

Psychotherapy

Esoteric Foundations

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1974

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*In remembrance of thy Star
and Love's everlastingness*

PART I

PSYCHE

1. *The problem with the concept of the unconscious*

[1] After more than a century of philosophical and psychological attention regarding the unconscious, it is now taken for granted that any reference to inner activities which border upon those of waking consciousness, and are therefore not identifiable with them, justifies the supposition of an **unconscious**, or of a subconscious. But in what “zone” of the soul this is to be found, how it arises and manifests, what it actually is in relation to the conscious intellect, and what value it might have for human self-knowledge—all this has not yet been made clear.

[2] When we have an impulse of will, we know what its specific nature is, but not where it springs from; and if we want to carry out an action, we have the representation, the mental picture of it, and simultaneously carry it out, but we do not know by what secret channels the representation is translated into movement. In the same way we can have a feeling, and know whether it is one of joy or sorrow, anxiety or hope, but not precisely what it is beyond its perceived quality; that is, beyond the fact of its being perceived as joy or sorrow, etc. In each of these cases we can speak of an *extra-conscious* which stands at the limit of the

perceptible and of what is able to be represented. Even in the case of thinking, in the conscious activity of consciousness itself, we can sense that prior to its enactment as perceptible thought it is indeed truly thinking, but of an intuitive order that is not and cannot be mediated by anything else: a pure immediacy.

[3] It is worth making the following observation: consciousness itself can discover that it is inwardly articulated in a way that implies the existence of various levels within its own overall power, and the possibility that these coexist, even in fact that they are linked and cooperate with one another. Only through an **unequivocal** reference to itself, however, does consciousness become the point in which all these levels converge and are taken up by it. This is the level of self-awareness, or the foundational experience of self, the very basis of investigation and enquiry into one's own being.

[4] We can speak of a *conscious principle*, which every form of enquiry presupposes, including that which concerns consciousness investigating itself. Such a principle is the condition by means of which we are able to infer or observe other levels of consciousness. This is a point inexplicably overlooked by modern psychology: it concerns *the reality of the subject* in all psychological research, which should serve as the index for its orientation and as the gauge of its content.

[5] The conscious principle which can formulate in the first place the problem of consciousness, and hence of the unconscious, ought to be the dominant theme of any research into what is or is not valid as far as consciousness is concerned, and any theories about the forms it can take. To be able to knowingly contemplate such forms and make mental pictures distinguishing a higher more lucid consciousness from ordinary waking consciousness, and this from the condition of dreaminess or semi-consciousness, or this again from the state of deep sleep and unconsciousness, is in itself an act of consciousness: that is, a deed by which these various levels or stages are referred to, and brought into relationship with, a conscious principle, the subject and originator of the whole action.

[6] A weakening or intensification of the forces of consciousness is something that can be experienced, and we can infer from certain enduring features of the psyche the existence of a subconscious, but that such research should be possible in the first place remains

necessarily connected to the presence of a conscious being who perceives a diversity of relationships within consciousness and who at a certain moment is sufficiently self-aware to be able to speak objectively of his or her own perception of a subconscious or an unconscious. Even the dream-state or that of deep sleep cannot be contemplated except by a conscious being who is outside these states and who can conceive, in the state of wakefulness, of a state in which there is a reduction or absence of awareness as a form of its own being. Thus we ought to speak of consciousness as a unity, with its principle simultaneously gathered in that unique point from which it can survey other levels of consciousness, and at the same time actually being *within* one of those levels. Precisely through being *founded upon itself*, such a principle is able to recognise and have knowledge of itself in the diverse and varied contents of consciousness.

[7] We have to wonder at the direction psychological research is taking today, in the way it conceives an autonomous life of the “unconscious”, with all its laws and connections, existing in a sort of opposition to the principle of consciousness, which it encroaches upon and determines the movements of, almost as if the unconscious were itself the primary principle.



[8] The unconscious cannot exist except in relation to the conscious. Only a conscious being, able to move in concepts, can create the idea of an *unconscious* and represent its dynamics. But every inner dynamic, once it is represented and analysed, and penetrated by an ever more engaged level of thinking, becomes knowledge owing to the identity that consciousness establishes with it.

[9] A being that is not endowed with a consciousness that constitutes its foundation cannot conceive of something that is “other” to it. Remove consciousness and the idea of the unconscious ceases to exist. To the dreamer the dream appears as reality, but it begins to assume the form of an otherness which calls itself “dream” for the one who is awake, or outside the dream. There is no unconscious outside consciousness itself. But psychological research has developed, in this century, in strange ways: it has formulated things so that it no longer finds the primary **principle and origin** in the conscious, but only a secondary

element conditioned by the unconscious, as if the unconscious were its essential and determining content. But the essential aspect of the unconscious, if we observe, is always the central power of consciousness, actualising itself via the pure immediacy, the absolute immediacy, of thinking.

[10] A mystical or an erotic feeling, a surge of anger, desire, exaltation or depression, a state of apprehension or joy: these are real because there is a being who experiences them, who is, no matter how minimally, inside them and, even if overwhelmed by them, nevertheless knows that he is overwhelmed and gives himself up to them to such an extent that he cannot effectively disentangle himself—which is the neurotic condition, in which basically the conscious principle is still active, in fact has to be **more active** than usual, since it has become identified with something that it does not experience as its own original being, but as very much a strange, even alien, impulse. This excessive activity and force on the part of consciousness results in a psychic conflict with its inner principle: neurosis, even touching on psychosis, is in this way brought about for the person who, endowed with self-awareness, nevertheless suffers the consequences of alienation from it. He or she does not, however, even when alienated, cease to be the subject, the experient, except of course in the case of an extreme and fully blown psychotic episode.

[11] Having refused to take into account the presence of this **subject** or **experient**, having ceased to contemplate its existence at the very centre of each and every psychophysical happening, and habitually treating the subject as psychopathic, without regard for its being the **alienated subject** of its own experience—all this has not served modern psychotherapy well. It has accorded but scant significance to the very principle of any therapy: the real inner being of the individual, which is not to be identified with any form of psychophysical illness, and which precisely for this very reason tends from out of its own depths to take on illness as a stage or phase in its own self-affirmation or evolution—its **true being** or essence being always inherently free from sickness of any sort whatsoever. The “subject” has come to be seen as the subject that is ill, as if its reality were somehow in identification with sickness and illness and evil: a situation, from the therapeutic point of view, which is completely untenable and contradictory, as it denies, and therefore makes therapeutically impossible, the action of that principle which is in itself free from affliction.

[12] As to the non-pertinence¹ of the concept of the “unconscious”, it is sufficient to note that the strange or alien impulse may well be functioning not at all through being outside consciousness and hence “unconscious”, but by means of, or rather from *within* consciousness. An unconscious that was truly such would not be able to influence consciousness in any way at all, since it would be obliged to run its course quite separately, almost as if it were the power of that consciousness. In the course of the present study it will be shown how such absence of the unconscious is the ideal condition for equilibrium and that real spontaneity of psychic movement is in direct relation to this equilibrium. The most blessed and fertile **unconsciousness**, such as we see in the artist or in the contemplative thinker, in the child or in the primitive, is ultimately a force of consciousness, streaming from within it, real and potent because it is its very essence. And we shall see how every cult of the “unconscious”, developed by psychology or analytically, is actually destructive for the fundamental forces of consciousness.

[13] The whole idea of the unconscious needs to be liberated from the mistaken notion that it is a transcendent unknowable. We need to understand what the term “unconscious” should actually be applied to, given that the activity capable of registering its phenomena is its very opposite—that is, an inner activity which can only take place by *eliminating* that which is unconscious. But the **non-being** of the unconscious, since its place has been supplanted by consciousness, is in effect its **being** *for* consciousness. The phenomenology of the unconscious knows no limits once it falls within the scope of the conscious. It has always been possible to speak of an unconscious insofar as it no longer existed, no longer opposed itself to the conscious principle—which therefore could calmly contemplate it, objectifying an **abstraction** which it called “the unconscious,” but which was not in fact unconscious at all.

[14] Once again we are confronted with the problem of the relationship between the concept and its content. In effect the unconscious ends up being treated by modern psychology as a **universal**, but without the recognition that a universal is necessarily an idea or a concept. The stock-in-trade of modern psychologists is not the unconscious, but the *idea*

¹ A concept which Scaligero will return to repeatedly, clarifying and deepening it, throughout the course of the book, particularly in regard to the relation between feeling and willing, and the nervous system. [trans.]

of the unconscious, yet they maintain that the idea is abstract, the unconscious itself concrete. Such is their unconscious position!

[15] The problem is not by any means limited to the field of psychoanalysis, but belongs to the whole of contemporary science and culture: the unconscious use of the concept, the inability to notice the essential function of the concept in the process of attributing concreteness to anything whatsoever.



[16] Ordinarily, the “unconscious” is conceived on the basis of a range of outer and inner phenomena, assembled by a process of representation or mental picturing, on the basis of which the existence of some universal substantiality is deduced. This substantiality, the unconscious, if it is observed, is in reality an idea: not a perception, not a representation, but an idea, a concept. Nevertheless, in psychoanalytic literature just such a concept, unrecognised for what it is, is continually identified with its representations; and in this way representations are readily and habitually taken for perceptions.

[17] In reality, unless inner perception is rigorously schooled by means of specific disciplines, another person’s psychic phenomena cannot be a matter of direct experience: the only psychic material that the researcher can observe is his own, but this invariably presents itself to him already clothed in his own personal thought. Similar psychic processes that he intends to follow in others, cannot be direct experience but must be mediated by an ideal element, which he must first of all identify in the workings of his own consciousness, so that it becomes capable of mediating another’s experience *objectively*. This is the kind of capacity that we must become aware of, and possess by means of self-discipline, in order to carry out research into the psyche.

[18] A self-analysis without this ideal element cannot move beyond the empirical limit imposed by one’s personal subjectivity: it is incapable of mediating the experience of the contents of one’s own psyche, and is therefore even less capable of assuming as its own the soul-experience of another.



[19] The concept of the “unconscious” is valid to the extent that the act of consciousness recognises itself in it, so that the unconscious as an otherness no longer exists. An object can only really be known when it becomes entirely consciousness: an object like the unconscious, becoming entirely consciousness, would have to cease being a reified psychic otherness, the product of psychological realism. In fact, the unconscious is either a pure concept that one perceives, or else an obscure noumenal image by which a conditioned consciousness constructs its various theories, creating for itself a content whose arbitrariness can nevertheless be inductively justified by the logic of various external, or physical, phenomena of the psyche.

[20] We can only rightly speak of the unconscious if we affirm the act of consciousness that does so, thereby ensuring the presence of the conscious Principle in the experience, rather than its elimination. The possibility of experiencing the “unconscious,” as an aspect of integral self-awareness, is derived from and firmly based upon a higher experience of consciousness—that is, upon the science of the spirit².

[21] The “unconscious,” which emerges from thought and which *as thought* gives rise to the doctrines pertaining to it, which then inform and shape its various phenomena, cannot in reality transcend the limits of a representation which considers it as a radical otherness. It cannot transcend these limits because the inner dimension of the thinking that thinks it is missing: pure thinking, thinking as such, in and as itself—the one and only “in and as itself” that is accessible to thinking consciousness. Normally the act of consciousness, unfolding according to parameters laid down by the object, is not conscious of its own movement. In the midst of this lack of awareness thinking imagines that it can somehow go forth to meet the “extraconscious”—not the spurious one, expiring as soon as cognition touches it, but the real one, which can be experienced when the threshold of immediate, reflected thinking is crossed—that normal thinking which nevertheless codifies its own limited immediacy by means of formal logic.

² This refers specifically to *anthroposophy*, the spiritual science whose principles and methods were elucidated by Rudolf Steiner in the early twentieth century; more generally, it means any systematic approach to the supersensible which is founded upon similar principles and methods. The essence of these principles and methods is amply elaborated within this present book. [trans.]

[22] In fact, the threshold of immediate thinking not only limits our experience of the “extraconscious,” but any object which science investigates where the investigation does not go beyond realistic reflection of otherness and of measurability. One sees for example the concepts of “market”, “price”, “society”, “freedom”, and so on: ideas which have never really been penetrated by thought, because the concept is continually mistaken for the object, so that instead of a true perception and understanding of the object we have only its dialectification—a content of thinking completely severed from the internal movement by which that content was formed, and hence held apart from the moment of potential union and identity with the object.

2. *Beyond the threshold of consciousness*

[23] The term “extraconscious” applies to every activity of the psyche that lies beyond conscious thinking. For this kind of research, thinking has the task of grasping itself at that point where it is still indeterminate³. The “zone” of its indeterminacy is the birth-place of all that is determined, including that which enables thinking to genuinely *know itself* in its indeterminate phase, which in turn acts as a reference point for everything to do with the psyche that can be thoroughly penetrated and illuminated by thought.

[24] To encounter the extraconscious means that the investigator has to work in such a way that, in conscious forms, thinking’s own extraconscious movement becomes perceptible. It is not a question of reductionism from the **preconscious** to consciousness, nor of some kind of “representation” of the unconscious, but of actual perception of that which constitutes the very substance of representation or of thinking.

[25] Only a perception of the *essence* of the thinking process, which necessarily eludes its grasp if thinking is always turned towards its object, can enable a knowledge of the unconscious. Consciousness is inevitably in close relationship with the processes that constitute its essential structure, processes of representation and of concept-forming. The

³ I.e. where it does not yet have any particular form. [trans.]

“unconscious” can begin to be known only as the internal dimension of such activity. It is not possible to deduce it from the products themselves of such activity, in other words from the ordinary proceedings of thought which have as their object either their own dialectic or sense-perceptible phenomena.

[26] Investigation which takes as its object the soul, or consciousness, cannot fail to take account of the fact that it is itself a movement of the soul. That which does the seeking is itself the thing it seeks: we must look towards thinking as the foundational content of the whole research. Modern psychology, proposing an unconscious structured by thoughts unconscious of their own unconsciousness, erects a barrier to any real experience of the extraconscious: it aims to characterise it by way of a dialectic whose extraconscious basis it refuses to recognise.

[27] The Freudian distinction between tendencies and unconscious feelings has, like that between unconscious and preconscious, a formal value which in practice bears little relation to the things it designates, because in those very things thinking, feeling and willing are in continual dynamic combination. A tendency always contains an intimate element of thought, but this becomes conscious only when inner activity draws it forth from sentient depths, with which that inner activity has been able to unite. One might just as legitimately speak of the spirit acting by means of the unconscious, or of the unconscious making use of spiritual activity. In reality, the only psychological analysis which can give an account of this sort of thing is one which is founded on actual experience of the connections between representing, feeling and willing—in what happens within the psyche, in tendencies, inclinations and in states of mind. Such experience is not possible for the sort of representation which functions via dialectical psychologising or by a dialectical approach to tendencies and “complexes,” but rather for a representation which grasps its own **pre-dialectical moment**, or the activity with which it unfolds within feeling and within the will.



[28] If we want to encounter the extraconscious, thinking must grasp itself not in a hypothetical indeterminacy, but actually in that zone or realm of the indeterminate which is one of heightened lucidity and activity, an activity which is the origin of the process by

which concepts and ideas are produced: here consciousness can attain a reality of itself which normally eludes it, even though it continually makes use of it. The inner instrument which allows the investigator to conceive of the extraconscious is thinking. Whatever the experience of consciousness to which he may be able to gain access and manage to formulate—given that it is not possible unless it is **mediated**, by thought with thought, idea with idea, so as to be a veritable substance composed of thinking—it is absolutely necessary to posit the pre-dialectical experience of thinking as the basis of the whole research.

[29] The investigator will first of all have the extraconscious as a content of thinking: the next step is the **perception** of this content, by means of an inner activity so intensified that it can experience itself within the content. The researcher learns that it is not a case of rationally elaborating some extra-rational content, but of getting right inside the pure dynamic of rationality. Thinking is the instrument of consciousness and of self-awareness. Consciousness does indeed manifest with the support of the cerebral cortex, the encephalic trunk and the encounter of the sense organs with the sense-perceptible world, but it becomes cognisant of this mediation because of an act of thinking, quite independent of the mediation itself. In the moment in which consciousness of this act rises into awareness, the human being experiences the real relationship that he or she has with the world and with him or her self.

[30] It is legitimate for us to speak: (a) of a thinking-force existing prior to cerebral mediation; (b) of that thinking-force becoming conscious via cerebral mediation; (c) of the potential for that thinking-force to attain consciousness beyond cerebral mediation, through understanding and overcoming the mediated state. It is the case that modern thinking has become stuck in the second phase, which only makes sense in the context of the first and the third. Those who today protest against our technological civilisation unknowingly tend toward the third phase, but remain firmly entrenched in the second because they do not have at their disposal sufficient forces of consciousness to comprehend its dimensions: they fall into the misunderstanding of action turned against economic and technological structures whose existence is in itself value-neutral—these structures are illegitimate solely in relation to the position of thinking, which is subjected without knowing it to the mediation of the brain and therefore incapable of that identity with itself which is the one thing that can actually decide the right use of technology.

[31] Anyone who cares to observe the process of reasoning will notice that in effect thinking ordinarily becomes conscious of itself in the moment in which it takes on dialectical form, which is the moment of cerebral mediation. As antecedent to this moment, we can intuit the pure dynamic of thinking, which can be called **metadialectical**. This is stimulated to become conscious when thinking is capable of turning not to its own dialectics but towards itself; which is to say, not to the comprehension of its own being, but simply *towards its own being*—which does not need to be understood in order to be.

[32] What can be drawn from this observation in the first place is that thinking continually *becomes* conscious, meaning that previously it was not. We continually think thoughts that we are not already conscious of and whose content is not previously known to us. There is no *numen*, no deity which prepares the thoughts that humans think. The researcher in this direction can discover the point in which his or her free being wells up. This freedom, however, he or she can only attain through awareness of the original moment of thinking, or as an inner perception of the same.

[33] When conscious attention is turned back upon thinking, we notice that thinking springs from a zone which we must not be conscious of at first, so that we can draw forth from it the kind of attentiveness that is one with the original moment of thinking. What emerges here is a direction towards which research needs to be directed if we would encounter the threshold of consciousness and experience the significance of the world that is intuitable beyond it, in that it is not only the world of extraconscious thinking, but at the same time, under another aspect, the world through which instincts and emotions burst onto the scene and work in all kinds of subtle ways. The distinction between these two aspects is the necessary act of consciousness that leads to the capacity to separate, in this sphere, the psycho-noetic element from its instinctive counterpart.

3. *Thinking & the resurrection of the foundation*

[34] The extraconscious, in reality, is internal to thinking, one with thinking and therefore presupposed by the simple fact of thinking's existence; whereas it is typically presented as

being somehow out beyond thinking, and having its basis, its foundation, in itself. The real problem of the unconscious lies in the limit of thinking, which can think something that is internal to it without knowing that it is so, thereby being made to suffer the limit that it is unaware of.

[35] The contemporary researcher deals with the unconscious by drawing on his own extraconscious forces, but is not aware of drawing on them; and so the unconscious in its reality eludes him. He develops his research through mental pictures of the unconscious and related dialectical structures, assuming that the foundation of the research is in the unconscious itself, but fails to recognise that the foundation is in the origin of his own thinking-dynamic, and therefore utterly inseparable from his investigation.

[36] Basing itself upon an extraconscious of which it lacks awareness, psychological research brings the condition of modern thinking to psycho-systematic development. The exactitude of this kind of thinking normally consists in its potential for attaining complete conformity with its object. This is typified by what occurs in mathematical-physical thinking, which realises complete conformity by limiting itself to dealing with the measurable aspect of reality, so as to attain a knowledge endowed with absolute logical consistency within the sphere of its corresponding phenomena.

[37] Such a conformity ceases to exist in the case of the moral and theoretical sciences (sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc.), in that the object is a thought-content with which the researcher ought to achieve an inner identity, in a similar way as with physical facts. But he would have first of all to attain *awareness of the thinking* that conforms so completely with physical facts, so as to possess the *thinking activity* capable then of being in conformity with an *inner* fact. The ultimate sense of physical research is precisely this. The non-consciousness of identity and the lack of awareness of this non-consciousness characterise the proceedings of the psychological disciplines in regard to the extraconscious. In fact, what comes to be presented as the object of such research is not the object in question, but rather a thinking which places its own contents outside itself as if they existed externally in themselves, whereas they are only real when thinking understands that they exist within it.

[38] Modern psychology establishes the unconscious as the foundation of things with a thinking that does not realise that it bears the foundation within itself. Thus it gives rise to forms of enquiry and produces a system whose structure is the inverse, the opposite of the true foundation. What fails to be understood is that, according to this vision of things, it is the I itself that posits the unconscious as the fundamental force, which then, by means of impulses, resistances, repression, censorship, conflict, etc., supposedly conditions the I, and functions in essence as if it were itself the I, which places itself outside and as it were against itself.



[39] The experience of conscious awareness beyond the threshold cannot in itself be dialectical; whilst it is an experience within the vehicle of thinking, its effective dynamic is nevertheless metadialectical. The researcher cannot dispense with that essential instrument of his enquiry, the concept, or the idea, which has made possible all of the well-ordered constructions of scientific achievement. Nevertheless, his task is to experience not so much the concept as its connective power, its power of synthesis. He cannot enter into the structure of thinking except by experiencing the activity through which concepts are generated. In reality a researcher, in his observations and ponderings, never passes from one thing to another, or from psychic content to psychic content, but rather from one content of thinking to another content of thinking, from concept to concept, even when he is not aware of doing so. What stands before him then as an initial task, if he intends to become aware of the inner activity which joins one concept to another, is experience of the concept itself. This experience is meditation.

[40] To move amongst concepts without realising that one is doing so, and therefore to use the concept unconsciously, is the root of the ills of contemporary culture. It is the origin of that errant path taken by dialectical thinking and scientific progress which has led to the absolute domination of technology, which is unjustly arraigned by critics incapable of seeing in themselves, in their own mentality, the very origin of the problem. Technology is not in itself an evil; the problem is that something baleful has established itself as a defining condition of our consciousness.

[41] By means of meditation, or “concentration,” according to criteria whose basic necessity will be made clear, it is possible to experience within thinking a graduated series of metaphysical states of consciousness. Just as normal thinking, which is capable of conceptual activity, corresponds to the level of waking consciousness, so the thinking which joins one concept to another concept corresponds to a higher, more inward, level of consciousness: such a consciousness, however, although commonly made use of in the processes of knowledge, is hardly ever actually possessed as an independent faculty.

[42] Experience of the inner dimensions of consciousness requires the dynamic of a thinking capable of grasping its own inner dimensions. Thinking must certainly be able to grasp itself in its rational form, but above all in the very essence of rationality, or in its pure movement, independent of the limit proper to the rational form. It is important to bear in mind that the realisation of such a dynamic, which is effectively an elevation of the subject above ordinary waking consciousness, signals on the other hand a gradual entry whilst awake into the state of deep sleep: one attains in full consciousness the detachment which is normally brought about by the sleeping condition, or by the descent of consciousness below its normal level.

[43] This detachment, which normally comes about when the conditions of drowsiness and sleep occur, can be deliberately caused by an action of consciousness upon itself: not as a descent but rather as an *ascent*, owing to the intensification of the forces which it makes use of in the normal waking state. Such intensification is in essence an action of the I, by means of the forces with which it takes hold of the bodily nature for the purpose of bringing itself to conscious expression. These are forces of the will, which enkindle the waking state and are therefore active as a function of the I: they operate by means of the cranial nerves, following a direction opposite to that performed by the will in the motor-forms of its actions, which as we shall see do not depend upon the vehicle of the nerve-system.

[44] It is possible to proceed in this direction as long as we realise that waking consciousness, ascending even slightly above its normal level, attains to the forces of the I in a “zone” in which it is normally operating at a reduced level, which brings about drowsiness and sleep. In relation to the identity of the I with itself, the inferior or lower level of consciousness turns out to be the same as that which is opposite and superior.

[45] To cross the threshold of consciousness means therefore: either to descend into sleep, or to ascend to a higher level which renders possible the perception of that which occurs during sleep, at that moment when for the ordinary consciousness the physical support ceases to function. At this point one can legitimately speak of extraconscious experience.

[46] The fact that an experience of this nature depends upon a special discipline of our consciousness does not mean that on the basis of its results there cannot be founded a body of knowledge which is also cognitively valid for those who cannot themselves reproduce the experience. The fact of having to fulfil certain inner conditions in order to reproduce such an experience provides some idea of the special value which pertains to any knowledge to do with things beyond the threshold of finitude and measurability, and at the same time an idea of the method, in that the possibility of living into the communications of the investigator and bringing the thoughts alive within us as our own is in fact a preparatory discipline for reproducing the original experience.

[47] The investigator lays the foundations for a knowledge of the extraconscious based on his own direct experience. Whoever studies this body of teachings can verify the content of it by thinking it through for him or herself: the science of the concept on which it is based is the very thing which enables it to be tested, explored, confirmed. Reproducing the experience is possible thanks to an inner activity rather than an abstract learning.

[48] The problem of the extraconscious calls for a method of penetrating the structure of thinking. Thinking must grasp its own metadialectical being, so that it may bring alive within itself the extraconscious or superconscious functions of the I, by means of which it becomes empowered to experience the subconscious, or emotional-instinctive unconscious. It is of fundamental importance that the investigator experience the essential difference between the superconsciousness of the I and the psychophysical unconscious, if he or she is not to be led along an illusory, and hence pathological, path by the ordinary confused jumble of the forces of the psyche, by not knowing how to distinguish the thing from the concept of the thing, or the unconscious from the concept of the unconscious.

[49] Just how little a distinction of this sort is mere philosophical speculation or psychological introspection, can be gathered from the fact that to **operate** via the concept is not a matter of comprehending or elaborating a specified meaning, but rather the perception of its formation—as a content that does not need to be understood in order to be fully what it is. To understand is in fact already a specific use of the concept, in relation to something whose meaning is being sought. Philosophy knows how to propound the dialectics of the concept, but as a truly conscious undertaking it really ought to be able to draw attention to the observation of thinking itself, beyond the fact of its signifying something. Such **observation**, or contemplation, leads to the perception firstly of thinking's identity with itself, and secondly of the original unity of thinking with feeling and with the will. This pertains to the superconscious sphere of the I.

[50] This technique, this kind of action, of thinking upon itself, is the methodological procedure employed by the science of the spirit, for the logical and philosophic premises of which the reader is referred to Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* or our own *Treatise on Living Thinking*. Here though the emphasis will be on examining certain things resulting from an analysis of consciousness, made possible precisely by that thinking which serves as an organ of perception for the life of consciousness.

[51] The experience of the concept provides the investigator with a way of unfolding a pure thinking capable of identity with the deep forces of feeling and will. The researcher has to come to terms with something rather more than dialectical thinking, namely the thinking-force that produces it in relation to a given. The given is separated from its immediacy by a thinking in movement; this thinking can be recognised as a given itself, and as such contemplated. In this way it is possible to encounter the forces from which thinking normally springs. Being able to have objectively in front of himself the current of thinking in which he is normally immersed, the investigator manages to perceive the forces which are internal to thinking: pure feeling and pure will.

[52] If we can experience thinking not as the thought of some particular thing—that is, not as the form of some sense-perceptible or inner content—but as a formative force not bound to any object, then we find ourselves before a content-in-itself, composed purely of thinking and inwardly endowed with life. If we can contemplate a content of this kind, we

experience it as the emerging of a life-current which is independent from ordinary feeling and will, but which bears within itself the original forces of feeling and of the will.

[53] The experience which one has can be characterised in the following way: it is as if, by managing to separate oneself from the normal course of thoughts, and therefore seeing as an objective reality the current of thinking *as an activity*, one were to find oneself somehow estranged, or rather independent, a witness, not only with respect to the world of one's thoughts, but also to one's feelings and impulses, free from all the habitual mechanisms of feeling and of will, and yet able to perceive deep within the flow of thinking both feeling and will as impersonal forces.

[54] Here we experience a decisive distinction, between will-feeling of a personal nature imposing itself upon consciousness in the form demanded by our subjective nature, and the original forces of feeling and willing which we perceive thanks to the experience of liberated thinking. We discover that the real relation of thinking with sentiment and the will unfolds at this level, in that thinking moves according to its own immediate extra-subjective, or universal, power.



[55] Thinking's typical activity is abstract, yet it implies and is based on the dynamic moment from which it originates. The activities of feeling and of the will are never abstract. But the dynamic or pre-discursive moment of thinking, just like the activities of feeling and of the will, eludes conscious grasp—that is, by *rational* consciousness.

[56] There is present within feeling and willing a life from which thinking continually separates itself in order to become rational activity. Ordinary rationality is more essentially itself, to the extent that it is independent from any promptings of an emotional or instinctive nature.

[57] It can be said that at the boundaries of ordinary rational thinking, the domain of the extraconscious begins with the pre-discursive elements of thinking itself and the pure activity of feeling and of will. The human being has the reflection of this activity at the level

in which he is conscious of himself. At this level he can observe that conscious thinking, through being devoid of its inner dynamic, which in itself is one with that of feeling and of the will, has the capacity to connect or unite him objectively with the world, whereas feeling and will always manifest as forms of his relationship with himself.

[58] From this it becomes clear that the unconscious is in essence that region of the psyche in which the human being is enclosed with no possibility of escape, the sole escape being his possibility of representing things or of thinking. It is also possible to understand how, in such conditions, the psychologist might create images of an extra-individual (or collective) unconscious, which in reality does not exist, because the sole power of extra-individual correlation available to him is the thinking that he uses to think these things. It is this that confers a universal value on them, which does not belong to the dynamic of the unconscious, but rather is a dynamic of his own.

[59] Ordinary thinking makes use of this dynamic without possessing or mastering it. The unconscious is not and cannot be identified with it because it manifests most vividly when thinking is at its most lucid and establishes cognitive correlations with the world, by means of concepts and the synthesising of concepts. Meditating on this leads the investigator to discover that the **principle**, the origin, of universals in our consciousness is the I, and not the unconscious. The I manifests itself in thinking, as the foundation of thinking's power of connection with itself and hence with the world. This kind of thinking, manifesting through the mediation of the brain, becomes reflected, or abstract, but continually implies and assumes the existence of a pre-cerebral—that is, pre-dialectical, or metadialectical—dynamic: in other words, the possibility of grasping its own movement.

[60] Whoever really tests out these things will discover for himself at this point how it is only the experience of the dynamic or universal element within thinking that can disclose to him that sphere of consciousness which is essentially impersonal—and unite him with the I-principle. In this sphere it is given to him to encounter the original powers of feeling and of the will which normally he knows in their subjective manifestation, that is according to the urgings of their subconscious currents.

[61] Experience of this kind provides a sure way of distinguishing between a somatic extraconscious and the true supersensible extraconscious: this latter being recognisable as the lofty foundation of consciousness and thus able to be experienced as an inexhaustible universal. What this recognition effectively means is witnessing at the basis of the experience an original principle of self-identification and responsibility.

[62] It is possible to speak of a legitimate investigation of the unconscious, as long as both noetically and practically the presence of the inner principle capable of experiencing it is assured: which is to say, that first and foremost there has to be a clear recognition and acknowledgement of the reality of the true experient, the I. This is precisely what modern psychology has overlooked, not that it doesn't assume or imply it, but in that it has failed to locate the I in such a way that it becomes the central reference point, the idea-force of the whole undertaking. Thus the universal or collective unconscious, about which much is said, is in reality the opposite of that universal to which the human being is raised through the act of thinking, through an idea or by way of meditation. It is, in fact, a psychic entity which, the more it expresses the animal nature of the human being, increasingly eludes consciousness.

4. *The threefold nature of the human psyche*

[63] It is important to recognise what actually governs the notion of a universal unconscious, which tends to reduce to a single category the subjective-instinctive extraconscious and the noetic basis of consciousness itself. It is quite possible to speak of zones of the soul which elude ordinary consciousness, not meaning by this that they exist objectively as an "unconscious" which can be codified by a consciousness that remains as it is—incapable of grasping itself and its own activity—but rather must be conceived as existing in relation to an I which experiences: in other words, to the human being. These zones can be experienced to the extent that the inner dynamic of representation is mastered and possessed, so that through this one has a direct **perception** of them, rather than a **deduction** of their unconscious nature on the basis of images fashioned by the intellect.

[64] A similar distinction is necessary in regard to the content of representations. The representation is legitimate when it is founded upon a content that has been perceived; in the absence of such content, representation expresses an unconscious or arbitrary content, except when it is the vehicle of creative imagination, or of pure ideational activity.

[65] The perception of activities of the soul which are normally hidden from consciousness leads to the creation of objective representations, or dynamic images, by which the researcher grasps ever more clearly the distinction between two aspects of the life of feeling and willing: beyond the **personal** aspect—which belongs to everyone—and where they are interwoven with consciousness in such a way that it is virtually impossible to distinguish them from it, one can learn to perceive an **impersonal** content, in which they exist as original forces as yet unsullied by being bound into the ordinary life of the psyche. The meaning, the sense of this experience, is the autonomy of consciousness with respect to its corporeal basis: an autonomy which permits consciousness to understand what it really means to investigate the psyche and to recognise the functional localisation of the psyche's typical movements.

[66] The activity of thinking takes place via the material support of the cerebral system: it can be said that rational consciousness manifests in the **head**, basically stimulated by sensory perception. Feeling-life has its seat in the **thorax**: its material support is the force which reveals itself in the rhythms of the breath and of blood circulation. The power of the will has for its vehicle the dynamic energies of the **metabolic system** and of the movement of the limbs. In the same way that the three systems—neurosensory, rhythmic, metabolic—interpenetrate in the physical organism, with each nevertheless having a predominant function in its own seat, so also the three functions of thinking, feeling and willing work in continual combination and interplay, according to a mobility and mutability which exceeds that exhibited by the functions of the corresponding bodily processes.

[67] Whilst the three seats or “centres”, differentiated in their physical structure also, correspond to the three types of activity of consciousness which have been referred to, they reveal themselves simultaneously to be in dynamic relationship with the four systems of the bodily organisation: the bone, gland, nerve and blood systems. We call it a “dynamic relationship” in that the threefoldness in the seats of head, breast and metabolic-limb

systems, answering to the triplicity of thinking, feeling and willing, functions according to the same principle of psychosomatic synthesis that governs the four bodily systems which are simultaneously present and cooperating in each of the three seats.

[68] What we have here is a fundamental *syntonía* or “sounding together”, which is not mechanical, in that each of the systems, considered on its own, can be seen as working in accordance with a type of force that corresponds to it dynamically: to the bone and mineral element there answer the root-forces of the physical structure; the glandular system can be recognised as the vehicle of the vital, or etheric, formative forces of the organism; the nerve-system as the support of the sentient and psychic activities; whilst the blood-system is the bearer of the I, which develops or unfolds as self-awareness in the head by means of a particular connection with the cerebral organ.

[69] We should add that the four inner principles—I, astral, etheric, physical—are present in simultaneous and interdependent movement in any manifestation of the three soul-qualities—thinking, feeling, willing—whilst in terms of the organism they are the original forces pervading their respective seats: higher (head), intermediate (breast), lower (metabolism and limbs). Equilibrium of the life of the soul can be understood as the actualisation of a hierarchical order which connects the principle of the I with astral, etheric and physical, through the nexus of the thinking-feeling-willing function. The I-principle in itself operates as the originating centre of all forces.



[70] The life of the soul is accordingly linked not only to the nervous system, but to other systems as well, with connections of various different kinds, which ordinary consciousness does not register but whose effects it continually experiences. We can raise ourselves to the causes of these, not by going back over the ordinary process of manifestation, which is not able to overcome the limit of the animal-vital nature, but only by finding in ourselves the principle which is actually independent from the manifestation.

[71] To the nervous system there can be ascribed solely the thinking and neurosensory functions. Feeling and willing are to be referred not to organs, but to supports which are in

movement, such as the circulatory and breathing rhythms and the metabolic functions, which do not offer to the I, as the nervous system does, a basis for the consciousness of the waking state. Feeling and willing, in fact, even though they are activities certain of whose manifestations are perceptible to the senses, nevertheless unfold on levels which for waking consciousness correspond respectively to those of dream and deep sleep.

[72] In actual fact consciousness arises in the seat in which thinking is produced: it is essentially a thinking consciousness, even when it moves amongst contents of an emotive or instinctual nature. This consciousness does not have a direct perception of the movements, the inner workings, of feeling and willing, such as it has with thinking. Feeling and willing, unfolding by means of other supports, do however become observed through the nervous system, which is not their actual vehicle but the vehicle by means of which they become known to consciousness.

[73] On the basis of the resounding in the nervous system of instinctive-volitional and sentient-emotive movements, extending as far as the cerebral organ, modern psychophysiologicalists have concluded that the life of feelings, instincts and will-impulses unfolds by way of this system. But in reality the manifestations of feeling and of the will, whilst coming to be perceptible through the activity of the nerves, do not actually get carried out in that way. Research into the psyche can clearly establish that an evolved or autonomous life of consciousness has to provide the human being with a way of perceiving emotions, or inner states, or impulses, *before* their entry into the network of the nerves—that is, by virtue of a preventive inner encounter with them, whereby their objective content becomes known, and a timely discrimination, acceptance or rejection of them made.

[74] Feeling and willing take place by means of bodily supports with which ordinary consciousness has no direct connection. But even where it does have a direct contact or connection, where the material support of the nervous system is the appropriate vehicle (as it is for the ordinary waking consciousness), consciousness is still not able to perceive this direct connection unless it educates itself to do so by means of certain disciplines which are capable of bringing it about. The connection exists on a level which eludes the ordinary rational awareness, incapable as it is of experiencing itself independently of its material support. Consciousness can, however, by way of a direct inner action, unite with the origin

of thinking activity and become cognisant of cooperating in the very arising of thought—but the same direct procedure it cannot realise in relation to emotional and instinctive elements, which present themselves as sensations already complete, as things which have already been formed, having already undergone a psycho-physical unfolding prior to the fact of their being perceived, and as a result of which they come bearing the stamp of necessity and as something which we are hence obliged to endure. This constitutes the essential problem of psychology and of all inner schooling.

5. *Subconsciousness, consciousness, superconsciousness*

[75] We have spoken of three seats of the life of consciousness (head—trunk—abdomen and limbs) respectively corresponding to the three activities of thinking, feeling and willing. Similarly we have been able to indicate four bodily systems each endowed with its own particular consciousness: the bone-system (corresponding to the mineral level of the physical structure and to the perception of the physical world), the gland-system, nerve-system and blood-system.

[76] To inner research the forces working in these systems reveal themselves to be endowed with a super-individual life, by virtue of which they constitute a sort of higher region of consciousness, unified by an individuating principle. They acquire subjective value in being incorporated into their respective physical supports and through their various configurations in specific manifestations of consciousness, under the guidance of that same principle, whose virtue however gets relativised as a matter of course at this level by the mediation of the physical body and one's personal mentality. Nevertheless, even at this level, the psycho-physical processes which accompany the manifestation of those inner activities which do become conscious, remain imperceptible to the human being. Thus waking consciousness can recognise itself as a point of continual encounter for two aspects of its own life which are non-conscious: one higher and another lower, and both of them under the sign of the initiating power of the I. This distinction is valid solely in relation to the real I-consciousness, which can maintain its own higher form and essence within the act of assuming and working within the lower elements and processes.

[77] We have also been able to indicate the typical structure of these forces, which partake at one and the same time of both the higher and lower nature, in that each one on its own works through a corresponding constitutional system of the human organism: the inner physical element (bone-system), the inner vital or etheric element (gland-system), the inwardness of the psyche, or astral element (nerve-system) and the individual mental element (blood-system). These distinctions ought to be considered as purely schematic, in that what we are dealing with here is forces that by their very nature are interactive and with a continual tendency towards synthesis, in accordance with the living reciprocity between the individual consciousness and its fundamental underlying force.

