

In Days' Dreaming

The experience started out early, with vestments, movement and liturgical processions, then through recordings of Beethoven—the late symphony and sonatas, quartets and *Missa*. Then you heard its name, *aesthetic experience*, and could inquire & learn about it.

In college you once asked a teacher if it's possible that when a person sees one beauty, the person sees all beauty;

so, Jacques Maritain entered: "The object of Poetry is the intercommunion of all things among themselves and with the subject they reveal to itself, in that spiritual flux whence existence derives."

Then you read plate 14 in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and later heard Quantum Physics' conclusion that two subatomic particles, once entangled, react to each other even when separated by an entire universe.

These urged you to think that, when you touch some thing with your hand, your touch might reach out to and in fact could touch everything,

and when you taste or smell some thing, the act could go on to all things having taste or odor,

and that when you hear late Beethoven, all his works are physically present to your ear.

Though not explainable by Blake's mythical characters, not even by Urizen, it must be what Blake intends when he says of his Eye that "I look thro it & not with it."

Lurking here was a realizing that there may be no such thing as a solid. And further, that an everpresent tendency to interpret reality dualistically has been seriously misleading—

for, having made divisions into body & mind and visible & invisible and here & there, so that we might easily examine ideas & come to conclusions—we could not yet realize that the universe itself is first & foremost one reality, and that each person is and acts as a single whole because each of us is just like the universe, whole and one.

Humanism in the West seems to have struggled long with dualistic thinking, taking its first lead from the shock-moment-split between life & death.

But reality is *one*, not in itself divisible, and that one is *consciousness*...

A simple and rich dream slowly ekes out in daytime...

That the principle of Evolution must underlie *all* reality—be not only within life on our Earth, but as well among the uncountable planets, stars, and galaxies in their emerging from and relating to each other. (Too beautiful not to be true.)

That the entire Cosmos is made up of consciousness. That atoms are composed not of discrete particles (for there'd be nothing solid), but of knots or concentrations of consciousness. And that one might, put to the test, dare an attempt to describe *consciousness*...

—As a child, walking down the street, you suddenly wonder that not only are you walking, but *you are aware of yourself walking*.

—If you sing a melody so the notes are not disparate but yield a whole, as if in a single breath, you've made a new thing: you placed the sounds of your timbre and dynamic in *an ordering to one another* that had never before existed. You, and I who heard you, experienced the *withinness* there—were *conscious* of it.

Consciousness is the recognizing of withinness.

Withinness is *a valuation of mind* that many things constitute a one.

Consciousness is recognition of its own withinness.

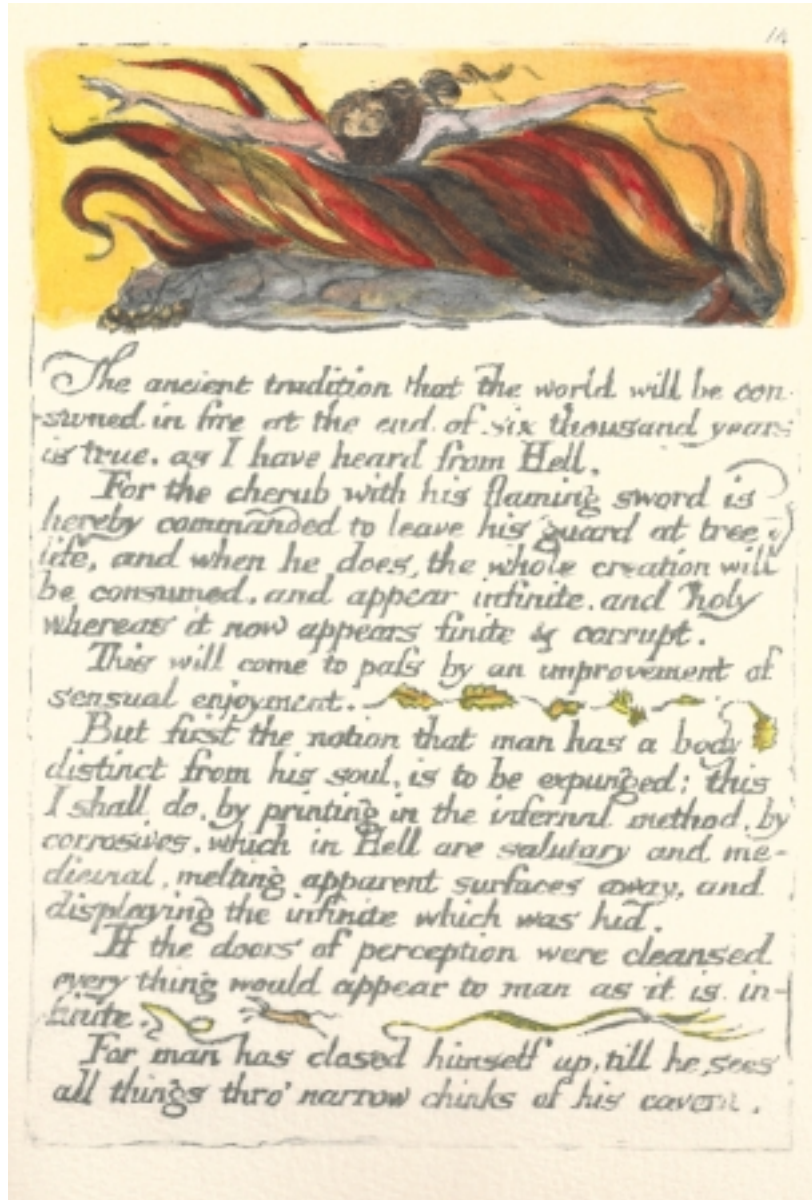
—Every thing is made up of consciousness, so we rightly speak of the primacy of mind in nature and say that Idealism is the logical philosophy of world.

