

THE "I"

AN EGOISTIC, PERHAPS EGOTISTIC DIVAGATION

BY ROBERT SPRAGUE HALL

I CAN remember how, for the first time, I became conscious of my personality. In a flash of insight I asked myself, "How is it that *I am here?*" I remember almost the spot where this idea came to me, a boy of perhaps nine years, on my way to school. But it led to nothing more than wonder, and a feeling of standing alone and unique in the world of my experience, and with the conviction that every other person must experience the consciousness of a like isolation and uniqueness. Only many years later did I concern myself with the meaning of self-consciousness and with the efforts of psychologists to explain it. But now, for many years, I have had the problem, in one aspect or another, in my thoughts, and it has gathered from associated problems so many suggestions, that I have come to regard it and them as parts of an intelligible scheme of things.

One of the fruits of my college course in Logic was the storage in my memory of certain significant phrases or catchwords, such as "begging the question," "arguing in a circle," etc. One of these, known as Occam's razor, neatly expressed in Latin, may be Englished thus: We ought not to introduce into our reasoning any element that we don't need. The maxim has played an important part in modern psychology. It is the cause of the complaint, by those who do not appreciate the methods of that science that it is psychology without a *psyche*, i. e., without a *soul*. In fact, it can get along very well without postulating a soul, better, indeed, than can optics, thermo-dynamics, electro-dynamics, without postulating light, heat and electricity; for these latter designate forces that enter in calculable fashions into the problems with which those branches of science deal. Soul, however, represents no concept that affords

any assistance in dealing with the problems of the mind's operations. As William James says, *Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 182, "We must—ask ourselves whether after all, the ascertainment of a blank unmediated correspondence, term for term, of the succession of states of consciousness with the succession of total brain processes; be not the simplest psycho-physic formula, and the last word of a psychology which contents itself with verifiable laws, and seeks only to be clear, and to avoid unsafe hypotheses." And he decides "to take no account of the soul" in his book.

Even the word mind is too vague a term to convey any definite meaning, or perhaps too likely to carry with it misleading implications. "Cerebral activity" or "cerebration" are harmless, and convenient because sufficiently vague.

Mind is generally taken to imply consciousness or the possibility of consciousness. "Presence of mind," "I have in mind," "bear it in mind," are examples. But cerebral activity includes, besides the mental processes of which ordinarily we are conscious, a vast number of which we never become conscious, some of which we rarely become so, and some that, without being conscious are indistinguishable in their results from our most vividly conscious activities. Examples of the first class are the processes that control and regulate the functions of our various organs, e. g., the circulation of the blood, the digestive activities, etc., of the second, the efforts that maintain our erect posture and direct our ordinary movements, as well as those that, by dint of practice, have become automatic, as we say. Of all these efforts we were once conscious, and in a general way, are still so, but not to the degree or in the manner that marked their first exercise.

Of the third class are all conscious activities whatever, since we know of none that is not capable, in some persons, at some time, of being carried on without a trace of consciousness, e. g., in sleep. Occam's razor commands us to eliminate this class, and thus dismiss consciousness, as an element of no importance in mental activities and of no use in effecting their classification. But the late William James has strongly expressed himself in favor of the opposite view.

"The particulars of the distribution [among members of the animal kingdom] of consciousness," he says, *Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 138, "so far as we know them, point to its being efficacious," and *Ibid.*, p. 134, "*A priori* analysis of both brain action and conscious action shows that if the latter were efficacious, it would, by its selec-

tive emphasis make amends for the indeterminateness of the former, whilst the study *a posteriori* of the distribution of consciousness shows it to be exactly such as we might expect from an organ grown too complex to regulate itself." But he afterwards says, *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 589, "From the guessing of newspaper enigmas to the plotting of the policy of an empire, there is no other process than this. We trust the laws of cerebral nature to present us spontaneously with the appropriate idea."

But in that case, what is there left for an "organ" of consciousness to regulate? And how is it possible to trust "a system grown too complex to regulate itself" to "present us spontaneously with the appropriate idea"? Again, when there flashes into the mind the solution of a problem long consciously, but vainly, sought, what organ has regulated the brain? It has become common knowledge that such complicated cerebral activities may go on while we are unconscious of them, perhaps in sleep, or while we are awake and are conscious of occurrences and thoughts quite alien to those activities. After all, our daily life is carried on in exactly this fashion. Our cerebral system seems to be arranged in departmental fashion, each department attending to its own work without interference from the others. Being in the same building, as it were, there is often awareness of one on the part of another of them, or even communication between them.

