternate nostrils. Now, many Indian philosophies prescribe breathing through alternate nostrils as a means of arriving at aspiration. They invert the right order, taking an effect for the cause; and following this prescription can produce only pathological states.

The same is true in the development of individuality. It can never be directly caused, any more than emotions.

What can we recognize as criteria? We have three stomachs, and each of these has its own state of working well, its own joy in being alive and functioning. We are aware of this in our habit of sizing up the state in which we get up in the morning; we say we are feeling a little low, or full of zest. The lungs are perhaps at their top form, and breathing would be of a certain complex rhythm. What do you regard as emotional well-being? It can be defined only in terms of the two others.

Do you recognize a state of joie de vivre in the brain? An intellectual joie de vivre? When this state in the brain corresponds to a similar state in the stomach, then the emotional state will follow.

The greatest delight for the mind of man is the employment of "cunning", with a good conscience, to a successful practical conclusion. At its peak this is "the employment of cunning, with a good conscience, to the aim of more being."

The word "cunning" is used here without any connotation of slyness, but in the sense of the canny employment of the whole of one's intelligence. The word cunning comes from the Anglo-Saxon cunnan, which meant both to know and to be able. In esoteric use it indicates a person who knows and can do. In this sense King Alfred was spoken of as a cunning man. In our use here it means going to work at a task, even such a one as the pursuit of a ten years' aim, in a common sense way.

May 19, 1931

The present meeting will be the next to the last in this series.

We have been discussing the science of being, which has two aspects: theory and practice. I urge each of you strongly to make the effort to assemble for yourself just what you have gathered of each of these two aspects. Set your results down on paper, in parallel columns, and see to what extent you have grasped the general ideas broadly, simply, and comprehensively; or to what extent you have merely a lot of details, without vertebrae. This is not a question of agreeing or disagreeing with the ideas, but of finding out how clearly you can focus them in your own mind, which is the prerequisite, as in the case of any ideas, for future consideration.

O then said that he had challenged himself that day for the main idea he had got from seven years' association with the Gurdjieff system. He had found that for his own convenience he could express it in a simple diagram.

This diagram consisted merely of an octave, in which the three lower notes were mechanical; the three upper conscious; and the bridge between them (fa) the state of transition which we call balance of normality.

The lower notes (do, re, mi) are the three mechanical centers; each of us has his center of gravity pitched in one or another of them. All of these are sub-normal; or sub-human,

defining a human being as a conscious being. Mechanical means behavioristic; which means: conditioned totally by heredity and environment.

The fourth note, fa, is normality. We can pass from mechanicality to consciousness only through normality. Other ways of making this transition result in a pathological state, comparing with the normal transition as moonlight with sunlight.

The three higher notes (sol - consciousness; la - individuality; si - will) are "I" (the state of being "I").

Consciousness is the state of knowing what we know and what we don't. Of a conscious man we might say, what he knows he does know and what he doesn't know he doesn't deceive himself about. He has experience of the difference between knowledge, opinion, wish, guess, and ignorance, and he knows where his own ignorance lies. Our difficulty is that in the first place we don't know what we know; secondly, we cannot discriminate between knowledge and plausibility; and thirdly, we cannot distinguish between an objective certainty (being certainty) and subjective certainty (a feeling-certainty). This does not mean that the conscious man is omniscient; he is still a learner, but with a criterion of knowledge.

The third note of these, si, is will. But in the absence of experience it is impossible to distinguish will from wish, particularly a strong and sustained wish. On this diagram all men fall into seven classes or degrees (falling into a further subdivision of twenty-seven types within each class). Of these seven, the three lower are mechanical: instinctive, emotional, and intellectual; the three higher conscious: knowing, being individual, and willing. Each of these last three differs from the others just as each of the first three differs from the others.

Each of us should be able to recognize on which rung he stands. If you are intellectual, every situation where there is no special reason for emotional disturbance, becomes a matter for thought; the center of gravity is predominantly there. And so on.....Ask yourself in what circumstances you are most at home. What is most congenial to you? *reading*

Fa is the bridge, or path -- the straight and narrow gate -- through which every human being must pass if he desires to become an individual, to know, and to be able to do.

In the absence of having passed through the impartial state of balance, he cannot distinguish between individuality and personality, between will and wish.

Almost the whole of Plato's dialogues are taken up in trying to lead readers to distinguish between knowledge and opinion. Socrates professed always not to know, but in contrast with the conscious ignorance of Socrates all those who professed to know were

shown to have only opinions. But Plato's dialogues were written in vain. Without experience no one can distinguish; one may theorize about it, but theoretical and actual experience are totally different; and only one who has had the experience can distinguish between the description of the two different sensations.