[78] The active synthesis of the bodily systems is more regular and well-ordered to the extent that the individual consciousness is independent of its physical basis, or in other words when it is itself occupied with the synthesis of its various inner functions, therefore enabling the bodily systems to be more strongly aligned with the forces that have brought them into existence. Such a condition comes about above all in the case of an absence of mental consciousness, such as occurs in “primitive” peoples, or on the other hand when there is an intensification of consciousness, which serves as a power of autonomy or **otherness** with respect to the various energies of the organism. Intensified consciousness is not bound by the necessity of encountering them via the pathways of physicality, because it encounters them through an inner activity which is free from the senses. In this sense it is possible for the conscious soul to identify forces which normally it uses without knowing it.

[79] Normally a cooperation between nerve and blood processes is necessary for the cerebral organ to mediate the manifestation of thinking and therefore the life of consciousness. It is a case here of the spontaneous-vital life of consciousness; it is not yet a consciousness aware of itself and still less so of the nerve-blood support. To become capable of direct perception of the support, consciousness must attain, beyond self-awareness, the capacity to maintain itself independently of the support, that is of the etheric-physical structure of the cerebral organ. At this point the investigator can grasp “directly” the connections between thinking and the brain, but similarly its relations with the instinctive and emotional life.

[80] In reality the human being: (a) has first of all a conscious awareness of self on the basis of sensory perception: if he stays put at this level, then by means of the rational thinking which is native to it, and no matter how conceptually and scientifically refined, he can remain convinced that consciousness is essentially a product of the bodily system and that the body is its foundation or basis; (b) takes hold of this self-awareness, this consciousness of his own being; and can in this case similarly use the consciously wielded force of rationality to affirm the bodily basis of being; or alternatively, by means of a rationality developed to the point of experiencing its own autonomy, intuit in himself the conscious principle which is antecedent to the consciousness reflected by the bodily organisation; (c) can experiment with and experience this principle, ultimately carrying self-awareness to identity with its own foundation, which reveals itself as being not of a bodily nature. In this third case one can encounter “directly” the inner content of sensory perception, the **substantial element** of the perceptual act which normally eludes consciousness. This is the highest experience to which an investigator of these times can aspire.

[81] In the first two moments of this threefold scenario, which represents amongst other things three successive phases in the development of consciousness, the human being realises sensory or sense-based awareness. In the third he transcends it. Only in this third and rarely attained phase can the human being really survey and evaluate sense-based consciousness, and as a consequence the achievements of science and the technological developments proceeding from it. The nature of scientific progress depends directly upon the nature of the idea whose instrument it becomes.



[82] The ordinary degree of inwardness does not permit the human being to have a true mineral, nor vital, consciousness, but simply to experience the mental repercussions of the mineral level. No matter what the perception, the human being moves in the **mental reflection** of the perception, not in the perception itself. This is due to the fact that ordinary consciousness is awake only in relation to the formal impression of the perception, whereas in regard to its effective content consciousness is present to it in the same way as it is present to what occurs in the depths of sleep.

[83] The human being experiences sense-perception by means of processes and sense-organs which he or she does not perceive, and it is for this same reason that when perceiving we do not attain an immediate relation with the sensory world, but rather one that is indirect and mediated. The mineral that we look at or touch is in any case external to us, just as every being or entity is which, even if it is not essentially of a mineral nature, nevertheless wears a mineral garb in order to appear: the plant, the animal, the human being himself.

[84] What this means is that the ordinary waking consciousness, which we experience through the combined working of various nerve-blood processes, does not include a perception or awareness of these processes, which are linked with other levels of consciousness.

[85] Consciousness arises through the synthesis which its central power—the power of the I—enacts by way of the forces inherent in the various levels of its being, which consciousness uses as a matter of course but which it does not realise. These forces are the supersensible principles of the four bodily systems: the mineral-bone, the gland, the nerve, the blood—and as a result it can be said that the phases in the development of consciousness are connected with the possibility it has of gradually realising and mastering the forces which govern the inner workings of these systems. The forms of consciousness which correspond to them contribute to the constitution—to the form and nature—of the inner state which manifests as self-awareness via the nerve-sense system. For this reason these forms of consciousness are certainly discernible at the basis of waking consciousness, but they exist in opposition to it through a kind of convergent or focused equilibrium, in that waking consciousness, in order to become what it is, must bring its extraconscious forces up to the level of its own self-awareness, thereby entirely excluding their otherness. Consciousness accomplishes this by a continual negation of its own extraconscious being: it affirms its own extraconscious principle only to the extent that it manages to experience itself as independent self-awareness. The correlation expounded here is fundamental to an understanding of the relationship between **consciousness**, **superconsciousness** and **subconsciousness**.

[86] Whether we see waking consciousness as the consciousness capable of grasping itself, and therefore determining itself as self-awareness, or whether we conceive of an autonomous and transcendent I, actualising itself through its I-consciousness, it makes no difference to the dynamics of the inner forces which work together to make waking consciousness what it is. The constitution of this consciousness through the working together of inner forces implies that these forces disappear or become invisible in the actual functioning of such consciousness: self-awareness unfolds solely through being founded upon itself and through all that follows from that, even when it assumes that there are foundations or influences for it which exist beyond itself and which are outside the reach of its awareness. The foundation is in effect conceivable thanks to consciousness' awakening to itself: and this is self-awareness, consciousness of self, the I. Unfolding itself, it negates everything which is not its foundation: thus in reality it functions itself as foundation and basis.

[87] The sense of the foundation is immanent, regardless of whether consciousness sees it as being within or outside itself, or as having a spiritual or bodily basis: in any case we are persuaded that we are fundamentally addressing a conscious being. Every affirmation of the individual appeals to the principle of self-awareness, and therefore postulates the presence of an I which is in itself free—and this is regardless of the actual content of the affirmation, regardless of its veracity or error.

[88] The situation of consciousness with respect to extraconscious forces can be seen clearly in the fact that it makes use of such forces, whose real action is to cooperate in bringing this consciousness into existence, in that consciousness on its own level establishes as a fundamental premise its unity as a unique entity. This unity is precisely the work of those forces. Self-awareness, realising their movement through the agency of its own inner principle, actualises their inner principle as its own.

[89] At the basis of the process of consciousness, therefore, there cannot be the psychoanalytic *Es*⁴ by which the I would supposedly be driven hither and thither, but rather the very opposite. The I makes use of the processes taking place in the depths in order to attain its own self-conscious form. The true processes of the depths are not the impulses and

⁴ The "It" or (as it has been commonly translated into English) the *Id* (=Latin for "it") [trans.].

tendencies which belong to the body, or to the species, but rather the original forms of thinking, feeling and willing, which belong to the spirit. Now from this we can draw some conclusions concerning the nature of neurosis: contemplated out of a synthesis, it can be understood as the somatic consequence of a deficiency of I-forces with respect to the underlying powers of the psyche.

6. *The immediate extraconscious*

[90] The forms of consciousness beyond and opposed to waking consciousness and yet cooperating, through the action of the respective bodily systems, in its unfolding, can be understood if considered in relation to how they are at work within sense-perception.

[91] The human being never has as conscious identity that which he or she perceives by way of the senses. Sensory perception is the act which inevitably locates the object as something external to him or her. One does not have direct communion with things: a colour belongs to us more intimately when we evoke it within ourselves than when we perceive it. In fact we realise identity with the percept thanks solely to the force with which later we are able to evoke it within ourselves: that of inner perception. We can, it is true, directly draw forth the inner perception from the sensory perception, but this depends upon a specific capacity which we have to intentionally cultivate in ourselves: separating the inner content from the sensory impression, or, to use an old alchemical expression, the "subtle" from the "gross". The ultimate inner meaning of sense-perception will reveal itself to be precisely this experience of the extra-sensory content which lives within it, and which makes possible the I's identity with the percept, with that which is perceived.

[92] Placed into the body as a being possessed of inwardness, the human being feels the body and yet does not have a direct relation with it, because he does not perceive it through identity with his own inner being, but rather by way of the sense organs. He ought to have self-perception, distinct from perception of the body: but for this he would have to possess the forms by which he perceives in a bodily way.

[93] Of the various systems constituting his physical entity the human being has no direct perception; but he uses the forces which have their support in these systems. This use, however, to the extent that it is carried out by waking consciousness, eludes him in its origins, which this consciousness cannot attain to. He feels, as if they were some kind of foreign entity, deep and little known regions of the psyche. That he should conflate this feeling with the concept of the “unconscious” is, as has been shown, a contradiction. The consciousness which, recognising the contradiction, feels the need of surpassing its own limited immediacy, finds itself looking at the notion of lower and higher levels of its own being. In its own processes it finds the guiding principle for investigating its own nature.

[94] The concept of the extraconscious, as has been pointed out, is a way for waking consciousness to represent certain forces to itself, whilst standing (or being) as it were outside them. In actual fact, the human being makes use of their dynamic potentiality in both perception and thinking, but without possessing awareness of so doing. The investigator ought to recognise in the very movement of thinking to which he owes his ability to investigate, the initial influx of those very forces of the soul which are the object of his investigation. He does not need to seek in some product of thinking that from which thinking itself arises; and in the same way he can gather from within the act of perceiving that very force by which he makes a perception his own. In the one case, as in the other, he lives in processes which are concerned with objective reality, but at the same time unfold within the sphere of the soul: that very sphere in which he intuits, feels and wills.



[95] The observation of the soul’s life in connection with the bodily supports of its characteristic activities provides a way of identifying the presence of a **subject**, or central being, or I, within its various manifestations. These show themselves to be functioning as so many levels of consciousness of that central being, in relation to the four bodily systems: mineral, gland, nerve, blood. These systems are differentiated, like their corresponding forces, but an essential unity holds them together from a basis which is ordinarily graspable only in its manifestations and in its continuity. The human being who says “I” refers him or herself continually to an active foundation, intuitable at any moment; but ordinarily imperceptible, through being the actual subject of all perception.

[96] For the purposes of this enquiry it is essential to refer to a premise drawn from spiritual science, which can briefly be stated as follows: only the perceptive and conceptual activity expresses itself through the nerve-processes, whilst the other activities, such as feeling and willing, are mediated not by organs but by processes, rhythmical and metabolic respectively, and have only a final connection with the nervous system, which is necessary for consciousness. Another basic idea to acquire concerns the potential independence of soul-life from the physical body which, nevertheless, with its limits and finiteness, actually enables an individual form of consciousness to emerge within the soul in the first place.

[97] The relationship between nerve-activity, respiratory rhythm and metabolic action is in itself a process of continual reciprocal cooperation. Thinking, feeling and willing interpenetrate in the life of the soul, in the same way that the three processes—nervous, rhythmical, metabolic—work together, continually combining in the life of the body, which is necessary for the manifestation of consciousness.

[98] That which presents itself as metabolic process in the cerebral system has no relation to thinking, but rather with the will; equally, the rhythmical (blood-breath) processes have a correlation with feeling, and not with thinking. We have to see where the activity of the cerebral system is neither rhythmical nor metabolic if we want to encounter the manifestation of thinking; but the pure nerve-processes which mediate thinking unfold an activity which is not identifiable physiologically, even if its vibrations are able to be registered. At the same time thought occurs by way of an action of subtle suppression of the vital element in such processes—that is, of their rhythmic-metabolic dynamic—which, however, it simultaneously influences. It is true that the act of thinking is mediated by the peripheral cortex of the brain and involves a relation between the occipital lobe and the frontal lobes, but this mediation cannot be grasped where it physiologically takes place, but rather only in its vital repercussions of a rhythmic-metabolic nature. No sense-based observation of the nervous system can identify the processes which mediate the life of thinking.

[99] No amount of observation of the brain can serve to explain the mechanism of thinking. The attitude behind such research is analogous to that of someone who believes he

touches “inside” the mirror the reality of the reflected image. It cannot be said that a mirror acts or that it is possible to grasp in its physical-chemical processes that which it reflects. We have to penetrate the process of thinking in order to understand the meaning of the cerebral mechanism.

[100] To attain an idea of the connection between thinking and the brain, we have to be able to experience directly the relationship between perception and representation. Only knowledge of this relationship can orientate research into the function of the cerebral organ with respect to thinking.

[101] But the mechanism of the transition from perception to representation cannot be studied from “outside”, with physical instruments or by way of inductive analysis, but must be done **directly**, in the very act of perceiving and representing. Investigation of this is possible only on the basis of a development of the capacity for perception beyond the sensory. The same discipline which provides a way for thinking to grasp in itself the forces which render it self-aware, orientates these forces towards the accomplishment of this task.

[102] We can glimpse here a possible evolution of science, guided by the knowledge of *the means by which it knows*. Such knowledge consists not so much of a passive **learning** but much rather of an **action**: it provides a way for researchers to communicate with beings according to the cognitive gesture demanded by their reality. The pure giving-of-itself of the object requires the pure giving-of-itself of the thinking which integrates and completes it: when the act of perception is experienced in itself, independently of thinking, then the act of thinking is experienced in itself, content-free and empty.

7. The presence of the supersensible within the act of perception

[103] Feeling and willing cannot be explained without taking into account their connection with their respective physical vehicles and the relationship of those vehicles with the nervous system, which, constitutionally, serves solely as the basis for perceiving and thinking. It does not correspond with the reality of feeling and willing if we attempt to

explain them in terms of the vehicle of the nervous system, and what reflected thinking is able to understand about it, for it is a thinking which is *conditioned* by the nervous system.

[104] The interpenetration of the three activities must be seen in relation to the underlying interrelation of the systems respectively connected with them. What appears to observation is that there is present in the act of perception both the interrelation of the supports and that of their respective activities. It can rightly be said that the whole gamut of bodily, psychic and spiritual activities is brought together in a single harmonious arrangement in the act of sensory perception. This is worthy of close study, if we want to grasp objectively this characteristic cooperation between I, soul and body.

[105] What does *not* come to consciousness within perception is the inner (i.e., astral-etheric) element of the sensory organ, as well as the inner element of the object perceived, precisely because this is the dynamic element of the whole process. Observation of the perceptual act leads to the recognition what becomes conscious, as experience of the I, is that which loses its life-force, or arises from an alienation of life: the representation, or image.

[106] Normally, the more a sum of sensations ends up being elaborated in the form of ideas, the greater the extent to which the living element of those sensations is suppressed; and for the same reason, it can be said that a greater current of life is gathered from a series of sensations when the conscious elaboration of them is renounced. In this latter type of case, there is identity with the sensation, but one does not really know what one is experiencing: sensation conditions the psycho-physical being right up to the mental sphere.

[107] This second aspect can be seen in the sensory experience of the “primitive”, whose power of spontaneity is the result of an identification of the consciousness with nature. Conversely, there is the possibility of an opposite and higher experience—the experience of the living element within perception, brought about by a conscious action of the will, to the extent that one is capable of being consciously present to the vital current: consciously, and thus without a diminishing of the waking state, even with its intensification. This is the conscious and therefore modern form of inner *askesis* (spiritual discipline).

[108] In essence, one manages to suspend the representational activity, with respect to a particular perception, so that as a result the living element of the perception is not eliminated. The living element can be contemplated; this is the immediately extrasensory experience of the I. Such a possibility is analogous to that of the restoration of the living element in ideational activity, which in itself is able to transcend, through the thinking intensification of its own dynamic movement, the limit of a merely reflective thinking.

[109] In any perceptual event there participate simultaneously the forces of willing, feeling and representation, together with metabolic and rhythmical processes of the nervous system. The content of perception is for this reason a synthesis, the flowing together as a unity of outer and inner vital-physical processes: in these latter are to be found the forces of thinking, feeling and willing, although in a non-conscious form. Their first emergence into consciousness takes place in the form of sensation-representation.

[110] It is an essentially practical operation, from both a psychological and inner-developmental point of view, to experience perception in such a way as to separate the living element within it from the abstract element of representation. Usually, with the incomplete presence of the I in the perceptual act, representation and sensation still take place, and the living element of feeling and of will that is inherent in perception, but not grasped by the I, ends up acting in the psyche in an automatic and totally unobserved way. Through this we can understand how the living element could in fact become an experience of the I: if the I did not merely undergo but actually penetrated its own perceiving, its own process of representation.

[111] Bearing in mind what has been said regarding the distinction between the spiritualised forms of feeling and willing (which under exceptional circumstances can be experienced) and the forms proper to everyday consciousness, we can understand how the working together of feeling and willing in the perceptual act can be experienced by the researcher as an autonomous function and can in that sense become for him or her a secure means of self-knowledge. This autonomous function, whilst it contributes to the objective content of the perception, at the same time elicits a response from the impulsive-emotive sphere, a response which normally slips past conscious awareness. It is an autonomous

function that can be contemplated, by way of a schooling in being consciously present to specific perceptions.

[112] The ordinary resonance of the sentient element of perception serves as a stimulus for mental states, or affective-rational states, which do not correspond to the real content of the perception, but rather are connected with an abstract representation, conditioned by cerebral mediation, and therefore closed to the **objective** life-element within the perception. As a result we can say that the non-conscious content of perception has two aspects: one is objective, supersensible, relating to the superconscious function of the I, and therefore endowed with reality only for the subject who is capable of self-knowledge; the other is subjective, spurious and therefore without reality, and belongs to the subconscious, the lower or inferior consciousness. An investigator cannot distinguish them as long as his conscious self-experience is limited to the sensation-representation dimension of perception. The distinction is a fundamental one, because subconscious tendencies and impulses are able to subvert or even overpower consciousness precisely in accordance with the degree to which consciousness clings passively to the ordinary process of representation.

[113] The objective inner element of perception as a rule does not manage to assert itself within representation and is therefore invisible for thinking. This deficiency is reflected in the bearing of modern science, whose status rests in truth on a foundation that it does not understand: the inner element of perception-representation. Thus the abstract phenomenon or the brute fact becomes the foundation-stone for thinking, the basis about which there can be no argument. The whole situation is no different for the analyst with his logic, for whoever follows the scientific method, for the psychologist, the sociologist and so on: what they work with is thought, but it is a thinking which has already been subordinated to its object.



[114] Normally in perception the inner order of things is inverted: on the basis of a physical-vital stimulus, an external given, which springs from the I's identity with it, acts upon the sentient, thinking subject, imprinting him or her with itself. Within the imprint or impression, the identity needs to become a conscious act, an assumption and resolution of

the given on the part of the inner subject, the experient. The right ordering of things, whereby the centrality of the perceiving subject is recognised, ought to be re-established, at the very least in the work of the investigator; but this normally does not occur. Perception is continually an uncompleted act; it does not penetrate beyond the measurable appearance of the real, as long as it lacks the response that comes from within the human being.

[115] Thinking consciousness does not integrate the perceptual act, does not encompass the whole path of perception so as to experience and possess it as it really is, which must include its energetic-volitional element. Consciousness passively accepts the inverted order as reality, limiting itself to drawing forth from it the form of which it stands in need: the image, the representation. This therefore is an act of consciousness via *reflection* of the real, not via the real itself; hence consciousness experiences the expression of its own will as something alien to its essential being, as an aspect of the **otherness** of the sense-perceptible world. The stance adopted by psychology, and this applies also to the contemporary understanding of the spirit and to culture in general, demonstrates just how far this “inverted” state of affairs is from being recognised and understood, and therefore how it is almost impossible for people to comprehend the fundamental flaw in human self-knowledge in this epoch.

[116] The participation of unmediated thinking-feeling-willing in the vital and physical processes of perception, has amongst other things the function of providing consciousness with that element of perceptual content which, in current conditions, it is actually able to grasp: the abstract element of representation based on the sensory form. The fact that the perceptual process is arrested at the point of its sense-based formalisation, which is then made use of by consciousness as if it were the sole and definitive aspect of the whole perceptual process, is, if we examine it, actually quite pathological.

[117] Non-awareness of the moment of identity and of its living content signals a continual loss of forces for the psyche, which the human being of this time ought to make good by undertaking a discipline that restores the autonomy of thinking, rather than *immediately* converting such loss into “knowledge”. When in the usual way a man believes that he is grasping the real, he is in effect identifying it with the measurable, quantifiable manifestations of contents whose more important, immeasurable element escapes him: the

causal essentiality. This essentiality is routinely ignored: the failure to distinguish the merely subjective aspect of consciousness from the dynamic moment of identity between the I and the object, impedes penetration into the real content of the perception, which is taking place at the level of semi-wakeful, drowsy consciousness. Structuralist, technological knowledge corresponds to this level of consciousness which, cultivated in and for itself, lacking any noetic confirmation of its content, is not only the source of neurotic phenomena but at the same time is the type of consciousness which breeds ideologies and doctrines unable to grasp human reality, as a result of which the situation of civilisation continually becomes not only increasingly problematic, but actually more and more perilous.

8. *The therapeutic function of perceiving*

[118] The objective living element within perception is normally extinguished as it passes away into representation, that is, as it becomes conscious content. Thinking encounters perceptual content in the nerve-vehicle, which is necessary for its becoming conscious: in this encounter perceptual content loses its life in order to transform into representation. But not all of the life-element dies away into representation: feeling and willing, which take part in the perceptual process (through the relevant rhythmical and metabolic processes), constitute that part of it which does not die away, in that they do not become conscious.

[119] Representation becomes conscious through the nerve-vehicle, it too depriving itself of its own original life-element, which is in essence identical to the original life-element of the perceptual content. If the life-element were to penetrate into the process of representation it would eliminate consciousness and produce a condition of sleep; representation would arise as a dream. But by the same token a representation which did not lose its native life-element and yet continued to exist in the presence of a consciousness capable of remaining awake, would become extrasensory vision.

[120] It can be briefly indicated that an experience of this kind, attainable through a willed self-transcendence of consciousness, is met with, in an inverted form, when brought about by hallucinogenic drugs: in this kind of case, a sensory perception imposes itself on an

artificially excited consciousness, and is experienced as a sensation outside the normal range and as associated visions—a content which lacks the wakeful lucidity proper to normal sense-perception and yet presents itself as being superior to it. In this lies its morbid character. A distorted sensory content presents itself as being of a supersensible nature.

[121] No different, however, is the case of a “spiritual” vision of the “unconscious”, along the lines established by psychological-analytical dialectics, and for that very reason only with great difficulty discerned as erroneous. The error lies in the vision’s inception as a cerebral process, by which the metabolic element, emerging etherically, provokes intuitions via the current of thinking, whose meta- or supra-physical principle has been excluded whilst the greatest possible use has been made of logical structures and reasoning. Such is the case with C.G. Jung.

[122] To restore the life-element to representation, so that it does not cause us to fall into induced forms of semi-consciousness, or mediumistic states, endowed with all the apparatus of psychological-analytical justification, but rather to the acquisition of a more intense consciousness, is the task of inner schooling, and therefore of psychotherapy. Every act of consciousness presupposes the presence of such a life-element, both in the act of perception and in the act of thinking, as well as its function in connection with the “living” both in nature and in the human being. The problem that presents itself here is to understand the way in which the life-element can be experienced by means of representation, rather than eliminated by it—for the living element is the seal of thinking’s independence from cerebral mediation.

[123] We shall see how the attainment of this independence not only gives a way for the human being to prevent emotions and instincts from becoming mental events, that is to say mental anguish or mental fury, having a destructive effect on the nervous system, but also constitutes the condition for overcoming the level of realistic primitivism which blocks science from freeing itself from the limitations of abstract quantity. In particular for the body of knowledge pertaining to psychology, it has to be said that only an activity of representation whose life-element has been restored is capable of grasping the life-element of the soul.



[124] In regard to the inner discipline necessary for the modern psychotherapist, we have looked at how thinking is able to cross the threshold of consciousness, insofar as it is capable of grasping its own movement, moving from concept to concept, or within the inner working of the concept, right up to the pure content of itself without any object. This experience leads to the perception of the impersonal essence of the forces of feeling and willing: the living element within thinking actualises itself as a power of identity with the original forces of feeling and willing.

[125] The currents of feeling and willing can be observed and followed in their permeation of the psyche, extending into the rhythmical and metabolic bodily supports; they can likewise be followed into their subconscious convergence within sensory perception. This convergence has a psychically determining character, through what it receives and transmits in its interwovenness with neurosensory processes.

[126] The inner, or living, element within thinking, as it transpires, is identical with the inner or living element within perception: it remains, however, outside conscious recognition. What we have here is an extraconscious which cannot be included in the category of the sentient-instinctive “unconscious”, or identified with the sphere of tendencies, it being rather an inner current correlated with the I, even if it is only minimally taken hold of by the I-consciousness: in reality what we are dealing with is a higher or superior extraconscious, one which is a function of the I.

[127] What we can make clear to ourselves at this point is the simultaneous presence of two distinguishable spheres of consciousness, whose opposition has been noted as simply functional with regard to a unifying, or self-aware, consciousness. If we can speak of superconsciousness and subconsciousness, it is necessary to think of their potential unity too, not under the sign of the unconscious but as the realisation of true consciousness of self. It will be shown, in the 2nd section of this book, how the higher or superior extraconscious, not realised within (or by) I-consciousness, and yet called upon by it in all its lucid actions, proceeds to sustain an inferior or lower *unconscious*, which does not exist simply unto itself but only in relation to a weakness of consciousness, or to the aspect of consciousness which

is dominated by the bodily nature: by such a pathway it finds a way of ascending to mental zones which would otherwise be forbidden to it. The first act of psychological research ought to be the distinction between the two types of extraconscious, which are in a purely functional opposition. Misunderstanding is raised to the status of a fine art when the lower of “inferior” unconscious, in itself connected with the metabolic system, is reified and made to ascend into the sphere of feeling and thinking by analysis of the psyche.



[128] When the conscious subject is overwhelmed by events, emotions, uncontrolled impulses, moods or tormenting thoughts, it can be said that he or she is involved in perceptual happenings whose effects in the soul take place independently of his or her will, as a kind of “spontaneous” reaction: perceptions and sensations combine in him or her in all their psychic immediacy, and not according to the relationship between one thought-content and another which, in conditions of calm, he or she would bring into correspondence with each piece of perceptual information.

[129] The human being of our times is far away from the possibility of a **pertinent relationship** of consciousness with the world of perceptions; but precisely a schooling, an inner discipline, in that direction is the beginning of therapy, rather than via the presumption of studying the automatism of spontaneous reactions, or the subconscious instinctive-emotive sphere which, by involving the investigating subject itself in the chaos of its spontaneous combinations, makes any rational research virtually impossible. In spontaneous reactivity what manifests, as we shall see, is not the individual being but rather the very opposite: that which continually tends to subvert, in him or her, the rightful conscious order. It is in fact a spurious spontaneity which has been dissociated from genuine spontaneity even since the earliest years of childhood.

[130] Usually consciousness loses, even if only temporarily, its proper equilibrium when it finds itself overwhelmed by perception-sensations which it is unable to meet with an autonomous act of its own, one capable of receiving them according to their objective content. In essence, consciousness does not notice the thinking already occurring in the encounter because it is not capable of distinguishing representation from perception—which

is not a facile and theoretical distinction, but a genuine experiential one. A distinction of this sort, applying to the exercise of pure thinking as much as to that of pure perception, gives us a way to meet the perception of a thing or of an emotive-instinctual impulse with an inner act that corresponds to the perception and which connects it with the conscious principle—which is the way for the independence of the conscious principle to remain intact in the face of factual or instinctive contents.

[131] The discipline, the schooling of thinking, to which reference has been made, includes the exercise of conscious presence to pure sensory perception, which can be especially cultivated by contemplation of aspects and entities of the mineral and plant realms. This exercise, as a process of the conscious will, need not interfere with everyday sensory experience, whose normal spontaneity remains assured: in fact its function tends to be restored to its natural autonomy by the exercise herein indicated.

[132] In reality, whoever observes a phenomenon does not find himself faced with an object, whose appearance would be independent of his looking: his perception in truth is born from the correlation—the encounter, the relationship—between himself and the object. This correlation, however, belongs to the observer: without him it would not come about, which is not to say that the object itself would not exist, but that there would be no possibility for it to arise, by way of perception, as thought. That this thought-content, within perception, should correspond in a real way to the object, to the point of being the revelation of an autonomous *and extraconscious* correlation, is the token of an investigation into the physical world that does not deprive it of its spiritual content, which is to say of its foundation. The distinction between immediate object and the object experienced through pure perception is important not only with regard to perceiving the living content of the sense-perceptible, but also as a way for the conscious principle to become independent from the subjective impulses of the psyche.

[133] Leaving out of account moments of rigorous self-awareness, normally the human being in perceiving is subject to a relationship in which the introduction of extraneous psychic elements is inevitable, connected with the ordinary sentient-vital current that has a share in any perceptual act. The extraconscious resonance of perceptual content in the psyche, once it is recognised, throws light upon the psyche's subjective condition.

[134] The art of perceiving with pure attention enables two objectives to be attained in a single sweep: (a) identifying what is irregular or disordered in the psyche, brought to manifestation within consciousness through being part of the perceptual process; (b) experiencing the supersensible content of perception. The importance of such an experience can be understood if we bear in mind that it is normal for the contemporary human being to proceed by way of mental images which have been severed from the internal objectivity of their perceptual contents. As has been indicated, a severance of this kind is discernible at the basis of every form of neurosis.

[135] It cannot really be said that science has made progress towards knowledge of the interconnections between perception, thinking and the life of the psyche. Just because significant studies have been conducted on this theme does not mean that the meaning of the interconnections has been grasped. The extraconscious element that is the crux of the matter cannot be found through investigation of the physiological mechanics of perception, but in the perceptual act itself: in which as a general rule an autonomous and non-dialectical impulse of consciousness identifies itself with the sensory content and works to transform it into mental image and thought. This content asks to be contemplated in its pure objectivity so that by means of it the subtle movement of consciousness that typically permeates the content can itself become perceptible. It is evident that, rather than a mechanical scientific endeavour, what is required of the investigator is a capacity of inner self-observation and penetration, a moral power so to speak—which does not derive from mere knowledge.

[136] Physiological analysis is certainly necessary, but it cannot lead to the experience of the *dynamis*⁵ of the perceptual act, the extraconscious content referred to here—for this is an inner experience. Such an analysis ought first of all to acquire awareness of proceeding itself through a series of perceptual acts, whose dynamic moment it loses, seeking it in an organ or a nerve, and not noticing it in the interconnections of the series of acts: always the self-same moment, **immanent** in every perception.

[137] It is ingenuous for a psycho-physiologist to observe the mechanism of perception, without acknowledging in this observation itself the very element that he is seeking. In

⁵ Gk. = Inner power, inner dynamic [trans.]

following perception from nerve-stimulus to cerebral organ, he draws mental images from subsequent perceptions, perpetuating in the manner of a continual limit the **unknown immediate** which he is apparently seeking to comprehend, but which he presumes he will accomplish *outside* the moment in which his thinking unites with it. The difficulty consists in the fact that this thinking is not conscious for him.

[138] The dynamic element within perception cannot be grasped by biophysical scrutiny of the neurosensory apparatus, nor through any other kind of reconstruction of its mechanism, but simply in the perceptual act itself. The investigator needs to experience within him or herself the inner means involved in the investigation as being both inherent and immediate: pure thinking and pure perception. The way of pure, living experience looks to the inner process of sensory perception, and not towards its product.



[139] The failure to become aware of the dynamic element within perception and of its extrasensory nature is the root cause of psycho-physiology's inability to discover the extrasensory forces connecting the psyche to the bodily nature. It also causes the inability to see the link between the lower kind of psychic phenomena and the irregular inherence of feeling and willing in bodily processes.

[140] The extraconscious interweaving of feeling and willing in the bodily nature is proper solely in perceptual processes; so much so that we can say that in sensory perception the human being has the very model of equilibrium in the relationship of psyche and body. And we can also understand from this how therapeutic forces can be kindled by educating consciousness in the contemplation of pure sensory perception, which is the method adopted by the experiential investigator in this new epoch.

[141] When we consider the case of loss of the modern level of rational consciousness, basically equivalent to a mediumistic lowering of consciousness, it has in reality to do with the phenomenon of irregular participation of soul-forces in the rhythmical and metabolic processes of the nervous system: processes which ought not to seize hold of consciousness directly, but which have to unfold solely in the physiological life of the nervous system, so

that the nerves can fulfil their work as the instrument of consciousness. We have been able to show how their part in the mechanics of perception, however, is right and proper in that it does not distort the objective or inner aspect of perception. A distortion can really only be regarded as a morbid occurrence: every hallucination, whether from paranoia or from drugs, springs from such an origin.

[142] The modern analysis of the psyche, in this regard, can be seen structurally as a product of the abnormal inherence of consciousness in the nervous system and hence in the whole physical organism. This inherence becomes codified and formalised, and unfortunately on the basis of a pathological condition: which is thus provided with the appearance of scientific propriety and a dignified metaphysical status. The help this sort of analysis can offer to the psychologist who has attained some inner autonomy consists in its being basically a phenomenon that throws light on the psychic back-space of its creators.

[143] The fact that modern psychology has not really been able to make sense of its investigations into sensory perception, the nature of the will, the connection between consciousness and its bodily supports, and the meaning of the instincts, can be explained by its failure to isolate the active conscious element from the psyche itself. How to detect, how to perceive the working of the I within the perceptual act has not been understood: there has been a failure to grasp and take hold of that original element of the soul that is called to experience itself as consciousness. It was claimed that the psyche was being investigated, whilst taking the psychic object for the very principle itself of the psyche: what was not taken into account is that such research can only be undertaken by a principle that is *independent* of the psyche, a principle with a capacity for synthesis, without which the psyche is merely an ambiguous mental-instinctive sphere, all of whose impulses are logically justifiable.

[144] Modern education is also an example of the crisis afflicting the principle of synthesis. Assimilating and elaborating in nearly every country of the world the precepts of the Montessori method, education has laid the foundations for the deterioration of the child's psyche, by eliminating in regard to the child the distinction between the various forms of spontaneity. Drawing on the psychoanalytic myth of the "repressed instincts" it deduces the abstract requirement of forming a human type exempt from "complexes", free and

spontaneous, by doing away with any inhibition or restraint of the instincts in our tenderest years. The consequences are that almost all the children subjected to this type of education become later on clients in psychiatric clinics, prison inmates or else personalities afflicted with a rebelliousness against any sort of order whatsoever.

9. *“Repressed instincts”*

[145] We have been able to indicate a living element within thinking identical with the living element in perception, which makes both thinking and perception possible, but which as a general rule merely operates according to its natural dynamic, namely that it remains hidden from consciousness. The real threshold of consciousness is encountered precisely here.

[146] Where perception becomes conscious, it loses its life-element; and similarly, thinking becomes abstract as soon as it becomes consciously delineated. Certain sensations, and certain thoughts too—mainly fantasy-related mental images—can maintain vitality as long as they are not elaborated by consciousness; though an exception has to be made in the case of artistic creation, in which the virtue of consciousness consists precisely in maintaining objectively intact, to as high a degree as possible, the living element in the mental image, so as to convert it into an aesthetic production. The case of spontaneous vitality is somewhat different, in that rather than being called forth by an act of will it results from an attenuation of intentional volition, and is therefore in essence a continuation of nature-processes into the mental sphere.

[147] Psychological enquiry ought to be able to draw from this a fundamental distinction: between the living element of thinking or perception, which can be objectively experienced through a specific schooling of consciousness, and the spontaneous-sentient element of thinking or perception, which asserts itself vitally by way of a diminution of consciousness. What we are dealing with here is one and the same life-element, which, in conditions of elevation of consciousness, allows itself to be perceived in the pure state, according to its objective dynamic, and therefore according to its extra-subjective laws, while in the case of sentient spontaneity it penetrates the psyche subconsciously. Its unconscious affirmation,

however, is almost always inseparable from its distortion: the presence of the conscious principle is insufficient with respect to the vital element.

[148] A fundamental rule for the investigator is the following: the threshold of consciousness can be crossed only when there is a subject who crosses it, or an I, capable of taking on such an act and of relating the experience to itself. Of course this experience always has a "subject", an experient, no matter what, but it is a matter of this subject being in clear possession of the fact that it is a subject, and not eliminating itself as such by reifying psychic facts and yet still presuming to penetrate into the psyche. To cross the threshold is not to allow oneself to be invaded by that which the threshold delimits, but to conquer it, as if negating it, and enter into the objective world of one's own forces. These can assume a morbid character if they interact in a disordered way in the psyche through a diminished relation with the conscious principle. The whole phenomenology of the psyche changes in accordance with the position of the I in relation to it: this position is of course influenced by the circumstances of the psyche, but essentially depends upon the I, which cannot ultimately be determined by anything other than itself. When the psyche prevails upon the I, this is invariably the sign of the I's abdication; to identify physical or psychic causes is essentially an illusion, even if useful methodologically: it signifies the potentising of these elements with respect to the I.

[149] Reification of psychic phenomena is an obstacle to our research. Nor can the phenomena be represented with fixed images or static concepts without falsifying their content, because by its very nature this is in continual movement and precisely in its changeability assumes value in relation to the conscious principle. A given feeling can grow stronger or weaker, or reach heights of exaltation, and yet, at each level of its varying intensity, have a different value, according to its relation with the conscious principle: which at each level may be only weakly present, but equally can be present in a clear and masterful way even in the moment of exaltation (and of greatest emotional intensity). The same thing can be said in regard to thoughts, and in regard to the will. A force that is not mastered is an illness; mastered, it is the positive expression of the human. The presence of the conscious principle is the decisive factor for the meaning of any process in the life of the soul. In reality, instincts are forces of the soul, in respect of which the soul has lost its power of correlation.



[150] It is not justified to speak of “repressed instincts”, because neither scientifically nor logically can it be said that anyone represses his or her own instincts. Nor would it be desirable as a conscious faculty, because whoever consciously managed to repress his instincts would already have had to renounce the possibility of knowing that part of himself which would be capable of this act, and which for this very reason could establish a right relation with the suppressed part. The task ought not to be the repression, but much rather the *knowledge* of the instincts.

[151] On the other hand, from the point of view of the subject (the experient) of consciousness, which does not exist solely as some philosophical or psychological phantom, to give or not give rein to the instincts makes no difference. Dependence upon an instinct is not removed by its satisfaction or by its non-satisfaction. It is our capacity for inner responsibility that determines the character of the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of an instinct.

[152] Freud’s error is to have confused the instinct with its expression: an expression which can be given or denied to the instinct by whoever is the bearer of it, independently of being subjected to it or not. Freud ignored the subject who experiences the instincts, he or she who has them as significant relations with him or herself, and through whom exclusively they exist. The expression “to repress an instinct” would be valid in the case of someone who had the instinct in front of him like an object that could be either accepted or rejected; but in this case there would be no need to repress anything, because the principle of consciousness which encountered the instinctual current with this kind of autonomy, would not find itself opposed to it, would not be dealing with an invasive and overwhelming otherness, but rather would experience a positive identification with it.

[153] It is not even a question of unconscious repression, because subjection to an instinct is, in essence, a case of identity inverted, to be precise a psychic otherness to which one is unconsciously subjected—and this is not repressed instinct, but its opposite: the instinct with which one has become thoroughly identified, so that there is really nothing left to repress, as can be seen in a recent type of humanity which has established itself on the basis

of a pedagogy inspired by psychoanalytic theories, and for whom liberty and instinctuality are one and the same thing.

[154] From the point of view of Freud and Jung it could be objected that the repression with which psychoanalysis concerns itself, is unconscious with respect to the attitude of consciousness. If this were the case, the task would not consist of getting the so-called repressed instincts to emerge from the depths, but far rather to help the subject emerge, the subject for whom they may become an otherness dominating the self from the depths. This otherness, according to psychoanalysis, dominates because it is in unconscious correlation with consciousness. But, in that case, psychoanalysis would have to be the thing least fitted to resolving the conflict, in that its methods tend to potentise the otherness: with its images of the unconscious, of tendencies, complexes, transference; with all its manoeuvres regarding an entity which conditions the I. Such an entity, in fact, acquires life and density when the I describes it to itself, and animates and potentises it, at its own expense.

