

Two Kinds of Thought

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This morning, while still lying in bed, I found myself in a current of thought that was thinking itself. This is a familiar experience, but it occurred to me that I had never discussed it and that it is of importance. There is the thinking that just happens. It calls for no effort at all. And in contrast, there is the kind of thinking that may call for very difficult effort and can be highly fatiguing. This has been recognized in the literature, and the best discussion of the subject, of which I have knowledge, is that in Dr. Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, the first chapter entitled "Concerning Two Kinds of Thinking." In the writing of *Pathways* and of *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object* both kinds of thought are present. The major portion consists of a thinking that is easy, that takes place of itself, but there are some parts that are the difficult kind of thought that takes real effort. In going back in my memory, I have been aware of these two types for quite a long time, though not as well developed as after the Realizations. I found that the most effective thinking was the kind that moved of itself, that it was the most effective in the academic period, that it was more like a play than like labor. In the academic field it was easier to get As among one's grades with the play-like kind of thinking, and that the laborious kind got results with much less effectiveness.

Now, here is a fact of experience that may explain two very different attitudes toward the thought process—namely that represented in Descartes' statement, "I think, therefore I am," and in contrast, the statement of Sri Aurobindo to the effect that thought just happens and that one merely, from the level of the witnesses, selects and rejects, but it is not true that *I* think. Now, if we assume that Descartes was referring to the directed thinking that is laborious, it is very easy to see how it seems as though *I* created thought, because there is substantial effort. It may become quite difficult. It may take a great deal of consciously willed effort, and it doesn't at all seem as though thought happens, but as though *I* produce it. On the other hand, the thought that thinks itself quite easily appears to be a thought that just happens. It streams along in the mind happily—not always following a logical pattern, but not necessarily illogical—and one may, indeed, take from this, selectively, values, and rejecting other values or statements; but, it happens, and from this one would naturally say thought happens of itself.

Jung refers to these two types in the book mentioned. His description of the directed thought is clear and unexceptionable; but, the undirected thought, the kind that just happens, appears to be viewed more like a streaming of a fantasy, a story, as it were, rather than a philosophical exegesis. Now, in my own experience the most abstruse, technical kind of thinking may be of the kind that flows of itself as well as the directed thought—as the undirected thought. Now, there is in this chapter of Jung's a quotation from Anatole France, which I'll read because it brings up a point.

What is thought, and how do we think? We think with words; that alone is sensual and brings us back to nature. Think of it! The metaphysician has

only the perfected cry of monkeys and dogs with which to construct the system of the world. That which he calls profound speculation and transcendent method is to put end to end in an arbitrary order the natural sounds which cry out hunger, fear, and love in the primitive forests, and to which were attached little by little the meanings which one believed to be abstract, when they were only crude.

Do not fear that the succession of small cries, feeble and stifled, which compose a book of philosophy, will teach us so much regarding the universe, that we can live in it no longer.¹

On the whole, Jung goes along with the position formulated here. There is the assumption underlying, that man has simply developed out of some lower order, somewhat animal-like, or completely animal, and evolved a language out of the cries of primitive creatures which in his later days of high sophistication he formed into a philosophical speculation. All through the discussion, speech or language is viewed simply as a directed communication to other members of the herd, as it were. And the implication is that these higher values that are attached to these sounds, which are scientific, and metaphysical, and mathematical in their import, are only evolved out of these far too animalistic roots. And the further implication is there that the higher meanings are not valid.

I was thinking along this line when it occurred to me that there is the story of the descent of the *Manasaputra* that's given in *The Secret Doctrine*. It is there said that when mindless being, which was the progenitor of man, had evolved up through what was there called the Third Root-Race, he was an ape-like creature, but essentially mindless—not guilty of sin because he had no responsibility. But at a certain time there were certain transcendent beings—which has been called a group of *Dhyan-Chohans*, who are generally defined as ex-men moving on a higher level of evolution—who because of some *karmic* sin of such a subtle nature that it would not be understandable to our ordinary intelligence, were forced to descend again, not to the bottom of the scale, but as far down as these mindless ape-like entities, and that they were required by *karmic* decree to enter into these ape-like entities supplying them with the principle of mind. The point is made that it isn't a case of two monads in one body, but that the monads are rather like rays from the root of all, and that if two rays of the sun come through one aperture, they produce but one ray, so that the entity that is produced is not separable into two, and yet there is a certain two-ness behind the unity.²

Accepting this hypothesis, if you please, there are certain consequences that follow that are very interesting, and, if valid, would negate in considerable degree the simple evolutionary hypothesis that is assumed by Jung in his discourse, namely, a movement from below up exclusively. The man of today—that is the civilized, advanced portion of humanity, the portion that has been a culture producing portion of humanity—has in his total makeup something of the fallen *Dhyan-Chohan* or *Manasaputra*, and is

¹ Carl G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 14.