The same is true of individuality and personality. Nine out of ten people are firmly convinced that they know the difference. But (the possession of individuality is impossible in the absence of having acquired it by conscious effort.) Otherwise there is merely an anthology of personal idiosyncracies. There are people in history who appear to have individuality because of their oddities, and they are described as unique, strange, or individual. It is important to be able to distinguish between oddities that give the impression of singularity, and the actual fact -- to realize that a human being with experience of individuality as a fact is as different as an emotional from an instinctive; not in degree but in kind. His rank is determined not because of something more, but because of something totally different in his experience.

All mechanical people have the same experience, ranging only in degree; consider for example any experience of terror, in war, on a sinking ship, in any entanglement of the emotions; the difference is only one of degree, according to the individual's private anthology. It is impossible to cite any experience that you and I have not had in some degree. The only uniqueness is in the selection. We all share the same world of possible experience.

We all, for example, occupy this planet. One of us may have travelled over more, or less, of its surface than another; but this difference, which is only one of degree, and not of kind, is insignificant compared with the fact that we all know the same air, earth, etc.

But individuality, consciousness, and will, are experiences that differ in kind. It is no use pretending that one has had them because it is possible to give some kind of a description. The author of Uncle Tom's Cabin had never owned a slave. A critic is one who has had experience and cannot be deceived by the description.

Thus from the Gurdjieff system stands out this diagram, both terrifying and encouraging. Terrifying because we are all born and educated mechanically; yet encouraging because of the possibility in all of us of attaining a non-mechanical rank.

The first of these non-mechanical stages of being implies a specific experience, indescribable in the absence of the experience.

itself; the same in the case of knowing, and will.

The transitional state is defined as the balanced man.

Objectively speaking, men are ranked 1, 2, 3 mechanical; 4, balanced or normal; 5, 6, 7, conscious men.

Having set out the diagram, the next important thing is the conception of the balanced or normal man. Search yourself for the answer. At bottom all men will agree. Every one discounts his own preferences if so questioned. Implicit in every individual is the conception of normality. What is necessary is a certain amount of self-questioning, pondering, to get at the conception; which, strangely enough, when individuality arrived at, is commonly accepted.

Men agree in everything except opinion: we are concerned here with what is not opinion in ourselves.

This balanced type is what every being aspires to become. It is as if it were only on account of some pressure, cosmic perhaps in origin, that we are not normal; but our true center of gravity is on the plane of normality. We are pressed down, but feel resistance to this oppression.

In a long illness, let us say, the real crisis is the moment when you begin to think of your illness as a normal state, to be content in the role of invalid, with no wish left for health. We can say of human beings that they are not born to be mechanical, but that under certain influences they find themselves sub-normal, scarcely distinguishable from animals except in faith, hope, and a sense of normality. Animals can degenerate without sighing for their lost state, without realizing even that they are decaying. Mechanical man can still feel pressure under the artificialities of his state.

All effort for all human beings must be directed simply to becoming normal. It is not yet a question of attaining the higher ranks; any experience of individuality, consciousness, or will, by any other means being practically certain to be either pathological, or fatal to the reason, or to any further development. There are beings who because of an experience of individuality, or consciousness, or will, are unable afterwards even to aim at normality, believing normality behind them. In the Gospels those that came in not by the front door but stole in by the back door were said to be expelled with violence.

But if it is thus impossible to attain individuality, consciousness, or will, except through the straight and narrow gate of normality, it is equally impossible to attain normality without desiring the three higher ranks, or at least one of them.

The state of normality in itself is not desirable, but only

because it is a gate. In itself it is technically called The Desert. For in itself it had no color of any of the three higher ranks, and it has lost the color of each of the three lower. The aniline dyes of the three lower have faded, the lasting colors of the three higher not yet appeared. Normality in itself is not an object of desire. The passage through the desert was made possible under the stimulus of the Promised Land for which the journey through the desert appeared worth while.

With the Promised Land held out, the attainment of normality becomes an instrumental agency. But the difficulty is that the experience of the three higher stages is possible only from this one; and it is impossible for the three lower ones to envisage them as an object of desire, to make possible the passage across the bridge.