[155] The conception of a “repressed instinct” is a mental image not only void of reality but also of logical content. An otherness is presented as being objective fact, which can only exist as such because of there being a subject, but from the point of view of psychoanalysis this subject does not exist; in fact no such subject can be real unless it is founded on itself, rather than existing as a thing determined by an Other. But here we are concerned with an “other” that is necessarily referred to a subject, which is therefore at one and the same time negated and affirmed, assumed as a premise and yet eliminated. Nevertheless, it has a sort of secondary or subsidiary existence bestowed on it through analysis, so that the message from the depths can be affirmed which thus makes it cease to exist again; so that what we end up with is never the I brought face to face with its own non-being—which in truth could never oppose itself to it, but would always be penetrated by it—but rather the I faced with its own unconscious phantasm which dominates it and leads it around on a psychoanalytic leash.

[156] In keeping with this, and so as to prevent “repressed instincts” and “complexes” from afflicting the human adult, it has been thought to develop an education which would not disturb or interfere with the child’s instincts, but which would in fact cultivate them. As a result the child is spared the obligation of fulfilling duties, of discipline, rules, rhythms,

ethical considerations, conscious resolve and decision. The cult of instinctuality is instilled into the child who, lacking any adequate contrast, finds himself methodically immersed in the sensuality of a self-feeling identical with his own animal nature, so that by a process of gradual affirmation this becomes later in his life the standard by which he evaluates and measures what it means to be human.

10. *The principle of healing*

[157] The conscious principle's presence to an inner state can indicate to the investigator the capacity to limit its invasiveness or to quell it, but equally the possibility of letting oneself go deliberately into it, as far as cognitive limits allow, whilst maintaining in essence one's self-possession. Experiencing the forces of the soul, when the subject who experiences them is consciously present, leads to knowledge of the objective content of feelings and of instincts—which generally become destructive forces, in that the conscious principle is not distinguished from the general surging of their movement, a distinction which is absolutely necessary for their assumption or resolution.

[158] If we can experience these forces, and without falling into the error of maintaining that the conscious principle is merely a rational power of inhibition in contrast to the profound forces from the depths of consciousness, then in essence what is perceived is a dynamic element in the life of the soul, identical with that which we have shown can be experienced as the dynamic extrasensory element in perception and in thinking. In reality, waking consciousness is diametrically opposed to its own underlying forces, but in the context of a radical correlation: to the extent that this opposition functions, thanks to the conscious principle, as a genuine independence, consciousness attains harmony with these forces. By virtue of this harmony, the life-element flows into the workings of consciousness.

[159] It is possible to speak of a supersensible vital body, or etheric body, which on the one hand is the body of formative forces of the physical organism and on the other is the mediator between thinking, feeling, willing and the bodily organisation—in other words the

vehicle for the manifestation of the soul's life, including its flowering within sense-perception.

[160] Instincts and emotions can pathologically gain the upper hand, when they manage to bring about a disturbance in or a damage to the life-element, in much the same way as sensations which distort objective perceptual content, or as thinking which thinks by losing the level⁶ that corresponds to its emergence within consciousness.

[161] This destructive disturbance is inevitably reciprocal between soul-element and life-element, and hence between soul and body. To grasp the meaning of this reciprocity is to understand how a disturbance of the soul necessarily communicates itself to the body and, vice versa, disturbance of the body to the soul, the boundary between them being one that unites them in the metaphysical ordering of things, with which consciousness has lost its connection.

[162] By functional necessity, the psychic being works through the vital body: in our interior structure, there continually occurs a conjoining of psychic being and vital body, which is now a harmonious cooperation, now a distorted entanglement or an oppression of one by the other.

[163] Any psychic activity, be it mental, emotional or volitional, can only manifest via the vehicle of the vital body. To manifest positively means that the inner activity becomes conscious, that it fulfils itself as an act independent of the supports which served as its vehicle; this independence fails to occur when the inner process is made to inhere in the physical body or deviates into it, or when a similar thing occurs in relation to specific zones of the vital body.

[164] What actually happens is that the forces associated with the bodily supports react to what is either an excess or a deficiency of inner strength. This excess, or deficiency, can always be traced back to the relation pertaining between the psyche and the I: that is, to a loss of independence on the part of the inner principle with respect to the body-bound

⁶ I.e., forsaking the clarity that rightly belongs to it [trans.].

psyche. Thus the reaction is directed towards the inner being, with an impulse either to exclude the inner principle or else to bind it to itself more strongly.

[165] We shall see presently how these two opposite yet similarly morbid situations are possible. To be able to perceive a psychic disturbance as partaking of one or the other of these circumstances—either the dissolution of conscious forces or their too deep penetration into the vital-physical organism—is the very principle of therapy.

[166] If the structure of the psyche is such that the life of the soul manifests by way of the bodily-vital supports, such manifestation in its turn involves the life-current of the soul uniting temporarily with the support, with that part of it remaining independent which is ultimately destined to become consciousness of the content. A pathological situation arises when this independence fails to occur: the union degenerates, giving rise to psychic forms which separate themselves from the rightful inner order.

[167] The disturbance, from which the maladies of body and soul generally originate, consists of the fact that the physical support suffers harm from the psyche, or that the altered support alters in its turn the life of the psyche.

[168] Nevertheless, whoever cares to observe will notice that he can understand the facts of the soul only if he succeeds in seeing the psyche as functioning, certainly, by way of bodily supports, but being in reality founded upon its own principle which, because it is the genuine foundational principle, is the principle of the bodily organisation as well, its polar opposite, in fact, and therefore incorporeal. Accordingly, everything that destroys or undermines the healthy rapport between psyche and body has to be referred to the relationship of the psyche with this incorporeal principle. But evidently this is that same principle which is at work in the contemplation which has as its object the facts of the soul, and is able to operate amongst them precisely because it is the principle of the soul: the principle unseen by Freud and seen to an even lesser extent by Jung, who included it in the sphere of the unconscious.

[169] The life of consciousness is not a product or an extension of the bodily organisation, but rather the opposite: it is not a position of nature, but exists in contraposition to nature.

Within the bodily supports, any prevalence of the vital processes over those of the soul signifies illness, or else an elimination, a casting out of consciousness. Such casting out may of course mean nothing more than the normal advent of sleep, where the prevalence of the vital processes corresponds to the simple necessity of physical repose, but it can also be an illness, a disturbance of the psyche. Affirmation of nature can be one of two things: either the total preponderance of the bodily life, which gives rise to sleep or a state of faintness; or alternatively the self-perpetuation of vital forces, separating and severing themselves from the ordered action of the forces that preside over the bodily structure.

11. Non-pertinence of the nervous system in regard to feelings and instincts

[170] Consciousness arises when the soul's life manifests through the three principal bodily-vital supports, amongst which the **neurosensory** support, as the vehicle of perception and mental imagery, is the basis of waking consciousness and of the functions which bring to its awareness those activities which unfold through the two other supports, the **rhythmical** and the **metabolic**.

[171] We have seen how feeling and willing are connected with their respective bodily seats in a way that does not correspond to the waking state, but rather to the dreaming state and the state of deep dreamless sleep, and that solely in the vehicle of the nervous system do they attain to consciousness, giving an account of themselves (so to speak) through the cerebral organ.

[172] Waking consciousness has in thinking the activity to which it owes its emergence, whilst with feeling and willing it finds itself confronted by impulses which reach it **mediated by forces outside its own mediation**—impulses which are, therefore, **immediate**. As a result, their presence points towards a content which in the moment eludes its grasp: consciousness is constrained to have, with these impulses of feeling and willing, not a relation such as it has with thinking—direct, proper to its own nature—but an alienated relation, imposed on it by having to receive and take up these elements with the cerebral vehicle. For this reason the I cannot avoid a certain incompetence in dealing with the

instincts and passions, which are the product of this alienation, with no simple way of being authentically itself with them.

[173] Feelings and impulses essentially take place in an extra-subjective sphere, and to the extent that thinking in its mediated form is conditioned by them, it is impossible for the conscious subject to regulate them; but it is precisely this alienation, before which the subject acquiesces, which constitutes the lower subjectivity of egoism. In reality, in the way they impose themselves upon our consciousness, leading it into positions absurdly at odds with its own inherent nature, feelings and impulses nevertheless stimulate the very essence and principle of consciousness from the depths to assume with full responsibility the mediation to which they owe their coming to consciousness: as a result of which it may experience their real content. Pleasure and pain in truth invariably give rise to a subjective reaction, rather than to the experience of their objective content on the part of the subject. The irrational nature of impulses and emotions in effect calls for a higher rationality from consciousness, for an overcoming of the rational limitation caused by the dependence of thinking on cerebral mediation. This dependency is what the psychotherapist needs to focus on above all, rather than the psychic phenomena which derive from it.

[174] This problem confirms that it is impossible for ordinary consciousness to mediate the processes of feeling and willing, because it does not have at its disposal a real, **functional independence** from the cerebral support, in spite of having the potential for such independence. What this is about is independence from the support-mechanism which makes consciousness experience emotions and instincts in the nerve-channel, which is not ultimately pertinent to them. That their invasiveness exhibits an ineluctable character can be attributed to their having to follow a path identical to that taken by sensations. This eliminates the real content, their original extrasensory being, and prevents it from becoming a content of consciousness or an experience of the soul; only if this were to occur could the content then legitimately go on to become also a bodily sensation. Consciousness ought to be able to have an experience of thinking independent of the bodily nature, so as to be able to encounter directly the forces of feeling and of willing.

[175] The neuroses of our time can be traced, even more fundamentally than to specific, clinically identifiable psychic or nervous causes, to a more general factor which has by now

become constitutional, namely the **non-pertinence** of the nervous system in regard to the currents of feeling and of the will.

[176] Feelings and impulses are facts which regularly display an absurd character for normal consciousness, because it simply cannot penetrate them: it is limited to being merely a *consciousness of being grasped* or taken hold of by them—and this consciousness forms mental images for itself regarding contents which essentially confound it. In reality the conscious human being never *has* feelings and impulses as an observable object, in the way that he or she does with the objects of thinking, except in those rare instances of elevation to the heights of meditation or of artistic creation, which allows him or her to experience, in respectively diverse forms, a conscious identity with the contents of the emotion or the impulse, which as a result acquire a quite different value.

[177] Emotion and impulse cannot be an object of consciousness, because they come forth as perception-sensation complete in itself, in other words complete with respect to thinking: there cannot be a living relationship between consciousness and impulse or emotion, because impulses and emotions are possible owing to an **alienated consciousness**. Only a consciousness restored to itself, to its own true nature, could perceive the content of an instinct, but in that case it would enter into contact with an original force. In effect, the human being does not experience the real content of feelings or impulses, in that he or she is compelled to feel his or her own passivity, not on the level of feeling, nor on the level of willing, and therefore not as an action of the I towards these things, but rather as a nervous reaction—which then resounds as a state of mind or as an impulse.

[178] The human being who is in the grip of an emotion or an instinct in reality finds him or herself in a sphere of perceptions which already has thinking in its power—the real content of these sentient processes is just what he or she cannot perceive: therefore they are at the basis of one's limited subjectivity and of the continual clash between it and the subjectivity of others. What he or she feels is the form in which, by way of subjective mental imagery, he or she experiences the alteration or distortion of the real content. The distortion of the content and the alienation of consciousness are one and the same thing. Only an intact, integral consciousness, one that is autonomous, or "empty", could actually perceive the real content.

[179] The alienation of consciousness with respect to the emotive-instinctual life is the consequence of the cerebralisation of thinking, which does away with the possibility of consciousness's independence from the nervous system and its direct perception of the dynamics of the psyche, whose substantial and essential reality comes to expression outside this system.

[180] One of the reasons why people of our time feel the need to provide themselves in some way with a surrogate kind of inner security—typically through drugs, activism or myth—is precisely their obscure intuition of the inadequacy of consciousness with respect to the insistent fact of feelings and instincts. The condition of emotionality or of instinctivity presents itself as something fundamentally senseless for the dialectical consciousness produced by this 'inadequacy'. This senselessness, or meaninglessness, is avoided with every possible care, but it exists and besieges the human being, and succeeds to an ever greater degree to make itself felt, in spite of all opposing rational defences and logical barricades. When these defences are overcome, if the subject manages to avoid ending up in a psychiatric clinic, the psychologist (himself steeped in the constitutional inadequacy referred to here) will most likely set about cultivating a state of inner collapse, thanks to an art which is ignorant of how to make the real healer, the I, emerge. His is an art which fails to grasp the dynamic of the affliction, but may nevertheless succeed in giving the impression of curing it, indirectly dispelling the fear by calling forth a special feeling: the illusion of having been helped by someone who knows how things stand.

[181] It is possible, though, for a certain type of human being, to turn his or her inner collapse into an ideological impulse, whose dialectics present the appearance of a decisive renewal, but are actually a phenomenon symptomatic of a brain-bound mentality completely ignorant of its bondage. The real content (of such ideological impulses) is narrowly conservative, because it cannot change anything outside itself, being in itself without inner movement; in fact, for inner movement it substitutes cerebral mediation, which is the unconscious chaining of thought. Narrowly conservative, such impulses are destructive in their social ramifications, in that they give the appearance of renewing things by making physical, external and mechanical changes which actually leave unchanged the real state of things.



[182] In reality the nervous system has the role of *perceiving* feelings and impulses, not of producing them, in the same way as the sense-organs do not serve to produce sensations but merely to perceive sensory content. As the eye is not altered by what it sees, so also the nervous system ought not to be concerned with feelings and impulses, its task being simply to convey them to consciousness, or to the I.

[183] Whoever achieves a practical realisation of the function of the nervous system as a purely mediating activity, unrelated to all thinking-sentient contents, would experience the extrasensory origin of feeling and willing, and would hold the key to the problems of the soul: he or she would have in fact the soul as it really is, as an entity of a body-transcendent nature, not the soul as an entity conditioned by the bodily physicality.

[184] The fact that the nervous system suffers that which it ought instead to transmit, and therefore becomes ill, comes about because of how it compels feelings and impulses to manifest on its own level, that is, precisely where thinking consciousness has bound itself to the cerebral process. The cerebralisation typically exhibited in the constitution of the modern human being constrains the emotional-instinctive life to become destructive for the nervous system.

[185] Such insights enable us to understand how intellectual activity can border on neurosis and how scientific mentality (thoroughly intellectualised) carries within itself, owing to its deficient awareness of the process of knowledge, the seed or germ of paranoia. In practice, though, cerebralism turns out to be less pathological for someone who practises it in its theoretical application, than for the person who naively imbibes its end results in the form of practical knowledge. Whoever studies or teaches a false doctrine, an erroneous theory, suffers the consequences to a far lesser extent than someone who passively learns it, **believing** in it, without participating in its conceptual elaboration. For this reason the ills and discontents of brain-bound thinking, of cerebral intellectuality, with which in some measure the modern human being manages to coexist, have a corruptive influence,

extending as far as abnormal excitation of the instincts, in typologically primitive peoples⁷, even if they are the bearers of wisdom-traditions.

[186] The rationalistic experience of the contemporary human being, unfolding by way of a thinking activity whose abnormality consists in not possessing its own movement, and thus in being unaware of the value of its own pre-formal being, gives rise to a use of the nervous system which is non-pertinent, and which a sufficiently perceptive analysis can identify as the origin of a vast range of maladies.

[187] This non-pertinence, unrecognised and hence unconsciously suffered and formalised, not only stimulates an irregular relation between thinking, feeling and willing, and therefore between the corresponding bodily systems, but inevitably leads psycho-physical research to erroneous and baseless conclusions regarding the phenomena of the psyche and their connections with the physical organism.

[188] The nervous system can be seen as one great sense-organ, by means of which the human being perceives far more than he or she is consciously aware of. Here we touch upon an extraconscious which, as we shall see, has nothing to do with the unconscious of psychoanalysis, but is uniquely traceable to the inner principle of autonomy and responsibility, of which it—the nervous system—is the perceptible instrument. The functions of the nervous system are neither emotive, nor volitional, nor of a motor nature, but simply sensory or perceptual, and, on the cerebral level, serve to mediate thinking. The task for thinking is to extend the cognitive function which the nervous system already mediates for it in regard to the sense-perceptible aspects of the world, to the domain of the extraconscious. In actual fact, the subject of perceiving is the same as the subject of thinking: it is the I.

⁷ A potentially contentious assertion, it refers to cultures which have not had the same gradual development of intellectuality as the West, but which have more or less suddenly been exposed to its products [trans.].

PART II

SOUL AND PSYCHE

12. Mind and metabolism: antithesis & synthesis

[189] Identifying the function of the nervous system presupposes observation of the connections between the three basic, characteristic activities of the psyche and the corresponding bodily systems: that is, between the tripartite structure of the psychic organisation and that of the corresponding physical organism.

[190] This threefoldness does not have a static character: there is amongst thinking, feeling and willing an incessant combining and interacting, according to a hierarchical order inherent in their inner nature, which is continually undermined by the ego-nature and

continually reasserts itself against it. A reciprocal influence moves them within a sphere which, in keeping with the hierarchical order referred to, leads them **in the heights above** to their inner wellspring and **in the depths below** to their physical supports.

[191] Feeling and willing, in relation to the conditions imposed on them by their physical supports, are only partially knowable for the human being. In fact we have seen how they are mediated to consciousness by the nervous system, which is not however their support: what is mediated then is already mediated contents, unrelated to the immediacy to which those contents refer. What feeling and willing objectively *are* eludes the grasp of consciousness, being outside or beyond the content by which they become known to consciousness, that is to say outside the ambit of the nervous system. This in reality mediates only one original **immediate** thing, and that is thinking.

[192] If there were no need for cerebral mediation, thinking would not have to think or reflect in order to know, because it would immediately penetrate the object and grasp its essence. Mediation is necessary in that the thinking force, to “enter” the sensory world as thought, needs an organ which has been formed by structural adaptation to the sensory: the cerebral organ. This organ extinguishes the living element within thinking, thus making it a thinking aware of and adapted to the sensory level. In this way the living element within thinking vanishes into the extraconscious.

[193] In reality the one immediacy which the human being could experience as such is thinking, the very principle of mediation, which the modern thinker renounces by not distinguishing that which is **immediate in essence**—pure, pre-cerebral thinking—from the **mediation itself** of dialectics. In fact, whoever thinks ought not and need not attach any further mediating activity to this pure immediacy (of pre-cerebral thinking), because it already reveals itself to us as an absolute objectivity. We do not need to carry out an act of knowledge in order to know it, because it is already knowledge. This pure immediacy, when it is experienced, reveals itself as a living element: and as such is identical with the pure immediacy of feeling, and the pure immediacy of the will. We shall show how it is not possible to proceed any further in researching the psyche unless this principle is firmly grasped.



[194] The psyche's threefoldness is functionally a duality, once we manage to see in the middle region the meeting-point of two systems of forces, one "higher" (the cerebral, neurosensory and respiratory functions), the other "lower" (metabolic and motor functions), and once we understand that two types of psychic currents, which are also diametrically opposed, are connected to these systems: the rational-affective and the volitional-instinctive respectively. This duality reveals itself eventually as a threefoldness, which becomes apparent once we discern a principle superior to both polarities, regulating the interconnections between them and tending towards an all-encompassing or total synthesis of their workings.

[195] We find ourselves also confronted with the two polarities of the nervous system, its central and peripheral aspects, but also with two groups of bodily processes, so that the human seems the being in whom there unite themselves, or who allows to unite within him or herself, two distinct life-currents: one which organises him from above, another which organises him from below, one descending and the other ascending, and both of them necessary aspects of a structure whose purpose is to make manifest, on the physical plane, in the form of self-awareness, an unequivocally non-physical principle. We can conceive of the action of an original unitary force which polarises itself in two opposing currents—opposing only in relation to the necessities of the manifestation-process—involving a bodily instrument and a corresponding consciousness: an image, let it be noted, only useful schematically, as a help in understanding the meaning of the polarity of the two systems of forces in relation to a principle of synthesis.

[196] When reference is made to the physical supports of these forces, we ought to think of two groups of organs and apparati, functionally in harmony through their opposition. The opposition, whose ultimate sense is the conscious experience of the principle of synthesis, or self-awareness, is incited to become a conflict, and therefore a process destructive for the physical structure itself, by the workings of conscious intellectual activities, which however can also open the way to the compensatory life-current, inherent (as has been indicated) in those same intellectual activities, when they are able to unite themselves with the principle of synthesis, or in other words become self-aware. When such a compensation does not take

place, the destructive processes of thinking contribute to the pathological one-sidedness of the life of consciousness, either in a rational-affective or volitional-instinctive sense.

[197] The very physical structures themselves can, through constitutional irregularity or temporary disturbance, provoke a negative form of the opposition between the two systems of forces: these can undergo alterations which, when they are not compensated by energies operating at their level, end up projecting themselves into the conflict between the two currents of the psyche. Nevertheless it is quite normal that one polarity should tend functionally to dominate the other: the human being evolves as a conscious personality by continually having to re-establish equilibrium between them, even when he or she is unaware of doing so. With the ascent of consciousness towards self-consciousness, the human being, referring him or herself to the principle of synthesis, indirectly works on the harmonious accord of the two types of forces, and thereby even on the reintegration of the vitality eliminated by the processes of mental or intellectual consciousness.

[198] The various nervous ailments can however be explained by the prevalence of one of the two polarities over the other: a prevalence which needs to be seen, in each case, in the light of the non-pertinent function of the nervous system. It can be said that the opposition between the two inner polarities becomes pathological whenever it manifests as a disharmony or clash between the two corresponding physical systems. The disharmony may have its origin in the psyche and begin to manifest physically, but with the physical phase it tends towards a psychic compensation, which is then blocked by the nervous system's non-pertinence. This is the kind of situation in which neuroses can become of serious concern.

[199] It can happen, though, that the psychosomatic compensation is not strong enough in its twofold process, and that no serious and noticeable psychosis occurs: in which case the conflict, as a final stage, transfers itself to the physical structure where it appears as a normal illness, by way of some point of least resistance.

[200] Diagnostic assistance becomes effective if it manages to grasp the distinction between symptoms relating to a transition from body to psyche and vice versa, on the basis of a knowledge of the fundamental polarity and reciprocal opposition of the two systems,

with the aim of distinguishing between illnesses of a truly organic nature and those of a nervous origin.

[201] The initial sign of conflict or of the prevalence of one polarity over the other can be perceived in the breakdown of the relation between thinking, feeling and willing, itself traceable to an insufficient presence of thinking awareness. There are, as will be shown in the coming chapters, two types of psychic disequilibrium discernible. (1) The mental element is overwhelmed by the metabolic: through a deficiency, thinking becomes manipulated by an instinctive willing, conceptual activity moves according to impulses which alienate it from I-consciousness, and feeling is driven into reactions which do not correspond with its real nature. (2) The opposite scenario: the metabolic element is overwhelmed by the mental: thinking prevails over willing: through its own excess, rational representational activity, or conceptual abstraction, frustrates the I's awareness. In this case too feeling is driven into action, now by a weakening of the will and an overwhelming mental-picturing activity: a subjective imagining causes feeling to trespass in other zones of the psyche.

[202] In any instance of psychopathology the activity of feeling will be seen to be distorted by one of the two forms of imbalance described above. Even when we are dealing with phenomena of a simply emotional kind, we need to focus not on what is happening in the feelings themselves but on which polarity they have been called forth from: from the mental sphere's overpowering of the metabolic or, vice versa, metabolism's ascendancy over the mental.

[203] Here though we find ourselves face to face with a dynamic process taking place in the back-space of consciousness, unfolding not as the problematics of a world of tendencies, conflicts, resistances or repressed impulses—which is the typical way of referring everything to the capacious and infinitely expandable repository of the “unconscious”—but rather as a phenomenology, whose pathological development can be attributed to a failure or absence of the ordering principle of consciousness, the I, with respect to the instinctive-emotive and rational-affective currents, a failure which shows itself either as an excess or as a deficiency in the presence and working of the I with regard to the forces of the soul. This kind of conflict requires the restoration of original harmony and concord by the central essence of

the I. We shall see presently which psycho-physiological processes can be identified at the root of the disquiet between the two polarities.

13. *The middle system*

[204] The interrelation between the two systems of forces unfolds by mutual influence and reciprocal limitation, and permits us to intuit the presence of a principle superior to both of them. The bodily constitution itself, taken as a whole, reveals its correspondence with a **principle** which cannot be deduced from the merely physical structure.

[205] It is not possible to consider these systems of forces within exclusively psycho-physical limits. We are dealing with complexes of organs, to be understood in connection with the decisive function of consciousness and with the life-currents by which they are accordingly created. We cannot speak of the head-organisation without referring to the system of vital-mental currents, nor about the metabolic system without recognising there the convergence of vital-volitional currents; nor can we fail to see in both the presence of a single power of synthesis. The selfsame principle expresses itself in the polarity of thinking as in that of the metabolism.

[206] This twofold polarity, however, when it is contemplated, permits us to see in the thoracic region a middle organism, a zone of equilibrium between the two systems, whose centre is the heart: the seat of organic rhythms, which come to expression in the cycles of breath and blood, in the pulsing of the heart and also in the life of feeling. It can be said that through the middle system there acts a rhythmical principle, a principle of rhythm and of synthesis of the two opposites.

[207] To speak of the two systems, head and metabolism, as two opposed polarities, means being aware of the simultaneous interrelationship of mental, rhythmic and metabolic processes in the upper system, and metabolic, rhythmical and "mental" processes in the lower system. The term "mental" here does not have the meaning normally associated with conscious intelligence, because it refers not only to rational activity, but also to that which in

the metabolic region corresponds to it, and which, as we shall see, is not a continuation of rational activity, but rather a consequence, according to its own laws, of the unfolding of that activity in the region which is proper to it.

[208] In the human being of these times, the range of disturbances in the connection between the two systems can be traced back to an inadequate functioning of the middle system. This in its turn can be attributed to an insufficiency in awareness or consciousness of self, and therefore to a disordered relation between the activity of thinking and the physical organ of thought, or more specifically the rhythmic and metabolic processes of the brain.

[209] Through insufficient I-presence the activity of thinking, unable to distinguish itself from what are merely sentient states, in essence does not realise that it is itself something distinct from cerebral processes and therefore unconsciously identifies itself with them: thus, as an *unthinking* mental activity, it influences that which corresponds to it in the metabolic system. Within the middle system, the I in actual fact tends to operate directly, whereas it never fully expresses its regulatory function by way of reflected mentality, or in other words through the other two systems.

[210] Every distortion in the life of the psyche can be traced back to wrongful infiltration of the mental into the metabolic workings: brain-bound alienated thinking paralyses or corrupts the current of the will. The forces of the middle system intervene in keeping with their equilibrating function, taking up that which has been disturbed into the vehicle of feeling—which is thus constrained to bear various forms of suffering and dole.

[211] Anguish, melancholy, desperation are in essence a message from feeling to the conscious principle; their task is not to drag it down but rather to stimulate its autonomy with respect to cerebral processes. When feeling ceases to conform to the function required by the middle system, then the situation of the psyche begins to be genuinely pathological.

14. *Supersensible processes in the body*

[212] That very essence which is active at the basis of the mental system can be seen, as a metabolic element, in its dynamic form in the process of nutrition. In this process, the transformation of substances is effected by forces which, in the upper system, and in an incorporeal state, come to expression as spiritual activity; whereas in the metabolic system, the system of transformation and exchange, they manifest their direct power over the materiality of substance.

[213] In the higher region these forces work, unrecognised and unknown, as the fundamental forces of consciousness, continually traversing the “membrane” between the conscious and the extraconscious in any free action of the intellect, or in a moment of pure intuition, that is, a moment of higher consciousness—which is becoming ever more rare and harder for people even to conceive. As volitional forces, on the other hand, they act organically, in a state of independence from the conscious sphere, and therefore with the greatest amount of their inherent *dynamis*: in the “lower” region they express themselves as the metabolic power of the processes of transformation-digestion and as motor activity of the limbs. *Their* movement is possible precisely because of the absolute autonomy of the volitional forces in regard to the physical.

[214] Whilst the metabolic processes are connected in the cerebral system with the volitional current of thinking, in the digestive system of exchange and total transformation they express the extraconscious activity of the will, which at the same time is the power that moves the limbs: united with its own **essence**, it is the structuring power of the bodily nature. Here the inner principle manifests *as will* the maximum degree of its force, which is not possible for it within the current limits of the mental nature, which can only call upon the will-current by way of mental images, in other words for specific purposes and not directly.

[215] The equilibrium of the life of the psyche rests above all on the rapport, the connection, that thinking indirectly activates with the volitional element in the cerebral region. In thinking which thinks in accordance with its own inner principle—e.g., in the act of concentration—a conscious concord is possible between the “superior” or upper region

(the intellective) and the “lower” (or volitional), corresponding to the inherent underlying hierarchy of the forces. In the head region this hierarchy ordinarily undergoes a distortion because of the opposition of reflected thinking to its own inner wellspring.

[216] The forces which manifest themselves as spiritual activity in the upper system display their dynamic power in the lower system, and work amongst other things on the transmutation of substance for the purpose of nutrition. This transmutation takes place according to phases connected with the necessity of the various levels of the physical organisation, which as we have seen correspond to so many grades or levels of consciousness.

[217] Through such phases substances are removed from their basal exterior structure and brought to a structural dependence on the inner principles of the organism, to the point where they can, through their placement into its vital circuit, respond to the needs of the bodily organicity governed by the I. The transmutative action takes up the fundamental nature of substances in such a way as to free them from the particular combinations of forces proper to their mineral condition.

[218] Etheric currents act formatively on the human being as the vehicle of the metabolic will-forces, not via the forces of the mental will: in the domain of the mineral nature and therefore on the physical-chemical plane, these etheric currents can be said to be external to substance, not in the sense that they are separate, but in that they hold sway over physicality from a basis that is non-physical. Since the human being is not capable of perceiving this basis, the mineral world appears to him or her to be merely sensory, and he or she deems as a purely physical value the being, for example, of a crystal which, as form and colour, is actually a correlation arising in our inwardness, by way of a perceiving and a thinking whose metabolic moment is invisible to us. Sensory perception is a rapport, a connection, a relation between the inner human being and minerality—which in our bodily structure, with the notable exception of the sense-organs, is generally dominated by inner forces through the action of the etheric body. The real significance of this relation is the transition from physical to etheric consciousness—from consciousness of the physical world to a conscious awareness of the living etheric world.

[219] The extraconscious forces of the inner human being operate indirectly within the organism on the inner nature of substance, dissolving its physicality and therefore tending to lead it back to an original and pre-terrestrial condition of vitality. In the bodily structure these extraconscious forces, through the various phases of the processes of digestion and assimilation, tend to lead substances back from their materiality to their original function as vehicles of the spirit. The organism falls sick when this work is obstructed. On the level of inorganic nature-forces, when the forces of consciousness have been at work in opposition to the processes of life, matter generally tends to quickly reestablish itself. At the same time the vital essence of the human being struggles against these inorganic nature-forces so that the physical organism may continue to exist as an instrument of the spiritual principle.

[220] The human being falls ill when the bodily instrument requires a deeper psychophysical penetration of the spiritual principle. In the healthy organism physical matter is permeated by the spirit—if even only by way of various internal connections—even in those organs and those processes which have, for structural reasons, a functional autonomy bestowed upon them with respect to any spiritual activity.



[221] In the process of nutrition the extraconscious forces of the organism act upon the inner nature of substance, annihilating its merely physical state, that is, the provisional and aggregate state which is necessary in order for substances to have a constituent part in the terrestrial realm—which appears physical to the human being, and is sense-perceptible insofar as it is external and opposite to its inner basis. It is worth bringing to mind the transformation of sensations into spiritual activity through the deed of thinking, in order to comprehend how deeper, more profound forces **of a will-nature** might act in the transformation of substances, so that these can become a vehicle for life. But life in itself has no meaning: it exists solely through and for a principle which lives it.

[222] Poetically, though most likely without grasping the full extent of his intuition, someone seems to have understood this when he affirmed: “Life does not live.”⁸

⁸ Epigraph to Theodor Adorno’s *Minima Moralia*, attributed to F. Kürnberger (1821-1879) [trans.]

[223] Just as the current of the will, stimulated by conscious thinking, manages to dominate and eliminate natural processes to the point of bringing about changes to the instinctual elements in the metabolic system, so in the same way extraconscious powers of the will work on the chemicalisation of substance: this takes place initially as an annihilation of their natural aggregate state and as a recombining, not according to their immanent physical laws but to the correspondence of these laws with their metaphysical principle, present within the human being and working through and beyond conscious mediation.

[224] This principle, which is the principle of the I, whilst it works according to the autonomy that consciousness requires with respect to the etheric organism, via processes which fundamentally differentiate the human physical structure from the animal's (it is an error, for example, to believe that a substance acts in the same way in both humans and animals), at the same time works as the supersensible essence of every mineral element present within the organism.

[225] In the extraconscious, the I experiences the inner power of mineral substance, which expresses itself in the physical world as will. The vital or etheric body of the human being is in itself the living synthesis of the minerals existing on the Earth. If we bear in mind that in the structure of the physical body every terrestrial mineral is present, we can understand how each mineral element needs to be permeated by the vital or etheric force which corresponds to it. At the same time the human vital body needs, in order to fully express itself within the physical structure—the visible physical structure—the whole array of mineral *quanta*⁹, which enable it to function as the instrument of the psyche and of the I.

[226] A deficiency or excess of the mineral element in relation to the action of the etheric body is the sign of sickness: in which case the action of the etheric body can be stimulated, if one succeeds in identifying the mineral which is lacking or in excess. Actually the cause of the insufficient correlation can be found in a disturbance of the connection between physical body, etheric, psyche and I, and is ultimately attributable to an insufficient autonomy of the I with respect to the psycho-physical instrument. The irregular action of one of the currents—mental, psychic, etheric—eventually has an effect upon the correlation of the etheric body with the physical. All the forms of this correlation are connected to the dominion of the I, so

⁹ Lat. = Discrete perceptible units or aspects of the mineral realm [trans.].

that any disharmony between physical, etheric and psyche can be referred to an irregular presence of the I in the life of the ensouled physical organism, either an excess or a deficiency.

[227] When metabolic processes take place in such a way that the mineral element is not mastered by the corresponding inner element, the mineral tends to repeat the action that was proper to it in external nature; chemical processes, with respect to the metabolic system, begin to occur with an autonomy that signals an opposition to the metabolism's function (assimilation and nutrition): the spiritual forces of the upper system, present in the lower system, do not have sufficient force to master the chemical processes of transformation: these necessarily arrive at a certain correlation of their own, which separates itself from the overall equilibrium of the organism.

[228] A series of illnesses can be traced back to such a situation. Our interest is to point out the neuro-psycho-morbidity associated with it and which is always the first stage of the organically pathological phase. This first stage in general, as was indicated in chapter 12, exhibits two typical psychic aspects. (1). The subject has a will that is abnormally weak—a weak will being the normal condition of the human being of our times. In such a case, the emotive-instinctual impulses prevent the development, on the part of consciousness, of an equilibrating rationality; as compensation, the metabolic-abdominal human reacts according to an artificial use of the forces of the metabolic region, tending to perpetuate the abnormal condition by bringing it to external expression. The individual can appear strong-willed, but in essence is ruled by an alienation of the will, which turns into a kind of pose, either of activity or of self-affirmation, that does not confront him but grants him a certain equilibrium. (2). The opposite situation can also be observed: the thinking, itself also typically weak, is excessive, dialectical to the point of automatism, so that it penetrates the metabolic system and here fights against the etherisation of the mineral element, preventing the spiritual function of this from becoming active. Rationality devoid of measure, and an excess of intellectual activity, that is of mental tension, interfere with the processes of metabolic transformation, and their disturbance in turn is reflected back upon the activities of the upper system. The individual is invaded by a dialectical intelligence which constructs its own world and its own language, superimposing them upon reality, with which it has no real contact.

[229] Thus also on the basis of what can be observed regarding the connection between conscious principle and mineral structure of the organism, the ills of the psyche can be traced to the position of thinking with respect to the emotive-instinctual life. This position, as an expression of the I-principle, shall be examined in terms of the degree to which the act of thinking is dependent upon cerebral mediation.

15. Thinking and the brain

[230] Thinking, when it is conditioned in its conscious expression by the cerebral organ, can accomplish only a limited investigation into the nervous system: it can comprehend, of the workings of this system, only so much as is permitted by its own dependence upon it. This is why modern psycho-physiology cannot imagine a state of affairs such as that which we have called "the non-pertinence of the nervous system". In reality, the conditions placed upon the inner human being by his psycho-physical structure call for autonomous forces of knowing, capable of recognising those conditions and identifying their function. The identification of the conditions is connected, for the inner human, with the possibility of overcoming them, so as to manifest through them his real nature, which is supersensible. The conditions of the bodily and psychic nature do not exist in order to enslave the human and attain through him their own systemisation, but to be the vehicle of his **real** nature on the level appropriate to them.

[231] Anyone who really sets out to experience how thought is born, will recognise in the cerebral organ a limit that has to be overcome, and to this end the necessity of drawing intentionally upon deeper forces of consciousness. It is not the brain which thinks, but thinking itself by means of the brain: the experience of this, in contemporary times, is for the researcher the sole guarantee that he is dealing with autonomous thoughts, autonomous thinking, founded upon its own essence. Research into the nervous system presupposes a thinking capable of perceiving its own essential autonomy with respect to that system and hence above all with respect to the cerebral organ: an autonomy unconsciously utilised by

researchers but blindly ignored by them, and which they continually fail to see in their insistent identification of thinking with its dialectical expression.

[232] The independence of thinking from the cerebral instrument needs to be above all an experience of thinking itself, to be precise of its pure and ideal *dynamis*, which is capable of drawing from its incorporeal origin and of giving knowledge of it. The experience of this is prevented by every scientific stance which presumes to identify the autonomy of thinking with the autonomy of its logical structure: in these instances it is not thinking that becomes the conscious experience of the thinker, but instead the product of thinking's alienation.

[233] The alienation of thinking, as the moment of objectivity, is indeed a contemporary necessity of the scientific process, but it is against the very spirit of science to refuse to notice this alienation, because it demands its own overcoming, the rightful restoration of the thinking process to the subject, through whom **and only through whom** an objectivity can arise in the first place. It can be experimentally verified that thinking can attain a far more radical liberation from cerebrality the more it acquires awareness of its own intuitive motion and of its self-alienation in physical-mathematical proceedings, in which it does not recognise this intuitive factor and as a result puts its faith in the reality of formula and proof. A thinking capable of penetrating the psyche is one which becomes aware of how it calls upon cerebral energies so as to experience the sense-perceptible finite: it can observe, in the cognitive process, how it traces the movement of its own thinking, the aim of which is not so much the object, as to experience the depths of itself by means of the object, and quite independently of the various cerebral energies.

[234] For science, the object is normally an object of **faith**, because the existence of the object is the premise, the sense-perceptible immediacy, by which the alienation of thinking becomes the basic movement on the cerebral level: the object comes to be known solely in its abstract measurability, which is only its **appearing**. Thinking in reality possesses in itself the **being** of the object, but is unaware of it, because it is not aware of its own movement: it believes in the object which is perceived and thought, but not in the virtue or inner power of perceiving and thinking.

[235] The nervous condition of modern man, his mental unease which is also therefore a general cultural condition, must be seen in the light of his failure to properly grasp the inner movement of thinking.

[236] Research into the sense-perceptible fails to see the action of consciousness, which would give a way of experiencing the very forces of the research which have been set in motion.



