

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

Example or Analogy versus Case History. I think it would be interesting to push the analogy from architecture used in the paper on chance in this issue a little further into art. By so doing I may be accused of going off onto a tangent. The biologist might admit at the outset that Blum's example was an unfortunate one, and therefore I am beating up on a straw man. Others may say that the analogy has the weakness of any analogy: you can push an analogy too far. I think it can be answered that if natural evolutionary theory is consistent it must continue in operation through all time and therefore the process of evolution must be going on now, and so has applications even to these "examples" or "analogies" themselves.

In the process consciousness and intellectual capacity have emerged to the extent that they can reflect upon their own origin. This is something that the stone, the piece of wooden slab, the amoeba could not do, and this represents an advance in the evolutionary process. Does evolution stop here with the development of consciousness, of intellectual capacity?

If not, then the history of the growth of architecture, of art, of science, of the individual idea, is as much a part of the study of evolution as is the study of biological structures. If this be so then it is an error to refer to the history of architecture, or of art, or of science, or of the individual idea, as "examples" or as "analogies." They become in fact case histories. And they are as important to the study of evolution as are the studies of Darwin or Mendel.

According to this idea we are living in a period in human evolution when the objects of evolution can reflect upon their own evolutionary activity. I wish therefore to pursue briefly the case history of the development from architecture into art.

In a wonderful chapter entitled "Germinal Forms and the Possibilities" in his book *Painting and Reality* Gilson sets out the great multitude of possibilities that are open to the artist who begins his painting. The following idea is emphasized from many directions.

Unless he is a mere copyist of himself or of others, in which case no problem of creation arises, a painter cannot distinctly know what he is doing until his work has been completed. (p. 150.)

And again he says,

Any single germinal form is pregnant with many different possibilities, but the greatest of painters will never be able to actualize more than one of them at a time.

And yet he says,

. . . where there is no mind, there is no art. (p. 151.)

Assuming with the evolutionist that the mind is still undergoing evolution, are we supposed to deny to that mind either causality relations or teleological grounds? This would seem to imply that paintings have no cause and painters no purpose. The same would seem to be the case in other fields such as for example quantum mechanists and evolutionists in the pursuit of their studies.

Perhaps I hear one of them state that such considerations are beyond science. But there is one failing in this argument I have never heard a naturalist explain. If everything is natural, and everything natural depends upon the laws of probability in principle, how can there be anything whatsoever that is beyond science? How can anything be anything else than a case history?

Foundations of Truth. In S.D. 5709 Swedenborg says, "I spoke about the foundations of truth, that there are two, one from the Word, the other from nature or the truths of nature. . . ."

This is a challenging statement and the fulfillment of its meaning is never accomplished throughout a long lifetime applied to its consideration. Every principle of philosophy must be subject to a consideration of it in the light of the possible meaning of these words. What in particular is meant by the Word as a foundation of truth is given in the next number, S.D. 5710. Something of what can be meant by science as a foundation can also be learned from that number.

Since Sciences have shut up the understanding. Also in S.D. 5709 Swedenborg says "Since sciences have shut up the understanding, therefore, sciences may also open it. . . ." This much has often been quoted to support the study of science. So far so good. Yet this is not all there is to this sentence. The sentence

is finished with the words “. . . and is opened so far as men are in good”; and the meaning of sciences, if we accept the Spiritual Diary as a part of the Word, applies as much to those sciences dealing with the Word as to the natural sciences.

Because falsities have shut up the intellectual. Also in S.D. 5709 Swedenborg uses the phrase which is the title of this note. And if we have only the previous note then we might be tempted to concoct the sentence, “Because falsities have shut up the intellectual, therefore, falsities may also open it.” But further thought will not permit such a statement to be possible.

The complete sentence in the Spiritual Diary is:

Since sciences have shut up the understanding, therefore, sciences may also open it; and it is opened so far as men are in good. And it was also proved that all things of heaven constantly have their foundation in the laws of the order of nature, in the world and in man, so that the foundation remains permanently fixed; just as are the body and the things which are of the body and its sensation, compared with the interior things which are of the will and understanding; but, still, because falsities have shut up the Intellectual and all ideas of thought are based upon natural things, therefore, also, such things must be as a foundation to the former, with those whose ideas are false (*The Spiritual Diary*, 5709).

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