

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

by Virgil C. Aldrich

The instructions, "Don't be so self-conscious," "You should be more conscious of yourself," and the like, are interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on the context. On the one hand, there are what may be called the popular or practical interpretations, and on the other, the more sophisticated or theoretically complicated ones. Let me glance first at some examples of the practical sort in a by-passing manner, since I am interested primarily in the other kind.

You are at a cocktail party for some dignitary and discover that a quantity of hors d'oeuvre dip has been on your beard for some time. You become painfully self-conscious, with the form of self-consciousness called embarrassment. Or you are a wallflower at the party, not because you are homely in appearance, but because you are shy. Shyness is a built-in, self-negating sort of self-consciousness that tends to keep the shy person out of circulation in social situations, perhaps because of an unfavorable estimate of himself. Or you may suffer from narcissism, being in love with yourself, in a sort of introverted and romantic preoccupation with the image of your self, and this too would tend to keep you out of the social whirl at the party. Or, opposite to all these cases, you might be an exhibitionist, self-conscious in a way that puts your self on exhibit at every turn, compulsively. This also might get you ostracized, in the end.

Such examples could easily be multiplied beyond necessity, and I do not want to do that. The point is that in all such cases I could properly tell you not to be so self-conscious, and you and everybody else concerned would quite readily get the sense of the instruction, in those situations and the like. However, I can't refrain from mentioning one more example. Suppose you are an exhibitionist in the above sense and are playing a part in a play on stage. Your job as an actor is to engage in a pattern of actions—including speaking, which is the most essential and expressive human action of all—that best exhibits the person of the character you are playing, not your own person or self. This requires a studied awareness of the pattern of actions which is the medium of the dramatic art. Now if you here make the mistake

of being aware of yourself instead, or of putting yourself on exhibit as well, thereby drawing attention away from the character you are playing, the admonishment, "Don't be so self-conscious," would again apply. Similar remarks hold for the writer whose style is, as we say, "self-conscious," out of too much concern on the part of the author to make a show of his own virtuosity at literary composition, at the expense of what he is supposed to be portraying in the linguistic medium of his art.

As for the positive instruction, "You should be more conscious of yourself," it too has practical interpretations and applications like the negative one I've been illustrating. One might direct it at a man with bad table manners—"Be more conscious of yourself, watch yourself!"—or to one who tends impulsively to give away things that the recipients do not need as much as the giver does. But, since it is this positive sort of instruction that readily lends itself to the more *theoretically* involved or sophisticated interpretation I mentioned above and which is the chief concern of this essay, I turn from the popular to the philosophical usages. Of course, the negative instruction, "Don't be so self-conscious," can be taken this way also. The philosophical mystic, for example, has quite some use for this, but what he makes of it, as we shall see, is very different from what has been made of it in the above cases. Be all this as it may, let us attend in what follows to the positive instruction, "You should be more conscious of yourself," as an occasion to examine what I have called the theoretically involved interpretations, treating these as if they express the kind of philosophical self-consciousness that prevailed at the time. So I proceed with the attempt to give you a bird's-eye view of the history of some of these philosophies of self-consciousness. These, unlike the practical or popular uses of the injunctions to be or not to be self-conscious, involve some analysis of self-consciousness, and of course this will involve a theory of the self and its self-consciousness. I want the brief story I am going to tell you of this to impress you with the evolutionary continuity or development of this concept, through the various theories in chronological order.

First, of course, Socrates, because as formulated by Plato, he *is* first. In Socrates' heyday, the Sophists were propagating a popular and easy sort of subjectivism and scepticism, the sort that the sophomore annoys his parents with after a year of college. Not that the *arguments* of the great Sophists for such a view were nearly as immature as the sophomore's. They were so penetrating that they taxed Socrates' powers of refutation to the limit. Protagoras, for example, argued the proposition that man is the measure of all things. *Each* man is the measure of reality and truth. To become conscious of one's self was, for Protagoras, to become conscious of the fact that it was a subjective or small container

of everything knowable by him. It was this idea of the self and self-consciousness that Socrates had to attack. As Plato's hero, he finally emerged with the notion, systematically argued, that what is subjective or private to the self is not at all essential to it. What is essential to it and its salvation is the consciousness of certain eternal objects to which *any* rational mind has access, in the sort of intellectual contemplation that the Platonic Socrates identified with knowledge. This tended to empty the self of its subjective contents in favor of consciousness of an objective reality that transcends private experience. Thus, realizing oneself was conceived as the intellectual love of timeless and selfless objects, and this absorption into eternal entities, by abstract contemplation, makes the self immortal. So the Socratic injunction, "Know thyself," turns out, paradoxically, to require the particular self to lose itself in a reality that lies beyond the self. True self-consciousness, philosophically arrived at, thus involves the paradox of self-realization through the absorption of the self into something selfless, something in which the identity of the particular self, as *subject* of the experience, is lost. The self as subject and subjective is a mere appearance, not ultimately real.