[237] The problem of the psyche is above all a problem of thinking, because thinking is the instrument of all research into it. Given that the object of this research is extra-rational, super-rational, and extraconscious, the instrument of the research needs to be qualitatively valid beyond the way in which it is valid on the level of ordinary rationality. The instrument itself needs to **formed** for the type of research it intends to undertake—formed or refined—not in the sense of perfecting its dialectical working, or a sharpening within the bounds of its limitedness, but rather a removal of the limit inherent in the dialectical process.

[238] Ordinary thinking, to the extent that it is conditioned by the neuro-cerebral vehicle, cannot carry out an investigation into the neuro-cerebral functions, because it cannot place itself outside them. Nor can this “placing oneself outside” be achieved by the investigator examining someone else’s cerebral organ: the thinking which does the research cannot contemplate outside itself conditions which are internal to it. What we are dealing with is a research which is subject to a limit, a limit which the researcher can only encounter in himself, and remove, by drawing on a thinking founded upon itself, outside or beyond the physical support.

[239] Thinking certainly needs the mediation of its material support for sensory experience and for dialectical expression, even of metaphysical content, but the ultimate method, regarding the essence of a phenomenon, the inner meaning, the ethical or moral dimension, cannot come from the same movement of thinking that deals with physical or numerical facts, but rather from a thinking capable of grasping, beyond any specific determination, its own movement as an activity independent of cerebral support.

[240] That we need this independent activity in order to carry out psychological investigation can be clearly understood if we bear in mind that it is quite illusory to examine the facts and events of consciousness without first discerning the great extent to which our thinking is already actively moving within their simple occurrence—for once we can do so our thinking becomes capable of immersing itself in their movement and following them without renouncing its own self and activity.

[241] Psychological research has suffered from the limits imposed by dialectical thinking, which can place the facts and occurrences of consciousness before itself only on condition that they no longer have the nature of real events. A glance through the literature of psychology will reveal no mention of the need, if research is to occur, of an instrument which is, to a far greater extent than rational thinking, the original impulse of rationality: something more than the rationality which expresses itself in science and in logic—its actual *dynamis*.

[242] Only an adequately prepared thinking can penetrate the facts and events of the soul, perceive their interconnections and interpret them. This thinking must possess its own movement if it would enter the regions of the soul where nothing is perceptible other than **movement**. It is a thinking that does not have to grasp concepts, but active forces. The very movement of thinking, being itself a living force, is able to encounter the forces of the soul.

[243] The dynamic reality of the facts and events of the soul is the very cornerstone of all research into the psyche: only a thinking which grasps its own movement can identify itself with this dynamic reality.

[244] The manifestations of the life of the soul cannot be known as fixed entities and identified in that way. Whatever is statically identified and dogmatically fixed cannot respond to the mobility that belongs to inner events. It could be objected, though, that even when the dynamic manifestations of the soul have been penetrated by a thinking endowed with self-movement, their scientific expression in concepts must of necessity have the character of something that has been determined, and hence be static.

[245] Objections and doubts of this kind are to be answered by the fact that concepts, which involve the correlation and interconnection of thoughts, come to be correlated in the case of real intuitive penetration according to a certain rhythm and formal order which correspond with the actual content, in such a way that when they are re-experienced by the thinking of the reader, they bring alive for him or her the original movement of the content. The crucial thing is that there actually *be* movement of thinking: it is not erased in assuming dialectical form, but can actually impart to this a structure which makes it both vital and truthful. Abstract thinking is not truthful, because it lacks real content and tends to construct formally, that is discursively, the content which it does not actually have. In our *Logic against the human being* we have shown how, when that happens, it is not because of some mindful error, but results from a state of mental impairment which in contemporary times has become normality. Truly, though, rational thinking *can* be used by the spirit for formal construction, so that it becomes the discursive symbolisation of an inner movement: the **expression** of a formative force.

16. *The mediation of perception*

[246] Thinking need its sensory support—the cerebral organ—in order to manifest, in keeping with its own inherent nature, in the sense-perceptible world. Its movement consists in drawing upon its own supersensible nature in order to unite with the sensory, bringing to each of them the experience of the other.

[247] This exchange is blocked by that consciousness which only notices one part of the movement, towards which there is an exclusive convergence of its activity. Thus sensory experience pathologically dominates thinking, so that the soul ends up identifying with it exclusively, and physical reality appears to be the only existent thing—and existent outside thinking. Rationality disregards the principle of its own movement, upon which it nevertheless continues to rely, taking care to remain ignorant of it or to negate it. The researcher's task is to understand and overcome this rational limit.

[248] When it crosses the threshold of rationality, thinking perceives its own original forces, but also those of feeling and of willing. For the researcher it is a personal experience of impersonal forces and of their superconscious synthesis, which facilitates and enables extra-subjective communion with the world and with the individuality of others. Let it incidentally be observed that there can be no real social life without the metaphysical integration of rationality, that is without that operation today rendered inconceivable by the ordinary position of the subject-object relation.

[249] Perception of these forces occurs initially through images. Because it is a perception of the etheric sphere, one is able to perceive the etheric weaving of the bodily supports of thinking, and also of feeling and willing, and thus of the whole apparatus of forces contributing to sensory perception.

[250] In sensory perception there work simultaneously the etheric forces of thinking, feeling and willing, through their bodily conductors: nervous, rhythmical, metabolic. We have already indicated how the content of perception, living in the etheric thinking-sentient-volitional dynamic, becomes deprived of life when it is transformed into representation, mental image: in other words, at that point where it arises for waking consciousness.

[251] In actual fact, the living element within perception is in part suppressed, in part diverted, with the arising of the mental image and representation: the diverted part pursues a subconscious life of its own in the bodily-vital support, developing its own relation with the psyche. This is a relation which, at a remove from consciousness, tends to operate autonomously according to impulses of feeling and of will.

[252] The vital current of these impulses is the same as that with which feeling and willing participate in the process of sensation. An irregular, disordered autonomy is possible, and hence a mechanical automatism within the relation, precisely because it lacks connection with conscious thinking, which only perceives the abstract projection of the perceptual content as mental image.

[253] It can be said that the perceptual content is in itself an objective correlation with the world, immediately deprived of reality and subjectivised by reflected consciousness. The

moment of objective correlation is the moment of non-reflected consciousness, which as a general rule the human being does not apprehend: he or she can experience it solely through **contemplative attention**, or in other words through a discipline of pure perception.

[254] The subjective taking up of the content, in effect caused by non-awareness of the inner process of perception, in the conscious sphere results in representation, the mental image; in the sphere of feeling and willing—that is, as repercussion of a semiconscious and subjective nature—it gives rise to sensation.

[255] Sensation occurs as the resonance of the sensory impression in the vehicles of feeling and willing, but without their objective relation to the content, because it takes place not with reference to the conscious principle, but rather according to association with sentient-volitional contents of a mnemonic character, endowed with a life-element of their own, and generally not controlled by consciousness—whence the automatic nature of the relation, as we were saying. The vital or etheric element becomes the vehicle of needs which are almost always opposed to those of the conscious principle, and yet endowed with such power as to obtain the adaptive conformity of rational consciousness and the assent of the conscious principle.

[256] Insufficiency of the I with respect to the processes of the etheric body dominated by physicality—this is the situation of the *ego*. The forced adaptation of the I to demands coming from the life-currents of the soul, whilst the I remains ignorant of their etheric vehicle and their subjection to the irregular influences of this, characterises not only the situation of the modern neuroticised human mind, but the wider culture as a whole.

[257] The *non-animadversio*¹⁰, the inability to take note with inner strength and self-possession, of the vital vehicle of sensation, and of the emotive-instinctual currents, together with the barely conscious forming of mental images and of concepts devoid of life, leads the investigator to the formalisation of phenomena of the soul which essentially elude him and condition him. Psychology, presuming to interpret events of consciousness whose reality consists in their possession of a *life* from which consciousness is normally excluded, commits

¹⁰ A compound Latin word, derived from *animus* (soul, spiritual principle) and *adverto* (turning towards), thus meaning 'perception, observation', but with an implication of intense and careful scrutiny. [trans.]

the error of interpreting “from outside”, in other words from that place where the psyche has vanished as something vital and alive, its life henceforth suffering representation by that dialectical viewpoint produced by said exclusion of consciousness.

[258] Honest scholars of psychological knowledge and of psycho-pathology are today managing to notice these limitations in the research. But this is not so with those who continue to construct a faith out of their method, subordinating the process of gaining knowledge to the unconscious mythologising of the “unconscious”. These researchers work in such a way that the back-space of consciousness, which they have sketched according to mental images and thoughts born out of reflection, rather than from actual perception, becomes reified—as a result of which the I must conform, by various expedient logical-analytical pathways, to the sovereign demands of the “unconscious”.

[259] The doctrine of the “unconscious”, ignoring the vital, or etheric, element of consciousness, which only a thinking capable of self-perception can grasp, and therefore not understanding the “non-pertinence” of the nervous system in regard to feeling and willing, does not have the means to cross the threshold of consciousness, and so must of necessity be constructed as a discursive mechanism which, through its necessary dialectical development, passes over into a level of consciousness of a thoroughly technological kind, adopting the usual structuralist tendency of every science concerned with things, objects, facts, and not the soul. Purporting, despite its discursive limitation, to be a science of the spirit, it aspires to be systematic, but it is the system of a dialectical structure, and the account it gives of the supposed content of the psyche is and can only be discursive.



[260] A psychology which would be a genuine science of the soul and not a parody of natural science, and thus avoid falling into the error of assuming realistically its proper object—the psyche, or facts and events within the psyche, or the unconscious—must be able to recognise thinking as the original activity of consciousness; and must also understand that the ultimate significance of thinking is the perception of the life-current of its own movement.

[261] Thinking that grasps its own life-element can find the same thing again in the life of feeling and of willing. It is something more than thinking. In the same way it can recognise this life-element in sensory perception: the extra-sensory content of sensory reality, which normally streams unconsciously within sensation. This unconscious streaming ordinarily establishes correlations within the psyche, which cannot be identified by dialectical analyses, but only by the metadialectical motion of thinking, *i.e.* by a thinking capable of grasping its own life-element, or of penetrating the extrasensory content of perception. The investigator understands that he cannot surpass the threshold of consciousness unless he manages to contemplate the pure etheric moment in his own perceiving, continually excluded and yet streaming within it.

[262] Thanks to this metadialectical motion, consciousness enters into contact with the currents centred in the rhythmic system and in the metabolism, and thus with the life-element of both feeling and willing. The forces of feeling and willing, which stream within the sensory process through the objective perceptual content, are the same forces which consciousness encounters in movement within the rational soul and within the sentient soul. It can recognise in these forces the presence of a life-power, whose alteration and weakening is the way by means of which an impulse, state of mind or emotion enters the psyche.

[263] Whoever, investigating along these lines, manages to experience the identity of the forces of feeling and willing present in the process of perception, with those which reveal themselves as movements and impulses of the soul, will notice that in the perceptual act they have an objective and impersonal character which in the emotive-instinctual currents they lack.

[264] Observation of the difference between the two forms in which the sentient-volitional current presents itself, enables the researcher to understand the reason for the very limited awareness normally brought to bear upon sensory correlation: in fact, what is normally drawn forth from this as real is simply the external and gross element, the onesided physicality, which is not the actual content of the perception at all, but the immediate form *assumed* as content and, in its immediacy, brought into correlation with the subjective character of feelings and impulses, or with the “non-pertinent” function of the nervous system. Indeed, the extrasensory element of the perceptual content which, from a strictly

concrete scientific viewpoint, is the *real* content of the sensory process, normally slips unseen past the investigator, who merely avails himself of its power of sense-perceptible expression, but fails to grasp its supersensible essence. As a result sensory perception is emptied of its objective aspect, and also of its moral element. It is both a noetic and an ethical failing.

[265] The non-pertinence of the nervous system does not pertain to the sense-organs: in these the nerve-apparatus possesses an autonomy which permits it to fulfil a purely transmissive function. The eye sees without feeling itself, in fact can see precisely through *not* communicating any self-sensation. It is important for the investigator to adopt as a measure of the non-pertinence of the nervous system, the positively realised **pertinence** of the sense-organs: the functional objectivity of the nerve-processes in the sense-organs can be traced to their independence from the rhythmical-metabolic processes which also take part in the perceptual act. The functional objectivity of the nerve-processes results from their absolute **quiescence**.

[266] The objectivity of the nerve-processes in the sensory organs, which serves a mediating function, can be experienced via the discipline of **pure perception**, which provides a way of grasping the extrasensory content of perception in its immediacy, because in pure perception the living element of feeling and of the will is not excluded by thinking, which is what normally happens so that representation can take place. Let us be quite clear that to grasp the living current of thinking in the perceptual moment means to grasp its identity with the living element of feeling and of the will. There is a will-force that we can speak of which the researcher livingly distils from nature, owing to the independence that thinking has acquired from the cerebral organ—through which, in the ordinary human experience of consciousness, there occurs the separation of the three faculties and their misleading and incidental concord in conformity with the bodily nature.

17. The cerebralisation of thinking

[267] The living being of thinking is endowed with a consciousness, which is its identity with itself, prior to any dialectical consciousness. But by limiting itself to sensory conditions

and taking cerebral mediation as its basis, it establishes dialectical consciousness, which is not real consciousness of self.

[268] If we follow the rational process back to its origin or wellspring by way of **pure thinking**, that very process can give us a feeling for the provisional and temporary nature of ordinary dialectical consciousness. That which we are accustomed to call “ego” is, as the unstable reference-point of personality, just such a provisional or temporary awareness: and clearly it is an *ego* solely through the agency of the I which sees, beholds and witnesses it.

[269] Overcoming the limit established by rationality marks not only the beginning of investigation into the psyche, but above all is the very method which makes thinking into the instrument required for this investigation. The researcher arrives at the point of experiencing thinking as something more than a dialectical instrument. We could in fact cease to call it thinking. In it is a communion with the “life” that is independent of the cerebral organ; and it is in this life that we can recognise the force through which the real becomes real for us, be it a physical fact or a formal logical operation. Such a communion cannot be attained as long as thinking is conditioned by the cerebral organ, that organ in which thinking, accomplishing the act of the spirit, must attenuate the life-element so as to draw forth from it the dialectical form. But the very experience of this formal immediacy provides a way of discerning the true immediate, the primary element, the metadialectical—pure thinking.

[270] Inhering in the nervous system through the conscious form it adopts, thinking abdicates its original immediacy and thereby the possibility of perceiving itself as a force. At the level of cerebral mediation, this thinking cannot conduct research or enquiry into the psyche, except by identifying itself with the mediation, which is what ordinarily occurs with any rational operation whatsoever, unconsciously assuming its proper object as something that is somehow not mediated at all. The necessity that operates at the rational level compels thinking even in regard to that which transcends the rational. This kind of transcendence remains an empty **nominalist noema**¹¹, in that cerebral thinking does not possess movement, but only lifeless reflection. In reality, the rational level can be positive only for the consciousness which knows how to overcome it through the working of its own

¹¹ Gk. = a thought, thing perceived [trans.].

fundamental transcendence, its pure immediacy. When cerebral thinking nominalistically reduces to its own level that which is superior to it—the extrasensory, the living—it produces that unconscious diminishing so characteristic of rationality, to which the rationalist normally reacts by reinforcing it through formal and logical-analytical means.

[271] Independence from the cerebral support, when it is achieved, through specific disciplines of thinking, enables thinking to make the distinction referred to, between the neutral, purely mediating, function of the nerve-channels in the sense-organs, and the non-neutral, and hence non-pertinent, function of the nervous system in the transmission of emotional and instinctual occurrences.

[272] We have been able to indicate how the activities of feeling and willing have supports in the organism other than the nervous system, and follow the pathways of the nerve-system solely so as to be made conscious. If in the perception of these activities the nerve-channels acted as they do in the sense-organs in relation to sensory content, then we could not speak of the non-pertinence of the nerve-system in relation to the life of the psyche: the human being would have an experience of feelings and impulses which would not implicate the nervous system, they would not constrain it to have a sensation of itself when conveying emotion or impulse, this self-sensation, arising in the nerves, being something in fact that the actual objective content of the emotion or the impulse has nothing to do with.

[273] We are provided with the very key to the problems of the soul by the inner meaning of this circumstance, once we know how to contemplate it with insightful awareness. The way the human being behaves in regard to feelings and impulses is at odds with the right ordering of consciousness, because his mental forces do not possess the independence which would allow them to take hold of emotive-instinctual content without being distorted by it. Normally it is only a weak motion of thought which goes forth to meet such content, and it gets overwhelmed. Weak because it is cerebral, this thinking cannot fulfil with respect to the emotive-instinctual content its true function as a limb of the I. In the best of cases, it manages to accomplish this somewhat after the fact.

[274] Recall what has been said: the eye sees because the human being does not have a perception of the eye itself whilst looking, but of the thing seen. In the eye he does not feel

his own self, but in the cerebral organ he is subject to and feels, not so much thinking itself as the repercussions and reverberations of impulses and emotions. The visual content does not exercise a disturbing action upon the eye or upon its intricate nervous apparatus. But in the reception of feelings and instincts this does take place: the nervous system is compelled to participate in a process which does not belong to it, a process that belongs to a content of which it ought simply to be a neutral conductor.

18. Adulteration of the will

[275] One of the tasks of psychotherapy is to penetrate the meaning of the binding of thought, in the human being of this epoch, to the cerebral organ. This binding takes place legitimately only up to a certain limit, beyond which lies the inevitable degeneration of the organ, if thinking cannot find a way to actualise its own unbinding and liberation, that is, its own free movement, as the final meaning of the process.

[276] This degeneration has already become all too normal amongst people, but goes unheeded by the contemporary investigator, because his or her research itself suffers from it. Although formalised and justified by scientific “progress”, its negative manifestations can nevertheless be clearly observed on a human, ethical and social level; but this simple recognition is not enough to lift us up to its origins.

[277] The process of the **inherence** or binding of thinking cannot be considered negative in its historically preliminary phase, that is during the first development of natural science in the West: it took place under the impulsion of inner formative forces, according to an internal and universal necessity, displaying with its seeming independence from any human decision the character of “destiny”. We can indeed speak of a transcendental guidance of human development, unfolding immanently. The perilous phase begins when the binding-process is complete and can be identified only through an act of consciousness which frees itself from it: an act of consciousness capable of reviewing the whole process and not simply undergoing it as a fact of nature, and capable therefore of understanding the meaning of the whole movement—essential given that this is the point at which the process demands to be

completed and brought to fulfilment under the sign of individuality and freedom. The contemporary human experience of free individuality has no higher meaning than this.

[278] Inner experience enables us to ascertain that the brain's physiological basis does not participate in the process of thinking except as a means of formal expression: an expression which is not a creative event but a mediation, just as we could describe the function of a mirror in regard to the reflected image as being mediative. The inherence to which we refer consists, for thinking, of a failure to become conscious of the reflection.

[279] This phenomenon becomes effectively irreversible when the outward expression is seen as the whole picture and, by way of its analytical procedures, renders automatic the dominion of abstract objectivity. Abstract objectivity then finds a way to produce amongst other things a systematic vision of the facts and events of consciousness, so that it ceases to be recognisable as a subsidiary and derivative form of inherence and acquires instead the appearance of unchallengeable law.

[280] The binding of the forces of thinking to the cerebral organ, and the fact that they are predominantly set into motion by sensory stimuli, compel the forces of feeling and willing to follow the same course as physiological sensations. Because of this the process of feeling and willing actually alters the nerve-channels in a destructive way, whose rhythmical-metabolic processes have objectively nothing to do with the content of feelings or impulses, but act merely as a support for them.

[281] As previously pointed out, the forces of feeling and willing do not have the nervous system as their bodily correlate, but their activity necessarily attains to consciousness by means of it. The fact that thinking consciousness is so thoroughly and inescapably inwoven with the nervous system compels the currents of feeling and willing to resound in this system, beyond the measure allowed for by its structure and its function: and with this they actually introduce destructive changes into the nerve-channels and in particular the cerebral organ.

[282] The corrosion is quite gradual, because the human being is able to develop forces that enable him to coexist with the destruction, forces which do not at all help to overcome it

but rather confirm and reinforce it, conditioning spiritual energies to adapt themselves to it that in themselves are actually called to fulfil another function and purpose altogether. Moreover, the destruction comes to be rationalised through the fact that the will-forces which are made to inhere in the bodily nature are transformed into instinctual energies which tend towards intellectual self-justification. It is worth recalling that the forces of the will, working directly via the metabolic system and the limbs, and giving immediate expression to themselves in their movement, are in a bodily sense the most dynamic of forces, by reason of their functional independence from the bodily nature.

[283] In instinct can be recognised a will-force diverted towards the bodily physicality, with respect to which it has lost its original autonomy. Failing to maintain its true incorporeal nature the will becomes, by inhering to the body, an instinctual impulse and acts disturbingly on the relationship between I, psyche and soma.

[284] We shall see how the deviation of the will towards the physicality of the body becomes apparent in the vehicle of feeling, which overflows beyond the confines of its proper ground. Feeling is such that, flowing through the manifold channels of sensory perception and of the breath, it pervades the whole bodily organisation. The greater the extent to which the deviated current of the will, within the vehicle of feeling, attaches itself to the physical, the more it becomes, as an instinctual power, destructive: taking on below the form of desire, it ascends as anguish and fear.

[285] In the psychic phenomenology of the contemporary human being the fact that the instincts are formed by a debasement of the will is primarily attributable to the cerebralisation of thinking. To this process above all the psychotherapist ought to turn his or her attention; an attention, naturally, whose will has been sufficiently exercised and educated.

19. *Feeling*

[286] Feeling, regardless of its specific nature, always manifests as a disturbance of cerebral equilibrium, because it is obliged to resonate precisely where consciousness is unduly connected to cerebral mediative processes. It occurs through an influx of rhythmical-blood processes into those pertaining to the nerves. Physiologically this amounts to the subtle infiltration of a phosphoric element into the walls of the nerves: whence there occurs the creation of more or less sensitive inflammatory states, which tend to spread to the bulbar centres and the corresponding organs.

[287] It must be said that generally speaking the average person has at his disposal a capacity of spontaneous compensation, a kind of positive accomplishment of the mechanism of disinhibition¹². But this is not a lasting capacity and there are numerous signs of its crisis or even disappearance from amongst humanity. The individual who is intellectually answerable to himself cannot fail to see the need to replace the spontaneous functions of inhibition and disinhibition with the awareness-filled activity of the will.

[288] This, calling first of all upon the inhibitive element and at the same time tending to master it, generates the possibility of a more profound negative tension but equally of a positive control and guidance of feeling.

[289] Were a feeling able to resound in consciousness without having to vibrate cerebrally it would transmit a force—no matter whether the content of the feeling were joy, or sorrow, or whatever. This is the reason why the formative discipline of the researcher focuses amongst other things on exercises of thinking which foster an original thinking-force capable of receiving “directly” the resonances of feeling. A particular technique consists in re-evoking a sentiment in such a way that, reconstituted with objective intensity, together with its attendant circumstances, it can subsequently be liberated from every factual and subjective reference, so that all that remains is a pure resounding: this presents itself as a force, a force capable of lifting up thinking from cerebrality and enabling it to partake of a vaster life, one which can be characterised as “the life of creative rhythms”.

¹² Disinhibition is generally associated with antisocial behaviours: it is that which enables an individual to bypass or annul the normal inhibitory function that unconsciously regulates aspects of behaviour [trans.].

[290] The connection with the etheric forces of the body brought about by an accentuated or deliberately induced dependence on the physical life, or by a diminished stability of consciousness, is one thing, and quite another is conscious communion with the world of rhythms that manifests bodily in the “middle” region, seat of the rhythmical and blood-processes. The first is a mediumistic type of experience and always has a pathological character: its manifestation within the psyche can be easily exploited to give the illusion of objective extrasensory experiences. We can see this in the euphoric enthusiasms and psychic degradation of the dropouts of our time, who with their solitary or communal drug-taking are searching for something beyond the sensory, but remain irremediably at the psychic level *below* that of waking consciousness: the sub-sensory. The second type of experience referred to above, however, is a cognitive experience of high level and has genuine therapeutic value.

[291] Through functional necessity the modern human being’s experience of feeling is on the whole pathological. Its excessive inherence in the bodily physical nature falsifies the content of feeling, continually accentuating the form of the subjective reaction beyond what would be normal, this being brought about by the bondage and subservience of consciousness to the nerve-system.

[292] If we take into account that feeling has as its bodily support the vital respiratory rhythm, we can well understand how feeling can “invade” the whole body-related life of the soul, because the respiratory process is not limited simply to the movement of the lungs, but pervades the whole organism right out to the furthest periphery of the skin. It pervades in particular the nervous system. For this reason, one has the sensation with a mood or state of mind that it is present in every zone of the body and that there is no way of escaping from it. A mood or a state of mind is a feeling endowed with a capacity of total invasion.



[293] There is, within the etheric body, a certain current which is necessary for the mobility of feeling and willing. This current, like that made use of by thinking, is fundamentally distinct from the architecture of the body, even whilst acting within it. When it is not

orientated and guided by the I-organisation, and thus is not a vehicle for the real nature of feeling and willing, it becomes the vehicle of their corruption and distortion, functioning as a subconscious process of impulses and tendencies. As such, and precisely because it is *etheric*, it can in certain cases directly take on the form of thought: thus the distortions of the psyche may well assume the appearance of logic and dogma.

[294] **Ordinary feeling is always a semblance.** Through the practice of inner silence—to the point of a temporary absence of feeling—one may awaken the capacity to break its deceptive spell, in that the power of feeling to overstep the boundaries proper to it and subjugate a weak thinking is withdrawn. It is crucial that a psychotherapist learn to perceive feeling simply *as feeling*, not as feeling which takes hold of him or her in a personal subjective-reactive way: it is important to become able to contemplate feeling in its first movement, as an objective entity which aims not to be endured or suffered, simply **felt**. However, it is precisely ordinary feeling which, as semblance and deceptive appearance, prevents this: it stands in the way of the perception of itself as real feeling, liberated from the etheric-physical sphere and experienced in regions of the soul in which its vastness manifests. To break the spell of its deceptive appearance simultaneously opens the way, for the psychotherapist, to identifying, beyond and through feeling, the deep impulse or tendency at work: in a feeling that we contemplate or re-invoke, these can be identified as extraneous elements: and the etheric current upon which feeling and willing depend is accordingly liberated. The researcher must carry out this experiment in him or herself for a long time: it involves the noetic distinction between feeling and that which uses feeling as its vehicle.

[295] The ideal to attain in this direction is that we are able to extinguish temporarily any spontaneous feeling-reaction whatsoever, even a thoroughly justified one, not so as to arrive at a state of apathy or insensitivity, but to create that inner void in which real feeling can appear as an impersonal, enlightening force. The ordinary feeling with which one habitually reacts to outer or inner perceptions is a current destructive of the soul, which does not express the soul, but rather its bondage to the body. The psychotherapist who attains in him or herself the experience of pure feeling acquires the faculty of perceiving objectively the feeling of another and the relationship that this has in a particular personality with the other activities of the psyche.

[296] The **effective cause**, however, which can be traced in every case of pathological emotion, is the corruption of the etheric body by feeling that oversteps the boundaries of its rightful seat which, as will be recalled, is the region of the thorax, seat of the life of rhythm. If one pursues the matter still further, a phenomenon is revealed which is even more incorporeal and more profoundly causal: an insufficient permeation of thinking on the part of the I, and the related potential for feeling, which is bound to the bodily nature, to function in the degraded etheric vehicle as the vital basis of thinking. This is the kind of path we have to follow in order to grasp the origin of the neuroses, and of certain dominant doctrines and bodies of thought, of our times.

[297] From these considerations it becomes clear that the remedy consists in reactivating the etheric current that unites the head with the middle region: such is the purpose of certain types of meditation on the nature of rhythm, or on the nature of thinking itself, which, once it disentangles itself from the sphere of the psyche—which it does by freeing itself from cerebrality—rediscovers its own original rhythm. This enables thinking to discern the subconscious impulses within ordinary emotion and to separate them from the real current of feeling.

[298] A subconscious impulse acquires destructive power when it is able to ascend into regions of the soul which are constitutionally forbidden to it. External analysis cannot reveal its meaning, nor does it resolve itself merely by ascending and coming to expression in psychic or mental forms which do not properly belong to it. These forms in fact reinforce the subconscious impulse and transform it into a poison from which the patient will only with great difficulty manage to disembarass himself. True therapy does the very opposite: it leads the impulse to **settle**, like a sediment, in the zone that belongs to it, by restoring to feeling its etheric rhythm, in other words by the animation of **pure feeling** within the soul: this can be achieved when one can clear away the semblance which is wrongly held to be the content of one's feeling or state of mind. A discipline which reactivates the etheric current of feeling gives a way of separating the semblance of feeling from the force by which it is formed, to the point where this force which shapes the form itself arises as the true feeling. Let it be remembered that pure thinking is the only conscious activity which can work upon the etheric current of feeling.

20. *Feeling and disciplines of the breath*

[299] If we wanted to enable the human being of this time to develop autonomy in regard to emotions and impulses, we would have to teach him something quite different from the old yogic breathing methods: independence of thinking from the breath. All the Eastern breathing techniques, from the taoist to the tantric, when practised today, lead to a reinforcement of the psychic life's dependence on the processes of the breath, and thus on the nervous system, because these techniques require of the physical vehicle a transference of consciousness to the spiritual which it can no longer provide, for the immediate vehicle of consciousness today is thinking, and consciousness cannot move beyond this immediacy except by possessing it; whereas in earlier times the human being, possessing this immediacy in the breath, had every reason to make use of it in order to gain direct access to the spiritual.

[300] Typically the breath of the human being of this time is the physical manifestation of the dependence of his or her I upon feeling. This dependence cannot be resolved through the breath itself, but only through thinking. Concentration upon the breath strengthens the dependence and renders impossible the transference of the principle of responsibility from the psychic nature to the I, which was spoken of in preceding chapters: for deeper forces of feeling and of the will become entangled and implicated in the nerve-processes. Such methods are a sure way of being overrun by invasive moods and obsessive thoughts, whilst appearing to have a mastery over the vital currents.

[301] What we have sought to indicate regarding the reintegration of thinking as a power of our being, means amongst other things that thinking can become the vehicle of autonomy for consciousness once it separates itself from the rhythmical and metabolic processes of the cerebral organ, and as a result attains a degree of control over, and insight into, emotive-instinctual states reverberating from other centres. We have in fact shown how feeling continually manages to impose itself illegitimately beyond its objective content, in that it naturally pervades the organism by way of the respiratory channels and the associated

rhythmical processes. The fact of being overwhelmed by an emotive-instinctual state means that thinking, and hence the conscious principle, has found it impossible to distinguish itself in its own domain from the flux of feeling, which makes itself felt there with such authority via the vehicle of the breath and the dynamics of the circulation.

[302] This kind of overflowing of boundaries could never occur with the metabolic system, which carries the forces of the will, because in the human constitution the will is the inner force most independent from the bodily nature: psychically, physiologically and on a motor level, its *dynamis* consists in its power of mastery over the physical, because it is in itself absolutely independent from it.

[303] Will which becomes an impulsive force and which tends to emerge from the depths as instinct seeking to assert itself, would have no destructive hold on the human being, in fact would even present itself in him as his own power, were it not that it is interwoven with the physical nature in the vehicle of feeling, which, by way of its own channels, provides it with a sentient power of total invasion.

[304] **Feeling contaminates the will** and renders the power of the instincts destructive.

[305] A formative practice for the psyche, that provides what no eastern method can offer to the human being today, is one which enables us to encounter with pure forces of self-awareness the original impulses of the will, before they become physicalised, and compromised, as instincts: that is, to perceive the will in its incorporeal objectivity, prior to its inherence with bodily physicality in the vehicle of feeling: *i.e.*, before its transformation into **desire**.

[306] The will is in itself an incorruptible force which, regardless of the state of the psyche, can always be found in its incorruptibility through a conscious action of the will itself. It is a matter of knowing the technique of this conscious act of the will. There exist methods which enable the researcher to catch the instincts and their force in the very moment they burst forth in the bodily nature, but these methods presuppose that he or she has a power of consciousness which has become independent from cerebrality and from the breath, as per what we have explained about the liberation of thinking from its material support. Once the

equivocal nature of feeling has been mastered, a pure consciousness can encounter impulse, instinct, desire, anguish or fear, in such a way that they immediately revert to being original forces of the will. But feeling must be mastered for this to take place, it must be separated from the vehicle of the breath and lose the capacity to permeate the cerebral organ.

[307] The basic problem of consciousness concerns the higher mental apprehension and guidance of what is continually taking place in feeling. Where instinct is not associated with feeling it cannot be destructive, and is even in a position to be restored as an aspect of the will. In point of fact, feeling, with its deceptiveness, invariably opens the way to the alteration, the corruption of the will. This alteration, if it can be contained within the proper arena of the will, can actually work as a power of autonomy that can be regulated and guided and therefore used therapeutically.

[308] The type of modern human being who is, it would seem, without emotion is in point of fact a being in whom, because of dysfunction in the material support, feeling has been displaced from its normal seat: it lies outside its proper place, it moves up into the mental, or else into the sphere of the will. The analytic process has great difficulty in accurately identifying the type of neurosis which results from this. But this method can indeed draw forth from the situation of the neurotic a *cliché* nicely corresponding to what it projected upon him in advance, reinforced by an interpretation with all the hallmarks of authority, thus serving to bestow legitimacy upon the whole enterprise.

[309] People speak of feeling as of a spiritual activity, and indeed it is a life-current which comes from a non-corporeal "zone"; nevertheless, as we have shown, in order to unite with the consciousness of the modern human being it has to be given as sensation. And this is the obstacle that the modern yogi or spiritual athlete sets up for himself, particularly for the deep forces of the will, when *through the breath*, which he is under the illusion of controlling and interiorising on the basis of the techniques he has learnt, he potentises and accentuates the binding of the psyche to the sphere of sensations.

[310] Normally, through the breath, feeling permeates the body by pervading the nervous system. But through the type of breathing cultivated by the disciplines of yoga, which much more strongly bind the soul to the body, feeling acquires a power of invasion with regard to

the psyche, which is not easily identified—it infiltrates itself unseen into thinking and moves in the unconscious forces of the will.

[311] In the domain of the will the disturbance wrought by feeling runs deeper, because it constitutes the instincts' psychophysical power of invasion. It is a more serious disturbance [than that which afflicts thinking] because, whilst there is a functional necessity for thinking and feeling to inhere in the bodily organisation, even though thinking places its conscious act in opposition to this inherence, the will on the other hand is the bodily power endowed, as a function of the I, with the maximum degree of *independence* from the bodily nature—an independence naturally not possessed by consciousness, which in terms of the will can hardly manage to be a thinking consciousness at all.

[312] When the pure forces of the will are constrained and limited to manifesting themselves according to sensory content, they bring about changes in the bodily organs which serve this manifestation. From this alteration there arise forces opposed to those which comes to expression as *conscious* deed.

[313] As a rule the intellectual will, manifesting as thought, certainly comes to expression through a partial destruction of the bodily support in the very process of affirming itself as conscious act, but this predictable destruction or breaking-down is continually compensated in the inner human being by the deeper organic forces of the will, stimulated by the conscious act itself with its capacity to reach beyond the limits of dialectical thinking. If we bear in mind that the alteration, disturbance and distortion of these forces produces the instincts, we can understand the hysteric neurosis of human mentality these days, because its instinctive life lacks the corresponding liberating power to be found in the conscious act. This conscious act in reality does not exist when people's thinking is abstract and devoid of inner movement. The instinctual life comes then to dominate the human being, in that it prevents the original will-forces from compensating for the etheric-cerebral destruction continually caused by conscious thinking.

[314] The will exemplifies force of an incorporeal nature, which as a result has dominion over the body: it is the force internal to thinking, and continually called upon by thinking, which however becomes separated from it in thinking's identification with its dialectical

form. This form is necessarily abstract and devoid of life—it becomes conscious on condition of suppressing the volitional-vital forces upon which it is based. **Nature must first of all perish, so that the spirit can emerge** as thinking.

[315] The spirit itself works to restore the destroyed forces when it actualises its fundamental independence from the psyche, calling forth through an intensification of thinking the deep forces of the will, which is what happens in concentration and meditation. Instincts, whether gratified or clamouring, are an obstacle to the restorative work of active thinking, in that they subvert its intuitive dynamic and hence its potential to carry the rational process to fulfilment. This fulfilment, or completion, has the power to stimulate the deeper vital will, of which we have spoken, that restores the life that has been suppressed. And it ought to be clear, at this point, that the really dominant instincts are not especially those which the human being knowingly suffers *as instincts*, as those which are so internalised as to work as mental categories. But precisely where the inner power of thinking is called upon, these instincts lose their hold on the mind and the mental functions.

[316] To the integral action of thinking the instincts stand in opposition, dominating the psyche from the depths and succeeding in finding an ethical justification in the various forms of science and culture. These are forms of the will compensating in an illusory way for the abstraction of thinking. In this sense an inferior or lower individualism goes hand in hand with rhetorical idealism, with one nourishing the other: degenerate psychic impulses readily clothe themselves in the dialectical cloak of progress. Thus the potential for the will to respond to the positive demands made on it by logical thinking is done away with. A thwarting of the will occurs, of the will which can lift thinking up from the cerebral-sensory level and restore to it the consciousness which would make it a vehicle for its own innate forces. These are the forces which yogic methods seek to attain through breathing exercises, but whose effect for the modern westerner is not only the impossibility of realising said forces, but actually the corruption of them.

21. *Quiescence of the nervous system*

[317] As objective consequences of what we have called the “non-pertinence of the nervous system”, certain neuropsychological facts can be discerned by an external phenomenology, but their inner movement is not so easily grasped and their real content is therefore hard to uncover. This has to do with the fact that feeling and willing overstep the boundaries proper to them: a transgression whose neural and psychopathological consequences, whilst being clinically observable, keep their causal process concealed.

[318] We have observed how feeling, when it is perceived and experienced not as **state** but as **being**, presents itself as a pure force and simultaneously as a faculty of metadialectical knowing. What this means is that when it encounters consciousness feeling unfolds within the seat proper to it: it does not overstep the boundaries, it does not become diffused throughout the whole being, nor does it implicate the conscious principle, which as a result is the real experient. Whilst the psychotherapist cannot necessarily expect the patient to take on the realisation of such a task, he can certainly demand it of himself, and through this he helps the patient. As a researcher he can carry himself into the zone dominated by feeling without renouncing his own essential being, in fact making an appeal to its very kernel: he can descend into the deeper “middle” region to the extent that he is capable of *ascending* to a consciousness of self higher than that which is necessary for him in ordinary experience. But such a movement is necessarily incorporeal: it requires a more profound liberation of the conscious principle from the bodily nature.



[319] In daily life we experience how feeling and willing stray beyond the domains proper to them whenever a mental state or instinct gains the upper hand over us.

[320] When a feeling or emotion does get the better of us, it is not enough to reduce it to manageable proportions, by mobilising various reasonings and mental images: even when this succeeds the disquiet resulting from the original influx remains fundamentally unchanged. This disquiet, this distress of the nerves, is a content predisposed to investing itself in any form of disturbance whatsoever, for reasons which appear purely external,

whereas in reality it is predisposed to reproducing the psychic state which gave rise to it in the first place.

[321] A state of mind can only be temporarily corrected by another state of mind. A feeling of happiness, called upon in order to put a sorrowful feeling to flight, may even succeed in its intent, but is still not a true remedy, just as "repression" is not a remedy, nor the revision of memory, nor psychic analysis, because they do not even remotely grasp the origin of the unwarranted burden placed on the nervous system. This is the reason why the patient will never become free of the analyst: a stop-gap remedy establishes itself as a necessity when the malaise cannot be grasped objectively.

