

23 February 1976

READING 4

DUALITY AND TRINITY

PART 1. DUALITY

In the papers you have been having we have tried to show that Duality – thinking in opposites – is perhaps the chief obstacle to Self-Realization. Mr. Ouspensky spent years trying to resolve the problem in his own way and for fifteen years the Shankaracharya has been trying to get us to understand how his great tradition of Advaita (non-dualism) deals with the matter.

In this country interest seems to have been first aroused by the mathematician C.H. Hinton, who in 1888 first published his *Scientific Romances* which made a great impression on Ouspensky (amongst others) when he was writing *Tertium Organum*. It is well worth going back to the original description by Hinton in two chapters of that book 'A picture of our Universe' and 'Casting out the Self', which has a new relevance just now in view of the recent evidence of a dual construction of our brains – the right and left hemispheres.

It seems to me that the subject of higher space is becoming felt as serious, and fraught with much that is of the deepest interest, not only as a scientific problem, but in other ways also... and I propose, that without ignoring the real importance of the subject, we should cast aside any tension from our minds, and look at it in a light and easy manner. With this object in view let us contemplate a certain story which bears on our problem.

It is said that once in a certain region of Ireland there took place a curious contest. For in Kilkenny there were two cats so alike in size, vigour, determination, and prowess, that when fighting they so clawed, scratched, bit, and finally devoured each other, that nothing was left of either of them save the tail.

Now, on reflecting on this story, it becomes obvious that it originated when looking-glasses were first imported into Ireland from Italy. For when an Irishman sees for the first time anything new, he always describes it in an unexpected and yet genial and interesting manner. Moreover, we all know what contentious fellows they are, and how all their thoughts run on fighting. And I think, if we put this problem to ourselves, how by bringing in fighting to describe a looking-glass, we shall see that the story of the Kilkenny cats is the only possible solution. For consider how it evidently arose. Depositing his favourite shillaly in a corner, the massively-built Irishman, to whom the possession was a novelty, saw reflected in his looking-glass the image of his favourite cat... point for point they were alike. 'Begorra if I know which of the two would win!' he ejaculates. The combat becomes real to him, and the story of the Kilkenny cats is made.

(From a visit I myself once made to Kilkenny, I can guess that such creative imagination could have been assisted by a few drinks of poteen.)

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Hinton proceeds to illustrate the story by twisting a spill round a glass rod in front of a mirror, and then to investigate many scientific examples of this general law, that:

There are such things as twists (now called 'Torsions'). Suppose by some means to every twist there is produced its image twist. These two, the twist and its image may exist separately; but suppose that whenever a twist is produced, its image twist is also

produced, and these two, when put together, annihilate each other... when a glass rod is rubbed with silk it becomes excited, its state is different for it manifests new properties such as that of attracting light bodies, giving off a glow of light etc. The silk also with which it was rubbed manifests similar properties – and yet there is a difference for the electricity is of different kinds, positive and negative and if the electricity of the silk and of the glass be brought together, all electrical effect disappears; they become glass and silk in an ordinary condition.

We need not continue with Hinton's example for since that time physics and chemistry have been full of them – e.g. the constitution of the atom (positive proton and negative electrons where the problem was resolved by the discovery of the neutron), matter and anti-matter, the double helix of the DNA molecule etc., etc. But most important to us is the fact that current western psychology is beginning to realise that of the two halves of the brain one is the mirror image of the other; that every 'twist' or 'cycle' set up in one hemisphere produces an opposite twist in the other, and that the two together annihilate each other.

The apparently universal law that 'to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction', has often set up a search by inspired men with a religious or philosophical interest for a 'third force' which shall resolve that stagnation and create a new event. Hence the insistence in all religions on the idea of 'Trinity in Unity'; hence also the three Gunas of Indian philosophy and of the 'Law of Three Forces' in our own Western system.

PART 2. TRINITY

Superficially it may look impossible to reconcile Mr. Ouspensky's teaching on the 'Six Triads as showing the Activities of Man' with the Shankaracharya's teaching on Gunas which agrees with Chapter 14 of the *Gita*. But this apparent conflict can be resolved by some well-based current knowledge of the human nervous system combined with self-observation and adequate meditation.

At this week's large Monday meeting we are trying to demonstrate the beginning of this on the screen; and subsequent papers will depend on your interest and our mutual understanding. It is worth carrying the idea of a 'third element, which can be present to resolve a particular pair of opposing forces' in your mind, whatever you happen to be reading. The Gospels are full of such examples. For now you might care to hear a question and part of an answer to show how practical is the application of the three Gunas in the Shankaracharya's hands.

A. You have spoken of levels of meditation; are these related to a person's position on the ladder?

S. Very much so, yes. But Gunas also play an important role. The Gunas are in all manifested things; people have predominant combinations of Gunas, and events and places also. So there is always the possibility that the influence of a certain preponderant Guna in a person or place will change the level of meditation. A man with more Sattva will have better meditation, whereas people with Rajas will have thoughts visiting them, and those with Tamas will find a nice corner to sleep in!

(Record, 4 November 1967)

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