Now as to the emphasis supposed by James to be given by consciousness. Emphasis is always present, and we are often conscious of it. But it does not always help, and sometimes it interferes. For example, when we are trying to recall a name or other datum of past experience, if undue emphasis is thrown upon a supposedly significant circumstance or element, it may prevent the free search of the mind in other directions and retard its arrival at the desired result. Even as James says, "we trust our cerebral nature," if we are wise, "to present us spontaneously with the appropriate idea."

But is it an "organ" of consciousness that lays the emphasis on this or that in our thoughts? To me it seems that the cerebral system lays the emphasis, and consciousness is our awareness of the fact. Why this should be so is the mystery. Why, for example, without any conceivable stimulus from the outside world, and at a juncture of time quite without significance, as far as I can discover, should the idea of my personality have emerged in my consciousness, as described at the beginning of this paper? Why should we be conscious, now of the most trivial ideas in our stream of thought

and perhaps unconscious of the most important and far-reaching ideas, or again, conscious only of these last? It is true that trivial things sometimes stimulate cerebral activity out of all proportion to themselves and that far-reaching experiences are often not appreciated at the time and produce their impressions only slowly and by combination with other elements. But all that goes on, for the most part, in our subconscious or unconscious selves, although, from time to time, parts of the process may emerge into consciousness.

But let me cite a few other passages from Mr. James from the same chapter as the foregoing, that on the Automaton Theory. "Common-sense has the root and gist of the truth in her hands when she obstinately holds to it that feelings and ideas are causes—and so are furtherances and checkings of internal cerebral motions of which in themselves we are entirely without knowledge."

"Whatever our ideas of causal efficacy may be, we are less wide of the mark when we say our ideas and feelings have it than the automatists are when they say they haven't it."

"The [brain] will be for us a sort of vat in which feelings and motions [*ideas*, I should say] somehow go on stewing together and in which innumerable things happen of which we catch but the statistical result."

"The feelings can produce nothing new, they can only reinforce and inhibit reflex currents which already exist."

Now we know that the reflex action following certain stimuli may occur so quickly that we are unconscious of any feeling, such as under other circumstances the same stimuli produce in us.

To go back to a passage above quoted, I would say that feelings and ideas *are* furtherances and checkings, nay are the very motive forces of all action. By *ideas* I would understand every result of a reaction of the cerebro-spinal system to a stimulus, beyond the bare feeling aroused, whether the stimulus be from the external world or from the organism itself, as well as all developments of such results, by their reaction upon each other, meaning to divide the activities of the neural substance awakened by stimuli into feelings and ideas, sometimes distinct from each other sometimes closely associated. Both would seem to be results of impressions, ideas however to be definite records of facts in experience, while feelings are excitements of a pleasureable or painful or neutral character, by the experiences or by memories of them. It is obvious that if an idea embodies facts that excited painful sensations the stimulus that would arouse that idea to activity would awaken to

some extent those painful feelings, unless the idea had become so modified by other ideas that it has lost the elements of the original experience that produced the painful feelings. In fact, all of our feelings of pleasure and pain except the comparatively few derived from bodily sensations, are due to ideas. And these ideas may have gained their power of thus affecting our feelings by very slight, often by vicarious reference to experience, as when a mere recital of tragical events, not one of whose elements of horror ever came within our experience, may arouse in us a lively perturbation of mind. Is it not plain that those ideas and feelings of which we are conscious arise from causes of whose existence we should be aware only from this consciousness? Who can tell why an idea that in one person arouses a certain feeling, arouses in another person a very different feeling? Sometimes, it is true, the history of the individual, as known to others or to himself affords an explanation of the phenomenon, but oftener its cause is lost in the void of forgotten experiences.

Again, the idea associated with a feeling may become lost or mutilated to insignificance, while the feeling is ever ready to respond as a reaction to the sort of stimulus that first aroused it.

The elementary phenomena seem to be these, i. e., feelings or emotions are primarily the results of sensations. They lead to the creature's efforts to continue in the same momentary environment or to escape from it, according as the feeling is pleasant or the reverse, or perhaps the sensations are too weak to provoke action. There are always a greater or less number of sensations associated with the one that stands out as determining the feeling. The perceptions that arise from the whole group of sensations get tied together by mere simultaneity of origin as do the various concepts resulting from them, any one of which may then be sufficient, when later entering the mind, to call up one or all of the rest, or without so doing, so far as consciousness is aware, may awaken the associated feelings.