The note sounded here is not unlike that of the later Christian teaching concerning the self and its salvation. There too is the paradox of the self dying unto itself, though this time more by faith and love than by knowledge or the exercise of reason. (Plato too had said that philosophy is learning how to die.) But the Christian orthodox teaching places more emphasis on selfhood as ultimate; I don't want to stress this at this point of the story. Rather, it is the echo that Platonism got in subsequent mysticism, beginning with Plotinus, that I next draw your attention to. In so far as Christian doctrine is mystical, it will be implicitly included in this notice. So I turn to mysticism.

According to the mystic, a sustained and educated effort at self-consciousness will not only make the particular self vanish into nothingness in the end, but, in the white radiance of that experience, it will become clear that the self was really nothing all along, even in the beginning. Its apparent being will dissolve away into its real nonbeing. This is the mystical experience. Since this pilgrim's progress of the soul is pictured as a passage from appearance to reality, the nonbeing into which it finally sinks, losing its identity like a drop of water in the ocean, is judged to be a blessed event—the new birth of the self through its annihilation. Here again is the paradox of consummating the self by annihilating it. The Oriental mystic has compared this to pouring milk into milk. Paraphrasing a passage in the *Brahma Sutra*, the particular self is an *apparent* modification of an ultimate *x*. The illusion of this particular modification called the self is produced, according to the passage,

by the self's unfortunate linguistic activities. It uses language, names, and the concepts that go along with these. It is this that makes it look as if there really are many particular things including the self, deployed in time and space. The truth is that these linguistic concoctions are mere appearances carved out of an absolute, undifferentiated unity that is nameless and ineffable, realized only in mystical experience and about which the wise man, the true seer, will keep mum. The current verbal practices of Zen Buddhism, with its *koans*, are aimed at driving home this point—breaking through the logical web of language.

So the instruction, "You should be more conscious of yourself," turns out, in this context of theoretical interpretation, to be issued in the hope that the self you only seem to be, as an illusory, verbal construct, will finally be rejected as full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Or, if you are a self-seeking sort of person, the mystic might as well say to you, "Don't be so self-conscious," and his meaning will be clear in the context of his mysticism.

Now make with me a big jump out of this cosmic, anti-rational mood into the scientific ethos that emerged in the West in the sixteenth century and jelled in the seventeenth. We find there that particular selves, as subjects of subjective experience, get recognized with a bang, not a whimper; but for rather embarrassing reasons. In fact, all bona fide experience begins to look subjective or "inner" in this new Light of Nature that, for the first great scientists of this period, revealed the external or outer world only as mechanically and mathematically structured. Moreover, it made this outer realm of matter look more real than the inner subjective realm of mind. It was in this age that the great dualism between mind within, and matter without, emerged with a vengeance. It became systematic in Descartes' *Meditations*, whose hero was his older contemporary Galileo, and fifty years later in John Locke who spoke reverently of "the incomparable Mr. Newton."

Under the impact of the new scientific world-picture, there seemed to be no place for mind-with-its-animation in the real external world in space and time. Space, said Descartes, is the essence of matter, and mind has no spatial properties at all. It is nowhere at all. Thus it has no affinity, no kinship, with the real external world of nature, in space. Thus it is not really possible for the self as mind to take the plunge of mystical experience out of itself into the vast ocean around it of the Not-Self. Thus each self is stuck with itself, confined to its own subjective contents. Strictly speaking, it has no direct experience of anything but these subjective contents or psychological states. Even its clearest and most distinct ideas that are put to work in its most responsible mental operations called scientific research are subjective. We must *assume* that these, when mathematically formulated, correspond to the

skeletal realities of the external world, but, as Descartes argued, we do not *know* that there is any such correspondence without a supernatural guarantee. And it was precisely the concept of the supernatural that was getting its props knocked out from under it by the new scientific world-picture. Descartes had to resort to nonscientific arguments for God's existence in a desperate effort to keep the supernatural on its props despite the swelling tide of scientific naturalism. He did this because God alone could save natural knowledge from the swelling tide of scepticism.