—Consciousness would be an ever-new state that is in itself free of time & space, here & there, up & down. A nexus between visible world & invisible mind.

—Because consciousness is not local, with proper and natural self-adjusting we can experience things not just locally *with* our senses, but *through* them to elsewhere, and physically.

Such a dream-vision seems to be friendly with Herakleitos' teaching, "All things are filled with gods." Today, he might be sure to add that we need the

humility and courage to acknowledge that we humans alone are responsible for what happens to us: that there is no superlative Father or Mother, only our selves, with the always-evolving *philosophia perennis* to afford us meaning. —That science and mathematics give us enough cause for profound æsthetic experience and attendant awe. —For a *Sursum corda!* that with humility does not need any object, but leaves us at death fulfilled, poised silent within the oneness of which we are integral portion.



The Dream's Exception

An apex of *evolving consciousness*, we exercise it through knowing, through watching ourselves knowing, & through knowing others in terms of our selves. To produce such richness, more complex manners of procreating were needed. Binary fission, budding, or fragmentation would not do—but, over millenia, there developed a new, richly active sort of *pollination*: in a lengthy evolutive leap came male & female, with desire—*evolving consciousness furthering itself* in venture and reception, in seeking and delectating.

Feminine and masculine principles bear living traces of each other, since—as Paschal said of grace—You could not seek me unless you had already found me. Each is alive to the light or shadow of the other, a cosmic mystery calling within deepest selves: An ideal sexual company between two persons long sought after, its sufficiency and import as yet not fully understood or realized.

This manner of reproduction, identical throughout the world, furthered the temptation to a philosophical dualism that has led much of humanity astray. In the West, Aristotle's matter & form (potency/act) came to be understood as body and soul—as if they were separable principles! It has to be a misinterpretation of the ancient philosopher, and it's proven disastrous in the history of human thinking and living.

If Blake is right—If the doors of perception were cleansed, every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.—he also told us how to begin: This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

I'm convinced that the cramped and clamped linking of sexual pleasure with sin/wrongdoing by Jerome and Augustine, with its wholesale adoption by Christianity, has been and remains one of the nightmares of Western culture. Ethics belongs to philosophy, it's home is not in religion. The role of churches, after assiduously scouring their philosophical bases, is to encourage awe and thanksgiving, and the wisdom of community.

As sexual sinfulness has been a temptation for churches, so the enshrining of reason has tempted the schools. In *both* schools and churches, reason has reigned within knowledge, obscuring the essential oneness of human strength. Reasoning, absent beauty, is not human knowing.



Songs of Innocence, plate 23 (partial), Kings College

Life is a Dream

that Consciousness isn't just an activity: it is withinness itself, the wholeness, the present *one*. The entire cosmos, animate and inanimate, is conscious.

A lone rock after very many years showed a crease left by drips of water—had taken them in, knew them. Proud cat Jenever knew that *he* was. Your arm knows what's good for it. My mind struggles with this paragraph. A human has all the knowing-types of rock, cat, arm, and reason. We take pride at our capacity for step-by-step empirical knowledge, and even define ourselves as rational animals. In my dream, however, reason is a detour within the path of the evolving consciousness whose concentrations had formed our bodies and now exerts power to continue the evolutive path towards **felt** knowledge. —To beauty, the sight of “the intercommunion of all things among themselves and with the subject they reveal to itself.” To the exercise of *integral* knowing, the æsthetic experience.

