

scope of this man's genius, as well as to demonstrate his deep interest in and contribution to the study of the brain. Some of the quotations we have presented here could not have been appreciated as little as fifty years ago. It is therefore possible to wonder whether the coming decades may not equip us to find other ideas in Swedenborg's writings which will also take on air of premature brilliance, where they now appear strange and unimportant.

Emanuel Swedenborg, whose intellectual breadth and productiveness have earned for him a high rank in many fields, clearly deserves a more prominent position in the history of neurological science than he has up till now been accorded.

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### PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

*Introductory.* This is the fourth installment of these notes devoted to symbols. It has been my intent to give numerous examples of the meaning of this term beyond the ordinary verbal or graphic meanings. It has been my effort to indicate the irreducible nature of the various ways of describing different aspects of creation. In particular it appears that such an interpretation is consistent with a pluralistic interpretation but does not appear to have application to a monistic interpretation.

This pluralistic interpretation of symbols has application not only in philosophy but also in science and education. Specifically it asserts the irreducible character of the disciplines philosophy, science, history, mathematics, and logic.

The irreducible character of man's thought as a function of time was indicated in a previous set of notes by the special kind of verbal forms that have been important at various times in history: the aphorism at the time of Heraclitus; the dialogue at the time of the sophists and Socrates; the poetical form of the epic in Dante's time. Also the irreducible character of significatives and representative was pointed out. And this was related to the irreducible character of the pre-Noachic man and those who follow.

Other examples occur to me that might be developed, for example, in the history of science and of art. As I indicated, the possibilities as outlined did not occur to me at first. Only these two things occurred to me: first, there was something quite wrong or essentially incomplete with the idea that the modern mind is

contemptuous of ancient verbal forms, in particular of the metaphor; second, it seemed incomplete, if not indeed wrong, to identify the modern mind with positivism.

With respect to the first I have hoped to show that the symbols that can be used to represent aspects of creation are much more various than those available in verbal forms only. I do not have the intention of disparaging the verbal forms, but only to put them in their proper place. By this means I hope to extend the meaning of the term "vision" to include insights that are beyond expression by words.

With respect to the second, it may turn out that positivism is more a symptom or a result than a fundamental cause. Although many minds may indeed begin and end their sojourn in philosophical thinking in positivism, I believe that the more fundamental characteristic of present thinking is its monistic nature. Positivism is only one of the possible results of monism.

*Program for This Set of Notes.* I had promised to go on in this issue with further examples of the nature of radical symbols using mathematics—specifically of differential equations. But as it developed, so much dependence upon mathematics was necessary in the January set of notes that I have decided to postpone this effort. I am aware that, however important the mathematical examples may be, the average reader might lose patience with the exposition and hence also lose contact with the main thread of these notes on symbols.

I therefore return to verbal representations. I select some examples from the Writings which seem to illustrate the irreducible or radical nature of symbols. In particular I begin with "image" and "likeness," two words that appear early in *Genesis*. These words there seem to stand as symbols for a reality or substratum far removed from the symbols themselves.

The distinction between "image" and "likeness" is discussed in the Writings. I interpret this as showing their irreducible character. This leads to two other distinct, and hence irreducible things, namely "understanding" and "will." In order to examine their distinctness I am led to ask, What is meant in the Writings when it says both "to know and not to know"?

In the process of this development we are introduced to the conflict in man's thought which arises between the conclusions of

reason and those depending on what the Writings call "common perception." I introduce two examples from contemporary philosophy.

*"Image" and "Likeness."* Image and likeness are terms which are related to symbol. Primitive languages were more pictorial than modern ones. In this way their literal meaning seems to be closer in some way to the object represented. But as ideas develop, the very literalness of language seems itself to be an obstacle to thought. And so when language has developed to the point where we have a word "image" rather than a presentation of an image, and also we have a word "likeness" rather than a presentation of a likeness, we are quite removed from the original primitive nature of the language of our ancestors.

Webster, for example, in discussing these words uses many other words. And before one can finish a complete discussion of "likeness" and "image" one has involved himself in a variety of dissertations about words. Nevertheless in the dictionary discussion there seems little if any crossing over between "image" and "likeness."

Are they irreducible with respect to each other?