Since only abstract, mathematical thinking had some chance of achieving true correspondence with reality external to mind, the doctrine of the sheer subjectivity of all sense-perceptual, imaginative and spiritual experience emerged with a new force. These are just so much smog compared with the scientific metrics of clear and distinct concepts. Thus, curiously, the new science tended to agree with the old mysticism on one count. The self is chock full of illusory and misleading appearances that simply must be seen through if there is to be anything like an approximation to knowledge and truth. (Bacon's idols of the mind.) But, according to the new science, the emotional escape in mystical experience from these deceptive appearances that mystics of India call *maya* is not really possible. The mystical experience is a lapse, a fall, from intellectual grace; not a salvation. Having it only augments the illusion. Or even just trying to have it.

So, in this brave new world, the injunction, "Know thyself," or, "You should be more conscious of your self," is a warning not to be taken in by its "subjective contents" that have no chance of objective correspondence with the demented external world of mechanical happenings under geometrical and causal laws. But even the mathematical ideas by which you have a better chance of achieving such correspondence are subjective contents of the self. So it is still by a selective kind of introspection that you *may* come to know something outside the self, i.e., by attending to its most clear and distinct subjective contents. To put the matter tersely, one may say that, according to this way of thinking and theorizing about the self, self-consciousness is inescapable. You can't help being self-conscious. You never really have direct access to, or get directly at, anything but the subjective contents of your self or mind, whether in perception or conception. Your own impressions and ideas are all you ever encounter anywhere in the field of your experience and thought. You are caught in the inner privacy of yourself, and not even a Houdini can get out of *this* trap.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Scottish sceptic David Hume had driven home the negative implications of this new dualism. The embryo of scepticism curled in its womb was brought to light and maturity by his treatment. We do not experience things, but only

our impressions of things. And all our ideas, comprising such knowledge as we have, derive from just these impressions, not from things. Even mental things like ourselves or minds are not directly experienced. Only certain impressions of them are, impressions that *suggest* they must belong to something called self or mind. (Nobody ever simply sees or hears or feels his own mind per se, or any other.) Just as other impressions *seem* to be connected with material things outside the mind. So, strictly speaking, instead of *knowledge* of things either material or mental, there are only pseudo-ideas of these. The genuine ideas, deriving from impressions only, reveal only the kinds and orders of impressions. Not of things, either material or mental. The rest is just sheer guesswork under psychological laws of association of ideas, not knowledge. The term "guesswork" here is due to Bertrand Russell, who also was a sceptic in one of the stages of his development. In short, both subjectivism and objectivism are hamstrung as meaningless, by Hume's analysis, if subjectivism involves a claim to knowledge of the self that *has* the impressions.

After Hume had done his work, or if I may play with his pet term, made his "impression" on the mind of the eighteenth century, it was clear that if there is anything like a game of knowledge-of-things to be played and won, some philosopher with a new angle, or a hitherto unplayed card up his sleeve, would have to sit down to the conceptual poker table. Someone who had absorbed the scientific ethos through the pores and, while understanding and respecting it, had premonitions of another ethos to come. Someone who would find intolerable what the sceptic had done to the age-old maxim, "Be conscious of your self" ("Know thyself"). If Hume was *right*, it was impossible to obey it. The best one could do to preserve one's sanity, after trying hard to obey it, was to follow Hume's own example, You stop trying, and turn for relief to play a game of backgammon—which, like poker, is also a game of chance. As is the game of knowledge.

Another thing was also clear at this stage. The self or the mind had by this time a big premium on it, though it had been used as a wastebasket to contain human values and purposes that had no place in the executive order of the external world. The evolution of thought from Descartes to Berkeley, who was just before Hume, had involved a retreat into the inner realm of mind from the outer realm of material things. Thus had things been subjectified into contents of the mind, in so far as any experience or knowledge of them is at all possible. Now, if by "the mind" here you mean *your* mind, then you are a solipsist, and such a view simply won't do. The solipsist argues that only he and his self-contained world really exist. Of such a view even the sceptic Hume had said that, though it admits of no refutation, yet it produces no conviction. But I think we have an informal sort of refutation in the

whimsical story about the French solipsist who complained, in a letter to Bertrand Russell, that nobody *else* would accept his excellent arguments showing that only *he*, the Frenchman, exists. Even the solipsist needs the company of other selves, when he argues. If he has any argument at all. So solipsism is self-refuting. The notion of arguing with oneself will not help here, since one cannot argue with himself until he has learned to argue, and this one does at first with another self.