The similarity between the words *aesthetics* and *ethics* leads me to search for a connection between how an artist organizes things and the ordering of one's behavior. Followers of the ancient Greeks Pythagoras and Socrates held that a true love of beauty has as its object good conduct and the right pursuit of knowledge. I'd say that, while "rational animal" may *define* us, "aesthetic animal" correctly *describes* the capacity for who we really are or can be.

It might be useful to have a term for consistently living inside unknowable beauty. *Mysticism* might do, so long as it holds no whiff of the supernatural, which is not needed to describe the awful wonder of the cosmos, lest we split reality without necessity: for reality is single consciousness, one and entire, terrible and sublime.

The rabbi Jesus didn't want any higher reality: he had once dismissed an accusation of blasphemy by quoting from Psalm 82: "You too are gods, sons of the most high, all of you." In a short life he taught how to live, die, and grow into unbound consciousness. Thus the late theologian Uta Ranke-Heinemann in 1992 wrote

The death and Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus
happened in a single instant.

Of our death & resurrection, in 1891 Henry Bennet Brewster had written:

Now my struggle is over; the time has come and my choice is made. I abandon to destruction the unity of which I am conscious; I take refuge in the lastingness of its elements. I bid farewell for ever to the transient meeting of eternal guests [my faculties] who had gathered here for an hour; they are taking leave of one another and never perhaps throughout the course of ages will they meet again, all of them and none but they, under the same roof. I hear them overhead moving to depart, and the sound of their several footfalls quivers through me in sweet bitter shudders. I hear the flight of the divine vultures that bear away my substance shred by shred; the wind of their wings is as ice on my forehead and from I know not where wells into my eyes the tranquil glory of a

boundless sunset. What are they waiting for, the departing guests? Only a word that shall set them free. Go, then; pass on, immortal ones. And, behold, I burst the bonds that pent you up within me, I disband myself and travel on for ever in your scattered paths. Wheresoever you are, there shall I be. I survive in you. I set my ineffaceable stamp upon the womb of time. I am whatever I have felt, and what I have felt is what some must ever feel. For years I have been conning my lesson, learning to say: not me, not mine; ashamed both of sorrow and of joy till they slowly were lifted from within me and stretched overhead, endless and unchangeable as the milky way whose soft light descends indifferently on all men from generation to generation. My hopes have become an heirloom of the centuries which it is my turn to take care of; my thoughts are here on deposit for a little while; they have been passed round since the dawn of time and someone else will have charge of them to-morrow; the laughter I have laughed rose in the bulrushes of yore and mingled with the sound of the syrinx; the kisses that have wandered to my lips will never grow cold; no hearts but mine shall ever ache and leap. My passions are the tingling blood of mankind. Now someone says to me: It is well so far; taste also the death. Then let there be banners and music: this is no leaving-taking; I am not even going home. I thank you, days of hope and pride; I thank you, lamentable solitude, and you, shades of those that loved me. I sorrow with you, grieving ones, and melt with you, O fond ones. I triumph with those who vanquish & I rest with those who are dead. I descend to my fathers & return again for ever. I have nothing that is mine but a name, and I bow down in my dream of a day to the life eternal. I am the joy and the sorrow, the mirth and the pride: the love, the silence, and the song. I am the thought. I am the soul. I am the home.

Life is a Dream that consciousness, the beginning & the means of everything we know, is also our end with all in all.



Lisa Meitner was one of the seven originators of the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics in the late 1920s. All seven were teachers—to a worldview that may prove the Copernican Revolution to have been but a breath.

to an *ethical* metaphysics

It would seem that belief in a personal Creator-God no longer satisfies us as the basis for all we know about the universe and about ourselves. This is said at first sadly, since the belief has proven comforting, and has inspired strong beauty in poetry & prose, in music and dance and in all visual arts. But ethical teachings based upon at least 4,000 years of monotheism in the West have not, *after all this time*, even begun to excise war and inequality and unjust pain & psychological trauma from our midst (while believers all too frequently cause these ills, or tolerate or side with autocracies that promote them).

We desperately need a metaphysics that encourages all that we are able to achieve, so our spirits might the more strongly be motivated to move forward.

We might exchange the beauty/warmth of a supernal father-creator
for the awe-filled beauty of omni-present *consciousness*,
feel its inherent comfort within us,
and begin to act evolutively.