² H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Press, 1893), 176-178.

not simply the upward growing ape-like creatures of the posited Third Root-Race. In other words, there is something in man that is from above as well as something that is growing up from below. The intelligence of the *Manasaputra* in man would thus not be something like the gropings for survival in an environment that is the biological process, but something above the merely biological. The *Manasaputric* element is a descent from on high. It brings with it, already, a transcendental meaning. And while the expression of that meaning may well require working with the emerging language out of the animal sounds, the meaning is not derived from the initial usage of those animal sounds, like the expression of terror, anger, hunger, and so forth. Evolving out of these elements words, and perfecting the words and the meanings of those words, would be developing only an instrument for the expression of a meaning not derived from the original usage of those sounds, but rather an agency within the total consciousness that was guiding a usage for the expression of a knowledge which is already possessed.

This gives a vaster, greater dignity to the meaning of the word ‘man’ than that which the evolutionist scientist gives, viewing him as only an entity evolving out of the slime. Jung seems to accept this view of science. I do not. I do not for the simple reason—not because what I have spoken of is written in *The Secret Doctrine*, but I have seen processes in my own consciousness that fit what is written in *The Secret Doctrine*. I have known a thought beyond words, beyond images and signs—something which you might call naked thought, a thought that is in terms of meaning unclothed by any word, sign, or symbol—and that this preexisted the word, sign, or symbol which might be used in its formulation. I’ve known also that there was no need for one’s own individual satisfaction to give form to this formless thought of pure meaning; but, that if it was to be in any way communicated, it had to be given form as by word, sign, or symbol. That fits the conception of a cognitive power descending from above; however much there might be a groping from below toward knowledge in the total nature of what we call a human being.

This thought, this formless thought, is extremely mature. It would seem like abstraction carried to the highest degree, and thus completely other than that highly concrete *imago* process to which Dr. Jung refers so much—the image-filled process of dream or of spontaneous fantasy-produced story which deals in distinctly concrete and sensuous, even sensual, form. This other of which I speak is more like a state reached after a long time dealing with mathematics. One deals with greater and greater order of abstraction until he has in his mind entities every one of which is infinite in its extension and barely graspable. Now, let the manipulating images drop out of the mind, and there remains a subtle field rich in meaning and value, but is totally beyond communication or formation. This is a level of thought far beyond all sensuous imagery, far beyond all signs however sophisticated, and this thought has terminal value in the sense that there is no need whatever for it to lead on to something else. It is therefore like a goal, the end for him who has been searching. It’s far above and beyond all that we designate and mean by the term biological. It has no relation whatever to the cries of the hunt, the cries of terror, the cry of danger, and the craving for herding together, for in this formless thought, which is the ultimate unclothed meaning of the most abstract thought of man, lies ultimate value itself. But, it may guide the process of formation in idea, and will find itself closest to that which belongs to the peak of human culture, and with difficulty reaches down to the depths where most men dwell.

What is here suggested is that there's a dual ancestry of what we mean when we say "man." The ancestry from below represented by the so-called ape-like creatures of the Third Root Race and the descending *Manasaputra* above. There are two possible definitions of 'man' from the dictionary. In the etymology of the word it is suggested that there may be a derivation from the Sanskrit 'm a n', meaning think. It's the root of the word *manas*. But the ordinary definition of man as given in a dictionary follows this line. He is said to be a plantigrade, featherless, biped mammal of the genus homo. In one case the word 'man' means the thinker; in the other case the word 'man' means a mere animal—the highest point of the biological process. In the first sense, any creature that could really think, whatever the shape of his body was, could be properly called man—and the shape of his body would be only incidental, a matter of trivial importance. For my part I view man as the thinker and not merely as a biological end-term having a certain shape. I would say man is the thinker who rides a vehicle which is an animal, but his identity is not with that animal; that animal is something very much less than what he is; that the true ancestry of man is not an ape-like creature, but a *Dhyan-Chohan* who has descended from above, and therefore the ultimate home of man is not the slime, but the transcendent.

Okay.