*Image and Likeness Distinct?* The usage of these terms with distinct application is given by Swedenborg in the Writings. He is referring to *Genesis* where man was created "in the image of God, after His likeness," when he says,

By "image of God" is here meant the Divine Wisdom, and by "likeness" of God the Divine Love; since wisdom is nothing but an image of love, for in wisdom love presents itself to be seen and recognized, and because it is seen and recognized in wisdom, wisdom is an image of it. (DLW 358)

See also numerous other references to "image" and "likeness" in Potts' *The Swedenborg Concordance*.

*Understanding and Will as Receptacles.* The passage that mentions "image" and "likeness" also says:

Now because the Lord is Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, and these two essentially are Himself, it is necessary, in order that He may abide in man and give life to man, that He should create and form in man receptacles and abodes for Himself; the one for love and the other for wisdom. These receptacles and abodes in man are called will and understanding; the receptacle and abode of love is called the will, and the receptacle and abode of wisdom is called the understanding. (DLW 360)

*Understanding and Will Distinct?* We read further :

That every man has these two, will and understanding, and that they are distinct from each other, as love and wisdom are distinct, is known and is not known in the world. (DLW 361)

There are here two things directly related to our notes, namely :

1. Understanding and will are distinct.
2. The distinction is both known and not known.

If they are distinct then they are irreducible. Will can in no way become understanding nor understanding become will. Yet it is necessary that, in order for man to be man, he must have both. If the distinction is granted it seems fairly straightforward then to arrive at the conclusion that they are irreducible. But to understand what it is both to know and not to know does not seem to be so easy.

*What is it to Know and Not to Know?* In *Divine Love and Wisdom* it explains at length what this can mean.

It is known from common perception, but it is not known from thought and still less from thought when written out; for who does not know from common perception that the will and understanding are two distinct things in man? For every one perceives this when he hears it stated, and may himself say to another, This man means well, but does not understand clearly; while that one's understanding is good, but his will is not; I like the man whose understanding and will are both good; but I do not like him whose understanding is good and his will bad. Yet when he thinks about the will and understanding he does not make them two and distinguish them, but confounds them, since his thought then acts in common with the bodily sight. When writing he apprehends still less that will and understanding are two distinct things, because his thought then acts in common with the sensual, that is, with what is the man's own. From this it is that some can think and speak well, but cannot write well. (DLW 361)

It says further, "It is the same with many other things," and gives illustrations, and adds,

But if one lapses from common perception, and submits these things to thought, he does not know what conscience is; or that the soul can see, hear, and speak like a man: or that the good of life is anything except giving to the poor. And if from thought you write about these things, you confirm them by appearances and fallacies, and by words of sound but of no substance. For this reason many of the learned who have thought much, and especially who have written much, have weakened and obscured, yea, have destroyed their common perception; while the simple see more clearly what is good and true than those who think themselves their superiors in wisdom. (DLW 361)

I wonder if the weakening and obscuring of the distinction between the understanding and will has not brought about a kind of reduction that has destroyed rational psychology itself?

I question if it is possible to have a dialogue concerning rational psychology as it is now being treated by Erik Sandstrom in the current series in *NEW PHILOSOPHY* and the modern mind? The accepted reality of soul and the higher operations of the mind as discussed in *Rational Psychology* would have no meaning to the modern mind.

An example of how such a condition can come to exist is given by Hume, who wrote in Swedenborg's life time. He is discussing what he understands by "myself":

I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist.

I wish to continue this quotation but I want here to remind the reader that by doing so I wish to illustrate how by the very nature of a philosophical position dialogue may become impossible. Hume continues,

And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one upon serious and unprejudic'd reflexion, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section VI on "The Doctrine of Substance")

The monistic interpretation of man's mind and its operations through psychology during the nineteenth century has caused rational psychology to disappear as a discipline. Along with this disappearance has also gone consideration of "the soul" and all higher functions of the mind.

If this be the case, we see that the modern mind's impatience with metaphor is only a fragment of the total situation, and there must be something more fundamental than this impatience.

As a further example of what I mean above by the impossibility of dialogue I give the following: The *Rational Psychology*, although it is one of the philosophical works, contains many ideas which are extended and have fuller and more important meanings in the Writings. Consider the following example from the Writings:

By the mind nothing else is meant than the will and the understanding, which in their complex are all things that affect man and all he thinks, thus all things of man's affection and thought. DLW 372

If we grant the substance of this quotation, what possibilities resulting from it are there in the development of a theory of psychology? And yet in what branch of psychology, or for that matter in what branch of any present-day discipline whatsoever, can one find a basis for dialogue that begins by granting an understanding and a will, and that these affect man in the manner described in the Writings?