Nevertheless, the self had by this time become the focal point on which the being of anything knowable and experienceable seemed to depend. How then to reinstate things as genuine and public objects of experience and knowledge "out there," without abandoning the notion of their containment by, and dependence on, a self or mind? That is, by replacing the false subjectivism with a true one? A formula for this had to be found as the only way out of the cramp of the new emphasis on the privacy of the experience of each-little-self-unto-itself.

Kant and the German romanticists after him found the formula and worked it with a vengeance, beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century and on up to the middle of the nineteenth. I shall be atrociously short about this development, with some pangs of conscience. The formula is: enlarge the self into the Absolute Self or Mind, and let your self and mine be finite parts of it, with Absolute Mind as their real essence. Then there will again be an objective—this time spiritual—environment for our selves containing public realities independent of my self and yours, and to be experienced and known by us when our experiencing and thinking is responsible. The disciplines that make these responsible and adequate to the task of coping with this spiritual reality are the humanities, not the sciences. Not even the science of pure mathematics. The blessing, indeed salvation, of true insight into the nature of things comes most effectively through the arts, especially literature, with poetry as the essence, more essential even than religion, though this too is more revealing than science. But, you will say, these humanistic disciplines are subjective expressions of imagination and feeling. Of course they are, and that precisely is why they serve the purpose of understanding and knowledge of the real world better than the intellectual abstractions of scientific investigation. You must remember that we live, move, and have our being in the Absolute Self, an all-inclusive Subject or Mind. That is why the subjective disciplines are on top, in the hierarchy of the disciplines. One properly goes up, ascends, to them, and down to the derivative and deteriorated view of things in the sciences. The sciences are at the bottom, concerned as they are with abstractions that make the spiritual realities around us look like inanimate and mechanical objects. To shake off such illusions, one turns advisedly, say, to

Tintern Abbey for Wordsworth's reminder that we are in The Presence. Or to Hegel's philosophy of the World Spirit.

In philosophy, this sort of anti-scientific world-view waned after—even before—Schopenhauer's death in 1860. It had a sort of revival through the turn of the century in British, American, and Italian Neo-idealism, and then again ceased to have much influence. It is in this quiescent state at present, though you can still feel its pulse if you put your finger in the right places—on those few individuals who are functioning as a saving remnant in honor of one of the great traditions in philosophy.

But what about the interpretation of our imperatives of self-consciousness in the context of such a theory? There they tended to feature the all-pervasive Absolute Ego, one way or another. The main point was that our finite, fluctuating selves, our little selves, tend to coalesce with this larger Self, even to *be* it, when they think and act as responsibly as they can. In fact, such conduct *is* the activity of the same Larger Self within us all. So it becomes important for us to be or realize this great potential, in the consciousness that this is what we ultimately are, our real being. Thus the instruction, "Don't be so self-conscious," would read, "Don't be so aware of (so stuck with) the little self that you really are not." And, "Be more conscious of your self, know thyself," would go, "Become aware of the Larger Self you most truly are." Since all this draws attention to real *being*—or has "ontological import"—such imperatives were boiled down into the single "Be yourself!" "*Sei was du bist!*" Your real self. What you really are. Self-consciousness of this expanding and more and more inclusive sort, that progressively reveals the Absolute Self as its essence, was the theme with variations in the romantic movement. Philosophically speaking, it culminated in Hegel in the first half of the last century. Its literary expression took on many forms, including that of the "existential mood" in which the great Russian novelists also participated. In this form, darkened with the tragic consciousness of what it is to be a man, the romantic spirit is still quite alive and to be reckoned with, even in communist Russia. Remember Pasternak, ostracized by The Party for his heresy of the anti-scientific world-view expressed in his poetry. (His novel *Dr. Zhivago* was also a poem, plainly against the machinations—and I mean also the "machine-ations" of The Party—of dialectical materialism.)