"If we start," says James, "from the frog's spinal cord and reason by continuity saying, as that acts so intelligently, though unconscious, so the higher centers, though conscious may have the intelligence they show quite as mechanically based; we are immediately met by the exact counter argument from continuity," i. e., starting from the hemispheres, "as these owe their intelligence to the consciousness which we know to be there, so the intelligence of

the spinal cord's acts must be due to the invisible [unfelt?] presence there of a consciousness lower in degree."

The error here lies in assuming the very thing to be determined, i. e., that consciousness is a cause of intelligence.

"All arguments from continuity," continues James, "work in two ways: you can either level up or level down by their means. And it is clear that such arguments as these can eat each other up to all eternity."

Why not accept the truth of both arguments, and reconcile their apparent inconsistency by avoiding the quite gratuitous assumption that consciousness has any causal efficacy whatever? The facts then appear to be that the various parts of the nervous system are capable of intelligent action in their several spheres of influence and that in the hemispheres this action may be accompanied by consciousness. The action need not, in any case, be stigmatized by the adjective "mechanical," which has acquired a derogatory sense, and is besides misleading. It is enough to say "reflex," meaning responsive to stimuli such as we find to affect nervous organisms.

We know not how any brain activity gives rise to thought, or, indeed, what thought is, but we need not assume what we do not know and what may be false, i. e., that our consciousness of an idea or of a thought is an agent in bringing about such an activity. We do know that our brains are stimulated and this because of the feelings that we experience. Conscious of these, we may at the same time become conscious of some idea that has become associated with such feelings by former experiences. For we know that the reaction of our nervous system to stimuli takes place quite independently of any ideas that may accompany them.

But may not the ideas have the power to reverse the process, as a phonograph reproduces the sounds that made its "records"? May not the ideas awaken the sensations and feelings that produced them, or were at least intimately associated with them? Nay may not ideas become the sources of emotions *of a kind* that tend to produce such ideas? It would seem so. The action and reaction of the elements of our mental life is so intricate and so rapid that it would seem to be impossible to determine the initial element in any group of activities. When we are in a quiescent mood, innumerable ideas flit into our stream of thought, whether we are awake or asleep. Perhaps one of these is that of a duty to be fulfilled, and we seek to fulfill it, or of a pleasure to be obtained and we set about securing it. But the ideas may enter yet give rise to no tendency to realize them

in action. It would seem as if, after all, impulses must be sources of action. And again, it may happen that before we can obey the call to action that seems to be aroused by an idea, our tendency to do so is inhibited by an emotion that may not, at least at first, be accompanied by any conscious idea. Here, however, we seem to be thrown back upon some subconscious idea, awakened by association with that in evidence, which gives rise to the inhibitory impulse. If the opposing impulses be nearly equal in strength, the struggle between them is likely to awaken an abundance of ideas. But I should say that the contest is not between the ideas, but between the impulses. And many such take place without revealing to consciousness the ideas with which they are associated. We even experience lively vacillation in regard to conduct which no reasoning, i. e., no ideas consciously therewith associated, seems to have any power to settle. We do not know which course to pursue and simply await the issue of the conflict. It is in prolonged struggles of this kind that we become conscious of many ideas associated with each impulse concerned. It is much as if either side tried to draw to its assistance every notion that experience furnished, yet, when all is done, one of the impulses prevails, in spite of the plausible array of ideas opposing its own ideas of which we are conscious. Indeed the sudden advent of a new impulse may cut the gordian knot of the conflicting impulses and decide our action, without awakening the ghost of an idea. We stand like the spectators of a combat between two nearly submerged monsters of the deep, seeing from time to time exposed to view a fin, a tail, a head, a back, a side, a belly, but never an organ or part whose condition of wholeness or hurt might give some indication of how the fight is progressing.

Where we are conscious of a struggle of contending impulses, we seldom know what particular stimuli called them into action, even though we recognize them as familiar elements in our personality, unless we can refer them, or one or more of them, to the influence of some object or idea of which we have presently become aware. And we never feel sure, after a decision of one of our mental conflicts, that it is due to the impulse whose associated ideas are most vivid in our consciousness at that moment. We know that any decision would draw to itself its kindred notions, i. e., clothe itself in becoming considerations. We also know that we are often conscious of an effort to obscure the real impulse that led to the decision, by filling the thoughts with other considerations that seem plausible reasons for it. And we are fully aware that this effort

obeys an impulse from below consciousness, quite involuntary, in fact. "Consciousness," says James, "is at all times primarily a selecting agency. Whether we take it in the lowest sphere of sense or in the highest of intellection, we find it always doing one thing, choosing one out of several of the materials so presented to its notice, emphasizing and accentuating that and suppressing as far as possible all the rest."

