

## *Heart and Mind—Two Modes of Human Perception*

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— 1 —

“Heart and Mind, what an enigma!”

These, if I rightly remember, were the last words uttered by the hero-comedian in Mr. Chaplin's recent drama “Limelight”. Among the numberless cinematographic films distributed to the public in the course of every year, but very few move, and still fewer entertain you. And this “Limelight” was one of the rarest ones that could at once move and entertain you in the deepest and highest sense of the words;— a live picture of artistic perfection, if it is not a kind of blasphemy for us to talk about “perfection” at all. But here I am not intending to make myself a bore with my dull homage of its wonders.

Heart and Mind,— harmoniously coexistent in an individual character as they are loosely taken to be, they respectively represent two modes of mental function so distinctly remote from each other that it often becomes a matter of vital importance for us to make a clear recognition of their respective difference.

The function of Mind is to reason, to judge. Its field is characterized by two remarkable principles,— the conscious superiority of the subject to the object, and the predominance of the known and experienced past on the unknown and unexperienced future.

In the field of reasoning and judging, the presiding character is not the object, that which is to be reasoned about or judged, but the subject, the mind who reasons or judges. Under the stern commandment of this presiding subject the defenseless objects are not allowed to have any positive say. Only the subject keeps the divine right to decide what countenance, among all the probable rest, they are to assume. His is the freedom to choose what part of them he likes to high estimation, and to leave what part of them he likes to cold oblivion.

Of course there must be some sound ground (criterion) justifying this dictatorship of the subject, and for this, when we are in the act of reasoning and judging, we turn upon our knowledge ... the heap of notions heretofore acquired either through direct personal experience or through social education that imparts upon us what has been acquired by our predecessors and col-

leagues of the society we belong to. Hence comes the principle of the predominance of the past (including the present) on the future.

The subject thus assimilating the outer objects to itself, and what is unknown and dim thus suffering enclosure under the authority of what is known and clear, everything in this field may be said to have a *centripetal* movement with the reasoning subject at the centre.

The function of Heart, on the other hand, is to feel, and this stands quite antipodal with the above. What characterizes its field is *centrifugality*, the predominance of the unknown future on the known past, the annihilation of the inner subject under the influence of the outer object.

To feel is to be struck, to be caught. We never feel anything but we forget ourselves, stop being what we are. All our reasonable selves, as is stated in the aesthetics of Lipps and his followers, are annihilated, the whole storage of our past experiences loses its power, under the overwhelming influence of the object. When we are really moved by something, as is beautifully described by Shelley in his "Defence of Poetry", we do not *know*, nor do we even *want* to know, how or why we are so moved,— only we *feel* that we are being moved. Then what is without stands intact fully independent of what is within. What is dim and unknown will ever remain as it is. Any subjective category, even time or space, has no right to interfere.

When a man, seeing a sparrow, picks about the gravel with it, he is *feeling*. A love-struck youth who, when asked what feature in his lady he has found the most charming, cannot find the answering words, is *feeling*. St. Paul was converted to christianity not because he *reasoned* or *judged* but because he *felt* he should.

It is a positive fact that we cannot reason and feel at the same time. "The judge sentenced the criminal to death pitying him." would be a wrong way of description. The fact is that "the judge pitied the convicted with his heart *at first*, and *then*, getting over this compassion with his reasonable mind, passed the sentence upon him." When one is present, the other is decisively absent. There is no golden mean to be beaten between the two.

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In the case of literary images and symbols there is also an obvious difference in quality to be observed between those that are begotten by mind and those that are the offsprings of heart. I hope the following examples concerning what we call natural objects may be of some service in illustrating this.

“This our life, exempt from public haunt,  
 Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks,  
 Sermons in stones, and goods in everything.”\*

What is spoken here by the Duke in the wood is, no doubt, a homage to the various natural objects enumerated,—trees, brooks, stones, and everything. But, great as his delight and exaltation may seem to us, it is a noticeable fact that these delight and exaltation are not the offsprings of his feeling heart but those of his reasoning mind.

For all his pretensions as an apathetic hermit contented with his simple life and free from every kind of secular cares and wishes, his conscious dignity he holds as a scholastic preacher is never slackened. His categories of perception are firmly established. He never sees anything but he clearly knows what attribute in it to choose and what to abandon. Books and sermons are ideas directly related to his present mission as a scholar and preacher, and here we see how the outer natural objects are perceived according to the preoccupant categories provided by his perceiving mind. He is so far from taking the trees and brooks as such that it will not be a mistake to say that this homage is dedicated not so much to the trees and brooks themselves as to the books and sermons they represent.

The books and sermons would be more easily procured in public haunt rather than in such a rural life. Significantly enough, when, at the end of the play, fortune smiles upon him with the recovered throne of his dukedom, he leaves the wood without a single drop of tears that an ordinary plebian might well shed when moving from a place that, however humble, has heretofore been his site of residence.

“Proceed, proceed; we will begin the rites  
 As we do trust they’ll end in true delight!”\*\*

Now he is a happy man. But where have fled the glories of the trees, the brooks, the stones and everything else? Have all the “precious jewels” of the toad, “the sweetness” of adversity,\*\* turned in an instant to mere “shrewd days and nights”?\*\*\*\* Stop complaining! The brooks and stones have ceased to be his books and sermons. The Duke now has nothing to do with them, though I am not certain if they would raise their voice “against this servitude,”\*\*\*\*\* against this dictatorship of the subject.