At this point the intellectual type may be said to have a certain advantage over the emotional and instinctive. Though it is true that an intellectual conception is not knowledge, yet it is also true that the mind is capable of analogy, symbolism, allegory, etc., so that when contemplating from below the described but as yet inexperienced, one moment of understanding of the above may be possible. This is the part played by intellectual mysticism, associated with the school of Plotinius. If you read his Enneads, you will realize that three times while contemplating the pattern of a higher man in his mind, he had the experience of being higher men; and that from these three experiences came the Enneads, and his prescription of intellectual mysticism as one method. In India this is called Raj Yoga. Raj means king; yoga means method; yoga -- yoke -- a means of carrying a burden. The three kings: individuality, consciousness, and will. Raj Yoga was a way of attaining one of these kingships.

The difficulty is that we seem to be indifferent to this attainment of balance. This is to be overcome by intellectual contemplation and emotional aspiration, remembering that "aspiration" includes practical effort, thus making a three-fold activity. With this diagram any competent student of the science of being has a working diagram: a map of being, indicating the still unattained states, the road to them, and the difficulties.

For this diagram alone the years spent in the study of this system have not been wasted.

But this example of O's has been cited as an inducement to the rest of you to do something similar for yourselves. Select the outstanding vertebrae of the system, to which for the rest of your lives you will be able to attach yourselves as a map of being. A map of being is not to be despised, even though there may be blank spaces on it. The relation between the blanks and the parts known is a part of knowledge.

O added that he hoped none of those in the group was without

some such map, and would not mistake a description for a map. I hope you will not say, for example (he went on) that for you the major idea is self-observation. That falls into a certain octave. It is a means only, for those that wish to become No. 4, or cease to be No. 4 (4 a state of balance, or normality). It is not a map of the system as a whole, but the means of transition from one part of the map to another. Nor that the main idea for you is the interchange of matters; or the three forces; or the simultaneous presence in any object of two opposing forces, one making for the intensification of the vibrations of the object and the other for the decreasing. All these are details, photographs of places, not a map.

If hereafter you are going to be left to the recollection in your own minds of what has been said in these groups, it is essential that you should form your thinking around leading ideas -- the principles involved.

Who is willing to formulate what seems to him the central idea of the subject?

One woman in the group answered: "the realization of potentialities." To this O said: Be more specific. A potentiality is not merely a possibility, but a latent power. It may seem unnecessary to you to make clear distinctions between words, but our civilization is rotting at present from an inability to distinguish between potential and actual, in its economic life, in the field of production. Potential refers to as yet undeveloped potencies. We all have the possibility of crumbling into dust; we have the potentiality of development. But people fail to distinguish. After the age of 22 or 23 most people talk a Babu English which passes for psychology, metaphysics, etc.; and which is really the illiteracy of the educated classes. There is also a quarrel with your word, "realization", which means to understand fully. It is not merely to realize but to actualize potentialities that is in question. And to actualize means to put into effect.

Another person answered: "the possibility of lifting one's self out of mechanicality." To this O said: It is good so far as it goes. There is nothing static in nature: everything is either appreciating or depreciating; up is the line of potentiality, down is the line of possibility. Every being is at every moment moving in one or the other direction. But a being is an agent with a responsibility to actualize his potentialities in the positive direction. This answer touches one of the living ideas of the system, but it is still not the bony structure.

Only beings are interested in the possibility of becoming. A being is an entity that can feel. Without feeling the question of becoming is a matter of indifference.

A man in the group (Loomis) answered: "the idea of watching what goes on in one's self." To this O said: You are singling out

the contemplative, or intellectual, aspect of a man's development, and neglecting the other two. The Cherubim were said to be complete on the plane of thought; the Seraphim on the plane of feeling; but man is capable of being a truly three-centered being. The contemplative aspect, which you stress, is the path of the intellectual yogi. It develops a being who can do and feel and think on the plane of ideas; that is, the emotional and instinctive sub-centers of his intellectual center are developed. But in the true centers of feeling and doing, he can neither feel nor do. It is not enough to watch. One must watch, but at the same time one must think, wish, and do. By self-observation alone it is possible to develop the soul only in one of its centres; that is, the intellectual. This is Raj Yoga. Each of the three main yogis leads to the development of one centre, producing a total being on one plane. But this is not a Man, whose definition is that he is complete on all three planes.

The meeting next week will be the last of this series. Try between now and then to set down the questions that are in your mind, or a statement of what you consider you have derived from a consideration of these ideas.

May 26, 1931

This evening is the last time that we shall meet in a group of this kind to discuss these ideas.

Have any of you a serious question to ask, the answer to which would be, for the rest of your life, of some practical use?