For this phraseology I venture to substitute the following, as more accurately descriptive of what takes place.

There is within us at all times a selective power. Whether the matter to be dealt with is in the lowest sphere of sense or in the highest of intellection, we find this power or regulator doing one thing, choosing one out of several or more materials so presented to its notice, etc.

In short, "the activity of consciousness" is an illusion, or a duplication in expression of the single fact that we are conscious of activity.

We can trace something similar to this consciousness in the lower animals, and must regard them as probably conscious of some part of the intelligent action which goes on in their organisms, though language is lacking them to express their state of mind.

Indeed is not this intelligent action precisely what James had in mind in the passage last quoted, under the name of *consciousness*? Is it not "intelligence" that is always doing one thing, etc., and only gradually developing *consciousness*, i. e., awareness of the activities going on in the neural substance?

Animals show character, personality, habits, good and bad, and are susceptible of being trained. They dream, they have their likes and dislikes, of persons or of other animals, even of their own kind, their affections and their griefs.

Most of us, on reflection, are conscious in regard to our recent activities that they were quite free from any consciousness of ourselves. They went on automatically or with moderate attention to surrounding circumstances, attention of which we were unconscious. Indeed, we often carry on simultaneously, two or more lines of activity, like walking and talking, and may pay so little attention to either as to remember even immediately afterwards very little concerning it. Yet each had been efficiently directed by our organism. No problem, however intricate, no mental creation, of music, of literature or of other construction, however elaborate, but has depended substantially as James, in effect, declares, upon unconscious

cerebral action. Our consciousness furnishes neither guidance nor material for this action, but is simply awareness of its results, and, to a limited extent of the interplay of the impulses from which they spring.

One of James's arguments for the efficacy of consciousness is based on a conception of the brain as an organ of highly uncertain equilibrium, likely to function at haphazard upon the slightest impulse, a "hair-trigger organization," from which one cannot "reasonably expect any certain pursuance of useful lines of reaction, such as the few and fatally determined performances of the lower centers constitute [sic] within their narrow sphere." And, "The performances of a high brain are like dice thrown forever on a table. Unless they are loaded, what chance is there that the highest number will turn up oftener than the lowest?"

And he asks whether conscience can *load the dice*, that is bring pressure to bear in favor of the most permanent interests of the brain's owner. He says that is what consciousness *seems* to do. He is undoubtedly right when he says, "Consciousness is only intense when nerve-processes are hesitant. Where indecision is great—consciousness is agonizingly intense."

But speaking, as always in this paper, for myself, these times of intense consciousness are times when not only am I not conscious of any power to decide, but am conscious that I am at the mercy of the forces that are deciding, or trying, to decide, and am awaiting their decision. Besides, it is very evident that the brain decides, and rightly decides, many matters that surely do not come within the narrow sphere of the lower centers, since they require more than mere reflex action to the customary stimuli, yet it does not trouble consciousness with such matters. Which means merely that numerous actions that have to be learned end by becoming automatic, so to speak, even though requiring intellectual guidance, e. g., speaking, writing, reading. In such activities we are usually quite unconscious of the directive efforts that secure appropriate performance and only infer them from the results. Our desires seem directly realized without more conscious effort than in walking. Consciousness of effort is not the same as effort of consciousness, as Mr. James would argue it is.

Mr. James finds a guiding function in consciousness in cases where the functions of missing parts of the brain are taken up by the parts that remain.

But if differentiation of function in fundamentally identical tissues, in obedience to the demands of the organism be the law of its development, there seems to be no difficulty in supposing this law to be manifested in the part of the brain that survives the injury. This would require no different control or direction from that under which the organism originally acquired its powers, and Mr. James does not assert that this was by means of consciousness.