[322] The correction of feeling or instinct by thinking, which can even make use of suitable feelings, is undoubtedly useful but does not get to the root of the problem. Every feeling experienced as an influx spilling-over from its rightful domain contributes to the alteration of the nerves, and is a pathological phenomenon which readily takes the form of a mood or state of mind. The healing of such a condition cannot occur through modifying the mental state, but by discovering the root-cause of how it comes about. Thus tranquillisers, sedatives, sleep therapy, can lead to the temporary suppression of the state of mind by putting the nervous system into a state of torpor, but in reality they leave it ever more vulnerable.

[323] Such non-reactivity of the nervous system ought to be attained as an awareness-permeated quiescence, through our taking hold of the reins of consciousness: then we might encounter feelings in the place where they arise, and become accustomed to perceiving and experiencing them before they make their way into the nerve-network, before they provoke disquiet in various regions of the nervous system, the mood or mental state from which there is no relief or at best perhaps only a minimal and partial one.

[324] Tranquillity and quiescence of the nervous system comes about through separating thinking from the cerebral organ. Thinking that deepens itself intentionally, but without strain, in a chosen theme, separating itself from the organ, essentially achieves a mastery over this process. Such calm tranquillity is possible because of the limitless autonomy of thinking, once it achieves the inner movement required of it that follows from its realisation of the extent to which it is habitually conditioned by the nervous system. To enter into a

profound repose is the *optimum* that the brain can accomplish in itself and offer as help to thinking: but this is brought about by a thinking which makes itself free. It is worth repeating that there is no yoga capable of providing this kind of possibility to western thinking, because the method of yoga is related to an older type of thinking, non-dialectical and pre-individual, tending towards the extinguishing of itself rather than to the conceptual articulation of the sensory world. Conceptual articulation is proper to western thinking, even if in current times it has lost its intuitive power, completely identifying itself, as it does, with sense-perceptible objectivity, which it considers real beyond and outside the thinking that makes it so. But conceptual articulation is in itself an activity which unites one concept with another, and can only become conscious as an activity unfettered by sensory mediation.

[325] The *askesis*¹³ of the concept is the foundation of the inner discipline required in our time. A conscious and self-directed activity of thinking can at first lead the cerebral organ into a state of **relaxation** and then subsequently to a positive **absence of activity**, in which thinking coincides integrally with its own movement, acquiring freedom and measurelessness with respect to the cerebral organ. This kind of repose, attained not as an inertia but as the result of rigorous activity, corresponds to a state of original or intuitive receptivity to conceptual movement. The dedicated and repeated taking up of a particular thought-content paves the way for this to occur.

[326] Psychology and psychotherapy will be able to help the human being by recognising the necessity of a mental discipline, as a vital and living element of consciousness, which actualises the real nature of thinking. For the full extent of its therapeutic application to be appreciated, this discipline will need to be undertaken first of all by researchers and investigators themselves, by psychologists willing to sound the psyche in this way.

[327] That *yoga* has nothing to contribute to such a task is made abundantly clear by the rigorous experience of thinking, the foundation of every positive operation performed by the psyche. It can be said that *yoga* acts in the opposite way to what we have indicated, in that its basis is the utilisation, not the mastery, of the not-yet-individual forces of thinking, the pressing necessity to bring them to self-conscious expression being quite foreign to it. *Yoga* demanded that the ascetic concentrated the forces of thinking within himself, in order

¹³ Judicious practice and exercise, intentional development, the 'raising up'. [trans.]

to go back, by means of them, towards a pre-personal state, for this purpose making use of various disciplines suited to the task: these, however, in the modern man, have the effect of binding the psyche to the bodily nature in a higher than normal degree, and deprive thinking of its potential for acting as a liberator of the mental nature from the nervous system.

[328] Altogether different is the path of the human being in the west, even if he or she struggles to recognise it: for the westerner, thought itself *is* the **universal**, realisable through an individual act which connects it with the world, in the heights and in the depths, in heaven and on earth, with the spirit and with the world of the senses, and in the context of people's ordinary everyday existence. On the other hand a modernised *yoga* is no longer *yoga*, and the act of establishing its authenticity is an ideal distinction possible only for the researcher who, as conscious being, has attained first of all to individual thought.

[329] The tranquil quiescence of the nervous system is not a torpor born of mental inertia, but a pure etheric enlivening, the outcome of an act of consciousness, whose **instantaneous** quality can be experienced as **continuity** through conscious willing, even if only for a few minutes. The exercise or application of concentration restores to thinking both its extrasensory life and its potential for provisionally freeing, within consciousness, the noblest part of the etheric body: that which disposes the soul to independence from instincts and passions.

22. *Sex and love*

[330] Sexual bliss has its origins in a momentary freeing of the etheric body from the physical, in particular from the controlling influence of the nerves. This liberation is brought about, so to speak, from the outside, by the prompting of impulses which in themselves are foreign to the laws of the etheric body and to the essential life of the soul. To a certain extent the I experiences, within the body, a liberation from bodily conditions. For a few brief moments the human being participates in a bodily transcendence for which however he does not possess the key and which, being more or less mediumistically experienced by him,

carries him along with it, but on account of this eludes him in his capacity as subject: he cannot co-exist with this transcendence¹⁴, which has value for him solely as ‘thing-experienced’.

[331] Transcendence is the dimension of the spirit: to experience it in the body is an ontological contradiction, from which the bodily nature in its fundamental wisdom tends to liberate itself fairly promptly, in spite of the desire which believes it can take this contradiction as its foundation.

[332] For a few moments the human being experiences independence from the nervous system, but it is not an authentic independence, because it is not a breakthrough of higher consciousness: in fact he or she does not know how it comes about, pursues it in the realm of nature, only to lose it and continually seek it, for its own sake and in itself. Not dissimilarly the mystic of earlier times sought and experienced as emotional bliss the temporary freeing of the etheric body in the sphere of feeling, without *knowing* and understanding the play of forces, and thereby was at risk of merely seeking pleasure in the psychic field of *eros*, whenever a rigorous inner tension did not preserve him.

[333] The freeing of the etheric body which is the cause of every form of sexual bliss, does indeed in the case of the sexual act come about by virtue of forces of the spirit, but via a “mechanical” stimulus of nature, which as a result achieves an unsanctioned communion with supernature, so as to wrest forces from it which it uses for the reproductive process, but also for the desire associated with it.

[334] The moment of *eros* is one in which the human being can perceive the simultaneous presence of two worlds: the original, primal force and at the same time its inversion; the beatitude of holy bliss, and then its sensual form which is necessary on the level of sensory consciousness.

[335] The imaginative projection of *eros* tends to reproduce the sensualisation of spiritual bliss in the forms demanded by a mentality under the sway of sensory appearances. This projection, based on an instinctive element that belongs not to the body but to the psyche,

¹⁴ I.e. the bodily transcendence eclipses the self-as-subject [trans.]

gives rise to forms of desire without substantial reality but which nevertheless tend towards realisation, the psycho-instinctual 'charge' from which they spring being very real indeed. Here we have a sub-imaginative creation which goes beyond the impulse of *eros* itself, having nothing to do with its physiological fulfilment. This physiological fulfilment, although its essence is surrounded by the influence of such unreal forms, and thus by alluring and labyrinthine interpretations, cannot however take place except through its external and characteristically animal process, the sense of which in the final analysis is the generation of another being.

[336] In reality the sexual act causes the most puissant forces of supernature to intervene in ordinary nature, forces which the average human being has no other way of invoking than through desire—which, in truth, has nothing essential to do with either the act itself or with love as a transcendent communion of souls. Indeed, only this communion can be in real correspondence with the forces of supernature operative within the act, because of its openness to their impersonal power, to which desire is inevitably a stranger. It is this contradiction which is responsible for the dubious identification of love and sex, due to the impulse which seemingly unites them: desire. This however is the very thing which radically disunites them, in that desire is an impulse of the will subservient to reflected consciousness, which in its turn is conditioned by sensory appearances, and therefore tending irresistibly towards the assertion of its own necessity.

[337] The subconscious creation referred to above tends to grasp and portray the 'moment' of the etheric body's liberation from its physical fetters, in its own imaginative forms: a moment not presided over by consciousness, but even dependent on excluding it. This consciousness is in fact fettered to the nervous system, which means it does not seek spiritual bliss but merely the sensation of spiritual bliss. It is unable to penetrate the content of this bliss, is irremediably outside it. This is ever and again a lost moment of transcendent choice: it *could* open the way to the impersonal power of creative forces which desire can neither perceive nor touch.



[338] Because of the lack of awareness surrounding the binding—of consciousness to the nervous system, and of the etheric body to the physical—which nevertheless dominates the life of the soul, the deep-seated inclination towards liberation from it expresses itself as **desire**, working through imaginative impulses created by the very dominance of desire itself, and thus by means of a confused use of imagination.

[339] In every form of enjoyment of the senses and to varying degrees in every sensory perception, there is a spontaneous moment of liberation and of autonomous activity of the etheric body in which the human being experiences the temporary “impression” of a release from the constriction of the physical body. He or she does not, however, actually possess this spontaneity, because it is sparked by desire, which reduces it to its own level of subtle bondage—through which the life-current is continually stolen away from the human subject. Thus there never exists a pleasure of the senses that is truly fulfilled, and that isn’t an extinguishing of the life-ether. The spontaneity of the sensory process is a potential which the human being continually wastes, because it is outside the dominion which the I exercises in relation to the etheric: a dominion which barely has a beginning in conscious thinking. Essentially it is a **memory**, or the **nostalgia for an original blissfulness**¹⁵, belonging to a communion beyond the sphere of sensory experience.

[340] It is a content, therefore, not experienced in its reality and, in this sense, is inauthentic or, so to speak, illegitimate; and this illegitimacy has always been the object of ethico-religious normalisation, or has been considered psychologically according to a causal mechanism that equates desire with the degradation of forces, but has never been understood through the internal logic of the phenomenon itself. Even in the most sensual love, the very embrace is the expression of the power of an ungrasped spiritual nucleus of life, however elusive it might be: a transcendental content, which takes *eros* as its vehicle on all levels of the soul, without itself being *eros*.

[341] In sensual enjoyment the human being seeks to possess something which he believes he understands but in reality is ignorant of, something to which his ordinary consciousness is quite closed: for he seeks in a contradictory and paradoxical manner to grasp impulses for the liberation and release of the etheric body, with neurosensory processes belonging to that

¹⁵ Or blessedness [trans.]

consciousness which necessarily excludes the etheric body. Bound to these processes, consciousness holds the etheric body in this bondage too, and yet tries to extract moments of genuine freedom from it which are fated to be no more than mere mental images arising in the vehicle of fleeting and elusive sensations—the very opposite of true liberty. In this sense every pleasure of the senses is almost always the result of an irregular use of the forces of the etheric body, which is temporarily reduced to the sensory level—irregular, in that something is sought on this level which simply does not exist there. No sensation, in fact, even if it were perceived right into its very depths in this way, would yield the content which is hoped for from it, because the content in this case belongs to the sphere of the senses. There would have to take place an inner conversion of the content, before the I, or the spirit, could be present in it. If this happens, sensory perception can indeed be the vehicle for an objective experience of the dynamic light of consciousness working within a given content—and in this case the content can be nothing other than of an extrasensory nature.

[342] That which people have thought of as “sin” is not, in fact, sensual enjoyment as such, but the corruption and degradation of certain forces, caused by seeking something through them which does not belong to their level, but to a level which negates and inverts them: and only a very clear inner presence can bring about the harmonisation, or the synthesis, of these opposing currents. The human being of earlier times was metaphysically aware of this antithesis, and provided for its resolution both ritually and cathartically.

[343] If we succeed in understanding how joy, either physical or of an inner nature, is a momentary state of liberation of the etheric body, then the incongruence of seeking this liberation with an etheric body in bondage to the neurosensory system becomes clear. This is what happens in the case of greed, which actually seeks itself and not the object through which it manifests.

[344] Just as joy corresponds to an extra-corporeal expansion of the etheric body, so does sorrow correspond to a contraction of it, in such a way that each of these feelings, at the limit which is endurable for the psychosomatic constitution, passes into its opposite. An excessive contraction of the etheric body prepares a reaction in the way of its subsequent expansion, and vice versa; and this is so whether the cause be pressure arising from external or internal factors. It can thus be understood how every joy associated with the binding of the psyche to

the sensory sphere, corresponds of necessity to a state of sorrow in the supersensible sphere, and in the same way sets the stage for a moral grief and thus for physical suffering. Desire, longing, instincts, are forms of etheric powerlessness with a tendency towards submissive acquiescence. The endeavour to subject the structures of the etheric to mental representations arising from the adulteration of the life-forces is nevertheless necessary in order that the human being may come to know and understand the ways in which he, whilst deceiving and degrading himself, sets up those situations of breakdown, rupture and catastrophe, which are needed to bring about a more radical intervention of consciousness.

23. *Contamination of the supersensible*

[345] The subtle corruption of feeling in inner experiences devoid of metadialectical consciousness is connected with the defilement of those will-forces which are the primary substance of the human being's etheric structure. The forces of the will, when deprived of their true object, which is a spiritual object, become forces of desire.

[346] An indication that the soul is developing under the sign of the I is its ability to bestow autonomy on the current of the will, which marks the beginning of all supernormal knowledge and likewise of direct experience of the hierarchy of forces. This autonomy is a prime and direct expression of the power of the I, which manifests as an independence of inner action from the bodily nature. It is an independence which becomes a vehicle of the conscious soul within the bodily nature and at the same time of equilibrium between the two opposing polarities, the mental-affective and the emotional-instinctive.

[347] The current of the will which is bound to the bodily categories is a psychic force which loses its autonomy with respect to the etheric body: its every *dynamis* becomes the projection of a physical situation rather than of something the conscious principle has determined. To that extent it functions as a degradation and distortion of its own original nature, signifying the I's loss of relationship with the soul-forces capable of working into the physical-etheric organisation. It is in fact possible to speak of a general human condition, at the basis of which a distortion of this kind can be discerned, as well as the two related

conditions which we described in chapter 12: the one reflecting an excess in the I's penetration into the psyche, as a result of which the I constricts the forces of the soul; the other reflecting an insufficient presence of the I to the working of these same forces.

[348] We find ourselves here dealing with two broad groups of malaise pertaining to psyche and body, whose origins are traceable in both cases to the kind of connection that consciousness has with the nervous system. An I which penetrates the organism excessively, or which penetrates it insufficiently, is an I which is being encouraged to learn, through consciousness of itself, that which is demanded of it by its own psycho-physical difficulties: it is an I called to come to the truth of itself by gradually emancipating itself from the provisional identification it has with its own physical-etheric vehicle.

[349] The supersensible forces which organise the physical organism, and which raise terrestrial substance to the plant level (etheric), to the animal (astral) and spiritual (I) levels, make use of certain organs and systems of organs in particular in order to accomplish their work at each of these levels. Their action is integrated and integral, that is in conformity with the principle which seeks to come to expression through the physical organism. As a consequence every autonomous expression on the part of the mineral element, whereby terrestrial substance escapes from the action of the (etheric-astral-spiritual) supersensible forces in the organism, reveals an insufficiency in the organisational forces and therefore in the order-bestowing presence of their principle (the I). All this is the sign of illness.

[350] The separation of the terrestrial element from the organisational action of the supersensible is the fundamental phenomenon underlying every ailment of both body and psyche, whether it be from an excess or a deficiency in the physical organism of penetration by inner forces. Every ill of the body or of the soul can be traced back to an insufficiency on the part of the I with respect to its own psycho-physical being, and every act of healing can be considered as a reaffirmation of the forces of the I. It is worth noting that this does not concern only the forces of the I which manifest through consciousness and self-awareness, but above all those which are directly active as forces up-building of the physical bodily nature.

[351] The physical organism lives to the extent that it can be separated from minerality and formed by supersensible forces which hold sway over minerality through the I. The physical-etheric up-building of the organism accomplished by these forces applies only to the life of the body, not to the expression of consciousness. The spirit, to attain self-consciousness, must of necessity place itself as a contrasting process to that, also stemming from itself, which builds up the physical-etheric organism.

[352] For this reason the ascetics of ancient times avoided the way of consciousness and reason because through appropriate disciplines they were still able to experience, in an integral way, the spiritual forces active in the bodily nature. But this was precisely an event of the soul, of the astral, and not of the I: the I was seen of necessity as a transcendent “higher I”, to which one had to raise oneself, leaving the Earth behind and dominating the body insofar as it constituted an impediment to this.

[353] The modern problem is that of an immanent I whose transcendental forces can only become active when that immanence becomes an actual experience of itself, rather than mere consciousness of the sensory through which it becomes immanent in the first place.

[354] The real challenge for the modern human being is the immanent experience of the higher I: in other words, overcoming what has been decreed to be human but is actually subhuman, since it is subject to alienation in the physical vehicle. The presence of the loftiest forces of the I manifests today in an inferior form which risks becoming enshrined as normal.

[355] The ultimate justification for research into the original forces of consciousness is the sheer urgency of the need to overcome what we currently think of as human, and to do this by virtue of a force that is already active within the human.

[356] The fact that inner experience becomes ever more capable of understanding the foundations of the bodily nature, as its power of independence increases with regard to the categories of that bodily nature, should be seen in relation to the fact that thinking becomes ever more capable of positive identity with the sense-perceptible as it increases its awareness of itself as a “sense-free” movement—in other words, as supersensible. The supersensible

nature of the inner life enables us to understand how all that, which in an irregular way conditions consciousness and imposes itself as an unleashing of instincts or an invasion of emotions, can be traced back to the trespassing, the straying of inner forces into the physical nature, in other words to their being seized and taken hold of by physical processes.

[357] The task of psychology and likewise of medicine is to grasp the phenomenon of the trespassing of the forces of the soul from their respective bodily seats: a phenomenon which can present either as a potentiating of physical processes beyond the vital-physical limit necessary for the expression of the spirit, or as an excessive penetration of spiritual forces escaping from the I into the physical-etheric structures. Both types of phenomena are however to be traced back to the breakdown of the connection between thinking, feeling and willing, the origin of which in its turn should be ascribed to the unrightful domination of reflected consciousness.

[358] Whether one form or the other presents itself, it being anyhow ultimately a single phenomenon, the expression “trespassing” or “overstepping the bounds” has significance solely as an image that helps the research to orientate itself, but is nevertheless symbolically useful. So also the expression “potentiation of physical processes” can refer on the one hand to neuroses or physical illness of nervous origin, or on the other hand to the prevailing of the instinctive life without any of the more typical neurotic manifestations. Therapy, in any case, consists of a thinking which, working upon itself, reintegrates and actualises itself as a vehicle of the I, which is in itself the higher I.

[359] Let us hold on to this as the chief problem of psychology and psychotherapy, on account of the fact that the highest spiritual forces are those which work most deeply in the bodily nature, and yet when they inhere unduly in the bodily nature they become psychically and physiologically the most destructive. An inner quality, in order to run its course in a positive way, needs to have a rigorously inward movement, that is to come to its full and proper expression whilst maintaining its independence, as extrasensory movement, from the physical vehicles which act as its conductors. The same quality, when it becomes bound to sensory functions or taken hold of by physical processes—and to establish how this happens is the art of the investigator—changes its sign and becomes the opposite of what it was originally: the intentional force of the will becomes fear, love becomes hate,

altruism a tenacious egoism. This is the danger today weighing upon all those who have a rich life of consciousness, or unfold intense activity of the psyche, without understanding its laws.

[360] The art of those who aspire to orientate their own and others' life of consciousness lies in their capacity to distinguish the sensory from the extrasensory element in the forces called forth by the activity of consciousness. In reality the forces remain supersensible even when they change level: at the level of the senses they become destructive, or productive of another kind of energy: they become instincts and passions. In such a circumstance it is not the supersensible force which is the cause of the problem, but its having been constrained to function at a physical level which contradicts its nature, whilst the actual proper level for its expression is the etheric, which is incorporeal, and the only one by means of which it is able to work constructively on the physical level at all.

[361] A force of love compelled to express itself on the level of the senses does not become corrupted, in fact even remains whole and hidden, but does cause a change in the vital-physical element in which it inheres: and the psychic product of this change is hate, or sensuality. This force can operate as a force of love on the sense-level if the movement which is proper to it is assured, a movement which is independent of the senses. Psychic illness is almost always a "contamination", an adulteration or mixing up of inner forces with physiological processes. A health-giving orientation is to distinguish supersensible forces from the sensory vehicle, that is—to use an expression borrowed from alchemy—the separation of the "subtle" from the "gross": the very point of **pure** (or sense-free) **thinking**.

24. Memory and association

[362] Analysis through free association is the opposite of the analysis which we have indicated. A psychotherapeutic conversation cannot be a dialectical procedure, but is first and foremost an inner process: it ought to provide a way for the therapist to call forth the I-principle of the patient, that is, the independence of the will from feeling, rather than a manipulated introspection—an introspection which anyway cannot take place in regard to a

content where the autonomy and independence of the subject is lacking, as is the case in these conditions. A subject devoid of subjectivity is called forth—from the depths, analysis would have us believe—but only so as to be ultimately negated. We shall see how a true therapeutic action cannot be a dialectical encounter, but rather a psycho-etheric action proceeding from the etheric level of the therapist's consciousness.

[363] When the human being meditates, or dedicates him or herself to an inner work which involves a conscious continuity of the thinking act, he or she realises an equilibrium in the soul, since the principle of consciousness operates from its **essence**, and brings about an independence which harmonises its faculties. This potential generally finds itself blocked by the unconscious insinuation of some automatic "association" during the unfolding and development of the thinking, kindred to the relation between thought and thought, and tending to replace it—the very opposite of a logical relation. Conscious intuition and logical relation coincide in thought that is consciously thinking. Association is an unobserved distraction that paralyses the meditative process, or diverts it, through an impulse which tends to make the I avoid the realisation of its identity with itself as the centre of consciousness, relative to the object of the meditation or research.

[364] Associative memory in the human being is an automatism of the sentient sphere, of a psychophysiological order, of the same nature as the automatic correlation active as instinct in the animal: and it cannot rightfully be called memory. The associative instinct of the animal, or the *mneme*¹⁶—it may even be found in single-celled organisms, very exactly as "cellular memory"—is something altogether different from human memory, the origin of which is to be sought in a direction opposite to that of the cellular support.

[365] Memory is an act of consciousness, involving a deliberate relation of the I to itself in the sphere of representation, and therefore independent of the bodily support even though it stands in need of its mediation. We have to distinguish in the human being true memory from its counterfeit, its simulacrum, which is deeply tenacious and belongs to the cellular structure, the race, or the blood, and is discernible as a stratification of ancient impressions unresolved by thought. This is a memory which, being a zone of psychic sediment, ought not come to the point of influencing consciousness. When it does rise up as memory, we

¹⁶ Gk. = a remembrance, memory, record [trans.].

have to say that it is illusory because it wrongfully conditions the **present connection** of the human being with himself and with the world, and therefore constitutes an impediment to the manifestation of true memory. We might speak of **pathological memory**, in that its power of correlation derives from somatic conditions rather than from objective identity. The various phenomena of spontaneous association, including so-called “conditioned reflexes”, are an expression of this kind of memory which, on the psycho-physical level, causes a grade of being to become established that the human being has in common with the animal. This is a “zone” against which the spirit, as against a constraining nature, is engaged in a perpetual action of transmutation and consciousness: the zone which least belongs to the conscious human being, and which prevails in him or her when the principle of the individuality is weakened, or when a physical illness interferes with the regular unfolding of conscious process.

[366] The human being is still very far from having in this kind of memory a spontaneous function of the spirit. Every automatic association is a sign of weariness of consciousness, or of some nervous ailment: all forms of error in the evaluation of things or in the alteration of the objective contents of sensation, can be referred to the fact that the conscious principle is at the mercy of an “automatic” psyche which establishes relations or associations not corresponding to reality, and intensifying the isolation of the individual within subjective limits.

[367] It can be said that the real act of memory unfolds as a moment of incorporeal will which overcomes the obstacle of the physical support, that is of the medium which reflects and therefore renders conscious the recollection.

[368] This medium works in opposition to the volitional-mnemonic current which precisely in overcoming it brings about a conscious remembering. The memory is a permanent content of the soul, but in order to be realised it has to “defeat” each time the opposition of the physical support: if there should be a dysfunction in this, or if it becomes the vehicle of sub-personal psychic currents, the mnemonic association can be severed from real memory and made use of by an extraneous process.

[369] On the other hand to speak of “free association” is a contradiction in terms, in that it is a use of the thinking relation on the part of that which lacks relation as such. The state of instinctive memory can be of value only if it corresponds to what has been consciously placed within the psyche by a lucid state of consciousness, or when it is the expression of a physical spontaneity which does not undermine but actually assists the volitional tenor of the psyche; but it is an impediment to any independence of judgment when it prevails over the conscious process of remembering, or becomes a psychic content and, seeing that it belongs to the psyche, is then contemplated and analysed. But in reality it never is analysed, precisely through the fact that its influence is brought to bear *upon* consciousness.

[370] The analytical process which, by inducing this so-called “free association” in the patient, claims that it achieves the automatic revelation of the sediments from the “depths”, in essence calls forth that which is least real and spontaneous in the personality. This kind of artificially provoked spontaneity belongs neither to the I nor to the psyche; the specific character which results from it does not belong to the psyche but to the way in which it is compelled to express itself. The patient is brought to a diminution of critical consciousness, which leads to the discovery not of that which he or she is, but **what he or she is not**.

[371] The repressed psychic content, in which unconfessed intentions and feelings are apparently to be found, cannot be made use of in an objective way, because—as we have seen—it results from an operation which is only possible to the extent that it has no relation with the zone from which it is supposed to emanate: the real relation in fact can be none other than an act of consciousness, which needs to be all the more lucid when it concerns the extraconscious. *This* content however comes out through a suppression of consciousness. The result of the analysis has value as an exercise for the analyst, but not as a therapeutic act for the analysand. He or she, even if everything went according to procedural expectations, would be the beneficiary not of his or her own act of consciousness, but of the analyst’s.

[372] Any normal individual, regardless of whether he was highly learned or completely untutored, would inevitably in this situation reveal an “inferior zone” in his psyche, which would lack reality precisely because it was *provoked* to appear: the real identity of such a zone cannot be disclosed by associative mechanisms, because it is in close association with the person’s underlying personality and is to be explained *through that*, not the other way

around. In the case of a neurotic, this kind of procedure amounts to a violence against a being who is already weakened, undermining the minimal conscious defences that he still has at his disposal, as a result of which he enters into a state of diagnostic dependence upon the analyst-confessor or investigator.

[373] This method, upon which—with certain formal variants—psychoanalytical praxis is founded, consists in brief of leading the neurotic to the revelation of a psyche that has been scattered and dispersed, that is of an automatically induced spontaneity: it calls forth a psychic substance which is inevitably abnormal even in a normal person, the content of which could only be true in connection with the particular individual to whom it corresponds, namely with respect to a sphere of responsibility which, however, analysis cuts off right at the start, for reasons of method, marvelling then that it finds itself face to face with a subject exhibiting all the expected symptoms. In itself such a “psychic substance”, as has been shown, is real only to the extent that it comes to settle in the depths of the psyche, without straying from its rightful place. Psychic disturbance occurs when it seeps into consciousness, through an impoverishment of this latter’s defences.

[374] The patient’s display of associations, from a formal point of view, is correlated to the mental standpoint of the analyst and to his interpretative bias, within a schema which makes a series of facts—without reality in terms of their relevance to the subject—function objectively and therefore with an appearance of scientific authority. The subject, as we have indicated, is in the end treated as if he or she did not exist as a subject at all.



[375] Psychological research may well believe that it penetrates into the unconscious, pushing its way past the threshold of consciousness, via the dialectical treatment of an external, or **causative**, phenomenology of consciousness, and by establishing a method of psychological induction or deduction, in which the analysis is discursive but armed with all the logical mechanisms required for a scientific structure.

[376] In reality research of this kind manages to cross the threshold of consciousness not at all in the way it imagines but according to quite a contrary impulse, the inverse nature of which it does not notice, namely that it forsakes the level of normal consciousness.

[377] The scientific formalisation of this inversion in the very nature of the analysis occurs all too readily in an epoch in which discursive formalism is quick to construct the content which it lacks. A concrete psychological research ought to be able to be quite clear with itself about the nature of analysis as a psychic phenomenon, that is as the production of a psychological norm arising from the binding of thinking and other related psychic activities to the physical processes of their respective supports.

[378] Analysis presents itself as a special case of alteration by the investigation itself of the very instrument it uses in the investigation, and which can be explained both by the typical condition of modern thinking, bound to an inordinate degree to cerebral physiological processes, and by the fact that analysis calls forth as a research-method the intensification or potentising of this condition. One and the same psychic level produces both the condition of mediumship and the various forms of abdication of consciousness which give rise to the “unconscious”, positing it as unposited, and bestowing on it an autonomy against which consciousness will have to engage in a perennial struggle without any hope of holding its own.

[379] We need to appreciate the significance of the inherence of consciousness in the processes of the physical bodily nature, so as to understand the distorted character of any psychic experience at this level, but above all so as to conceive what a **real** inner research would be like: as we have seen, it is essentially an experience of the etheric body, in that the etheric is the vehicle of the life of the soul and of the relationship between this life and the bodily nature.

[380] The new psychology will have to open itself to knowledge of the etheric world if it wants to understand the life of consciousness and the significance of the continual oscillation of this life between the inner and outer poles of existence. In the etheric it will be able to recognise both the up-building vital current of the physical body and the immediate vehicle of extraconscious research, belonging as it does to the sphere open to investigation

and experience immediately beyond the threshold of consciousness. Beyond this threshold the etheric functions as the instrument of **memory** and of thinking, as the vehicle of feeling and of willing—of transcendent impulses which descend into the physical bodily nature and of those lower ones which from the bodily nature ascend into the mental.

[381] The ambiguity of psychic life will remain incomprehensible unless the double function of the etheric is clearly grasped: as extrasensory formative force of the organism and as vehicle of the faculties of the soul. Not distinguishing this twofold function prevents us from clearly understanding the continual adulteration of the psychic together with the bodily life and the potential for bodily processes to project themselves as psychic phenomena; furthermore it stands in the way of the recognition of pure thinking, or thinking that has become liberated, as quickener of etheric consciousness, and consequently of the I's relationship with the powers of the soul.

25. Imagination as a power

[382] The contamination or adulteration spoken of above lies typically in the fact that the rhythmical and metabolic processes, which are necessary for the life of the cerebral organ, can also illegitimately condition thinking which, to be a real inner motion, ought to unfold according to its own extrasensory dynamic. Thinking ought to make use of mediating processes that are **purely of a nerve-nature**, and not of those that are rhythmical-metabolic, which are only necessary for the physical life of the cerebral organ. The cause of the contamination, naturally enough, eludes not only investigative research but also the hypotheses of whoever has been affected by it.

[383] Thinking is without the shadow of a doubt necessary for the daily round of existence, as a measure of its values, but it has also a life of its own which cannot merely be subordinated to that which it is required to be the measure of. The rational research which is all that the human being of this time avails himself of, not only lacks the power of noticing

the mental backspace in which a real “inverse intelligence” is at work, but becomes an instrument of it, because—as we saw in relation to the scientific assumption of phenomena—it does not securely possess the particular degree of consciousness associated with the perceptual moment: the extraconscious essence of this moment continually eludes it.

[384] When we speak of the mediumistic condition of modern mentality, or of magical pseudo-potency, or the mystical exaltation of the “liberated life”, what is being referred to is the unconscious inherence of thinking and of psychic currents in the rhythmical and metabolic processes of the nervous system—those processes which assert themselves in a normally healthy human being during sleep, dominating the cerebral domain to the complete exclusion of thinking consciousness.

[385] Conversely, it can be said that real inner research lies in the potential for thinking to experience its own being independent of the physical support, so as to activate its own movement on a level which for ordinary consciousness corresponds to the state of deep sleep. It is the same level, but with a different relationship: a level which every irregular inner experience believes it attains, but in essence attains as a mediumistic inversion, as an inferior reflection, not only eliminating the potential independence of the mental from the nervous system, but actually bringing about a submersion of the mental in the nerves—a phenomenon which can similarly be observed as a sort of waking-mediumism in current scientific-technological activities and in various forms of both eastern and western spirituality, to the extent that they are inner forms of reflected consciousness. The subject may be awake, dynamic, sure of him or herself, yet at the same time moved by impersonal forces endowed with intelligence and with the capacity of dialectical manipulation, whose aim is the exclusion of the human being from a real consciousness of self.

[386] It can be said that inner investigation not only demands the *animadversio*¹⁷, the close observation and scrutiny, of the illegitimate influence of the cerebral organ’s rhythmical and metabolic processes upon thinking, but also supposes experiencing the independence of the thinking act from the purely nervous support, that is the experience of thinking as a vehicle of its own force, capable of providing consciousness with a sure foundation, one from which

¹⁷ Lat. = A turning of the powers of the soul towards the observation or perception of a phenomenon [trans.].

it becomes alienated in its dialectical mode. This is an extrasensory force which, not bound to any representation or image, manifests its own free movement; it is experienced as the image-forming power of the inner man in his intuition of the living essence of other entities. The living being which man presumes by way of the abstract concept can really arise in the *dynamis* of imaginative thinking.

[387] The perception of the power internal to thinking, which is the conscious realisation of freedom, in that it attains to that point in which pure motives of action arise as independent intuitions, is brought about through the physical-etheric support but unfolds outside it. But this depends upon **consciously cultivating** the independence of that in the soul which is absolutely independent and original. In the form of an essential image, one opens oneself to an objective content, just as in sense-perception; but the content in question is not of a sensory nature. It ought to be clear that perceiving signifies the possibility of mastery here. I can work upon something that I see, not upon that which I do not see. The human being is not free as long as he is dependent upon something which he does not perceive.

[388] This kind of inner perception presents itself first of all as a vision in symbols and images, and is a form dependent upon the initial vision-capacity of the researcher; it is not yet direct perception, which demands that the researcher develop an autonomy with respect to the imaginative world. It is most certainly a supersensible perception, but in reality what is perceived of the supersensible is that with which consciousness, not as yet independent from its habitual reflected disposition, is able to establish identity. Thus it is not yet an identity which flows from the profound impersonality of consciousness—which belongs to a higher level of supersensible experience, towards which perception in images simply serves as an introduction.

[389] The basis of imaginative experience is the intensification of the forces of normal consciousness.

[390] The aspect of this force which initially lacks genuine supersensible correspondence, nevertheless participates in the experience in such a way that, through the harmonising of its inner movements with those of imaginative consciousness, it grows by virtue of this

integrity into other zones: consciousness attunes itself to these zones, even without yet possessing the forces to move directly within them.

[391] This distinction is necessary as a point of method with practical application, so that one does not end up believing that it is possible to work arbitrarily by way of an imaginative form, as if it were somehow the actual supersensible content. If this happens, the experience would arouse forces in an irregular way from the depths, forces which ought to be left alone in their subconscious otherness if they are to function in a positive way for the human being.

[392] The one thing that can work upon such forces, and it does so in an indirect way, is the final product of supersensible perception, that is, the element irreducible to human dialectics. For human dialectics this product needs to be mediated by some specific inner form: an imaginative form, indispensable for the purposes of making a right connection with consciousness, and so as to enable a possible translation of it into concepts.

26. The mediation accomplished by the nerves

[393] Within the flow of imagination the researcher perceives the forces of feeling and willing from a perspective quite different from the one he makes use of in his normal apprehension of feelings and impulses—as if from an original and transcendent zone, with which he himself is in essence identical. Ordinary feeling and willing have to fall silent so that, like a pure negative, the inner element can reveal its positive content, which is essentially unknown to normal consciousness.

[394] The investigator learns that the normal manifestation of feeling and willing, in the form of emotions and impulses, alienates their essence from its true original identity and compels it to a kind of opposite identity, to which the researcher himself is normally subject. These in fact insinuate themselves into consciousness by way of the rhythmical and metabolic processes necessary for the life of the diencephalic centres. The pathway between hypothalamus, thalamus and cerebral cortex functions by means of these vital processes: the connection with the nerve-element as such becomes irrelevant in this centre. In fact we

ought to see the “autonomous” or “vegetative” nervous system as the appropriate mediator, whose function essentially consists of harmonising this contradictory connection.

[395] The autonomous nervous system ensures that the contradiction does not become destructive as it spreads beyond its own proper natural limits¹⁸. Knowledge of the contents coming from this zone cannot be simply a derivative awareness contingent upon unconscious attitudes of censorship or repression—which is **assumed** to be the contradiction—but rather an autonomous inner activity, which does not interfere with but actually assists the regulatory function of the vegetative system. This function is decidedly interfered with, however, when these contents are compelled to rise into consciousness, by way of a forced associative automatism, and to unduly follow the course of mental processes, whereby they acquire a psychic power that they ought not to have.

[396] The analytical impulse alters the deep equilibrating function of the autonomous system.

[397] By contrast, the capacity to **contemplate** the flux of personal feeling and willing provides the investigator with a way of bringing about a radical liberation from it, which is at the same time an objective restoration of the forces of feeling and willing. The movement by which these forces are constrained derives from their participation in the animal nature, with which consciousness only dimly identifies, owing to the passivity of its reflected condition. Therapy ought to consist in the conversion, the transformation, of reflected thinking and in rendering conscious the original identity of the functions of the psyche and the I; not in giving added weight to their distorted creations, thereby aggravating the burdens of the I, so that the psychic content acquires, through forces stolen from the I, an anti-I function.

[398] In order for therapy to be possible, the conversion of thinking ought to be able to lead to the experience of the etheric forces of the organism. Given that the function of the etheric body is twofold—being the vehicle of thinking, feeling and willing; and structuring the physical body—it is possible to make clear to oneself how there can be no alteration of

¹⁸ I.e., the autonomous nervous system acts so as to mitigate or reintegrate the destructive effects of the contradiction [trans.].

the etheric vehicle of thinking, which is not reflected in etheric action upon the physical body. From this the therapeutic importance of working in such a way that the two functions are separated: we have been able to clarify how this separation is blocked by the mechanism of reflected thinking and by the non-pertinence of the nervous system that is associated with it. The separation and harmonisation is accomplished instead by the vegetative nervous system, whose function becomes particularly positive when a spiritually strengthened consciousness is able to grant it the autonomy proper to it.

[399] A mental state always becomes a physical process, either in the direction of health or of sickness, owing to the mediation of the etheric body between psyche and physical body, and the mediation of the autonomous nervous system between physical body and etheric body. We shall see how this psychosomatic function can be governed by consciousness, when consciousness, through an appropriate discipline, arrives at the point of transferring its own essential principle to the centre of the etheric currents which support and sustain the organism, so as to grant to the vegetative system the greatest possible autonomy.



[400] The experience of the fundamental forces of feeling and willing beyond their respective supports leads to the perception of the structure itself of those supports. This perceiving is an inner act, the objectivity of the content of which does not rest upon sensory identity, as ordinary sense-perception does—which is always lacking awareness of the independence of its inner *dynamis* from the physical stimulus which gives rise to it.

[401] To inner perception the structures of the supports reveal themselves as arising from the interpenetration of the four systems of the physical body's organisation: mineral, gland, nerve, blood. These systems, as we have seen, are cognisable for imaginative perception to the extent that it grasps the supersensible principles which respectively govern them, whence four inner grades of being are distinguishable, responding to four orders of forces: the physical, the vital or etheric, the soul-animal, the conscious mental (the I).

[402] The psychophysical structure of the human being, in its dynamic form, appears as a synthesis in movement of his/her whole history. The forces which acted formatively in the

beginning are now present within this structure as activity of the I and of the soul, working in the form of self-awareness: by way of this they oppose this physical structure which at one time they organised.