Now, in quick retrospect, you can see that the story has been of a tendency at first, in the early Greek period and subsequent mysticism, to lose the self in what is wholly Not-Self; and then, in the modern scientific and subsequent romantic period, the tendency either to get stuck sceptically with the little self or to escape from this by finding

the self in the world of the true, Larger Self. (The term "larger self" is, by the way, due to Harvard's Josiah Royce, in his heyday at the turn of our century.) In short, the picture we get, in retrospect, is of two mighty opposites: non-subjectivism against subjectivism. (I say "non-subjectivism" instead of "objectivism" because, e.g., mysticism is non-subjectivistic but not objectivistic. Indeed, it denies the reality of any objects, including Plato's eternal Forms.)

An impartial yet deeply concerned view of this impasse, activated by the question, "Which view is the right one?" has, mainly in the last thirty-five years, generated a new kind of philosophical self-consciousness, a language-consciousness. Indeed, the predicament required it, as the next new angle or card to be played if the game was not to be abandoned at the dead end it had reached. At this time, philosophical self-consciousness began to emerge as language-consciousness. The feeling grew among the philosophers that they had unconsciously had their say out of selves and worlds structured by the linguistic forms they were using and being used by. "Linguistic" here does not mean what it means to linguists or to lexicographers. It has a deeper meaning that does greater justice to the power of language to order the realm in which a man, as a man, is active, stylizing everything he does even when he is not *actually* using the language. This notion of language as a constitutive form, a form of life, modifying things even in the field of perception, not just conception, now has currency among language philosophers in quite different camps. (Even Heidegger in existentialism and Merleau-Ponty in phenomenology.) Notice the curious agreement here with the ancient mystic's view of language. The mystic had also asserted the power of language to create and order the world of diverse things that every man is aware of. But for the mystic this was not reality. Reality was the undifferentiated continuum or unbroken unity back of the multiple appearances. So he rejected language. Not so the new philosophers of language. For them, discarding language is throwing the baby out with the bath, since, as Waismann said, reality is realized in the forms of language-in-action, as character is in a face or in a pattern of human actions, of which language-using is the greatest and most refined. Man is best defined as a language-using animal—*animal symbolicum*—since his language is the soul of him. It is this that distinguishes him from the other animals. Moreover, it is this that distinguishes between kinds of men, both culturally speaking and according as they are primarily scientists or artists or religious people or simply men of action. The language of science is the soul of the scientist, the language of poetry of the poet, and so on. Thus there is a need for a nonspecial or neutral account of all these in their various relationships, bringing to light the logical grammar of each, formal and

informal, and it is the philosopher's job to adopt this new spirit of high neutrality and use language in a nonspecial way in the account. It is not an easy job because such neutrality must be highly disciplined or cultivated if it is to bear fruit.

My story—my plot, if you like—has had a beginning and a middle. You can feel that it has been ending through the last page or two. I shall say "period" to it by finally mentioning a few names with the related key ideas, all in this new linguistic ethos.

It was Cassirer who, in his philosophy of symbolic forms, got beyond the traditional dialectical idealism by giving it a twist that has been called Neo-Kantian. Kant's idealism had been more critical and cautious than Hegel's, so has had more influence on the developments I am now speaking of, in the end. Cassirer made much of the language of myth, of art, of science, of religion, treating these as symbolic forms that structure autonomous worlds under different criteria of intelligibility. Thus did he multiply the constitutive forms of life and its "objects" beyond the few that Kant recognized or ever dreamt of in his philosophy. Concurrently, the logical positivist Carnap—who, by the way, like Cassirer, began as a continental European—drew a picture of the logical structure of the world (*Logischer Aufbau der Welt*) as a function of the language of science *only*. Other modes of expression have only emotive meaning, or imperative. They do not give us true or false descriptions of *any* world. This has been called "scientism," though it is a more sophisticated and less offensive sort than the popular critics realize. For example, the logical positivist would reject as rank nonsense the remark that only matter is ultimately real. Such talk has no place in science proper, or anywhere else, according to logical positivism.