I beg each of you to set down in your mind what significance these ideas have for you. How much better off, or worse off, are you for having considered them?

The question was asked: what is will? O said: the effort to be non-mechanical is will. Self-observation, participation, and experiment, all three, are the bridge.

The proper framing of a question is of itself of value. Do not dart out unrelated questions, but formulate your question in the framework to which it belongs. The relating of a question to its framework helps make it possible to answer it, and already points towards the direction the answer must take.

The question was asked: how is one to develop impartiality? O replied: An exercise has been frequently urged in these groups, which is designed to lead towards objectivity. The exercise is of such a kind that any mind, from a baby's up, may begin it, and it may be continued as the capacity of the mind increases without the

exercise becoming exhausted. Take a globe of the world and try, from an external point of view -- that is, in imagination not occupying any continent on the earth -- to become aware of the life actually existing on its surface at this moment. You see a sphere, covered with a green paint of vegetation, through which are scattered swarming and creeping objects, some on two legs. Try to bring together and realize simultaneously all that you already know about them.

Thinking is only the mobilization of your past images. When you think you first evoke images already present in your head; assemble them, arrange them, and finally draw conclusions from them. This is true of all thinking, from the least to the greatest. The only difference in point of thought between any of us and the greatest thinker is that he has a greater command over all of his past images, can mobilize, compare, contrast them, etc., more fully and more freely than we. But each of you has as many images as he; like him you are receiving them every moment of your life. His superiority lies in the effort, not contained in the images themselves, to arrange them.

Now returning to the exercise recommended: You already know a thousand things about life on this planet, impressions that have been received at various times under various circumstances, and which lie unrelated in your mind. Make the effort to draw together all of these impressions, and try to realize simultaneously all that you know. In that moment you will become detached; you may even forget that you are a human being; and that moment will give you at least the taste of objectivity.

Similarly, if you can shut your eyes and call up a picture of yourself as clearly as though it were a picture of some one else. This also will give a taste of objectivity. The experiment can be described, and the moment is checkable. If you cannot realize yourself as you realize some person you know who is absent, you haven't yet accomplished the first note, "do", of this method. The "re" of the method is participation but in the absence of already having accomplished "do", this will mean nothing except an intellectual conception. Participation is the possibility of being simultaneously (a) the acting organism, and (b) an observer who is as if the actor. A life would be well spent if it were accompanied by a steady, sustained effort to attain this experience of seeing one's self.

Incidentally, it would be a guarantee that one would be kept on one's psychological toes. If you were making this effort day in and day out, you would find that automatically many trivialities would drop out of your life; and that many reactions, which are merely leakages of energy, and devastating to the organism, would cease. The quantity of energy that each person has is approximately the same; but in one person it leaks out through a thousand holes like a sieve, another person contains it for his use.

He is continent (which is very different from abstinent). But unfortunately there are two kinds of continence: (1) the first is merely mechanical; that is, the person is obsessed by some dominating idea. For example, Napoleon. This idea has the effect of focussing all his energy, so that none is wasted. I said "unfortunately", because such a person acts willy-nilly, like a person in a hypnotic trance; (2) the second kind is conscious continence. That is, for a voluntarily chosen objective; for example, self-observation in the pursuit of objective reason. It has the same effect, but the person is not victimized. Eventually he becomes able to do what he has wished and striven to do.

Let us hope there are no world-shattering geniuses here in this group. Such persons are so magnetically attracted by some external aim -- power, knowledge, fame, etc. -- that, like a filling on a magnet, they are literally incapable of letting go.

Yet in the absence of some strong wish, centralizing and organizing our energy, we do nothing.

We thus seem to be between two stools: on the one hand the magnetic wish of the genius, so strong that he is dominated by it, and is incapable of any self-activating will; in other words, pathological; and on the other hand, having such diverse wishes that we can't guarantee they will be the same two years, or two days, running. The choice seems to lie between the white heat of the genius and excelling at nothing.

It is true we can't wish a wish on ourselves. We may deplore the fact that our wishes are weak, but that doesn't change them. Suppose I despise myself for being lukewarm towards something that my mind tells me I've love to love. How am I to generate the heat I need and want? That is, how am I to focus and intensify my feelings towards this objective? I cannot do it directly, but it can be done indirectly, by making use of the relation between the intellectual and the emotional centers.

Emotions are evoked in response to the images present in our consciousness. The wishes themselves live in the dark, seeing the outer world only in the images that we form of it passing through our consciousness like a cinema. We are in the habit of leaving this to the haphazard accidents of our daily experiences, reading, associations, etc.