[403] It can be said that the *Logos*, having worked upon the human form in its physical aspect, then its etheric, and then its astral, descended after that itself as individuating principle, or as the "I", into the astral-etheric-physical human being, to the point of attaining a consciousness of self which initially can be no other than mediated by the nervous system. It cannot actualise the original autonomy with which it worked formatively upon the human being from the outside, except by reascending, through the stages of the descent which first enabled it to emerge as consciousness of self, but now starting from the lowest level: the physical. This grade, which is the final one of the descent, becomes the first in the reascending. Naturally, the creative potency of the I is not yet equivalent to that which came to expression in the original physical creation, but rather corresponds to the current neurosensory level of consciousness. This explains the process of the cerebralisation of knowing which, begun in the West with Greek philosophy, could not do otherwise than have as its crowning a one-sided experience of the sensory; it also explains the contingency of this experience, in that whilst establishing itself in its current limited dimension through the authority of its original impulse, it is nevertheless in a secret and hidden opposition to its original inner forces, which bear within themselves the possibility of overcoming the limitation. The current impulses of culture, even though they ultimately derive from the spirit, work actively against the spirit, in that they presume to have value as forms of consciousness without possessing actual consciousness of self, nor an awareness of how precarious it is to assume the physical state as sole measure of the human being.



[404] Concerning the cosmological significance of the four constituent systems of the human being, references can be found in traditional texts as well as in modern spiritual-scientific research to the cyclical doctrine of the Four Ages and their connection with the symbolic stages of terrestrial development: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth.

[405] According to this view there can be distinguished in the structure of the human being: a saturnian man (physical body), a solar man (etheric body), a lunar man (astral body), a terrestrial man (I-consciousness).

[406] These stages are present in the human being in an organic structural sense and also as states of consciousness, gathered to a head in rational consciousness—not because this is the synthesis of them or their culmination, but on the contrary because it is the first step of their new working, in a direction distinct from their original one, retracing now from below the process of descent onto the physical plane. The meaning of the historical process, after the so-called “dark age” (*Kali Yuga*), can be only a reascent from the descent’s lowest rung: rational consciousness.

[407] Even though the occult origins of the human constitution do not form part of the present study, nevertheless that paradigm is useful in understanding the ambivalent nature of the unconscious. The forms of consciousness which stand so to speak “below” rational consciousness, like paleo-psychic forces of the physical systems, represent so many potentially higher stages of consciousness, which function in a negative way, becoming corruptive of the psyche to the extent that mental consciousness becomes immersed in them without realising self-awareness in respect of them, a self-awareness towards which they tend as to their natural higher reference point. With this immersion, the conscious soul denies the meaning of the freedom that it won with the loss of its original spiritual state, and therefore the free action necessary to find it again; which is to establish the kind of connection with those forces of the psyche required by their current condition. The freedom of the conscious soul can be considered the fruit of the “sacrifice” of the original spiritual forces, which now wait for that freedom to restore them.

[408] When rational consciousness digs around in these zones analytically or via pseudo-yoga, it does no more than engender the illusion of penetrating them, because it is not possible to penetrate into a world of forces except by virtue of forces of a similar, if not higher, level. It is by virtue of the primordial power within the I that the forces are able to attain to their origin. The real sense of the research is to master these forces in oneself: mastered, they are both good and true; unmastered, they lead to evil and error. But only a Principle which does not identify with them can master them, being **prior** to them and

altogether higher; it has no need to possess them and therefore **no need of struggle** to master them.

[409] The psyche's inherence in the systems of the body, beyond the necessary mediation of the nervous system, ultimately conditions rational consciousness, alienating it from the human subject: it is an illegitimate calling forth of forces which stand in no real relation to the autonomous subject, the relation being one which properly unfolds exclusively in the dreaming and deep sleep states, according to a mechanism which belongs to nature rather than to consciousness. To establish harmony between the autonomy of consciousness and the mechanism of nature is the function and purpose of the neuro-vegetative system.

[410] These deep structures are syntheses of forces which have worked upon and formed the human organisation to the point where the spirit could express itself through it, and initially in the form of thinking: these forces ought to remain outside rational consciousness, so as to maintain the integrity of their function as fundamental life-forces, respecting which rational consciousness manages to have a certain minimal autonomy insofar as it opposes itself to them. It is a temporary and contingent state of consciousness, the continued evolution of which demands that consciousness grasp the life-element in itself that would enable it to transform a negative kind of opposition into the positive one of conscious freedom: in reality freedom signals the entry of these forces into the human sphere, whilst allowing for their more-than-human content.

27. Alteration of the material support-structures

[411] Rational thinking is the expression of a consciousness diametrically opposed to that of its extraconscious forces, which encounter the world's minerality. In essence rational thinking is the **reflection** of the encounter between its own deep forces and the mineral being of the world.

[412] As reflection, thinking does not penetrate minerality but grasps its empty form, not recognising it as a form in which it is itself active in a reflected way, and upon which it

imaginatively bestows content: thus it thinks of matter as real in itself. The content of matter, however, in reality is always form, which naïve thinking fails to realise. In this thinking or imagining, the essential force of a thinking in the process of penetrating minerality seeks to emerge as a conscious fact. In every future ascent of thinking this imaginative weaving of the reflected form will be the vehicle of a renewed influx of spiritual forces into the human being, insofar as the reflected form can be experienced or perceived in itself independently from the content which served to manifest it.

[413] The penetration of minerality is mediated by the nervous system, in which the soul realises an immanent relation with itself, orientated towards drawing forth from the nervous system, as its own identity, conscious thinking. But the deep forces within thinking have a power of unreflected identity with minerality, through the fact that they are independent of the nervous system. This independence is not conscious, because consciousness arises from the reflected state, which is one of dependency.

[414] Wherever mediation via the nerves has made itself necessary, thinking acquires consciousness of the mineral realm but loses its independence in relation to it: this event takes place in the cerebral organ, by means of which the human being possesses reflected thinking and sensory connection with the world. At the same time, whenever the mediation of the nerves *in the neuro-vegetative system* tends towards the same behaviour as in the cerebral organ, the forces of the depths, already referred to, are subjected to alteration: they lose their autonomy and act destructively. We can see from this how important it is to be aware of thinking's connection with the cerebral organ, in terms of treating nervous maladies by restoring to thinking its essential independence from the physical organ. The loss of this independence acts upon the connection between the psyche in all its depth and the neuro-vegetative system.

[415] In the deep reality of its own nature, thinking has nothing to do with rationalistic dialectics, but is pure form, or formative force, one with the pure force of feeling and willing. We can speak of an original current of thinking-feeling-willing, from which thinking separates itself so as to be reflected by cerebrality and create a provisional basis for I-consciousness.

[416] The original independence of this current from the nervous system explains why the human being neither acts nor moves himself directly via thought, which is reflected and therefore dependent, whilst he can move his limbs via the will, which is not reflected. But this will normally executes the commands not of the authentic I, but of the I mediated by reflected thinking, the I which does not realise itself via a thinking independent of the reflected state. In fact, the reflected state is not itself the obstacle, but consciousness' dependence upon it.

[417] The dominance of the reflected state is the outcome of the unconscious dependence of thinking upon the cerebral vehicle. We have been able to show how the function of this vehicle with respect to the thinking process is purely mediative, in a "mechanical" sense, because it has no connection with thinking's content, either before or after the reflected moment: both pre-reflected thinking and reflected thinking itself take place outside the cerebral organ. The dependence lies in the incapacity to separate the pure thinking element from the rhythmical-metabolic resonances of the emotive-instinctual sphere in the cerebral organ, owing to non-awareness of the pre-cerebral essence of thinking.

[418] Thinking's insufficient autonomy, in intimate correlation with its subjection to the rhythmical-metabolic element of the cerebral nature, has further ramifications in the way it compromises the **autonomy** of the deep soul-anima nature, which in turn is reflected in an alteration or disturbance of the nervous support. Naturally the process also works in the reverse direction: the alteration, the disturbance to the nervous support, manifests as an abnormal dependency of the psychic life as a whole upon that support. And if we recall and bear in mind that feeling and willing have their bodily support in systems other than that of the nerves, then we can understand how the compromising of the connection that representation has with the nervous system alters feeling and willing in their depths, and drives them towards becoming pathological for both psyche and body.

[419] We can understand the extent and significance of the harm if we bear in mind that an orderly connection between perception and representation, an objective functioning of the sense-organs and the capacity of the nerve-terminations to mediate the contact of the deep thinking-force with the physical domain all depend upon the psyche's independence from the nervous system. Various psychotic forms of an hallucinatory kind can be explained by

the contamination referred to here, that is, by the projection as mental image of currents of feeling and of the will, irregularly inhering in the neuro-sensory vehicle.



[420] The art of the therapist consists in distinguishing within the degraded state the forces immediate to the conscious act. With regard to the supposed penetration of the extraconscious by way of narcotic or hallucinogenic drugs, it has to be said that in the best of cases a minimal element of conscious will can still be present in a process which basically relies upon eliminating consciousness. The minimal conscious presence can, because of the drug's action upon the nervous system, attain in an irregular way, that is, not through autonomous activity, the perception of a normally unconscious moment within mental representation which is coincident with the perceptual process.

[421] This unconscious moment does not have the slightest reason for acquiring an objective form, except when an autonomous act of consciousness unfolds within it, which (in the case of drug experiences) is what has been eliminated beforehand: as a result of which it has the power to awaken arbitrary forms of imaginative content, which assail and obsess the subject, being at one and the same time in correlation with him and in opposition. The minimal conscious presence appropriates to itself a fleeting extrasensory experience derived not from the supersensible sphere but from an artificially stimulated neurosensory impulse. What we have here then is an **inverse extrasensory**, a sub-sensory realm, which as psychic content expresses one's subjective nature, not so much in its limitedness as in its alteration and distortion.

[422] Experiences of this kind, which some people fancy as a genuine function of psychological research, are inevitably gnoseological contradictions, internally inconsistent, because they are authentic only insofar as they lack consciousness of the thinking implicit in their content. If we bear in mind that psychophysiology is still at a loss regarding the mechanism of the perceptual process, we can appreciate the ingenuity it exhibits when it nevertheless carries out experiments beyond the ordinary limits of perception.

[423] These experiences and experiments represent an attempt to live entirely within a psychophysical process, in that one gives up trying to complete the experience as thought and therefore as knowledge, the so-called investigator being satisfied with the sensations that this process procures for him in its incompleteness, and hence in its irregular and pathological state.

[424] Thus something is hailed as extraconscious experience which is actually the reversal of a process of bodily consciousness, that one is incapable of understanding in its normal workings. The inability to perceive the “inner” aspect of normal perception is carried over into the research concerning the inner aspect of an abnormal perception, brought about by provoking a disturbance in the connection between perception and representation.

[425] Artificial immersion in lower grades of consciousness is not a real penetration of them. Only higher forces of consciousness can penetrate the depths. On the other hand it is precisely the **raising** of consciousness that requires of the investigator a conscious awareness of the path travelled: an awareness possible only by a strengthening of consciousness itself; not by psychic regression, which is a definite temptation for consciousness when it is incapable of grasping itself and therefore of experiencing new modes of itself.

[426] Hallucination, regardless of whether it stems from psychosis or is artificially induced, is not a genuine inner experience, but quite the opposite, a psychic projection with its origin in the alteration of a neurosensory process. The semi-conscious experience of sensation, through an alteration of the ordinary process, cannot rightly be called an experience of the pre-conscious moment: it is not the same as intuiting the inner aspect of sensory content, which—as we have shown—is in itself a supersensible objectivity.

[427] The semi-conscious state can be meaningfully experienced only by the researcher who possesses the uncommon capacity of passing beyond waking consciousness and yet preserving something of its basic nature in the face of the extraconscious sphere which comes towards him; not by the researcher whose point of departure is to attribute great value to the abdication of consciousness, as happens in all experiences brought about by psychotropic drugs, in all forms of mediumship or of insufficient logical treatment of the object of experience.

[428] It is useful to characterise the psychic state of a drug-user or someone who is hallucinating, even if only in one's own capacity as a researcher, so as to bear in mind the analogous conditions occurring on the level of consciousness of current scientific experiment. We have been able to show how the physical-mathematical system of **knowledge** is attainable on condition of a descent of thinking below the level of consciousness which is used in physical-mathematical **operations**, in that this consciousness lacks the self-identity proper to it—an identity which is likewise lacking in regard to the perceptual act.

[429] The relationship of consciousness to its own interiority, for which the object as thing perceived paves the way, ought to be the measure of the truth and reality of knowledge. This relationship has been ignored; interiority of consciousness is continually lost because knowledge, conditioned by the object, knows nothing of its own movement. Knowledge proves to be particularly illusory, even if it is formally logical, whenever thinking embarks upon investigations involving the inner experience of perception, or analysis of the thinking employed in scientific research. This analysis ought in fact not to concern itself with the meaning of specific thoughts or of a particular research, but much rather with the actual dynamic of the thinking process, independent of the mediation of the nerves; and it ought likewise to identify the inner thinking-element present within perception as a pure intermediary activity.

28. *"Complexes"*

[430] At the root of emotional or instinctive states, of obsessional forms, of phenomena associated with depression or mania, we ought to see the degradation of some higher activity of the soul, which, through its inherence in the nervous system, changes its sign and becomes qualitatively the opposite of what it was at first.

[431] In this way a certain kind of germinal representation is nourished, virtually an imaginative blueprint, tending to insistently reproduce its own form once it has become

involved with the bodily nature: any sort of changes to it would be possible only through inner forces capable of operating at that level.

[432] These are not “complexes” but sub-imaginative creations stemming from contaminations between psyche and nervous system, owing to irregular connection between soul, etheric and physical, attributable in its turn to an insufficient presence of the I. Complexes are thought of as being in objective opposition to this I-presence. The term “complex” seems to correspond to a real phenomenon, but the *quantum*¹⁹ of reality which belongs to it can be explained by the alienation of consciousness, by the loss of its undivided state—an unalienated consciousness being the only one that can actually have such a phenomenon before itself as something real.

[433] The whole conception of the “complex” rests upon a psychological realism that evaporates into nothingness once it is observed in relation to the effective position of consciousness, or the conscious principle. For the I which takes responsibility for consciousness the complex cannot exist, only for the I deprived of power and authority—which nevertheless can only discern the complex if, to some degree at least, it does not experience itself as subject before the complex, whilst at the same time experiencing the complex as a perception of itself. The “complex” is an unreality, existing solely as the experience of a particular state, which I-presence cannot be said to undergo in the same way as I-absence. But the complex is imposed by psychoanalysis as coexistent with the I, not insofar as it is perceived by the I, but as a construct made of mental representations, formed in such a way as to be dominated by their content, with no knowledge of itself. We can recognise here the phenomenon of degraded imagination, referred to in the preceding paragraphs, which is lent a certain intellectual dignity by the subject who is able to coexist with it. It is an inherently contradictory way of approaching the responsibility of the I, one which leads even sociologists and philosophers to see the complex as a real entity, according to a sort of induced visualisation.

[434] In reality the psyche inheres in the bodily nature through a semiconscious representational activity, tied beyond certain limits to sensory impressions, which eludes current research.

¹⁹ Lat. = Literally ‘how much, how great’; in this context meaning: amount, quantity, degree [trans.].

[435] It is simply not possible to speak of complexes, psychic nodes, fixed and definite instinctual mechanisms, or identifiable impulses, which are somehow ready to translate themselves into specific spontaneous reactions.

[436] There undoubtedly exists a mnemonic basis for spontaneity, but we can readily understand the limited applicability of the concept "memory" when it comes to the phenomenon known as a "complex", if we bear in mind that real memory is a higher activity of consciousness, presupposing the active presence in the psyche of the I, whilst the apparent memory connected with psychic irregularity is an incidence of association, the recurrence of which belongs to the bodily nature and in that sense tending to condition real memory: it is in actual fact the very thing eliminated by the real presence of memory, that is, memory in the service of the I. Associative "memory" is basically a physical mechanism, the calling forth of which feeds the irregular state of the psyche, by usurping the real activity of memory, for that purpose making use of the same kind of etheric force, stolen so to speak from the I. So, when we speak about a "complex" of this kind we are not dealing with certain specific static-dynamic contents which hold sway in the depths of consciousness, but with the arising-as-memory of psychic contents connected with irregular bodily processes. This arising-as-memory is not a cause but an effect: having neuro-vegetative foundations, it expresses itself in recurrent and mutable ways, which nevertheless cannot be grasped through a fixed, but only with a very mobile typology. This neuro-vegetative basis, when it happens to become apparent, is observed clinically outside the sphere of the psyche, so that it fails to acquire any power as a psychic factor.

[437] The very act of describing the "complex", with its phenomenology, its constants and its symbols, tends to become pathological, formulating and standardising a psychic phenomenon which in itself is non-existent, but which acquires objective power, working from without inwards through the authority of the analytically determined representation: which is indeed justified by certain objective manifestations, but constrains these to function according to a predetermined schema, with no possibility of rising to their actual cause, and thus with no possibility of restoring that order which derives from the conscious working of consciousness.



[438] Beyond the notion of the “complex”, then, we can legitimately identify a representation which as a rule is too strongly bound to the sphere of the senses and has for that reason become “constitutional”; and we can speak of a naturally occurring by-product of the imagination, deriving from the “normal” working of representation. Such a by-product, as has been shown, does not come about on the level of waking consciousness—even if its phenomenology receives its names and forms from there—but is nourished underneath that level, in the non-conscious zone of feeling and willing, where it obtains forces not available to representation and conscious thinking.

[439] This by-product of the imagination tends to operate as an unconscious content within thoughts and feelings, and in its turn behaves within the depths of consciousness in a generative way, in that it insinuates itself into the zone where the psyche and the bodily nature meet. Wherever it is able to impinge to any extent upon the bodily nature it inevitably gives rise to recurring phenomena because of the way it latches onto the etheric-physical support: hence the possible assumption of these as “complexes”, whereas actually it is a question of phenomena which can be traced back to a level of deterioration in ordinary representation, through an excessive inherence in the nervous system. This by-product of the imagination opposes itself as a life-force to the autonomy of consciousness, or to the presence of its principle, through the fact that it illegitimately avails itself of imagination, that is of the essential force of consciousness. It is clear that the autonomy of consciousness is connected with its potential for realising identity with itself, as against the reification of irregular forms produced by an insufficiently strong self-identity.

[440] Three possibilities emerge from this: (a) a response from normal consciousness clarifies and resolves the alien process as required; (b) the response of consciousness is insufficient, and as a result there come about various forms of neurosis, from the mild to the psychotic; (c) waking consciousness identifies with the imaginative by-product, to the point of dialectical cooperation with it. In this last case we have a type of “positive” obsession, which legitimises itself by expressing itself in doctrine, dogma and other socially sanctioned forms. We gave attention to certain of these in our work *Logic against the human being*, demonstrating amongst other things how the invasion which in general gives rise to

paranoid states can in certain individuals, where it has at its disposal a logical-dialectical apparatus and a systematic inclination, even come to expression in cultural works and in political activity bearing a particular force of persuasion. The characteristic which from the pathological point of view is well worth observing in such manifestations is the monomaniacal focus which betrays the obsessive nature.

[441] Certain dominant myths of our time, with considerable mass influence, can be explained by this very phenomenon: namely, that what is psychopathic tends towards codification, providing an objective and scientific appearance to its erroneous inner perspective. Such is the dubious use to which our formal logic can be put. Unfortunately, because formal logic has become the “functional” guise of such forms of neurosis, there is very little on the clinical or psychological level which, being itself the product of the same intellectual mould, can give a way of noticing the problem or of providing criteria for distinguishing truth from error. Nevertheless we should not forget that in the current state of opposition existing between consciousness and its deep forces—the initial condition of neurosis—we can recognise the moment in the developmental history of the human being which hinges upon the potent and living ideal of self-awareness and freedom. Whilst neurosis can be considered as an irregularity to be identified and combatted, at the same time it can also be seen as a symptom of the discomfort of the human being who feels all around him a world of potentised socio-political, scientific and mechanical *things*, to which he has given reality with inner forces that he has lost the means of understanding or regulating. His error amongst other things lies in believing that he must now set himself up in revolt against this world and not against the obstacle which he bears within himself as his way of knowing.

[442] To understand the meaning of psychic discomfort in this way would, if one could grasp it, signal the possibility of accepting it as something positive: one could discern in the discomfort an incapacity to be open to new forces, and come to see that the forms of apparent “normality” and passive adaptation to what is amiss, together with the impulse to perpetuate and codify it, are in fact in themselves disturbing. Neurosis can be seen as the sign of the thwarted attempt of consciousness to realise its own fundamental forces. But the possibility of identifying this underlying element in the neurosis of the contemporary human being is made more difficult by therapies that are not pertinent, as also by

intellectual forms in which it can manifest as a positive value, even as a critique of civilisation, and, in the realm of psychology, especially by the notion of the “complex” which tends to confirm the opposition of the forces living in the depths to consciousness itself.

29. *How the “past” holds sway through reflected consciousness*

[443] Rational consciousness, unaware of its reflected origin, is of necessity in a relationship of subconscious opposition to other levels of consciousness. Whilst rational consciousness becomes conscious through being reflected, the other levels become conscious through *it*. Because of its reflectedness, it allows a Nature that appears to be objective to arise before it as if founded upon itself and in opposition or contrast to it, thereby negating, within consciousness, the original unity with the other levels of consciousness and with their fundamental structures. Ignorant of that first movement of thinking which is simultaneous with the initial revelation of being, rationality works in opposition to its foundation: it establishes **being** as something objective and utterly other.

[444] Precisely as a rational self-awareness, incapable of self-possession at the roots of its rationality, it is compelled to undergo that which its deeper alienated forces constitute as the “past” of its own structure. Every unconscious assertion of these forces, which slips through the gaps in the weaving of mental awareness, presents itself as we have shown in the form of one kind of mediumship or another, and as a regression towards stages which precede the emergence of rational consciousness.

[445] This regression is not at all obvious because it takes on forms produced by rational behaviour: not only are the dialectics of science an expression of it, and all those ideologies which are unaware of the essence of thinking from which they originate, but also we have to include here all those spiritual techniques wrongly drawn from systems of the past, the practice of which prevents the human being of today from grasping, through the forces which are *currently* active, the reality of his or her inner life. These techniques are at odds with the immanent and immediate significance of the psychic structures, instead giving

strength to the impulse whereby these structures are made to act, with regard to rational consciousness, as forces of the **past**.

[446] The fourfold psychophysical structure of the human being reveals how rational consciousness is certainly the latest or most recent to emerge in human evolution, but precisely for that reason is hierarchically the lowest: it owes in fact its initial conscious form to the physical level of things, where it stammers its rational primitivism under the sign of quantity, bestowing an importance on rationality and logical-formal intelligence which is effectively an idolatry of the object.

[447] Current rationalistic primitivism tends to make a positive value out of its lack of consciousness regarding the ultimate meaning of the rational process: which is to join the temporal present with the perennial immanent. In making thinking into a structure that is exclusively discursive and formal, rationalism not only plucks the real cognitive force from out of itself, but also falsifies the atemporal relation of the I with temporal consciousness. Obtuse forms of consciousness linked to the physical structures of the organism are unconsciously solicited, not according to the principle towards which they ought to be focused, but according to its opposite, so that they work as forces of regression, or forces of the “past”, but which with sufficient self-awareness could rightfully reunite themselves with their original impulse. In reality rational thinking ought to be the instrument by way of which the forces of the soul are able to find once again a harmony and a concord with their inner principle.



[448] Modern rational thinking achieves systems of certainty because of its fundamental self-identification with external objectivity: the scientific formalisation of this identification is generally plausible because it does not imply that thinking should draw the form of its own movement *from itself*, this being supposedly assigned to it by the objectivity of the phenomenon. But actually thinking does draw upon its own internal forces, through what is asked of it by the objective contemplation of whatever fact.

[449] In extrasensory research, thinking lacks the support which the sense-world offers to the objectification of its movement. But thinking which is able to realise the objectivity of its own movement within sensory observation can, through an extension of this, recognise the independence of the movement in itself: and with this it has grasped the basic foundation for supersensible experience.

[450] Supersensible experience cannot be derived from the rationality used in sensory investigation, but from the power of pure movement within rationality. It ought to be evident that what we are dealing with here is not a transcendence of thinking, but the passage from a passive level of observation to a kind of observation that is both responsible and dynamic.

[451] The discipline of concentration and meditation accomplishes this task. For the purposes of inner research the potential of thinking has to be disentangled from the form it assumes in its investigation of the physical dimension and which stimulates its objectification; it has to be extracted in its objectivity and known in itself, distinct from any dialectic; and in this way it proves to be the true instrument of extrasensory experience.

[452] The distinction between thinking which is conscious at the physical-mathematical level and thinking which can grasp objectively its own self-intuition at that level, so as to be independent from it, is fundamental. This independence confers precisely the same objectivity upon thinking for supersensible research. Without this kind of independence the researching consciousness cannot discern the forces that hold sway in the depths of the psyche; in its normal state consciousness is thoroughly embroiled in their distortions, but without in the least being aware of it. Error on the inner plane is not so easy to pin-point as on the physical plane. Nor is it possible to have an erroneous relation with these forces operating according to extra-rational laws, without their becoming destructive for both psyche and body: for they are fundamental forces of life, with which only a free inner act can establish a right relation, a relation disrupted by the necessity of an exclusively sensory-rational kind of knowledge.

[453] With these dimensions of consciousness—the mineral (saturnine), the etheric (solar), the astral (lunar)—which were mentioned in the previous chapter, the rational human being

has disrupted and broken off his relation because it was necessary for the autonomy of his consciousness, but this autonomy, on account of the limitations of the rational vehicle, and in ignorance of its own principle, becomes contention and discord in regard to them. This conflict distorts the function of these structures, which as a result act as powers of the “past”, of regression, manipulating the apparent autonomy of rational consciousness. This autonomy however is the very thing that has to unfold in absolute purity, and be pursued with inner rigour, to the point where it becomes conscious of the very principle of itself and therefore of its own active dynamic power beyond the threshold of consciousness.

[454] In fact, the freedom brought about by the isolation of the human being within the physical dimension is completely different from freedom as possession of the force from which the isolation of consciousness has itself arisen. In point of fact the freedom which human beings collectively believe they enjoy is precisely the result of such isolation, not the possession of that which created it. The realisation of that which created the isolation in the first place is the true extraconscious experience.

[455] It is inevitable for the rational process to presume a relation with the extraconscious, through the immediate procedures which it has at its disposal: mental representation, discursive analysis, etc. This process, not attaining to the fount of its own movement, cannot but be the slave of subconscious impulses: that is, impulses of the past. Lacking awareness of the plane in which it becomes conscious, it does not succeed in distinguishing itself from the psychic element which is bound to the bodily nature: it therefore establishes with the depths of consciousness a relation which it does not properly own, in that it does not understand the meaning of it: thus it calls upon the forces of the depths in a way opposite to that which they require if they are to be a positive force for consciousness.

[456] Exploration of the unconscious, penetration into the sphere of the instincts, knowledge of the impulses within the life of the soul—these cannot be the work of a consciousness bound to the cerebral nature, without themselves becoming an expression of unconscious instinct. Nevertheless, being something produced intellectualistically, rationalist explanation has the power, as the embodiment of a particular psychic state, to imprint upon the soul and in the subconscious of whoever is subjected to it, as patient or as

reader, the psyche's thralldom to physical nature, from which the intellectualistic formulation derives.

[457] The various magical practices, yogic techniques and "liberating" methodologies of the contemporary scene find themselves in an analogous position as regards the extraconscious. Through tantalising images of an infinite inner mastery, they actually reinforce that reflected form of representation which *yoga*, magic or the "liberated life" ought on the contrary to completely transform.

[458] In this case too, the disconnection or lack of relation between that inner element which reveals itself *as thinking* and the content of the inner world evoked, can be traced to the conditioning of the rational impulse on the part of the psychophysical structures which express the human being's past. In contemporary spiritualistic systems we see spiritual mastery and liberation expounded not according to the logic of the spirit which has them internal to itself, but as metaphysical contents existing prior to the spirit. Logic is pressed into service with all its tendencies to take possession of the spiritual object whilst ignoring the inner movement which does so.

[459] Precisely upon the basis of an experiential method, the inner dynamic of representation and of thinking is knowable as an objective and impersonal activity, founded upon itself, as upon its own essence with its own specific laws. Because of its primary nature, this force when experienced leads one directly towards the I, which alone is capable of realising it. The preparatory discipline has to enable one to develop concentration in such a way that at a certain moment it becomes possible to grant **autonomy** to thinking: the being of the I then actualises its own **immobility** with respect to the **movement** of thinking. The I has to be able to be awake without the support of thinking. When the I takes its stand upon itself, thinking is truly liberated.

[460] In the decadence of the human faculty of representation, we can see a commonplace degradation of a power of the I. This decadence can be understood as the alienation of representation from its metaphysical source. It is possible to observe the emergence of thinking from a source of supersensible life, and its alienation from this as formal reflection, to the point where reflection is in actual opposition to its own wellspring. From this

wellspring thinking moves as a force turned towards the future, whereas reflection is always in bondage to the past.

[461] The loss of communion with its origin is what makes it possible for reflected thinking to represent to itself any inner or outer content whatsoever, devoid of the extrasensory dimension which is actual reality. Normally this unconscious estrangement is perpetuated, within the psyche of a philosopher or psychologist, as the supposed limit beyond which research cannot progress. The illusion of reflected thinking is the conviction to which it gives rise of possessing the content, thanks to its discursive form, as a content independent of the thinking which conceives it.

[462] Thinking alienated from its original being induces the extraconscious to adapt itself to the alienation and then in this altered form to function as the fundamental force of consciousness. Not recognising its own self-foundation, thinking incorrectly regards the subconscious as being fundamental, which makes it stand forth and function as a psychic “zone” dominated by **memory**, given substance by the repercussions of what we have called the “non-pertinence” of the nervous system. We have seen how this non-pertinence compels the original forces of feeling and willing to manifest in a degraded and distorted way in the somatic sphere. In essence this distortion, which is in close correlation with reflected representation, yet incapable of perceiving it because of alienation, comes in its turn to dominate the relation between representation and the extraconscious, conceding legitimacy to it solely in terms of its own one-sided temporal perspective. The layers of emotive-instinctual sediment in the psyche are therefore a past which tends to make itself felt as the present.

[463] In an indirect way reflected representation exercises a regressive action upon the life of the soul, in that it tries to make the extraconscious adopt a very limiting temporal role: one appropriate to the pre-individual psyche which, as such, belongs even historically to the past, having preceded the modern development of abstract representation; its function is no longer pertinent—conscious initiative now belongs to abstract representation and to its scientific articulation, which gives the impression of legitimately calling forth the one-sided temporal aspect of the extraconscious. But abstract representation in its current form is genuinely legitimate insofar as it distances itself from the subconscious life, the exclusion of

which has led to its characteristic clarity and lucid awareness. For abstract representation the extraconscious ought to be *pure* temporal experience, that is, experience of the etheric.

[464] Whenever abstract representation turns to investigation of the psyche, it assumes that it can simply enter once again without any more ado into the world which it has cast away from itself, even though it originally emerged from it, imposing on the extraconscious what its present alienated state imagines and supposes it to be like—a state which is thoroughly at odds with it. This is the essential limitation of contemporary psychotherapy.

[465] The time-structure of the extraconscious finds itself awoken and improperly rendered functional as a constricting and limiting past, as memory of sensation and habit—the distinction between extraconscious and unconscious is blurred, and in fact completely obscured. What the researcher has to understand is not only that this functioning of the unconscious is overcome and transformed by the experience of true self-awareness, which through an active synthesis of the moments of its own self-making bears within itself the real and true relation with memory, but also that this functioning of the unconscious is continually compelled by reflected consciousness, exercising its natural dominion by way of representation, to establish itself as an impenetrable limit.

30. *The superconscious order*

[466] Representation, when it lacks consciousness of its own movement, can be seen as the formal vehicle normally used by the impulses of the psyche. These impulses would have no power over consciousness, except that representation, devoid of its own content, lends itself to their expression.

[467] If representation were to fill itself with its own supersensible content, it could not be an instrument of the instinctual life. But this does not mean that instinctual life would remain simply unto itself like a sediment in the psyche: in actual fact, if it were met by a faculty of representation that had become truly independent, it would become a power enabling representation to penetrate into the deepest vital sphere.

[468] We should not forget that the metabolic forces of the psyche appear as instincts, insofar as they have taken possession of representation; when they do not dominate representation, that is, when it has mastery of itself, they become something quite other, and of an opposite kind: they stream as constructive forces of imagination. From this we can appreciate the importance of a discipline which enables representation to realise its original autonomy.

[469] Logical-dialectical expression, as a form of the alienation of thinking, is a counterfeit mode of self-awareness, closely connected to the forming of the instinctual life, which feeds upon that which is engendered by alienation. Our habitual dialectical mentality continually subverts the ordering principle, by means of which the "ancient" or "lower" zone of the psyche is regulated and receives meaning from an "eternal" or "higher" one. The problem consists in the fact that only when it is truly free can human thinking participate in the higher sphere and thus guide what unfolds in the sphere which is, so to speak, "beneath" waking consciousness.

[470] The human being can realise himself as a free being only where he is really able to be free, not where he is dependent upon a power that he is unaware of. Whenever he behaves as if he were free with a part of him that is still in bondage to various kinds of forces, he merely provokes the corruption of those forces, and creates instincts of a lower order.

[471] A person should observe the laws of that to which he is subject; and as long as he is thus subject and in a state of dependency, **conformity** with those laws should be his law. To the extent that in spite of this he does violence against the laws of those forces, thereby stoking the subconscious with the product of this harmful action, he makes of them the very thing that will subject him to corresponding processes of "destiny", the meaning of which remains for him opaque and obscure.

[472] One and the same order of forces can be a means of realisation for the free human being, or of enslavement to sub-nature for the human being whose will is merely arbitrary self-will.

[473] From the ethical and social point of view it is a mistake to believe that freedom can simply be bestowed upon people as autonomy without regard for the developmental level of their self-awareness, when they are still in a state of dependence upon the formative processes of that awareness. Autonomy given to a child or an adolescent, or a typologically "primitive" person, is the tragic gift of a premature form of being whose content is the vital opposite of freedom, for it acts as a stimulus to purely *natural* processes.

[474] The way of freedom is the very opposite of the path psychically followed by nature. The human being can express himself or act as a free being thanks to an inner power which he has been able to emancipate from the formal strictures of reflected representation. If, enclosed within these strictures, he behaves as if he were free, he cannot avoid stimulating the kind of consciousness which is very closely allied to and dependent upon the body, receiving impulses from it with which he identifies: these are imaginative forces which have been diverted by the continual sprouting of a representation bound to the senses: an act of representation from which he can contrive no way of escaping and in which he continually suppresses his freedom. In fact this kind of representation cannot grasp itself, but only the image of what it represents.

[475] With this kind of representation, moreover, there takes place the construction of an image of the "unconscious" or of yogic "power" or of the "free life", an image having no essential connection with what it represents, and yet acquiring a distinct power beyond the threshold of consciousness. Such a power does not direct its activity towards the superconscious wellspring of thinking, but towards those rhythmical-metabolic forces of the cerebral support which, in order to make a legitimate contribution to the process of thinking, actually need to be ignored. We have already drawn attention to how the interference of rhythmical-metabolic processes in the functions of consciousness is at the root of psychic disturbance and illness.

[476] It is inevitable that representation bound to the form in which it comes to expression, and in that fixed form having become an instrument of knowledge, should provoke to an extreme the deteriorating action that is already constitutionally part and parcel of the mental make-up of the human being of this time. Through the inherent logic of its own process, as we have shown, rationalistic experience stands in need, in responsible thinkers at least, of an

integrative concord between thinking and its superconscious wellspring above, and the profound depths of the psyche below.

[477] Let it be remembered at this point regarding the usage of the terms “above” and “below”, and of the expressions “superconscious order” and “subconscious order” with regard to the psyche, that whilst there is a legitimate distinction between an inner activity *independent* of the bodily supports and an activity *binding itself* to the vital-physical structure of these supports, yet nevertheless inner activity is all one: it alienates itself when it binds itself to **otherness**, and realises itself in a higher sphere when it identifies itself with itself.

[478] We can quite properly speak of a superconscious sphere and a subconscious sphere, as two potentialities and indeed as two realities for waking consciousness. Consciousness is one: binding itself, it becomes subconsciousness; liberated, it is superconscious.

[479] The superconscious is not graspable dialectically, in that the human capacity of representation inevitably only moves on the surface of its own world of forces.

[480] This world of forces is inwardly structured in a way that can be characterised as “hierarchical”, in that higher, subtler processes hold sway over lower and more gross or dense ones. It is for this reason that a limpid idea can prevail over a whole hodge-podge of disordered thoughts, or a simple sentiment gain the upper hand over a turbid emotional *chaos*.

[481] This hierarchy or ordering of forces is continually subverted by representation which in its alienation enjoys a *virtual* freedom—a freedom that representation could make positive use of, in keeping with the logic of its own inner dynamic, if it attained to the wellspring of its own force, that is, if it drew from the true **inner order**.

[482] The freedom of representation is severely limited by the fact that it experiences the forms in which it expresses itself when encountering the world as an objective otherness: alienated from the source of its own power, it does not perceive *itself* as real, but only these forms—which are no more than provisional means by which it takes up the world into itself: thus it renounces knowledge both of the world and of itself. Considering itself free in its

reflected state, but without being so at all, it distorts and devalues its own movement and instead sets up an external moment as absolute, in which it tries to include even that which is valid solely because it is supersensible, that is, real outside and beyond the reflected state.

[483] In the preceding paragraph we have shown how a representation of this sort can impose its own brokenness on that part of the inner order which is to be understood as operating below the level of waking consciousness. This state of being situated *below* the waking level does not actually correspond to any kind of localisation. In reality the inner sphere that can be experienced as the higher wellspring of the activities of thinking, feeling and willing, in being hierarchically “up above” waking consciousness, holds a power of great depth—that is, of acting “down below”, where thinking, feeling and willing become so to speak personalised and form the life of the psyche.

[484] This is an important element which can help us understand the purpose of an inner discipline in preparing the way for psychotherapeutic intervention and for any research or investigation of the unconscious—the “inferior” or lower zone of the psyche—which can be explored solely from “above”, by way of forces capable of penetrating it, in that they have true mastery and dominion over it: forces of the original life of thinking, feeling and willing. Let it nevertheless be emphasised that whilst hierarchy most certainly does exist, it becomes functional only in relation to a consciousness which attains self-realisation. If it does not do so, does not realise itself, then the immediate extraconscious inevitably presents itself as an “inferior”, lower or subconscious world. It is essential for the psychotherapist to distinguish **functionally** between these two spheres so as to identify the reality of the hierarchical order; if he confuses the two spheres he will unavoidably be led to ascribe their various phenomena to the category of the unconscious alone, in accordance with his inversion of the true inner order and its hierarchy.

31. *Superconsciousness and the structure of time*

[485] The distinction between superconsciousness and subconsciousness must not remain theoretical, but has to become essentially dynamic: dynamic in the sense of the *noesis*²⁰ or

²⁰ Gk. = intelligence, thought, mental activity. [trans.]

active intelligence of liberated thinking, which we have characterised, and which leads to experience of the twofold relation between the I and the faculties of the psyche. Contemplation of this relation involves the perception of an inner dimension distinct from the sensory: an etheric dimension, recognisable as **temporal**, not because it takes place *in* time, but because the etheric is itself the “substance” of time. (Memory, for example, can be seen understood as a synthesis of time: if we imagine a plant divested of its mineral content, the vital or etheric form which remains can be seen as a memory of itself, as a time-structure—the true being of the plant, the synthesis of its past, present and future.)