Let us examine some of the manifestations of consciousness. When we undertake to learn any set of movements, like those of a dance, of the fingers in playing on a musical instrument, or of the organs of speech for pronouncing a foreign language, we are conscious of efforts to bring about certain definite results. In most cases we do not succeed in our first attempt. We proceed by successive trials, and these are conducted by a process of which we are but imperfectly conscious. A striking example of this process is afforded by learning to ride on a bicycle, which is quite comparable to the efforts of a child in learning to stand and to walk. We simply keep trying, that is, we persist in offering to our subconscious selves the opportunity to adjust our muscles so as to maintain the balance of our bodies and of the wheel. How this is accomplished is forever secured from discovery, since it never emerges into consciousness. When practice has enabled us to ride with ease, we have so far lost consciousness of even the tentative movements that accompanied our learning, that we could not, if we would, reproduce them. They have been lost beyond possibility of conscious recall, merged in the completed fashion of movement. So, we may presume, were developed the necessary movements of the earliest living organisms, by efforts to maintain their existence, and in like manner these once become habitual, the steps by which they were formed lapsed into oblivion. Hence we are normally unconscious of the processes concerned in the digestion of our food, of our respiration, of the circulation of our blood, etc. When we do become conscious of such operations, we know that we are victims of some malady or at least of some disturbance of our ordinary balance of bodily functions. Thus pain or discomfort becomes a warning of trouble that must be met by appropriate action.

But let us take a case in which consciousness is extremely alive, and which, according to James's idea, as expressed in several of the above quotations, ought to exhibit the guidance and selective emphasis of that "organ," so desirable for the accomplishment of the purpose in hand. Take an intricate problem in mathematics. What

emphasis or guidance are we conscious of being able consciously to give or are we conscious of giving? We are aware of holding the attention to certain regions of knowledge within which we suppose the elements will be found that should lead to the solution. Beyond this, we may be conscious of strong efforts to evolve the desired result, but of no details of the activity aroused.

The study of consciousness seems to call for a consideration not of the kinds of idea that may figure in it, for we know of none that is not capable of sometimes being there present, except those concerned with purely physical functions, but rather of the circumstances under which ideas in general are extruded, as it were, from the unconscious into our awareness. Under an external stimulus, we may be induced to perform actions when the stimulus is too weak to attract our attention. And these actions may themselves fail to divert our attention from the subject of our thought. A familiar instance of this is our avoidance, while walking in deep reflection, of small obstacles or unclean footing in our pathway. On a more extensive scale, the same relation of cause and effect may be seen in the movements of a somnambulist. But at its extreme development, *this* sort of consciousness may indicate that the organism has emphasized a set of impulses and ideas so different from those usually in control as to constitute a new personality unknown to the normal self. There may be several such personalities successively manifested, in the same individual, more or less unknown to each other, but totally unknown to the normal self.

The late William Morris, in his *News from Nowhere*, has not belied psychological truth, in making his tale an example of a dream so vivid that the dreamer seems to himself to be awake but in a different world from that in which his life has been passed.

I myself have experienced, in brief form, this sort of dream, accompanied by a skeptical opinion of its reality. Some mystics have maintained that our ordinary life is but a dream, from which, at death, we shall awake in the real world.

I would suggest a rude scale of degrees of awareness, placing at the bottom awareness of conditions of the environment and their relation to the prime needs of the organism, whose intelligence develops by "trial and error," the capacity to utilize these for its purposes. Next above this degree would come that in which the organism is capable of valuating alternatives and choosing the one best suited to its interests. Here, perhaps, may be placed the beginning of struggles between impulses, which awaken consciousness.

But Mr. James adduces *pleasures*, which are normal to most beneficial experiences, and *displeasures* or *pains*, which are concomitants of most detrimental influences, as showing the causal efficacy of consciousness. It is true he says that Spencer and others have suggested that this is due to natural selection, since that would weed out organisms that enjoyed fundamentally noxious experiences. "But," says James, "if pleasures and pains have no efficacy, one does not see (without some such *a priori* rational harmony as would be scouted by the 'scientific' champions of the automaton theory) why the most noxious acts, such as burning, might not give thrills of delight, and the most necessary ones, such as breathing, cause agony."

The reply is that pleasures and pains of which we are conscious are only extreme degrees of sensations of the organism which, usually without our consciousness of them, do guide it in its conduct toward its environment. And so far from their being sole determinants of that conduct, we are often aware of other impulses so strong as to decide to action the reverse of pleasant or even quite painful, though perhaps not disturbing vital processes.

Let me go back to one of the passages from James quoted near the beginning of this paper, the one where he contrasts "brain action" and "conscious action." How does he contrive to separate the latter from the former, with a view to this contrasting? How can there be conscious action, or better, consciousness of action, that is not brain action?