*To Know and Not to Know. An Example.* We have already had in the notes what seems to me to be an example of the contrast drawn between what arises in the common perception and what arises when reason has been applied to the same things. In the January issue of the NEW PHILOSOPHY there was a note "Logic a Radical Symbol."

B. Russell is reported there as giving a critical review of his own book *Principles of Mathematics*. It is evident from this critique that the work needs complete rewriting based on fundamental changes rather than merely secondary ones. And after this critique Russell says,

Broadly speaking, I think this book is in the right where it agrees with what had been previously held, but where it agrees with older theories it is apt to be wrong. (Preface to Second Edition of *The Principles of Mathematics*, p. xiv)

What is left? It seems that what is left is a *belief* in "what had been previously held." Whether or not *we* believe in "what had been previously held" is not the issue here. The issue here is that Russell has a belief which is not fully supported by his logical exposition. Russell's applications of his reason to the reduction problems of mathematics have now become recognized as faulty in fundamental ways. Nevertheless, Russell still *believes* in the possibility of "what was originally held." Is this not an appeal to something other than reason, since it seems that reason itself has failed him? Is it too far-fetched to assume that even B. Russell admits something in himself that *we* might be tempted to call "common perception"?

*To Know and Not to Know. Another Example.* Because B. Russell is not only a competent scholar, a logician of the first

rank, and also an excellent expositor, and because he has written many books, he is vulnerable as an object lesson in what it is to know and not to know.

He says in his opening paragraph on Hume in *A History of Western Philosophy*,

David Hume (1711-76) is one of the most important among philosophers, because he developed to its logical conclusion the empirical philosophy of Locke and Berkeley, and by making it self-consistent made it incredible. He represents, in a certain sense, a dead end: in his direction, it is impossible to go further. To refute him has been, ever since he wrote, a favourite pastime among metaphysicians. For my part, I find none of their refutations convincing; nevertheless, I cannot but hope that something less skeptical than Hume's system may be discoverable. (p. 659)

Before commenting on this, let us review what some of Hume's conclusions are. I refer to a summary of these given in Thilly-Wood's *History of Philosophy*:

David Hume accepts the empirical theory of the origin of knowledge and the Berkeleyan view that *esse = percipi*, and draws what seem to him the logical conclusions. If all we can know are our own impressions, we have no right to assert the reality either of material or of spiritual substances. We find no impressions that justify the assumption of *any kind* of substance. And we discover nothing in our experience that justifies our notion of necessary connection or causation; cause and effect can mean nothing more than a regular succession of ideas. Metaphysics, theology, and natural science cannot yield universal and necessary knowledge; the sciences of God, the universe, and the soul are impossible, as rational sciences. We can know only what we experience, and we can reach only probability in this field. Hume agrees with Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke in requiring that genuine knowledge must be self-evident; but he finds no such knowledge anywhere except in mathematics, which merely analyzes its own concepts. (p. 368)

Now let us return to the quotation from B. Russell. These conclusions of Hume are evidently, according to the testimony of Russell, incontestible on logical grounds—as a result of both his own study and that of others. He states that none of the refutations of Hume are convincing. Nevertheless, somehow he is concerned over the extreme skepticism in the conclusions, and so he says, “. . . I cannot but hope that something less skeptical than Hume's system may be discoverable.”

Here it appears that Russell is reduced to a hope. Again it seems that reason has failed to support what arises outside reason, namely a “hope that something less skeptical than Hume's system may be discoverable.”

Again, would it be too far-fetched to ask whether the origin of this "hope" lies in something other than reason alone—perhaps in what we call "common perception"?

Other modern scholars might be called to add other examples. But it is difficult to find clearer examples than those one finds in these appraisals of Russell which have led him in one important instance to fall back on belief, and in another on hope.

*What is The Divine Love and Wisdom?* The notes just above have made use of Swedenborg's work *Angelic Wisdom Concerning Divine Love and Wisdom*. This book may be regarded as a text on the subject of discrete degrees. These notes could at this point well become devoted entirely to discrete degrees as the fundamental subject arising out of our consideration of symbols. For

1. Discrete degrees are true examples of irreducible elements in creation.
2. The study of discrete degrees can lead to an extension of knowledge.
3. The understanding of the nature of discrete degree is dependent upon man's historical development. For example, discrete degree within nature could be illustrated for the first time in that period when Swedenborg lived because of the development of the microscope. This is illustrated in hundreds of pages of his anatomical works.
4. Discrete degrees have numerous applications in the Writings.