Then there is Wittgenstein who, like Cassirer and the earlier German idealists, gives us a more humanistic account of the language we live and think by, though in a more detailed or less systematic way. This has infuriated Russell who is more inclined toward scientism. Some of the theorists under Wittgenstein's influence have been accused by their positivistic or scientific associates of having a leg even in existentialism (Hare). That is how informal or mercurial Wittgenstein's enigmatic pronouncements are. I am speaking of course of the maturer Wittgenstein who, when he became a man, put away the childish things he said earlier as a logical atomist, positivistically inclined. Very few of his critics have got the full significance of this awakening out of his earlier dogmatic slumber, and no philosopher has ever been as subtly imaginative and suggestive in any such awakening, not even Kant whom Hume jolted out of his dogmatic slumber. But Wittgenstein is partly to blame for the misunderstanding, perhaps even for the trivialities that some of his own disciples have spawned in his name. To prevent

that—if it's worth preventing—he should have told them more systematically what he meant. But it is possible that he would not have got across as much of what he meant as he actually did communicate, if he had been more explicit.

Just two samples, in conclusion, of the sorts of things that Wittgenstein did say. He had a situational, almost organic conception of language. The terms of the language come to life, as he loved to say, in various live and working connections with one another, *and* with the situation of their use. Thus there are families or clusters of phrases that go together in the living language, and that become limp, or meaningless and perplexing, when their organic connections are broken. This happens when they are put into combinations in which their informal logic does not allow them to survive. Their animation, which is their meaning, then departs from the words, like the *anima* or the breath from a dying body, leaving it inanimate—a mere “physical object.”

But let me now give you the promised examples. Suppose I say, like Descartes, that I could, while lecturing in class, be asleep and only dreaming that I am lecturing. This seems at least to be meaningful, and its truth to be an abstract possibility. But notice that the term “dreaming” has live and working connections with “awakening” and “able to report the dream upon awakening.” It also ties in closely with non-verbal aspects of the situation of its use. A student might significantly think that I am sleepwalking or sleep-standing here before him, and that I am sleep-talking, if there were something eerie about my manner of speaking, and my movements somewhat mechanical or abstract, like those of the principal actor—*shite*—in a Japanese Noh play who impersonates a dead man that has temporarily come halfway out of the total inanimation of death to convey an urgent message. But is the situation like that in my daily classroom lectures? If not, then the phrase, “Maybe Aldrich is dreaming,” has no working connection with the situation and so is not in use—it has no assertive force—despite appearances. It is such “appearances” that the new philosophers of the language we live by are taking stock of, in what Austin has called the phenomenology of language.

As for my own pronouncements about the state I am in, the informal logic governing the use of “dreaming” makes it *logically* impossible for me to say to someone that I am asleep and dreaming, and to *mean* it. I can say *and mean* that I am awake, but not that I am asleep and dreaming. If I am lying on a couch and you ask me if I am sleeping, my answering “Yes” could at best be a joke. Moreover, since our dreams are couched in, textured by, unspoken language, and since our “dreaming” goes with “can tell the dream,” the concept of dreaming as applied, say, to a dog becomes problematic.

What Descartes did with the term "dreaming" was to cut it loose from all such connections that keep it alive with meaning, or on which its real use depends, this use being the meaning. Thus he was, unconsciously, simply toying with the term and intrigued by the imagery of what it is to be awake or dreaming that language conjures up when it "idles" in this way, tempting one to mistake these images for the meaning of the term or phrase and thus to suppose that some weird and intractable possibility forever confronts us.

These are relatively trivial examples of what the new phenomenologists of language are doing. But they do illustrate the procedure in current philosophical investigations of the language of science, morals, art, and religion, where the findings are more important. Sometimes the moral to be made about the important cases is more clearly seen, at first, in the trivial.

I said that Descartes was "unconsciously" just toying with the term "dreaming." This gets us back to the theme of my essay. Well, the present and new notion of the self and self-consciousness, philosophically construed, might be described as sensitivity to the logic of language which is our form of life since it institutes the self with its practices, including what I like to call "plain talk" *and* the more sophisticated or special languages of science, religion, etc., *and* their relations to one another. I say "sensitivity to" instead of "concept of" because such consciousness of our life-situation, including the *modus operandi* of the language we live by, is more of a *feel* for it, a watching and a hearing it at work, than a concept of it to be defined. This is one reason why Wittgenstein talked suggestively and sometimes enigmatically about our language as our soul or our form of life, instead of framing conceptually clear arguments in support of this situational theory of meaning. I conclude, then, that the self that lacks this sort of sense and sensibility has, by current standards, not realized itself. It is not self-conscious in the required way.