But how about free will? Are we not conscious of a force by which we exercise choice, by which we resist temptation, by which we maintain courses of conduct? Surely we choose, resist, persist. Consciousness does not deceive us. No, consciousness does not deceive us. We do choose, resist, persist. But the *we* that does so is far more than what we are conscious of. It is common experience that we wonder how we came to act thus or thus. Which is simply another expression of the fact that the process that brought about the action has not emerged into our consciousness. But going back as far as we can in any case of willing, we are unable to arrive at the cause why at the particular instant when we became conscious of it we exercised that power or why we became conscious of the exercise. It has become so habitual to us that we accept it as the ultimate fact. But the least examination would show us that there is always something behind it, lost in our subconsciousness. We even find ourselves speculating upon it, as if another person had acted, as

in fact is the case—i. e., another than the person of whom we are for the moment conscious. And this fact constitutes the reason why the speculating itself goes on, the section of brain activity to which it belongs not having become cognizant of that which produced or prompted the act of which we were conscious. That act was in fact due to “cerebral motions of which in themselves we are entirely without knowledge”—James, as above quoted.

It is ancient knowledge that a man may see that a certain course of action is best, yet act deliberately otherwise:

Video meliora proboque,

Deteriora sequor.

Why? He is conscious only of a force too powerful to be overcome by the view of the case of which he is also conscious. A little reflection will give the true explanation. We act in general as habit dictates, so far as, in each case, any habit is available. Any general principle of action that we know asserts itself only so far as habit has involved its employment. Such habits as contravene it must be regarded as having been formed before its applicability was appreciated, or under circumstances that did not strongly call for its exercise; and can be modified, if at all, only by a strong stimulus from without. Such a stimulus may be the presence of some desirable object or of some danger to be avoided. The stimulus may act directly upon the habit or mediately through the ideas that closely underlie it. And the latter is the usual case. We acquire the ways of a particular social group by living with it and by imitating them. We might learn them without acquiring them, and that is often the case. It is plain that *doing* is essential to the establishment in our conduct of any principle of action.

As Socrates said, if anybody wishes to appear to be a good flute-player, he must make himself such in fact. A man may be conscious of a wish to do many a thing, but may find that, for undefined reasons, the self that *is* he, does not move in the direction that would satisfy the wish. The impulse not to do so has subconsciously gathered to itself all the reasons that inhibit the contemplated action, and by the same token has inhibited or nullified all notions contravening itself. Hence the impotence of casually awakened wishes. They float into consciousness and dissolve into oblivion, as evanescent as the waves with which a light breeze ruffles the surface of a lake.

Mr. James discusses the possibility of consciousness helping “other” and defective “organs,” and it is quite conceivable that we should *become conscious* of help being rendered to weak organs by

better developed parts of our organism, or, better, of efforts on the part of that organism to marshal its resources for working out its purposes. Such efforts are so much a matter of routine in human actions, that most of them never come into our consciousness. But are these "efforts to marshal," etc? May they not be conceived to be more or less extensive reactions of the cerebral elements according to the character of the present stimuli, i. e., their strength, their more or less direct associations with previous experiences and the circumstances that have limited or extended the development of associations with those experiences? We know very well the extent of such brain activities is in the closest relation to the education or other conditions of life of the individual. But again, the possibilities of such reactions must become multiplied in more than geometric proportion, as the range of experience enlarges, especially if the individual concerned is possessed of what is termed "a lively imagination." The resulting combinations must far exceed the demands of the individual's life, and often, therefore, fail to have any practical relation with his conduct. For that is more strictly controlled by habits formed before many of the principles that might seem proper to control it had found any definite shape in his mind—even subconsciously.

It sums down to *this*, that the soul of which we are conscious is to the elements in our consciousness as Kant's *Ding an sich*, absolute matter or substance, so-called, is to the qualities, such as hardness, shape, color, etc., by which alone we are aware of its existence. *Self* and *matter* are simply forms of speech, abstract nouns, to express collectively the groups of elements constituting the one and the other so far as we are conscious of them.

As, again, James says, *Ibid.*, p. 401, "If the passing thought be the directly verifiable existent which no school has hitherto doubted it to be, then that thought is itself the thinker, and psychology need not look beyond."

But I would have psychology look beyond, that is, look to the far more numerous elements and processes beneath consciousness and the "passing thought," if it would reach the real thinker that *is* the thought. There lies the home of the personality, the domain where it rules, were it attains to such freedom of will as is possible to it, and whence it issues its commands to the bodily functions and activities, as well as to the "stream of thought." There is the secret laboratory of life, of character, of opinion, of all we are for ourselves and for our world.