If someone were to ask what we hold to be our most valuable asset, would we not have to respond, Consciousness? —But *consciousness* is nothing less than the creative virtue in the withinness of the entire expanding universe, limitless & unbound to our understanding. What arms could be more Present closely and thrillingly to enfold us with comfort and to inspire us to valuable act?

As evolving into the human species depended upon the sexual joining of individuals, so evolution itself operates through us in *our* joining together in groups and nations. Since we have free will, very much depends upon the fairness and kindness of the majority of individuals toward one another.

A new ethics would not be based on some perfect other, but rather on the great withinness that we are creatively growing—upon the consciousness that, at each moment, we welcome to evolve.

The ethics would be founded on the understanding that we are all equal. So the place to begin, and perhaps end, would be with that understanding.

In the presence of the West's inequal religions and unbeautiful schooling, we may search for ethical principles deeply hidden within our own consciences—not rules nor laws, but mind-sets *inspired by Eastern contemplative life...*

Every person & thing is more a part of evolving consciousness than it is its self.

This is a shared honor that cries to be recognized in our selves and in every person and thing we encounter.

The right expression in all things is awe and thanksgiving, & they beget love.

Any competition that causes any sort of anger is absent value & hinders love.

To the extent that a state of being or action furthers evolving consciousness, it is of value & therefore just; to the extent to which it hinders, it is absent value.

Each person can care for and joy in every single action as it is being performed, & this consciousness is of more intrinsic value than the results of those actions.

It is of value always to do the best one is able to do, and then never look back (which is a waste of time and effort) and never regret (for that is of no use).

It is of value always to be open.

It is of value always to accept what now is or must happen.

It is of great value always to realize that one's self, while essentially bearing both feminine and masculine principles, is by its nature indivisible.

The basic, indispensable unit in any society today remains the aesthetically-thinking individual person.

It may someday be helpful to enumerate separate ethical problems with their possible solutions—but what's important now are the aesthetic-formed consciences of individuals. LGBT rights, and the constitutional right to abortion, just for examples, wouldn't be problematic difficulties for citizens (or Justices) formed in a classless society that is sensitive to the workings of evolution.

By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night.

afterword

The late-18th/early 19th-century birth of Romanticism presaged the slow awakening of our species to the independence of the cosmos and the awareness of our role in its evolving. Hölderlin, Blake, Beethoven & the spirits of their Beloveds, confronted with the non-locality of Quantum Mechanics, would have murmured Of course, what would you have expected? Isn't that the sort of thing we've been saying to you all along?

St. Peter's Citicorp, underlooking mid-Manhattan's tall office buildings, offered a concert place that was like a megaphone: little in, little out, magnified. But once, a thin old lady sat down at the piano and glory came out—from her mind through the keys to fill the entire space. A woman who saw the withinness of a gathering of notes shared that sight with us, and consciousness was born inside all present who were openhearted to it. Consciousness, the newly felt experiencing of withinness, is by its nature always actively creative.

It gives birth all the time—to stars, to earth's varied species, to individual human beings and to their ideas, to the correction of ideas. To such ideas as potency & act. And now, to the correction of that idea—through Romanticism begun two centuries ago, its effects still continuing.

There is no up and down, no body and mind, no creator and creature, no life and death, not even pain in the light of what is abuilding.

A very infirm old brother long ago taught that one can only love a mystery. Well, the ever-creating conscious moment—there now for all to recognize, experience and live—is a beauty worth the devotion of each one's lifetime.

R John Blackley 2023

MARITAIN (WITH RAÏSSA): *THE SITUATION OF POETRY*; NEW YORK, 1955, P 79 [AND *CREATIVE INTUITION IN ART & POETRY*].
EDGAR W. WILLIAMS: *ON THE NATURE OF ART AND THE NATURE OF REALITY: A LAST LECTURE*, POWERPOINT, c. 2005.
PSALM 82: 6 & JOHN 10: 34. RANKE-HEINEMANN: *PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS*; TRANSLATED 1994, P 134.
BREWSTER: *THE PRISON: A DIALOGUE*, WITH MEMOIR BY ETHEL SMITH; LONDON/NORWICH, c. 1931, PP 152-154.
MEITNER: ATOMICARCHIVE.COM/BIO. JAMES AGEE: *KNOXVILLE, SUMMER 1915*, WITH *A DEATH IN THE FAMILY*, 1938, 1956.
ROBERT NADEAU & MENAS KAFATOS: *THE NON-LOCAL UNIVERSE: THE NEW PHYSICS AND MATTERS OF THE MIND*, 1999.