[486] Psychological research needs to take place on a level of consciousness which, whilst it maintains an ordinary temporal relation with the sensory sphere, is itself independent from sense-perceptible conditions (both rational and sensory)—which means a different experience of time. The conditions of the sense-world bring about in the human being a kind of time-bound knowledge, closely related to his psycho-physical structure and therefore subjective in nature. These conditions, because they take place in the “domain” of physically defined space, erase the human being’s objective experience of time, in that they spatialise it.

[487] This spatial imprint persists as a form temporarily necessary for the subject once he attains to inner experience of time-images, in which various streams of forces come to manifestation. It is right to call them images, and to speak of imaginative experience, because they display form, light and colour just like sensory representations; but whilst these are abstract, lifeless and subjective, the images of superconscious experience are objective and alive with force, so that the practical training of the investigator consists for a long time in habituating himself to a state of contemplative calm that enables him to sustain the impetus of the experience: which is not physical, and yet finishes by manifesting as a physical *dynamis*. In actual fact, every movement on the physical plane is nothing other than the lower manifestation of that very force.

[488] The possibility of sustaining the impetus of this force depends upon the I being able to encounter it on the basis of identity with it: that is, through being able to counterpose to this force its own immobility, its own capacity to be utterly separate and distinct from it. In its ordinary life the I has a dim existence: it is immersed within the force; confused and mixed up with it, it moves together with it, in thinking, feeling and willing—and therefore is

itself without force. In the experience to which we are alluding, the I realises its transcendent **immobility**, in that it arrives at contemplating and therefore at exercising mastery over the movement, not simply flowing with it: it actualises the force in itself, therefore can contemplate it as that which it can experience the movement of. It can bring alive within itself the power of the movement, precisely because it is free from it.

[489] For an analogous reason the I can experience identity with a being or an object, in respect of which it has realised genuine autonomy: it can identify with that of which it masters the identity. Identity without awareness generates the illusory world of the I: the *ego*, and dialectics.

[490] In forms woven of time, the various kinds of inner force—the mental forces of the psyche, and the supramental—present themselves objectively to the researcher. He finds himself before forces in which he is normally immersed without any way of distinguishing himself from them. Only to objective imaginative contemplation can there appear the relation between representation, corresponding to waking consciousness, and the world beyond the threshold of consciousness: the subconscious and the superconscious.

[491] Because the extraconscious bears its own hierarchical order within itself, it arises for waking consciousness via grades of consciousness which from its perspective correspond to daydreaming, sleep with dreams and deep dreamless sleep. Subconsciousness and superconsciousness, even though they are worlds valid solely through consciousness and real only in relation to its diminishing or intensification, nevertheless are distinct from each other. This distinction is a practical one, scientifically useful, in that it is experienced by the I, which can recognise in itself the single origin of all the grades of consciousness: it perceives this by experiencing the inner weaving which unites them in their distinctness: a connection woven of time, that is, of time objectively perceptible as space.

[492] To this kind of perception, the sphere of the subconsciousness appears as an inner dimension which bears its own past, present and future within itself as a time-structure, but undergoes a contraction which limits and particularises it as solely the past: it functions as the sphere of atavistic memory, of mnemonic instinctuality, of inclinations, of influences imprinted by the environment—a blood-memory, and hence of bodily facts with a tendency

to become psyche and thought. This is the sphere of the psyche's physical-etheric supports, and yet also of the inherence of the psyche in the bodily nature beyond what is strictly necessary for the harmonious relation of the two (super- and sub-conscious) orders: a memory of the past, that is, a time-structure devoid of connection with the present and future dimensions. It is not a case of dialectical memory, but of past impulses illegitimately tending towards present expression, above all by way of ideologies which exclude the original dynamic element of thinking.

[493] This sphere, with respect to the supersensible weaving of time, turns out—as we have seen—to belong to a very particular aspect of the past, the **paleo-psychic**, the “sediment” of the constitutional structures of the organism: a world in which various types of forces interpenetrate each other, forces corresponding to the systems which, as we have indicated, represent the several phases in the development of the human being—the saturnian, the solar, the lunar—unified by the structure which brings them together in their present mineral form (Earth).

[494] The symbols Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, corresponding to four planetary stages of the Earth, stand as an indication of the path of consciousness from an original supersensible state to its current sensory condition. These are evolutionary stages tending towards the realisation of an original intent, but which, being full of power as structures of the past, actually impede the process, conditioning consciousness in their capacity as forces of the subconscious. Materialistic ideologies, which describe a nature devoid of spirit, are a prime example of this conditioning, in that they are based upon reflected thinking and not upon the original inner dynamic of thinking. In the human being who is conditioned in this way the depths of the psyche act as a negative force of the **past**, precisely when a **present** self-mastery ought to reunite the spiritual principles of the saturnian, solar, lunar and terrestrial foundations of his being, in keeping with the original intention of consciousness.

[495] It could be said that the sphere of superconsciousness, articulate in the synthetic weaving of time, exists as a power of the **future** in opposition to the subconscious in which the **past** lies congealed. A concept of this kind, though, is useful only as long as we bear in mind that the superconscious sphere is essentially non-temporal, and that it is only when superconsciousness is on the point of emerging as human knowledge that it encounters

etherically the action of certain entity-forces which bear their past, present and future within themselves as a dynamic synthesis, so that it includes and encompasses in their movement the movement of the subconscious sphere also. In this sense the superconscious sphere contains the seeds of every future creation, independent of the past, not because it is in opposition to it, but because it has the past within itself; and it has it within itself not as “the past”—which is a mental category—but as being-in-movement, unconditioned by its own nature: a status which only the willed action of the human being, independent of any spiritual, psychic or bodily conditioning, can ultimately realise.

32. *The hierarchy of forces & experience of the depths*

[496] Superconsciousness is experienced not as an abstract sphere of ideas or immaterial outlines of forms, but as a zone of germinal powers which support, rule and maintain the body and its vital energies.

[497] We have seen how the structures of the human organism, which correspond to the ontogenetic stages designated by the planetary symbols Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth, are so many layers which tend either to be projected temporally, unilaterally imposing themselves as the past, the psychic sedimentation of which constitutes the subconscious, or alternatively become meaningful as potential levels of the reintegration of higher states of consciousness, of which they are the immanent material. In this latter case, which requires the conscious principle’s self-recognition, the bodily structures realign with their **higher** counterpart. In this higher counterpart there is a meaning which transcends their binding to bodily necessity, and which makes it possible for the I to discover in its relation with the essence of the bodily structures the stages of its own supersensible experience. In connection with the highest aspect of this experience, it is quite right to speak of grades of initiation.

[498] We can speak of a superconsciousness realised by the I insofar as it is capable of descending into the depths of the bodily organism: in fact its ascent to a higher sphere is precisely a conscious *descent* into the extrasensory field of the bodily structures. This descent is connected with what we might call the transference of the centre of the etheric forces from

its seat in the head to others “deeper” within the organism. The starting-point for this process is the essential activity of self-awareness, with its independence from the sensory being more pronounced and definite, the greater its capacity to actually penetrate the categories of sensory existence.

[499] We can speak of a higher order and a lower order of consciousness: but such a distinction, useful from a theoretical point of view, cannot be made use of from the point of view of inner discipline, since in reality there is one order, and it is such that what is higher contains within itself and transcends all that is lower or inferior to it. The recognition, though, of this synthesis cannot be merely a matter of rational ascertainment, but the actual attainment of an autonomous act of consciousness: as such it is already the establishment of a hierarchy, the affirmation or reversal of which depends upon human freedom.

[500] To normal psychological consciousness, the description of the two extraconscious orders cannot but appear gratuitous. Things change, however, if consciousness does not limit itself to *deducing* self-awareness, that is, conceiving it as a dialectical value, but *actualises it* as an experience of its own being: in this way it begins a research which ceases to be the conceptual projection of normal consciousness’s bodily perception of itself.

[501] Ordinary consciousness is normally satisfied with the inversion of hierarchy, which it experiences as a functional cognitive mechanism; in fact, only a free deed of consciousness can make the distinction (between super- and subconsciousness) and aim for a higher synthesis. The free deed is first of all an intuitive recognition, but it is the sign of an awakening of consciousness to itself from a sort of dream state, for which as a general rule all the psychological justifications of the unconscious are, or appear to be, entirely valid.

[502] Ordinary consciousness, even in the forms most full of awareness—the philosophical or psychological—is subject to the limit of rationality. For psychological science, extraconscious processes are hypothetical entities deduced from external manifestations which are deemed sufficient to lead to the ascertainment of various inner or physical motives. This however is not sufficient to guarantee a causal link with the psychic event, nor to overcome the suspicion of a nervous or corporeal basis for these processes. The limit of reflected thinking is the limit of a consciousness which does not (or has not) come to the

point of experiencing itself as self-awareness. For a consciousness incapable of grasping itself, only subconsciousness can be real. This consciousness cannot realise the real form of itself, since normally it is active not through and in itself, but through forms of itself roused by external stimulus. When these stimuli cease, it would have the opportunity to turn towards itself, but at this point ordinarily it loses consciousness: drowsiness and sleep take over—or else mediumism.

[503] From this it is evident how the freedom which the human being believes he enjoys is illusory, not because it isn't consciously attainable, but because consciousness is not normally based upon its actual principle, the I—on account of which it manages to be conscious in the first place—but upon impulses of the psyche with which it identifies. This identification is formalised and codified by a thinking unaware of its own spiritual nature, even though, in order to express itself in dialectical form, it unconsciously makes use of spiritual impulses. Because of this, in our culture now and in general daily experience what we see regularly is the manifestation of I-forces formally and ethically excluding the I itself.

[504] This kind of situation gives us a way of understanding the precariousness of ordinary self-awareness: it arises for the human being upon the ground of nature, as something unstable and shifting, as a conditioned and provisional self-awareness. This self-awareness is only a potential, not yet a reality. The individual may well realise self-awareness, if he or she manages to pluck it from the unstable ground of nature: that is, extricate it from the sphere of the psyche—which, without its principle, cannot avoid imposing upon consciousness an exclusively physical vision of the world. The psyche, without the I, is in fact the very figure of our animal nature: operating in place of the I it generates dialectics as the yardstick of every value. Dialectics is fundamentally the rationality of our animal nature: it cannot see the human being as anything other than *homo oeconomicus, sive animal oeconomicum*²¹.

[505] Representation conditioned by the sense-world, functioning as if it were free, sets up the lower order of consciousness in opposition to the higher, as a kind of subversion which in reality does not concern the higher order at all, which remains untouchable, but only the psyche's connection with it: the psyche itself becomes diseased, morbid, unsound.

²¹ Lat. = Economic man, the economic-rational animal [trans.].

[506] This consideration leads us back to what we said right at the beginning: the unconscious as such does not exist—there is no such thing as a life of the unconscious which can be depicted, in all its otherness and with all its essential dynamics, upon the basis of ordinary consciousness. The fabrication of a transcendent unconscious existing alongside an essential passivity of consciousness, ends up giving realistic credence to a host of well-known phenomena, as a result of which the *Id*, “complexes”, transference, etc., become thoroughly real: that is, real as idols and myths.

[507] In actual fact there exist lower forms of consciousness, which we may fall into when we are unable to sustain in their regard the active presence of our individuality and freedom, which would have made them into *higher* levels of consciousness. As a result a power of thought is bestowed upon a nature to which the very principle of thinking has unconsciously deferred: one has the illusion of progressing by way of the systematic mechanisms of knowledge, whilst noetically one actually regresses. What actually happens is that one tends to re-experience in a mediumistic way the states of consciousness associated with the evolutionary stages of old Moon, old Sun, and old Saturn. This occurs because of an ego-asserting attitude, quite unaware of the kinds of impulses which end up making the subconscious world dominant. The truth of the subconscious, however, can only consist in mastery of it by the conscious actualisation of such impulses. Descending into the depths is not an exploration but a corruption of them, via mental images and representations which ardently seek there an ancient form of being, opposing itself as past to the present forces of consciousness.

[508] The naive investigator establishes an imaginary unconscious domain which, as dead psyche, stands in the way of consciousness’s communion with its principle, and thus of its right relationship with the ancient stages of terrestrial-lunar-solar-saturnian consciousness. Only through self-liberation can the investigator actualise in waking life the grades and stages of consciousness corresponding to those in the higher order.

[509] A descent into the depths of consciousness is only possible for the forces of superconsciousness, which bear in themselves a potential correlation with the psychosomatic strata associated with the saturnian, solar, lunar and terrestrial levels of

consciousness. These levels are made to function, thanks to the workings of contingent rational consciousness, as one-sided influences of the past, as a result of which the structures corresponding to them are made to appear rigidly stratified: a world **constrained** to present itself as a sphere of necessity and instinctuality, through the insufficient presence of the I in conscious life.

[510] The embryonic form taken by rational awareness enshrines the otherness of the subconscious sphere as established fact, and therefore also the conflict or opposition *not* between this and a superconscious sphere—which in this situation simply vanishes into nothingness—but between the subconscious and the actual principle of the individuality, which, aware of itself in a reflected way only, feels the need to project outside and beyond itself as transcendencies those domains which it has renounced.

[511] The world beyond the threshold of consciousness is not static, but is a world of values whose sign changes according to the human being's degree of freedom. **The deep becomes a reality for the elevated and sublime**, that is, for a higher level of consciousness. Rational consciousness cannot penetrate, cannot reach there; it can maintain the illusion of doing so only with dream-like images or images of a mediumistic kind, which unconsciously make of it a "lower" or *underworld*. But this is the same world that becomes the inner place of encounter with primordial forces for the free human being.

[512] It is essential to remember that one and the same force, with respect to the conscious principle, becomes creative if in this principle it finds an authority equivalent to that of its own essence, but becomes overwhelming when this authority is wanting: it draws then from a principle which is "outside" it and which makes it into a force opposed to the human being.

PART III

THE ESSENCE OF THERAPY

33. The supersensible foundations of consciousness

[513] We have given an outline sketch of the relation between the two forms of the extraconscious, differentiating it into superconsciousness and subconsciousness: and have shown that in reality it is but one single domain, a supra-rational order, whose hierarchical structure becomes gradually altered by rational consciousness to the point of inversion, a distortion necessitated by its process of manifestation, and occurring solely in relation to

rational consciousness. It is a kind of loss, a shattering, a falling away which goes hand in hand with the fact that reflected rational consciousness manages to posit *itself* as foundation, thereby giving rise to an objectively physical world seemingly separate from the knowing which experiences it, a world **having no dimension beyond its reflected condition**, that is, beyond its immediate physicality: and thus conferring the status of an absolute, by way of the formal structure of knowledge, upon a world opposed to the spirit.

[514] We have seen how superconsciousness and subconsciousness, and their correlation or opposition, are realised *within* consciousness. Consciousness alone is the gage of their existence and of the interconnections between them. What must concern us now is to determine the therapeutic value of this picture that we have sketched.

[515] The human being is placed into physical life in such a way via the nervous system that he is able to perceive the mineral element in his own bodily nature and by extension in the external world. But he is only conscious of this in that part of the nervous system through which he thinks and receives sensory perceptions. If the human being were not placed into physical existence and right into its very minerality, knowledge would present no difficulty, because he would not be limited to a mineral perception of the world: he would not find himself before a material multiplicity and faced with a world of things, but rather forces of synthesis in movement, the unity of which he would not need to understand, because he would immediately perceive it in itself; he would feel himself to be one with all, but would be without individual consciousness.

[516] This can enable us to gain insight into how the inner human being, incarnating physically, draws from the perception of minerality, in the body and in the external world, that reflection of self which he calls consciousness, and to that end uses as instrument the physical system least endowed with life, and closest to minerality: the nervous system. This system, in the cerebral organ, reaches the highest degree of its lifelessness. Reflected thinking and sensory perception are possible because of the encounter, in the cerebral organ, of the inner principle of the human being with the mineral element of his organism.

[517] In sense-based consciousness we can recognise a consciousness which has provisionally forsaken its existence within the vitality of the etheric world so as to become a

mineral consciousness, or a consciousness of the sense-perceptible world: in other words, an entirely *earthly* consciousness. Actually, this consciousness is for the moment a wakeful one precisely because of the working of its physical support-structures: it is not yet a real mineral consciousness, but a formal or reflected consciousness of minerality. With the dawning of that day in which the human being realises actual mineral consciousness, he will be free from the necessity associated with the mineral manifestation, that is, from the otherness of the physical realm and from the laws it comprises.

[518] Had consciousness been held back in the vital, etheric sphere—and such was the consciousness of the primordial human being—it would not have been able to become an individual consciousness, because of the dynamic and impersonal structure of this sphere, and its openness and permeability to cosmic life. The human being would not have been able to become conscious of freedom, that is, of independence from the etheric forces which, in the heights above and in the depths below, reveal his original connection with the supersensible.

[519] Beyond the vital-etheric sphere, we can discern a psychic sphere, and beyond that again a spiritual one. Though these three spheres are noetically distinct, in reality each of them is interpenetrated by the others in accordance with the hierarchical arrangement of the spiritual. **This hierarchy is unknowable for rational consciousness:** nevertheless, because rational consciousness does—however obscurely—actually identify itself with its own principle, it tends to confirm this hierarchy through its wish to relate everything to its own subjective measure. It does not actually succeed in this, though, except on those rare occasions when its reflected state happens to coincide with the spiritual.

[520] The sphere immediately bordering upon that of sense-bound consciousness, and thus the first extraconscious zone or region, is the vital sphere, the etheric—and as we have shown it is perceptible via an objective image-force, that is, by the primary vital form of a thinking independent from the senses. For the sake of what was constitutionally necessary for the human being, the vital current, in itself supersensible, had to submit to the requirements of physical consciousness, and underwent certain alterations, disintegrating and destroying itself in part so as to bring into existence a residuum of psychic dross, subsensory in nature. This destruction was necessary so that consciousness could become

self-consciousness. The ideal for the human being is to attain a consciousness that is not in opposition to the stream of life, so that knowledge and contemplation, science and morality, intellect and love can coexist.

[521] It can truthfully be said that the soul becomes conscious of itself in the human organism by destroying the life of those organs necessary for its manifestation. The activities whose processes involve destruction of the vital current are thinking, perception and breathing. Through these processes the human being has the potential to create a subsensory world. For example, the current scientific-technological world, imposing itself as an abstract objectivity, is already a subsensory domain, in that it is produced precisely by eliminating the living element of the thinking that produces it. If this exiled living element were to be consistently recognised and made conscious, our technological system could be orientated in such a way as to become the instrument of a civilisation of the spirit.

[522] The processes associated with thinking, perception and breathing take place by causing a destruction or degradation of etheric, vital forces. This destruction is not conscious but is at the basis of the processes of consciousness. Therefore it can be said that the less consciousness intervenes in the vital or energetic economy of the organism, the less it needs to destroy forces of life.

[523] It is possible in this direction to distinguish incorporeal etheric currents from those which are engaged in the bodily structure, and which are altered and undergo deterioration on account of the processes of consciousness. The etheric forces independent of the bodily nature are connected to that part of the human being's inner life which unfolds independently of both the physical body and the etheric organism itself. Thus the right use of the etheric vehicle depends very much upon the human being's inner freedom: the etheric can lead either to a dependence upon the body or to a creatively up-building independence.

[524] Whoever investigates the basis of consciousness can experience the etheric life not where it deteriorates through the effects of mental and neurosensory processes, but where it is not subject to the bodily nature. The distinction is necessary because the sign of supra-rational experience is the perception of the incorporeality of the etheric current, that is, of the ether independent from the physical-etheric organism and yet working within it. By contrast

every attempt at rational analysis is the sign of the collusion of thinking with the etheric body that is bound to the physical; it is not a penetration beyond the threshold of consciousness but an alienation of consciousness. This alienation, having at its disposal a whole dialectical apparatus, organises and arranges the images and mental representations of what it **supposes** or imagines to be beyond the threshold: an action that is accomplished in the vehicle of the deteriorated etheric forces, at the limit of the nervous system, immediately below its physical structure—at the subsensory level.

[525] Experience beyond the threshold requires that waking consciousness be potentised to the point of experiencing its own **supersensible nature**, at work within the etheric forces which are independent from the body. Through this experience, consciousness, attaining at times to self-perception, supports itself with itself and does not need physical support: an experience that is both supersensible and psychological. There cannot be psychological research unless the researcher has a consciousness of the supersensible as a basic premise. The researcher who merely has rationality at his disposal cannot avoid sinking into the subsensory, without realising it, as soon as he presumes to explore the depths with such weak means: a movement “beyond the threshold” of any kind whatsoever, when it is not a surpassing of rationality—for rationality in effect is itself the threshold—means that one is following the path of deterioration of the vital forces.

[526] The etheric deterioration of the vital forces and the consequent creation of the subsensory level is a phenomenon attributable to the previously mentioned excessively deep entrance of mental processes into the cerebral nature, and the onesided form of sensory experience devoid of its inner counterpart. The irregular situation which generally applies to rational thinking, that it lacks awareness and therefore fulfilment of its own movement, is conducive to the irregular performance of the perceptual act, so that it too lacks the element of inner completion, or in other words the essential content of perception, which is actually independent of the sense-perceptible form.

34. *Mineral consciousness*

[527] The level of sense-perceptible manifestation can be called the level of “minerality”, in that this manifestation occurs for the human being through a consciousness called forth by the mineral *facies*²², or countenance, of the world, via sensory processes mediated by the cerebral organ. It would nevertheless not be right to say that the current condition of the human being corresponds to a mineral consciousness of the world, it being rather the case that **consciousness is dependent** upon this mineral countenance, that is upon the categorical nature of sensory mediation. Physical objectivity, assuming the form of an absolute immediacy, appears to be a thing entirely unto itself, because thinking is unaware of its own fundamental presence within sense-perception. We can speak of an alienation of this thinking, insofar as it treats the world’s material countenance as objective, when actually it arises as form through thinking’s encounter with minerality. **The appearance of being, however, is already a synthesis:** when thinking fails to become cognisant of this fact, that is of its own part in this synthesis, then thinking is asleep, and maintains that what it has before it is an objectivity of the world that is founded upon itself, an objectivity that exists in opposition to thinking and which is therefore essentially unknowable.

[528] Thinking that has become free is true thinking, in that it recognises the provisional and temporary nature of its alienation and experiences minerality without remaining rigidly identified with it, as is normally the case. A certain catalepsy or rigidification of the forces of thinking can be said to take place on the mineral level so that thinking can become awake in being reflected by minerality, in other words reflected by the brain. The significance for thinking of being reflected lies in the acquisition of consciousness of itself and of its own foundations, including the perception of its provisional identification with minerality. Only by recognising itself as an essence founded upon itself can thinking penetrate minerality. **The mineral world cannot be penetrated by a thinking reflected by minerality.** This is the stumbling-block of the current physical sciences.

[529] The thinking which accepts the material image of the world as the fundamental reality, and constructs with this its science, is a thinking reflected by minerality; having

²² Lat. = The external form or figure [trans.].

fallen from the level where it actually originates, it establishes consciousness of itself not through its own movement but through the object. This kind of thinking does not possess mastery of the mineral level in which it arises: it descends further below, unaware of doing so, because it has not been able to attain awareness of its origins. This leads to the *myth* of matter, rather than to its *experience*. Even atomic research cannot be regarded as a penetration of matter, being in fact the very opposite: it comes to a stop at the infinitesimal limit of the phenomenon, which continues to exist as an externality that conditions thinking and constitutes, through a mathematical elaboration of its irreversible immediacy, a further realm of transcendence.

[530] Thinking does not really come to know anything about the minerality of the earth except for its reflection, which it translates into terms of external measurement (chemical-physical-mathematical). This thinking expresses itself through the categories of minerality, but remains ignorant of its essence: it is a product of minerality, external to it, and yet in other regions of consciousness minerality is encountered by the forces deep within thinking. We have seen how thinking manages to become conscious by estranging itself from these forces and manifesting through opposition towards the organic processes associated with them: forces which are none other than the root-powers of feeling and of willing.

[531] The power by means of which the human being encounters terrestrial reality in sense-perception—is the will. Through a will-process the very principle of consciousness, the I, coincides with the principle of minerality in the moment of perception, by way of an original identity, which consciousness only takes up as a reflection in the form of sensation or representation, with the result that knowledge appears, for the human being barely beginning to unfold his thought, to be merely a “mirroring” of objectivity—just as with someone who would take the reflected image as original, and entirely miss the real thing which exists outside the mirror. From this kind of illusory and immature thought has been established, with unyielding dialectic, the culture of our time.

[532] The minerality of the Earth can be seen as the domain in which the will-current of thinking expresses itself, dialectical thinking being its reflection *without* self-awareness. The fact that waking consciousness, with respect to the will-current, has the same relationship as it has with the state of deep sleep, signifies that thinking is awake and individualised to the

extent that it moves upon the *surface* of its own current of force. The metadialectical discipline which was spoken of in Part II of this present study leads thinking to the conscious experience of its own current of force: prior to this experience the force-current, being one with the vital structure, excludes waking consciousness and shuts it out. Waking consciousness, in turn, normally has to be in opposition to somatic life and to neutralise the organic processes that it encounters, in order to be conscious within the bodily nature according to its own principle, which is independent from the bodily nature. Nevertheless, without the extraconscious activity of the correlative and yet opposing force-current, neither perception nor thinking would be possible. This antithesis throws light upon the meaning of human freedom and its connection with the power of necessity.

[533] Perception, which in its normal function seems to give a reckoning of the sensory world, and thinking, which gives the impression of scientifically penetrating it, in reality are outside it. They move, at any rate, within the formal reflection of phenomena, that is, in the reflection of minerality and not within minerality itself. They are perpetually in connection with the surface of every measured, weighed, deduced or dialecticalised thing. The current culture of the sense-perceptible does not actually express mastery of the sense-perceptible realm: its processes and procedures are in fact obstacles to the actual penetration of this domain. The one positive element of this culture is the **potential** for thinking to become free, owing to the negation at the heart of everything reflected.

[534] It can be said that the vital force within thinking is immersed in deep sleep in order to be awake in another region of the soul as reflected thought. We have been able to clarify how this reflected thinking comes about on the lowest level of the spiritual-bodily hierarchy of the human structure, the physical or mineral level, so as to provide the first movement towards consciousness of self.

[535] But what self-consciousness has to do is to actualise itself on the mineral level in which it makes its appearance, and not bind itself to this level in complete ignorance and unawareness of itself. In truth, the very highest forces are called to operate on this level in a non-conscious form, both in nature and in the human being—minerality, as the lowest level of manifestation, is the symbol of their objective negation, and yet of their real presence beyond the confines of appearance. Thus, presenting itself to consciousness as positive

imprint of its negation, that is as reflection, **minerality appears material**, as matter, as real. Sense-perceptible appearance, which provides a means for the emergence of self-awareness, becomes an object and end in itself for a self-awareness that is not insufficiently strong.

[536] The reality of the forces in the depths can be realised by a thinking which attains independence from reflected form. Without this independence any contact with these forces is subconscious or mediumistic. The task of consciousness is to grasp the impulses ascending from the depths on its own level, not to collude with them in the belief that it can simply extend its cognitive reach into their depths. The danger for consciousness lies in abandoning the positive character of the waking state by turning towards the unconscious as if it were a transcendent content; a danger which even devotees of spirituality cannot avoid, if they are too bound to the form and name of their doctrines to be able to realise the original element of consciousness which knows those things in the first place. Formalism and mediumism in this sense are in perfect concord and agreement.

[537] On the physical plane, as we have said, the principle of consciousness is present owing to the extinguishing of ancient and transcendent impulses, an extinguishing brought about during the stages of its descent from the spiritual to the physical, towards the form upon which it has worked since the beginning. The ultimate purpose of the descent is a reascent through these stages, starting from the deepest of them, the physical, the only level at which it was possible for the principle of consciousness to emerge as an individual consciousness of self. We have spoken of a mineral consciousness. So far this has been attained by the I in the most naive form, as a reflection, which gives rise to a rational activity which appears to mediate sensory reality, whereas its effective force is actually the principle with which, by way of rationality, it posits the world as such. Nevertheless, for the intellect that has come to a halt at the image of the world's otherness, rationality is still more real than the force of its principle which is able to step beyond otherness and overcome it.

[538] If the meaning which transpires from the whole process is the reacquisition of super-consciousness by way of individual autonomy, it is evident that on the merely rational level autonomy and self-consciousness are not fully real: they are the barely begun and almost abortive beginning of the conscious principle's intent. This explains the gamut of philosophical and dialectical misunderstandings regarding human freedom, and the

disquieting use that is currently made of it. There is an insufficient and inadequate distinction between the inner aspect of consciousness and the sensory forms by which it expresses itself.

[539] The problem of freedom does not concern the forces of the depths, but thinking consciousness: it is this alone which can realise and in a free way make use of the profound power of those forces. The task in this sense which waits upon the human being is a use of his freedom which does not become an antagonistic opposition between psyche and spirit.

35. *Concentration*

[540] The opposition of the psyche to its own inner principle is the typical dynamic of every psychic or psychosomatic illness. This opposition is possible because of the unconscious absence of the inner principle in the passivity of reflected thinking. Consciousness identifies with the illness itself, insofar as it fails to attain consciousness of itself; in fact as a general rule it does not have at its disposal thinking proper—autonomous thinking—but only reflected thinking, a thinking accustomed to shaping itself according to what it reflects. Psychic illness becomes a process of consciousness, because consciousness does not manage to distinguish itself from it.

[541] Illness of the psyche is possible only insofar as it encompasses and envelops consciousness: were consciousness to maintain its autonomy with respect to the psyche, it would always be able to liberate itself. This enables us understand the psychotherapeutic function of the discipline of thinking, a discipline or schooling carried out according to the principles of spiritual science, that is according to criteria established by the conscious process of rationality. Rationality does not admit of penetration by “metaphysical,” yogic or psychological methods which are extraneous to its own process. The experimenter can ascertain the fitness of the method through the fact that it is based upon the experiential certainty of the inner element of thinking. The concentration of thinking upon a specific theme, whose rational expression is taken up as a means of manifesting the thinking force itself, re-establishes a connection between the I and the faculties of the soul: emphasising the

rational act itself rather than its content or object restores to thinking its independence from the cerebral vehicle. In concentration knowing is used as a means of experiencing the forces which make it possible, whereas normally the intent of the cognitive act is the object itself or the theme.

[542] The rational process, used in accordance with its as-yet-unformed *dynamis*, is the very principle of therapy, for the same reason that it is the principle of sickness and illness when made use of in the customary way. An inner analysis of the rational process today can discern an insertion of psycho-mental forces into the cerebral organ, and therefore also into the nervous system, beyond their capacity of physiological resistance, but at the same time can discover that this insertion is not in itself pathological, but only to the extent that it lacks the correlative inner movement which is capable of integrating it: the act of consciousness which ought to take responsibility for the entire experience. This is the “fulfilment of the rational act” spoken of in Part I, namely the *animadversio*, or close observation, of the rational act, shorn of its dialectical products; the close scrutiny is an I-relation, and that is what is normally excluded. This fulfilment is the very thing experienced in the quintessential discipline of thinking—concentration.

[543] The excessive presence of the mental currents in the nervous system is a consequence of an incomplete or unfulfilled rational act, in as much as this enters into the “physical” dimension and comes to a halt there, without even conceiving that it might free itself, whilst the “end”—if such can be said—of its entry into physicality is not to identify itself with it, but to acquire consciousness and potency of self in extracting itself from it: that is, in realising on the physical plane its own dimension, which is not physical. Naturally the extraction of itself from the physical, being the completion of the movement, ought to be followed by a renewed penetration into the sensory and this in its turn by a further consciousness of self, finally leading to an extinguishing of that **otherness** which is the sign of thinking’s paralysis with respect to the mineral domain. However, sensory one-dimensionality prevails instead, subduing and enslaving the inner forces of the supposedly knowing subject, who is unaware of them.

[544] Concentration is the means by which thinking frees itself from the cerebral support and therefore from dialectical forms, with which it is normally identified: it realises in this

way its own pure movement as a power of life. This power of life acts as a conductor towards the very centre of the life-forces; as a result of which the researcher can finally appear as the subject of consciousness and sound the hidden depths of the psyche. That this possibility should be based upon the fundamental experience of *thinking*, which resolves rationality into its pure dynamic through an original act underived from any logical construct, throws light upon the fact that the modern experience of the spirit, even when it concerns a resurrection of the **sacred**, is above all an event of knowledge: a mental *metanoia*.²³

[545] That which in tantric yoga was designated as the fiery current of **kundalini** is for the modern seeker the central etheric current which he can experience consciously through the conversion of thinking, its transformation into etheric movement. Let it be observed, though, that the tantric method today cannot offer to the contemporary seeker any possibility of successfully enlivening this current, which is a higher etheric stream now connected with that movement of rational thinking which can be transformed via conscious intensity into a movement of the will.

36. *The centre of the life-forces*

[546] The will, which can work actively within subjective nature because at no point does nature make it its own, and which is one with pure thinking and pure feeling, can come to be experienced as a streaming form of thought, with no residue of any dialectical impression. This is a metadialectical experience. It concerns a current of force which, in passing from form to formative power, as to an original will, leads to a centre inside the head, a dimensionless point located between epiphysis (pineal gland) and hypophysis (pituitary gland), and in which consciousness perceives its own state of being willed by the I. For this reason it is the point of departure for the intentional guidance of the etheric streams.

²³ Gk. = repentance, change of mind, conversion [trans.].

[547] The localisation of this centre in a specific point of the physical structure cannot be attributed to any corresponding somatic functions, its significance being first and foremost of an extra-spatial nature. The localisation is necessary for the human being who, by way of sensory consciousness, begins with a self-representation linked to the body, which is capable of uniting this consciousness with the supersensible.

[548] The *quantum* of will that is available to the human being capable of willing independently of nature always expresses the power of this centre. An act of will requires in any case a decision of thinking, an original movement of consciousness, involving the presence of its pure principle. The point in which this principle takes hold of consciousness, by way of a resolve which is consciously able to hold back from becoming thought, thus avoiding falling into reflected consciousness, so that it directly expresses itself according to the pure dynamism from which it originates, is the centre which is being alluded to here. The fact that it is found within the cerebral organ, and is yet beyond its physical structure, precisely indicates the way in which a researcher in this time begins to grasp his or her own being, on the basis of a radical experience of thinking.

[549] In this centre the life-stream of thinking tends to encounter the life-currents of feeling and of the will—not ordinary feeling and willing. This encounter is generally unconscious within the human being and takes place as a sort of clash, because of the position of dialectical thinking with respect to its extraconscious basis: there is a disharmony, a discord between the currents, and this disturbs their forces. On the surface of consciousness the discord manifests as intellect's incapacity to grasp the supersensible reality of both nature and the human being, an incapacity which is nevertheless continually confirmed through being translated into science and dialectical culture.

[550] The clash of these underlying forces acquires, as far as ordinary consciousness is concerned, the appearance of an agreement or a concord which, however, is merely the dependence of thinking upon states of mind, and the fact that it judges according to instinctual pressures, such as sympathy and antipathy. The superficial agreement is in effect a "pact" made by thinking and feeling, whereby feeling lends a certain vitality to thinking's abstract and unenlivened form, on the condition that it is able to express through this abstract form its own desire or disgust—such is the ego's profound limitation upon

experience of the spirit. Even the most elevated natures, as long as they have not attained genuine freedom, the autonomy of pure, content-free thinking, are compelled right to the very end to judge according to sympathy and antipathy, and to suffer the illusions of a feeling-life bound to the bodily nature, in other words the deep-seated influence of the **sexual domain**.

[551] The experimenter who attains consciousness of the inner centre in the head can, starting from there, harmonise the encounter of the fundamental forces of the soul with sensory life and distinguish the presence of these forces in the cosmos as well as in his or her bodily structure: only in this way can he or she understand the actual function of consciousness, the principle of psychotherapy.

[552] Owing to the particular function of self-consciousness at this level the meditative content associated with it can be elaborated qualitatively, so that it can gradually produce a transference of the etheric centre from the region of the head to the larynx and then subsequently to its real seat in the vicinity of the heart.



[553] To penetrate the process of consciousness means perceiving the basic function of the etheric forces in the bodily structure and also the relationship between consciousness and the ether—the ether through which thinking moves as a metadialectical essence. The experience of this, in its preliminary cognitive stage, necessarily starts in the seat of the intellect and leads to the initial identification of the etheric centre in the head.

[554] Experiential knowledge of this centre, apart from being a path towards perception of the instinctual sphere, marks the beginning of a new kind of experience of the physical world, in that it gives a way of contemplating the architectonic function of the etheric currents in nature, in the human being, and in the cosmos. Thus, because of the quiescence of the cerebral system, the perception of higher etheric forces becomes possible, forces which on the sensory level are normally bound to the bodily nature, sacrificing their original nature in order to build up the bodily structures and mediate the soul's experience in the physical world, and even in those forms which necessarily contradict and oppose their original

nature—the various animal functions. On a higher incorporeal level these etheric forces act as a vehicle for those rare moments of intuition and inspiration which human intellect experiences.

[555] This knowledge paves the way for the perception of a yet deeper seat where the life-forces are centred. In certain moments, owing to a deepening mental silence, feeling ceases to be experienced as sensation and its incorporeal life completely unites with the liberated stream of thinking. The metadialectical course of this union leads to our perceiving the function of the centre near the larynx and subsequently to the disclosure of its life-power in the heart. In the region of this organ the original centre of the etheric forces is experienced.

[556] We can understand why this centre must initially be experienced in the head, because it serves as a point of departure for *conscious* perception of the etheric system. Anyone who attempted to attain to the etheric seat of the heart prematurely, by mystical or yogic methods, would lose himself in mediumistic experience. The I initially takes hold of itself via the organ of the intellect, and this cannot be sidestepped without the whole experience ceasing to belong to the I.

[557] In the etheric centre of the heart, the investigator recognises the organ through which the foundational forces of consciousness seek to establish an equilibrium between the polarity of the two systems, neurosensory and metabolic.

[558] Traditional *askesis*²⁴ required the pupil to extinguish the personal element, in that it was an impediment to consciousness opening itself to the principle of individuality and experiencing the impersonal forces of feeling and willing—the immanent regulator of these forces being precisely the etheric centre in the heart. This function today has been entrusted to the immanent I, and takes place in a different way: through self-consciousness bearing witness to itself.

[559] The spiritual discipline of our time requires that the transcendental forces of feeling and willing give a revivifying impulse to what is human, and that their super-individual power become individual. Previously, no matter what the tradition or the ritual form, the

²⁴ Gk. = spiritual discipline [trans.].

soul reached out beyond itself towards union with the higher I and to this end had to eliminate, even if only temporarily, the individual or personal element; today, inner experience demands a different and opposite procedure, because the higher I emerges as the immanent element within consciousness. Human action is more distinctly individual the more it manifests the spirit. What is commonly known as egoism is not the action of the individual element, but an obstacle to it. The egoist is as he is because he does not know how to attain to the independent individual element: he is moved by instincts, by psychic necessities, by habits—and believes that he himself is willing that which is in reality willed in him by the species.

[560] The way to the “heart” is not directly available to the rational human being and is an illusory path of research if we do not realise that the way is blocked by the inherence of inner forces in the cerebral support. What the researcher has to do is to recognise this inherence so as to understand and gain insight into its provisional function. Forcing the “threshold” so as to gain access to the seat of the heart, through concentration or mystical tension, is at any rate to descend below the level of normal consciousness along a mediumistic pathway; and thus to remain bound to cerebral and instinctual conditions, whilst presuming to operate beyond the consciousness which is subject to these conditions.