To create a wish, or to intensify one already present, assemble out of the memory of all your images those that are associated with that wish, and keep them present in your consciousness. This was once the technical meaning of "prayer". This was what happened mechanically to Don Quixote, as a result of his reading. But we can dispense with an external stimulus. Evoke images and keep them permanent.

Perhaps you find that your wish is not intense enough to do

what you wish to do. Your heredity and environment have not happened to make it so. Yet your intelligence tells you that the thing can be done. How are you to strengthen yourself?

Collect your images and mobilize them. "Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve." (Browning) -- and becomes thereby a real person, only differing from a mechanical person in that he has done it consciously. The selection of aim has been his own; the means intelligent; and incidentally the effort involved develops the thinking center so that thereafter he can think capably about practically anything.

A member of the group (Wolfe) then said that to him the realization of death was the keynote of the ideas. O said: Call it rather a stimulus to effort. Suppose you were on the Titanic when it struck the iceberg. Such a situation may be the contingency of every moment of our lives. We forget that every time we draw a breath some one is being born, and some one is dying, somewhere on this planet.

We all know theoretically that some time we shall die. But we don't realize it as a fact. Such a realization would be two-fold: (a) a sense of unfulfilled wishes, or obligations; and (b) a sense of shame that we have lived so long, done so little, and been so ignorant. If the realization of how little we have become could be combined with the realization that even this little might be lost, it would be the strongest incentive to seeing ourselves as we see others.

Suppose a man were hanging over a precipice on a rope which was gradually being abraded, as he climbed up it, by the edge of the precipice. He might, or might not, reach the top before it snapped. He would have a double shock: first, the realization of the imminence of death; and second, that what was dangling was only a simulacrum of a real being. It is said that this experience has been used in certain schools, with perhaps no guarantee that the danger was not real, to awaken the knowledge of death and that nothing dies.

When Orage dies, nothing dies. He is a product of nature, animated and made to look alive; but no more human than a tree or an animal. He has not become an incarnation, a vivification, of himself. Realizing this failure brings a sense of frustration, shame, etc. For we are attached to life from an unconscious realization of our need of the body in order to attain consciousness. If we merely live out its life, we have failed. This shame was the technical meaning attached in the ancient "schools" to the word hell.

Wolfe's formulation touches a nerve of the system; touches its emotional center. We can talk for weeks about diagrams, and except for the light they throw on contemporary intellectual problems, they would not touch one's being.

We have these three steps:

Knowledge of the body; through self-observation;
Control over the body; through participation;
Proper use of the body; through experiment.

None of us can fail to realize the slow pace at which even an earnest student changes. Year after year passes, and the change is so little that one's nearest friends see no difference. The change in one's attitudes and reactions is microscopic. This fact is due to the failure to realize what Wolfe has just brought up: death and the shame of unfulfillment.

How could a man, really knowing that he might die at any moment, keep on thinking trivial thoughts -- unless they were connected with the practical details of his life, in which case he would think them as capably, practically, and quickly as possible, and dispose of them. O expressed himself amazed, not at the time devoted to trivial things, for our daily lives are made up of small matters that have to be despatched, but at the importance attached to them. With the mobilization of all of a man's energies toward the central aim of his life, accompanied by the knowledge that his time was short, he would automatically shed the trivial concerns which didn't contribute to that aim and from which he derived, in consequence, no real satisfaction even at the moment. This would be a sort of inner asceticism, brought about automatically by the rejection of what was of no value to him, and differing from ordinary asceticism in that it would be invisible to others.

Another member of the group (Morris) said that he had written down, as O had asked at the previous meeting, what seemed to him the framework of the system in relation to the question of being. Not in a diagram, as O had done, but in a series of statements. O remarked that that form was equally useful. M. read his statements (given at the end of the notes on this meeting).

O criticised the last statement (#14), in which M. said that the only hope of development was hatred of our present mechanical state. O pointed out that this ignored the "magnetic tie" discussed in previous meetings, between ourselves as we are and as we would be if fully developed; that is, as we should be. Hatred alone is not enough; there must also be the love of what we are designed to be; that is, aspiration. The statement read gave only

the negative side, hatred, which should be counter-balanced by love.

The danger of the formulation read was that, left alone, it leads to melancholia and despair. To the seven deadly sins the Eastern Church added an eighth, which was well known in Hindu philosophy: spiritual despair, incurred by those so unfortunate as to fall out of love with themselves as they are, without falling in love with themselves as they should be. Hatred refers to the actual, love to the potential.