The above four properties of discrete degrees appear to be consistent with those properties previously ascribed to the radical symbol. See *The Radical Symbol*, Jan. 1966 issue. In that note the properties were listed as follows:

1. The radical symbol cannot be reduced.
2. The radical symbol extends knowledge.
3. The radical symbol has a special timely historical significance.
4. The radical symbol has a great variety of applications.

*Irreducibility Distasteful?* I have associated the use of the term "distinct" with "irreducible." The dualism for which Descartes is condemned is repeated in DLW.

There are two distinct things: I can think without speaking, and I can will without acting; and the body, it is known, neither thinks nor wills, but thought falls into speech, and will descends into action. (DLW 374)

But to relate the mind and the body it is necessary to accept in philosophy a new principle. This is correspondence. We read, From this who might not conclude that there is correspondence; and further, a correspondence of all things of the mind with all things of the body; and since all things of the mind have relation to affection and thought, or what is the same, to the will and understanding, and all things of the body to the heart and lungs, that there is a correspondence of the will with the heart and of the understanding with the lungs? (DLW 374)

When Dr. Odhner says, "The pragmatic modern mind . . . is easily made contemptuous of metaphor" (see *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, Jan., 1966), I say the modern mind's impatience with metaphor is only a fragment of the total situation, and there must be something more fundamental than this impatience. But even since writing these words in a previous note I have come upon the following (going on from the last quotation above):

Such things have remained unknown, though they might have been known, because man has become so external as to be unwilling to acknowledge anything except the natural. This has become the joy of his love, and from that the joy of his understanding; consequently it has become distasteful to him to raise his thought above the natural to anything spiritual separate from the natural. . . . (*ibid.*)

There is no room for *contemptuous*, for *impatient*, or for *distasteful* reactions in any scholarly pursuit whatsoever that pretends to seek truth within the disciplines themselves, or in their relation to each other, or in the many divisions of philosophy, whether metaphysical, cosmological, or epistemological—nor especially in the conduct of our researches into education of the mind.

Creation is a vast marvel, and it in turn is made up of many particular marvels. Its study must always leave open the possibility of pluralities on every hand, and of irreducible aspects. We must seek constantly for the relations between these distinctions through correspondence.

*What Is Man?* The answer to this question has importance to every philosophy. In the above notes we have had two answers. It is useful to compare them in juxtaposition:

As noted above, Hume can no longer reason with him who would have a notion of what is *myself* that differs from Hume's notion. And so he says,

But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable

rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, IV, vi.)

For Swedenborg it is man's mind that characterizes man :

By the mind nothing else is meant than the will and understanding, which in their complex are all things that affect man and all that he thinks, thus all things of man's affection and thought. The things that affect man are of his will, and the things that he thinks are of his understanding. (DLW 372)

What is it that man is? Is he a bundle of perceptions only? Or is he a mind composed of will and understanding, these being the receptacles of God with him?

The answer to this question affects our approach to psychology, to all branches of philosophy—even to cosmology; it affects our answers to social questions, to education—to all things of life in which we act consciously.

We live today in a climate of opinion in which the view is held that the past is truly the past and its great thoughts might have been worth something at one time—but now? not now! At most they have only an *historical interest*, whatever that may mean in this climate. According to this view, the reason for the study of rational psychology is associated with the past, and died when experimental psychology came in.

John Dewey has used his own knowledge of the past to help arrest the interest of his followers in the past. He is interested in reconstruction. It may be a *reconstruction in philosophy* (see his book by that title) or it may be a reconstruction of *philosophy* (see the introduction to that book). Nevertheless, whether reconstruction sheds the past or builds on the past, whether it is a construction of a new philosophy, after the ruins of the old have been cleared away, or construction within philosophy, Dewey makes what he would no doubt regard as a timely definition of man :

Man differs from the lower animals because he preserves his past experiences. (First sentence in Chapt. I of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*.)

What is man?

- a.) a bundle of perceptions?
- b.) a will and understanding?
- c.) a memory?

It might be interesting to pursue the extension of this list of questions.

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