[561] The liberation of intelligence from cerebrality is at the same time an experience of pure individuality and a perception of the super-individual nature of thinking, as a result of which one recognises within thinking a force which in the normal course of things loses its vital power in becoming reflected as mental picture. This seems individual but is not, because, conditioned by cerebral mediation, it expresses the impulses of the species. This is why individualism can be regarded with suspicion and disapproval: it is that through which the individual actually is *not* real, in that he is the prisoner of his own psychosomatic self, which illegitimately calls itself “I.”

[562] Intelligence, if it becomes truly individual, is in contact with the super-individual: it can participate in the regulative function that the heart-centre has in the life of the soul. The etheric forces perceptible as the vehicle of liberated thinking lead to this centre as to their origin. Whoever can reascend the stream of the inner life and contemplate the process through which this life emerges as consciousness encounters the etheric centre of the heart,

and understands that every **healing energy** of the soul and of the body has its origin in this centre, and that every sickness is recognisable as a degradation of this energy, in any organ whatsoever, regardless of its apparent separateness from the cardiac function.

[563] It is nevertheless essential that the experimenter in these times first of all attains to the centre of the etheric forces in the head, by overcoming in the cerebral seat the limit of reflected consciousness. The transference of the centre from the seat in the head to the region of the larynx and from there to the heart comes about through a precise shift of consciousness. The perception of the centre will suggest the appropriate content of contemplation: a content which, given its metadialectical nature, needs to be cast in symbolic form—from which it follows, conversely, that the taking up of certain symbols is itself helpful in facilitating the experience.

[564] If the transition from cerebral consciousness to metadialectical consciousness can be assisted by contemplation of the symbolic elements earth and water, then the transition to the larynx-region is aided by grasping the significance of the transition from the nature of water to that of air, and subsequently, for the cardiac centre, from the nature of air to that of fire. It is not a case of mental pictures directly related to the corresponding sense-perceptible elements, even if at first these very things have to be made use of, but is to do with making active and bringing alive, via contemplation of the element taken up as symbol, the actual force corresponding to it in the etheric order of nature and the cosmos, and thus within the structure of what is human.

[565] The task of the **therapist** is to form, to shape consciousness via a vision which retraces the process of creation. The capacity for vision emerges from the conversion, the elevation and transformation, of reflected or dialectical thinking—meaning that one neither suffers nor worships it but really possesses it in its very essence.

37. *Intelligence of the heart*

[566] The ultimate significance of the conversion or transformation of thinking is the perception of the etheric centre of the intuitive faculties. The quiescence of the cardiac plexus opens up the possibility for the experimenter to perceive the higher ether as a vital weaving of thought: leading further to his encountering the forces whose inversion or counter-image is the world of the instincts. His limitation as an individual becomes for him a sign pointing him towards the task of communing with the force in which individuality as such has its root.

[567] Individuality is illusory as long as it is unconscious of its own wellspring, but it does bear within itself the golden thread of thinking. Until thinking is brought to life, the work belongs to the autonomous initiative of the human being: the path to the **higher I**, up to a certain point, is the same as that of the lower I. In fact the human holds in his own hands the very end of a most significant thread. Only in the head can the **serpent** be grasped and mastered. The head of the serpent is in the **head** of the human being: no one but himself can take hold of it and subdue it, so that the force of the instincts is neither merely suffered nor opposed in sterile dryness, but having been mastered can return as vigorous life-force.

[568] Any impulse substituting itself for this free initiative would necessarily be illusory and deceptive. The extinguishing of the ego cannot be willed by the ego, only by the I which recognises the force of the ego as its own. Such an impulse originates at that moment when the human being intentionally experiences a pure consciousness of self. Once that free act has entered into the field of play, to pursue it further means that the investigator integrates himself into a hierarchical order which unveils itself to him, of which his freedom constitutes a particular degree and in which it plays an integral role. One hierarchical degree after another declares itself, through the one central impulse, which has already been realised by the principle of that original force which expresses its sublime greatness in the very depths of the earth, and therefore in the most intimate structures of the human, as the secret of minerality.

[569] Insofar as this impulse involves a sense of responsibility towards that hierarchical order which, from out of the inward depths of the will, begins to become manifest, there

cannot fail to arise a corresponding cognitive rigour, capable of penetrating right into the processes of contemporary rationalistic culture, and at the same time able to achieve the greatest possible degree of independence from it.

[570] We have so far spoken about the forces operating in the mineral depths from the point of view of what they mean for waking consciousness and for the function of thinking. Now we can begin to recognise in these forces of the heights and of the depths the foundation which the human being draws upon in order to establish himself and his own autonomy, and thus his capacity to come into correlation with the world—which will always be a merely subjective thing, incommunicable and the source of much polemic, unless it is based upon this autonomy.

[571] The infinitely high infinitely deep in which the I has its foundation bears within itself, at all levels of being, the potential resolution of every tension associated with the instincts. At every stage the knowing human being is able to encounter this fundamental force of his in the etheric sphere. But in the physical domain it inevitably appears as a tension spellbound by greed and obscurity.

[572] The psychotherapist of these new times is faced with the task of knowing what it really means for consciousness to be “in harmony with the forces of the heart”. A first act of discernment is to establish that it has nothing to do with any sort of emotional appeal or mystical-ethical belief, but rather concerns a potential transformation of consciousness, by which it would receive into itself, in all their integral and transcendent reality, the pure original forces of feeling and willing. Naturally this must be a consciousness capable of refraining—even if only for brief moments—from reducing these forces to the level of its own entanglement in the nervous system.

[573] The investigator actualises within himself a certain power of knowing through the independence he achieves from the cerebral nature, and as a result of this he becomes able to observe the course of the instincts and to take possession of the life-force from whose degradation they originally derived; the life-force is restored as a power of the I. The very act of contemplation proves to be a vehicle of and for that force.

[574] Reference to the inner organ of the heart has value both theoretically and for the practical investigator because it clarifies the conscious path towards the supersensible which is applicable in our times. On the basis of the absolute immediacy of **pure thinking**, that is, essential consciousness of self, the origin of the “infinite force” is revealed to the investigator: as if the absolute which he intuits, not only psychologically but also in a contemplative and metaphysical sense, were already realised within the inner structure of the heart, and perceptible right up to super-human stages, such as those referred to in traditional teachings about *samadhi* or *nirvana*, or the “Kingdom of Heaven” of the Gospels, but which can become functional only for him who asks, “asks the question”²⁵, insofar as starting from pure consciousness of self he discovers within his own I the higher I also. If one truly seeks the I, he or she finds the higher I—the Logos.

[575] The significance of all that we have so far considered as regards the connection between consciousness and superconsciousness, or between liberated consciousness and the heart-organ, is that the investigator can unite his or her human fallibility with the force of a superhuman principle which is always present within the I and yet is continually rejected by the ordinary forms of the I. Both cosmic and human, the principle of every therapy and of every transmutation of consciousness, the investigator can unite with it by virtue of the same freedom he normally make use of to reject it. He can awaken from the bewilderment and stupefaction of the senses, if he knows the secret of “sense-free thinking”, which has been prepared and unfolded through the very life of the senses themselves. The following as a result is abundantly clear: whoever is truly free can know whatever he truly wants to know. He who knows what he is really asking, knows also how to ask so that what is asked will be given, because he starts from the principle—the very beginning and origin—of that which he himself is.

[576] The knowledge which in this sense can be derived by the psychologist as therapeutic science involves a higher awareness. Now it is a fact that the spiritual doctrines which have become established in the contemporary world lead one to believe that their authors have penetrated the secrets of the life of the soul. Such illuminated understanding is possible and

²⁵ A reference to the Grail legend and to Parzival’s famous failure to “ask the question” regarding the Grail King’s ailment, when he was first admitted to the Grail Castle. It is only by “asking the question” that the terrible enchantment afflicting the Grail King, with all its dire consequences for the people and the land, can be lifted and the secret of the grail be revealed [trans.].

even urgently needed by human culture, but it can only be accomplished by an intuitive procedure capable of recognising its own emergence from the very source of life it intends to investigate.



[577] Experience of psychic depths can be understood as the perception of elements of the psyche which, at the level of ordinary consciousness, are consciously or unconsciously conceived as transcendent. Knowledge of the heart-organ is the prerequisite for any real investigation of the depths, because it is a direct perception of the spiritual: thinking, liberated from cerebrality, attains to the source of its own movement, in self-transcendence: it actualises a relation with the “heart” which does indeed exist behind the veil of cerebral consciousness, but is perpetually contradicted by reflected thinking. This relation leads one to the reality of the I: as if the I were to perceive its own being.

[578] Thinking as a mere reflected movement cannot know the source, the wellspring of the heart: its first task is to become aware of the cerebral mediation which links it to the sphere of the senses. This mediation, in fact, enables the I to retrace the movement of reflected thinking, benefiting from the self-awareness that this thinking has made possible: the state of wakefulness which guarantees, as we have seen, the autonomy of the inner forces which immerse themselves in the non-consciousness of the bodily nature. This is the significance of harmonisation between consciousness and the forces of the heart. It would be an error if these forces were to dominate the human being *prior* to his bearing witness to himself as a self-conscious being: they would not be able to be for him a revelation of the heights and the depths—he would not have the means to observe them. The virtue of these forces demands, in order to be effective, the raising of self-awareness to their level, brought about by possessing the initial impulse of freedom.

[579] The human being who is unfree believes himself to be the “ego” and subordinates his sense of life to it, by way of a will which nevertheless proceeds from the I—he does not manage to see the origin of his own will. Bypassing the I, he cannot receive its forces into himself: thus the psyche usurps in him the function of the I—and the intelligence of the heart, which is the true intelligence, is closed to him.

[580] That the “ways of the heart,” of love, or of feeling, presuppose the pure positive action of thinking, is the fundamental premise of psychological research and enquiry. The great source of error lies in the unconsciousness of subjective feeling which, formed and given substance by mental imagery bound to the cerebral nature, manipulates thought that believes itself to be free. As long as this bondage exists, it is useless to believe that one can find in feelings, in love, in fraternal supportiveness, in facile humanitarianism, the antidote to intellectualism, because this feeling will always be an expression of the limit imposed by intellectuality. This limit, though it assumes the speculative form of universality, of brotherly love or social awareness, will always be the real content of imposing ideologies, because ideology does not involve initiative of thinking, but calls upon and arouses the animal nature of man.

38. *The limit of intellectuality, and its surpassing*

[581] The foundation of psychotherapy is the inner act which allows the investigator entrance into the psyche. Every formulation of psychotherapeutic principles, every utterance concerning it, should breathe the air of supersensible perception. Its research should have as its basis the intelligence of the heart, that is, communion with the sphere of the metadialectical powers of the soul. It cannot and should not be determined by the psyche itself, but ought to unfold within the psyche in keeping with the transcendent reality which constitutes its substance: a transcendence which is immanent to it, as it is to thinking, because it is the dimension of the spirit—the whole meaning of this immanence being the development of self-awareness. The establishment of self-awareness on the sensory level is precisely the logic of its supersensible principle.

[582] The metanoetic dimension of consciousness is something that contemporary psychotherapists have truly failed to become aware of, with the result that impulses of autonomy having no connection with the actual basis of free action, but only with the bodily nature, have been scientifically cultivated in the soul, thus confusing a phenomenology of instinctuality with one of genuine freedom. Psychologists, teachers, philosophers have

ceased to understand the human organism as a structure sustained by hierarchies of extrasensory forces, operating both in nature and in the cosmos, expressive of an order which seeks to manifest itself within consciousness, the knowledge of which is the real principle of psychotherapy.

[583] The essential thing which an investigator today must see to is an act which he or she alone can accomplish: an act of self-recognition and self-possession at the very root of his or her psychic embroilment, where consciousness is thoroughly under the sway of the bodily nature. What is needed above all is the inner development of thinking, for it is the vehicle, the means, for distinguishing between the original *spiritual* inner element and that element which pertains merely to the psyche. This vehicle is the very means by which those who have liberated their thinking can supportively unite with those who, for reasons of destiny perhaps, or race, or age, do not have sufficient self-awareness to distinguish spiritualised thinking from dialectical thinking. In this sense they can freely accord themselves a certain authority, an authority belonging to the spirit, which has no need of compulsion in order to have validity, influence and power.

[584] The light-mindedness with which many people today accept promises of power or liberation from instructors of Yoga or Zen can be explained by the predominance of the psychic element, which presents them with an acceptable spiritual path insofar as it spares them from the absolute act of consciousness. Traditional disciplines, of the yogic or mystical sort, can be of real use today only to those who are already capable of loosening the knot within consciousness that thinking has tied through rational experience of the sense-world: a knot which began to form at the beginning of the so-called "historical" epoch and which in more recent times has become constitutional. Those who are moved to behave as though this bondage did not exist, are in reality compelled by an obscure will not to notice it, so as not to have to free themselves from it.

[585] The task of the therapist of the soul is to accomplish something which depends entirely upon that which he or she is in **essence**. Effort should not be directed towards spiritual or psychic endeavours, undertaken through the assent of thinking to some doctrine, but should consist of working within the very thinking with which doctrines themselves are thought, so that one recognises *within thinking itself* the dynamic in which the

power of knowing moves. This dynamic, this inner movement, is more important than the doctrine itself, in as much as it is its own truth-criterion, as well as that of every doctrine, having as it does the power of distinguishing its own metadialectical content from the dialectical form. This distinction is not possible for ordinary thinking, because it is identified with the dialectical form.

[586] Transformation of the instrument of knowing: that is what it is all about. Through the discipline of concentration the experimenter comes to contemplate thinking completely objectively and to recognise its reality as a current of **life**, beyond the dialectical form and the veil of the cerebral. He temporarily withdraws thinking from the mental sphere in which, when not orientated by the engagement of the will, it is at the mercy of instincts and states of mind; he perceives it as it really is—a force not bound by any form, streaming from the supersensible. The supersensible becomes conscious perception.

[587] On the ordinary psychic level the human being is taken hold of by sensory life to an extent greater than his capacity for penetrating it with conscious thinking: this unconscious dependence fosters the subsensory in his psyche. But if he enables thinking to manifest its own autonomous movement, he increases the force able to re-establish equilibrium of consciousness with respect to sensory experience—and he discovers the objective nature of thinking as a supersensible entity. Quite different was the situation in earlier times, when the human being was immersed in the sphere of supersensible thought but could not obtain knowledge of it, and yet from the heights of that sphere experienced the sensory domain; now, however, the modern human being has the possibility of intentionally vivifying the inner dimension of thinking, thus setting it free from the sensory domain and from the enchantment that makes that domain seem to be the one and only thing that really exists.

[588] To the modern thinker falls the task of bringing to conscious fulfilment the spiritual process of the ancient ascetic. In the risky uncertainty of modern mentality, we really have to see the possibility of the actual failure of a grand inner enterprise of remote origin. Thinking that has descended to the lowest level for the sake of attaining autonomy, can become temporarily oblivious of the purpose of the whole endeavour—that is, the reascent—and from its level of dull obscurity construct its own particular psychology, social dogma and science.

[589] Those to whom this level is congenial tend to impose upon humanity, according to the obscure mystical impulse which moves them, an all-levelling ethics and its associated social mechanism. No doubt the free human being needs this extreme situation so as to awaken and become active. But that is a little bit like saying that we need illness so as to develop the forces of healing.



[590] Self-liberation is thinking's ultimate logic: it becomes aware of itself beyond logical necessity, as containing in itself every dialectical category but without being conditioned by any of them. This is the restoration of thinking as a power of being, which ordinarily negates itself in the process of rational manifestation. To experience this throws light upon the conviction of the ancient *mystai*²⁶, theurgists, kabbalists, hermeticists and masters of yoga concerning a "divine magic", which could be enacted via the transformation of the faculty of knowing. When consciousness is conditioned by the process that separates thinking from its impersonal and cosmic roots, then the human is degraded; but when consciousness is capable of experiencing thinking as a **cosmic entity**, as a vehicle of revelation, then a liberating and ennobling impulse is at work.

[591] Because of the birth of self-awareness and the inevitable rational form of its initial manifestation, the ancient magical power has been fading away in the course of time, until it has become a mere shadow of itself.

[592] This shadow is abstract thought, thought mediated by cerebrality, to which of necessity the individual expressions of feeling and willing conform. Becoming lifeless and abstract, thinking was able to give the human being the vision of an exclusively physical and quantifiable universe, in which he would feel himself to be alone, within finite limits, without God, responsible for his own image of reality. Only in this way could he accomplish the experience of individuality and of freedom, initially forgetting and unconsciously contradicting the perennial principles of knowledge: negating the gods, but in this losing his

²⁶ Gk. = initiates [trans.].

sense of his own **higher nature**—that is, his sense of the reality that lies at the basis of nature itself.

[593] The transition from ancient man to modern, whilst under the aegis of metaphysical guidance, has been accomplished by mental impulses characterised by anti-metaphysical revolt—of self-awareness against its own extraconscious basis. Owing to dead vestiges of the ancient psyche, with a capacity for assuming rational forms in an inauthentic appropriation of rationality, the modern human being has created new gods for himself, without being aware of it—dialectical gods, physical myths, dogmas of matter—to the point of creating the idea of a mechanical universe and a society mechanically reducible to a system. This results from an incapacity to attain, radically and in freedom, to the real content of sensory experience and to understand its instrumentality with respect to the spirit.

[594] From the depths the psychic corpse of the old magical force, holding the human being in its grip via new forms of dependence, comes to life again in intellectual forms that simulate progress, ethics, culture. It is able to re-express itself on the one hand through abstract social mythologies, aiming at modern resurrections of the ancient “group soul”, of a primitively collectivistic type, and on the other hand by clothing itself in the now empty forms of ancient magico-metaphysical disciplines in tandem with their contemporary dialectical interpretation.

[595] The conversion and transformation of thinking which we have indicated as a foundational premise for psychotherapy can be understood as a path towards the rediscovery of the original magic—of which the power of technological man today is an inferior parody, nevertheless undeniably, despite its mechanical monotony, a manifestation of the power of thinking. This power demands courage of the modern human being, the courage to rediscover thinking as a reality beyond the state of alienation—as the innate possibility of his or her own free being.

[596] The human being has begun to be free in thinking, but does not make use of this freedom, because he finds it easier to follow what has been thought by another, or to follow a thinking moved by preconscious impulses, rather than moving in and of itself.

[597] Normally man conceives of freedom by way of thinking, but is not aware of doing so, and commits the error of organising doctrines or postures for himself which give him the sensation of being free, whilst avoiding the inner dimensions of thinking, and not understanding that in the very thinking which conceives freedom the barely begun process of being free ought to be pursued and developed. The human being is not free if he is not free in thinking—but this does not mean in dialectical thinking or in that thinking which is already the form of a content, but rather in its pre-formal force. In thinking lies man's bondage, but for that reason it is the very place where he can loosen and unbind his fetters. He can loosen and unbind only by finding within the innermost recesses of bound thinking itself the liberating, unbinding force, which is the original impersonal nature of thinking. The original wisdom inherent within thinking is alienated when thinking becomes man's personal domain, his individual intelligence—if he is incapable of drawing his individuality directly from itself.

[598] The binding impulse takes hold of thinking which has lost its original impersonality, whence sense-perceptible appearances assume the power of reality—not that the sensory world is an illusion, but *appearance* is that in which the human being, reducing his thinking to a purely abstract motion, is unable to recognise his own activity. He mistakes appearance for the very being of the world, in that he does not heed the radical activity, the presence, within appearance, of his I; and so assumes appearance as if it were founded upon itself:—that which is “outside” becomes objective otherness, susceptible only to quantification and consequent mechanical interpretation.

[599] Man's process of self-consciousness has been blocked, he does not see that the binding force can be reversed by him through his identity with the original power from which it has arisen. In the potential freedom which he has, there lies a way of restoring the original impersonality to thinking, so that thinking becomes once again for him a revelation. The art of concentration and meditation, in keeping with the inner development of thinking that is required today, draws forth from thinking that which is inherent and yet concealed in its outwardly focussed mode as a power of restorative transformation: the force *within* the form, the virtue of original impersonality, **wisdom**—which in modern times has been more or less exclusively replaced by **intelligence**. Without an intuition of this possibility, the human being of the present time is stuck on a dead-end road.

[600] The road beyond rationality does not signify an insufficiency or inadequacy with respect to the rational, but rather the full possession of its inner dynamic and movement. Given that rationality represents a limit placed upon human knowing in regard to the totality of what is real, the way beyond that limit can restore an awareness of our participation in the inner history of the cosmos. This is a way of knowledge, by virtue of the point from which it necessarily begins—the **dialectical** moment of consciousness—a point which becomes the locus of mediocrity and corruption, unless it is transcended by the very principle of the force within it which ordinarily limits itself to abstract rationality.

[601] It is in that process of knowing by which consciousness becomes aware of itself that the *limit* of consciousness is overcome. If you would discover who you are at the root of your being, you have to begin with an unconditional act: intuiting the original self-willing in the continual metadialectical emergence of thinking.

[602] Once we have taken stock of the limit, to go beyond is to enter an unfamiliar inner landscape, into which during the course of daily life various **unconscious transcendent elements** are accustomed to project themselves in a great variety of forms. In fact it becomes possible to experience the force-images of numerous entities, which barely come to our awareness in what we normally receive as inner impression from things or from thoughts: now it is possible to sound their depths, because we are within the I, which lives in connection with these things as in its own world.

[603] The import of this experience is to awaken from their state of sleep within the soul the forces of feeling and of willing, which normally undergo a deterioration, unobserved, into instinctual-emotive forms. These in their pure state are the vehicle of inner perception. The fact that normally they become merely personal expressions does not mean that they exist for the unfolding of the egoistic nature of the human being, but that they have to be elaborated in a personal form, so that their inner content, the perception of which in the past required the dimming of waking consciousness, can now be realised via an individual act of that same waking consciousness.

[604] The first phase of the process is the awakening of self-awareness via the disciplines of meditation, concentration and contemplation, directed towards freeing the intellect from mental-cerebral categories. What follows is the metadialectical perception of the concept: the concept, disentangled from its formal determination, is an autonomous entity functioning as a support of the individuality in the etheric sphere, until such time as that individuality is able to proceed on the basis of his or her own autonomy. Self-awareness mediated by the form-free power of the concept reveals itself as the capacity to be independent which is required in the face of the cosmic **ether**: without the opposition of this independence, the cosmic ether would simply overwhelm consciousness. In this way one comes to understand the ultimate significance of sensory experience: not the hallowing of the sensual, but the forming of a self-consciousness capable of becoming an **etheric consciousness**.

[605] Transparency of the thinking-process and true autonomy fulfil at this level an orientating function relating to the identification of the individual centre of the etheric forces which, as we have seen, is formed first of all in the head, then, following contemplative transformation, in the region of the larynx. The subsequent phase, which has been designated as “knowledge of the heart,” is determined by the encounter between the liberated forces of thinking and the original forces of feeling and willing. Through this encounter the centre of the etheric currents is transferred to its real seat, near the organ of the heart. The initiative of the experimenter at this point is transformed into an observing attentiveness or into a contemplation of events which belong to the perennial order of things, and reveal themselves to him as coming to their completion and rightful fulfilment through his own essential will. The force which he has hitherto developed and liberated is realised by him, in contemplation, as devotion.

[606] Feeling and willing, as forces internal to thinking, come to be perceived in their autonomy with respect to the nervous system: only for thinking is it possible to speak of liberation, whilst for feeling and willing we have to speak of a *potential* entity which is actualised or manifested—and which one contemplates.

[607] This contemplation enables us to reascend towards the metaphysical source of both feeling and willing. The reascent takes place in a gradual way, meaning that at every stage the powers which correspond to it in the cosmos can be recognised. As it has been made

clear in the first section of this book, this is a knowledge which discloses itself first of all in dynamic images.

[608] It is of decisive importance for the science of psychotherapy to place at its foundation the relationship between consciousness and the forces of the heart, as basis of the distinction between the sphere of consciousness and that of the soul itself, and in order to recognise the method, the particular liberating action, which can free the intellectual forces that are normally bound to cerebrality and which thus act as an obstacle to the above-mentioned distinction. Only when this distinction is clear can we attain a sense of the deep concord between the world of the senses and the world of the spirit.

[609] We cannot simply by-pass rational intellect in order to rediscover the wellspring of our inner life: rationality is a kind of thinking within whose form there exists *in movement* the very thing which the I seeks by means of it. The I's task is to possess the motion in which it moves: the very *life* of the form. Through the intellect's action upon itself, the I takes its first step in crossing the cerebral threshold. This threshold, or limit-situation, is the origin of the fundamental error of our culture *if it goes unrecognised*, but for the free human being it serves as a sign of the task of recovering one's strength. Human freedom has its beginnings within this limit-situation, where it imbues itself with its own secret impulse, but it cannot become a full reality except through knowing and crossing the threshold. Freedom is in error when it is merely the projection into the world of its own unconscious identification with the limit imposed by rationality.

[610] There exists an illusory freedom for the human being imprisoned within the limit-situation: the prisoner carries his chains outside the prison and thinks that he is free. In this sense we can even speak today of a use of freedom that works against itself. Every contemporary manifestation of the instinctual life, culturally codified or mythologised, is just such an inverted use of freedom. It makes no difference whether the instinct is unleashed through violence and revolution, or through peaceful satisfaction. Freedom is similarly annulled in both the instinctive person who expresses his obsessive condition in violence, and in the man calmly satisfied with his place in the mechanism that confines him, technologically satisfying his needs.

[611] The crossing of the cerebral threshold renders the existence of its limit creative, because the free human being attains to the wellspring of force and brings its strength back into the world, expressing it *within* the forms of necessity.

[612] It is an error to think that these forms are illusory: rather it is creative to contemplate these forms, so as to penetrate **the secret of the finite**. The form is the symbol of a content called for by the human situation in the sense-world: its finitude is the sign of a threshold to be crossed, the external index of an inner endeavour. Finitude does not dwell in things, but in the human mind—which is where it is overcome.

[613] The limit-condition, for constitutional reasons relating to the present evolution of the human being, is fixed and abides, and only in exceptional moments of knowledge can it be overcome by investigators who are able to transmit their experience also in dialectical form. The transmission becomes educative and formative for the human being, it orientates culture: that is, it serves as a preparation for that type of human being for whom the crossing of this threshold will be a normal and natural part of life. Up until now, some rare exceptions aside, science has not known how to use its conventional intellectual and logical powers to state exactly the problem of the limit-situation, in such a way as to orientate the human mind towards a transformative comprehension. The idealist position in this regard has been no less sterile than the materialistic.

39. *The significance of psychotherapy*

[614] In overcoming the limit-situation (the limit of rationality) the I actualises a conscious relation with the forces of thinking, feeling and willing. The I realises independence from these forces because it no longer needs to perceive them through the cerebral organ; it is not condemned to that ordinary immersion in them which disfigures their nature.

[615] The I's independence from cerebral mediation leads to an experience of thinking, feeling and willing which reveals their original synthetic relationship with the heart-centre: the heart stands revealed as the origin of their force, not so much because it really is that

origin, but rather that the relationship of consciousness with the heart enables them to function directly as formative powers of the soul—as if the heart-organ gathered together their streaming from extraconscious depths and served as their centre within the human form. To all intents and purposes we could say this: it is as if the original being of man, from outside space and time, bearer of a power absolute, were to penetrate into the human organism by way of the heart—by way of the heart accomplishing the conversion of this original force for the soul capable of gathering it unto itself.

[616] Thus we can understand how every time the human being takes into himself a creative intuition, a transcendental inspiration, a healing virtue, an impulse of destiny, this comes about through an opening to those forces which are governed by the heart-organ. We can also understand how and why the metaphysical traditions recognised in the heart-centre the seat of the human being's higher I. But these same traditions speak of the loss of this centre by rational man. The essence of all that has been considered in the present study is this: whilst having to admit the reality of the loss, it is precisely the rational human being who can **consciously** rediscover the heart-centre, thanks to the free deed of thinking—which, as we have shown, is a possibility not for the ancient but only for the modern man or woman.

[617] The path of thinking leads to the seat of the heart: it is conscious thinking itself that can rediscover in this seat that principle whose experience in former times could only occur with the *elimination* of thought.

[618] Rationality has no higher meaning than this: in overcoming the limit which prevents it from finding within itself the essential content of its own being, it orientates itself towards the heart. The ultimate meaning of logic lies precisely in this—it is as if an eternal inhabitant in the soul were able to bring back to the human being, via the heart, his original lost principle. This principle, whose everlastingness has not prevented rational man from becoming oblivious of it, becomes a real presence once again through a rationality which is able to master and thus to silence itself: this principle awaits simply to be rediscovered, beyond the threshold of dialectical thinking. But it was very necessary that this threshold should exist; now, though, it needs to be perceived and clearly seen for what it is.

[619] The psychotherapist has the task of bearing witness, through his own personal experience, to the reality of a higher consciousness which each person can discover in him or herself.

[620] Consciousness itself presupposes the existence of superconsciousness. And psychotherapy must place before itself as its ultimate aim the direct experience of the *foundation* of consciousness and thus bear witness to the presence of a **responsible**, a helpful, an **immanent resolving power** in the human being, in which his whole transcendence is present and ready to actualise itself.



[621] It has been possible to indicate the way to recognise within the inwardness of consciousness the presence of an essence of life which, whilst being immanent for the human being, is at the same time in intimate connection with a boundless world of powers and forces. In this way we have shown a method for acquiring a true foundation. A psychotherapy for our times has to be able to help the human being to recover from an insufficient awareness from which he suffers, an insufficient awareness of the world-reality which has its foundation in his own self, and which, in the absence of conscious awareness of it, cannot but appear to him as a *chaos*, elusive of any logic whatsoever.

[622] The human being is in need of healing from the gross error which leads him to consider objects, entities or myths as if they themselves were somehow the fundamentals of existence, whereas he must inevitably end up finding them insubstantial and empty, with sorrow and sickness as a result continually befalling him. Sorrow, sickness and psychic breakdown ought to be averted and assumed by a deed of consciousness: thus they actually stimulate, in their necessity, a certain wisdom within the human being. But the human being, ultimately a free entity, cannot be made wise by force.

[623] We are most definitely not free when we rely upon transitory support-structures, treating them as though they were genuine foundations and bestowing on them an idealised notion of their power, endowing them with soul. In this way we foster those delusions which beset our knowing, but which ultimately cannot coerce it.

[624] The human being's chief error is to attribute to these foundations, which are actually not fundamental at all, a value which in fact springs from himself, all the while failing to recognise the foundation in himself which is the true measure of all value. Every time that he founds his security upon situations or things or beings, whose value is based on a relation that he has not penetrated with his knowing, what he is basically doing is projecting as an ideal or as knowledge his own conditioned state.

[625] The intellectualised rhetoric of brotherhood which today exercises such a widespread influence upon masses of people, in essence is born from *unrelationship* with its object, in that relation is not truly possible for the psyche, but only for the I. It is for this reason devoid of the content of consciousness to which it ostensibly refers, and represents only an embryonic intention as far as real altruism is concerned. People are very willing to embrace an ethical task upon which they can lavish their need to experience themselves as social beings, but they are afraid of being so in reality, because they cannot free themselves from their own subjectivity, the limited and reflected nature of which they do not understand and hence are oblivious of. What the other really needs is quite different from what it pleases us to portray to ourselves, so that we can bask with a clear conscience in our brotherliness and in our enlightened social action.

[626] Man binds himself to things and to beings by way of images in which he does not heed his own activity at work in the images themselves: he makes no attempt to understand how imagining arises. Only from the source of this image-making capacity could he establish a true relationship with beings and with things: a relationship between one foundation and another, between essence and essence, entity and entity. This is beyond the scope of a psychology whose analytical procedures do not relate the happenings of consciousness to the principle of consciousness which is capable of supra-individual relation, but to the finite and limited individual, seen as a symbiosis of psychic impulses and cellular processes.

[627] That our connection with the world is based upon *identity of the foundation* is an ancient truth, which the texts of the Tradition express in a variety of ways. The Upanishads

mention that love for things and beings is real when it is directed towards the *atman*²⁷ which sustains them. All that we have indicated in these pages has the same significance, but there is a world of difference regarding the relationship to this truth between ancient man and modern. The human being of ancient times who thought *atman*, already in the thinking experienced the initial streaming of the forces of *atman*: his thinking still moved in a way that was not yet dampened by cerebrality. The modern man who thinks *atman*, essence, foundation, *Logos*, finds himself dealing with an immobile abstraction, whose one possibility of movement is formal, of logical or dialectical kind. He stands in need of a vivification, an enlivening of the connection of thinking, not with *atman*, but with itself—which is the whole intent of the inner development of thinking to which we have made thorough and abundant reference.



[628] It would be an error if the human being of this time, intuiting in some fashion the metaphysical function of the heart, were to devote himself to this organ through concentration or direct application of one sort or another upon the emotions or the breath. The contemporary human mind cannot establish a genuine rapport with the centre of the life-forces, and hence with the source of its own inner life, as long its consciousness is based upon the inner life's bondage to cerebrality, for its awareness in this case is founded upon the dead lifelessness of its thinking. To seek, under these conditions, direct experience of the depths of consciousness or of the metaphysical seat of the heart, simply creates pathological states which tend to present themselves under the guise of psychological or mystical phenomena.

[629] If the impediment to experience of the psyche is a thinking psychically bound to rationality, the first fundamental task is precisely **knowledge** of this state of bondage. We have seen how the **perception** of the state of bondage is itself the beginning of its transformation, and how thinking, feeling and willing once liberated do not break away from the human being, but rediscover their true centre in the inner human being: only these free forces have the power to operate *within* the human.

²⁷ Skt. = The spiritual kernel of the human being, his or her inviolable spiritual essence [trans.].

[630] Normal thinking and feeling and willing, the ordinary mind, the everyday psyche, are constrained, by the one-sided nature of thinking and its attendant cerebralisation, to manifest on a subhuman level. The fact that there are philosophers and sociologists today who are capable of depicting the disquiet and the contradictions of the present phase of civilisation can be a further trap, in that the situation does not become known as it is in reality, and there is thus no exit from it. Some denunciations and criticisms of the contemporary world are in themselves an expression of the level to which the world has been degraded, and have the function of disseminating illusory methods for putting things right.

[631] The state of civilisation is in fact quite anti-scientific, insofar as its manifestations all point logically to the identification of the inner principle of the values which it affirms, but— it seems that this identification, so decisive for conscious relation with the foundation, is the only one that it is impossible for science to make. It refuses to know the very principle of things. A contradiction indeed, whose absurdity comes to expression in the various forms that **destiny** is taking for present-day humanity—all undoubtedly explained by the many intelligent and relentless analyses of the “civilisation of the machine,” the “consumer society” and so on, but in reality thoroughly *inexplicable* by human reason bound to the limit upon which it presumes to cast judgment.



[632] The aim of the present study is to help orientate psychotherapy and psychological enquiry generally towards the kind of knowledge that is essential for these disciplines and yet which they studiously avoid: knowledge of one’s own inner capacities and their metadialectical origin. The burden of responsibility which is laid upon modern psychotherapy in this regard, as bearer of this knowledge, will only be alleviated when numbers of conscious and morally responsible individuals make their autonomous intuition the foundation and central factor of their psychotherapeutic practice.

[633] That what happens in the psyche happens in close association with the body and is interwoven with it and stimulated by it, does not mean that it is simply produced by the physical instrument; rather we have to see if what happens in the psyche can be followed

within the psyche itself, independently of the physical body—in other words, *via* means which, though they may not be outwardly perceptible, are nevertheless very familiar to self-awareness, because what happens in the psyche is uniquely related to self-awareness and implies its prior existence. The inner human being can review what really happens in the psyche, with its extraconscious perceptions, and can experience the forces of the soul—but only if he realises himself first of all as the Subject who continually expresses *and externalises* himself through those things.

[634] A consciousness which does not realise itself in this way cannot establish a science of its own phenomenology.

[635] We cannot speak of phenomenology without assuming as premise the existence of its principle. In the case of psychotherapy the principle is the *subject* of the phenomenological investigation.

[636] Consciousness which does not manage to become self-consciousness, by perceiving the metadialectical process without which its own activity could not for a moment exist, has no way of effectively contemplating either the psyche or consciousness itself. The key to the problem is the metadialectical experience which has been dealt with in this book. The business of examining the phenomenology of the psyche via physical means can only rightly be based upon the prior work of establishing to what extent the phenomena of the psyche actually correspond to physical processes, and where by contrast they manifest their own reality as something quite independent, and in this latter case on what level exactly the real principles might be found. Thus the physical element will not be confused with the psychic, nor this with the spiritual, and we will not imagine ourselves to be dealing with one, whilst actually being bound to the other.

[637] The lack of distinction between these elements is such for modern research that it proceeds without supposing that there is even a problem of distinguishing something. The modes of knowing in which modern research into the psyche expresses itself are elaborated along structuralist and deductive lines, associated with the gradual perfecting of the instruments by which physical processes can be registered and recorded, the assumption being that because the movements of the psyche are accompanied by physical processes,

these physical processes are what determine them. At the same time events within consciousness are viewed without the basic distinction as to whether they are of bodily or spiritual origin, in other words whether they represent an excess or a deficiency in the action of the spirit upon one of its vehicles—the psychic, the etheric, or the physical.

[638] This distinction cannot be made mechanically, nor can it be determined through this or that abstract notion, but must be a psycho-noetic act, an act of metadialectical thinking, over and over again attaining to and drawing from the foundational reality. Through the subject-matter dealt with in this book it has been possible to show how psychological investigation, without imprisoning itself within metaphysical assumptions, can recognise upon a strictly logical basis its true spiritual task, and the need for certain qualitative requirements on the part of the investigator, so that his or her knowledge of the psyche can be actual experience. If the psychic object is genuinely perceived, thinking need not add anything to it, because within the perception there already exists thinking's identity with the object. Metadialectical content can if it chooses take on dialectical form. The fact that morality and knowledge, at this level, are actually one, proves to be an objective scientific occurrence, not determined by ethical considerations but affirmed by purely scientific ones.

[639] Anyone who undertakes the necessary psychological research can verify that the activities of the psyche, even though they are stimulated by sensory life, in reality originate and progress by way of movements independent from sensory life, and refer to a foundation upon which the bodily nature itself also rests. We can grasp in the contemplation of this movement the metadialectical foundation from which it springs forth and functions as psychic life. This foundation needs the mediation of the senses in order to manifest as that consciousness of self which is necessary for the immediate revelation of the world at the level of the senses. Accordingly, for the scientist who confounds the principle of a form with its manifestation, or the concept with the thing itself, consciousness can appear to be founded upon the bodily organism and the world can seem to be exclusively of a sensory nature. But consciousness which is not conscious of its foundation cannot decide about some other foundation: thus the therapeutic psychologist cannot enter into communion with the foundation of another's being if he is not aware of his own. Inner identification with the otherness of the body is not actually true consciousness. It is an illusory consciousness which assumes the *phenomenon alone* as real, and therefore as scientifically translatable—the

phenomenon devoid of the ideal relation by means of which it invariably presents itself: as a result scientific consciousness can only contemplate that aspect of the human being which is destitute of spirit, or of the I—that is, the animal part. It cannot, as psychotherapeutic awareness, understand human affliction, nor can it help to heal it.

[640] We have shown how research and investigation is nevertheless based upon the foundation even when it is not aware of this, even when it sets itself up in opposition to it; and how the foundation is present and ultimately asks to be seen, acknowledged and recognised within each and every form of research, in keeping with an old tradition of consciousness and a primordial sense of our work: because, as foundation, it is the I which in the objectivity of the world seeks the mystery of its own being, of the finite and the infinite, and can discover it in truth as a supersensible reality within the sphere of the senses. The sense-perceptible world appears to negate that reality and becomes illusory itself only when it does actually negate it.

FINIS

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