Mantra are formulations used for mobilizing ideas, and keeping images present in consciousness. If repeated with a full inner effort to give them significance to one's self, the corresponding wish in the emotional center will be evoked. The prayer-wheel originated as a device to keep the mind occupied with a certain set of images. "I wish to be aware of myself." What content can you give to the word "I"? None, as yet; but you can try to use it as if it already had meaning. What is the most intense association you have with the word "wish"? It is all of that ardor, and a thousands times more, that you are trying to put into that word here .. etc. You are speaking for the secret "I" within your heart, and some part of your mind should always be reminding you of this.

Another mantrum is a simple one, which you might attempt to repeat frequently, say, a hundred times a day. With the attempt to say it as if it had meaning there would be a rapid development of consciousness. It is a short cut, but unfortunately no one is ever able to do it, simple as it looks. People either forget it entirely, or else the words lose all meaning to them. It is an ancient one: "More radiant than the sun, purer than the snow, subtler than the ether, is the self, the spirit within my heart. I am that self, that self am I."

At first this can be merely a mechanical repetition. But the process is one of making a fact by making it conscious. Spiritual facts do not occur, they are willed; and often brought about by what appear to be mechanical means. Try to repeat this as if it were a fact, not just verbally. You will say this is auto-suggestion, and so it is; but in the absence of acting under auto-suggestion, you are bound to act under the suggestion of others.

All of our present behavior is done under suggestion, and our hypnotist is our environment. The only counter-hypnotist is auto-suggestion. Spiritual growth takes place as normally as growth of the body, but it presupposes something to grow: that an "I" is there. Once given the germ, it grows according to its own laws.

Many of you have asked if there wasn't some short cut, instead

of the drudgery of the method, and here is one if you can use it. But you will find that after three times you will begin to say it mechanically. How hard it is to try to put more and more meaning into it each time! Trying to bring it home to yourself to have the resolution that it shall be so.

An illustration: How can you persuade a man who has always lived in poverty that he has a million in the bank he can draw on? Ouspensky told of an incident in England. A barman inherited half a million pounds from a brother in Australia, and although the lawyers explained it to him, showed him papers, gave him a checkbook, and urged him to write checks, he was incapable of believing it. He listened to everything they said, and then went on as if he didn't have the money.

You have an "I" in the bank. It may be that we are all drugged on this planet, that its fumes are uncongenial to man, and breathing them in we dream. But there are times, in grief, etc., when we have moments of self-realization.

Many ideas have been discussed in these groups. Either dismiss them entirely, or get them down. Chew on them. Don't leave them, like a cow, in your first stomach, but like a cow bring them up again and again, and ruminate over them. Get them into the second stomach. This ability to bring ideas up and chew on them, comparing and contrasting them with others, etc., is a preventive against brain rot.

This meeting is the last day of a certain year, which so far as O is concerned has lasted seven years. So far as he can see it is the last meeting he will ever address in New York on this subject, and it is probable that no such meetings will be held again. He can regard this as the last night of an old year, and the eve of the new.

There is an ancient custom, still preserved among serious people, of marking such a night with something in the nature of a vow to one's self -- and fulfillment of it is the condition of self-respect. A self-respect which is independent of any injury done to what is called self-pride, which fears nothing from the insults of others, and expects no praise, but is more severe than any taskmaster. A vow to be fulfilled on peril of having to condemn one's self henceforth to futility, and to swallowing what others may say of one with the conviction that they are justified, having failed one's self. The nature of the vow is not very important; but it should have certain characteristics:

- (1) it should be possible;
- (2) It should lie in the sphere of secret desirability for you;

- (3) it should be instrumental; that is, on the way towards that figure of yourself that you know you should be ten years hence. This is a resolution to perform divine service, which consists in only one thing: in becoming divine. It is simultaneously a service to one's self and to that divine that is in each of us.

The attempt to fulfill such a vow is the condition of happiness. In the failure to have any such vow, or to attempt to fulfill it, one is condemned to accident, chance, etc. - drifting.

Let us seize this occasion of our last meeting and turn it to account.

Recall the ideas in your mind, and make use of the practice. You will find that there will be a progress in your realization of the meaning of much that has been said, the full meaning of which didn't strike you when it was heard. It has often been said that not for seven years will one fully realize what is contained in the buds of these ideas. But this increase in meaning will accompany a constant striving to be more conscious, more individual, and to have more will (guts).

Meaning more, being more, doing more.