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\* *As You Like It*: Act II, sc. 1

\*\* *Ib.* Act V, sc. 4

\*\*\* *Ib.* Act II, sc. 1

\*\*\*\* *Ib.* Act V, sc. 4

\*\*\*\*\* *Ib.* Act I, sc. 1

The following lines of Wordsworth may be taken to be correspondent to the above. They are from his little piece of work about a boy of Winander, who, at evening, standing beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake, used to blow mimic hootings to the owls in the wood that they might answer him. At first he was successful; all the owls began to shout across the waterly vale with,

“a concourse wild of jocund din.”

But a pause ensued such as baffled his best skill.

“Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake.”\*

Trees, streams, and rocks,— all these elements of the scenery are similar enough to those of the wood of Arden. But here the subject of perception, the boy, stands in a mood quite different to the hermit Duke's. Having concentrated his mind in his childish trick and in his expectation of its effect, and having had the concentrated mind baffled in its entirety, he is now literally void of mind,—vacant-minded. How could he read books or sermons with such a vacant mind? Not that he tries to operate upon the objects, but they come into him quite of themselves.

These are the images of what were *felt* by the boy. No further concrete explanations are given in the poem,—nor could they be given.—Here the story ends, all the rest are the several supplementary lines about the churchyard in which the boy was buried.

Again, take the following lines from King Henry the Fourth about a cuckoo-bird.

“He was but as the cuckoo in June,  
Heard, not regarded.”\*\*

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\* Wordsworth: “*There was a Boy.*”

\*\* *King Henry the Fourth*: First Part, Act II, sc.2

For the king speaking here what worth will be left in the cuckoo when he has made the best of its two attributes—audibility and invisibility? Here the cuckoo is admitted in the lines only to serve in explaining how the person here represented by the pronoun “he” behaves,—heard, not regarded. For that matter, anything else, provided it has these two attributes in it, audibility and invisibility, will be as well qualified to be ushered in.

“He was but as a rat in the attick-room,  
Heard, not regarded.”

would, the question of metre excepted, convey as much as the original version.

Though Wordsworth's Cuckoo also begins with the allusion to the same attributes, audibility and invisibility,

“Shall I call thee Bird,  
Or but a wandering Voice?”—\*

the cuckoo is here sung about for itself, not as an image caught in any specified category decided by the subjective mind, but as an image *felt*, as a whole being, an unknown entirety, a mystery beyond the range of human definitions,

“A hope, a Love,  
Still longed for, never seen.”\*\*

Will it be too audacious to imagine that myriad-minded Shakespeare, when speaking in similes and metaphors, as he might well have done as an excellent artist of words, kept an enormous table of definitions in his mind, allotting each imaginable attribute to each imaginable object in the natural world,— a dove, say, representing whiteness, a crow, blackness, and so on? These categories of perception, it must be admitted, were not necessarily individual, but were directly related to the mode of perception common to all the human beings living as his contemporaries — the “Spirit of the age.” But whatever the subject of perception be, either his individual self or that “Spirit of the age” incarnated in him, it can hardly be denied that in his field of perception there was this visible tendency of centripetality in which all the outer objects (i. e. natural objects here) were given an order of arrangement according to the subjective mode safely throned in the

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\* *To the Cuckoo*

\*\* *Ib.*

centre of the world. Everything existed only to serve humanity, its master. Its value is measured by their utility.

Thus Theseus estimates a distilled rose more highly than that

“Which withering on the virgin thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness,”\*

—an idea that was one of the elemental factors that brought forth his Sonnets.

The moon is usually an unpleasant symbol to lovers, because it represents the chaste goddess of Diana, so envious and changeful. A “moonish” youth is a youth not to be trusted. Juliet on the balcony cries out to her lover,

“O swear not by the *moon*, the inconstant *moon!*”\*\*

This Romeo may seem to be a *feeling* man when he, in the opening part of the scene, utters a wonderfully metaphorical line,

“Juliet is the sun,”

but the next moment the revelation comes with his words that directly follow the above,

“Arise, fair sun, and *kill the envious moon*  
Who is already sick and pale with grief”

specifying the function of the sun. Here Romeo annihilates not only that masked Rosalind imaged in the moon, but also the sun himself. Even the bashful little epithet “sunny” attached by Robert Bridges to his sweetheart’s hair\*\*\* would carry more of undefinable atmosphere of implications round it than this elaborate Shakespearean metaphor.

This mode of perception presided by reasoning mind goes parallel to the idea of human control over everything else. What reasoning mind is in the field of perception, is just what human beings are in the actual world. In Shakespeare’s works no non-human force is allowed to control or even exceed men.

Macbeth becomes what he is through the temptations of the Super-human witches, but the world is at last relieved of him by the effort of other *human* characters. Prospero abandons his magic wand when everything

\* *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*: Act I, sc.1.

\*\* *Romeo and Juliet*: Act II, sc.2.

\*\*\* Robert Bridges: *Shorter Poems*: Book III, No.12

is settled. The case of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" may be an exceptional one and Puck must apologize himself to the audience before the curtain falls. But even here the friendly fairies are hardly superhuman characters, they are thinking and acting quite in human ways.

The world may exist without men, but it could be "brave" only when it,

"has such *people* in it !"\*

The celebrated line from the Sonnets,

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"\*\*

would, if left alone by itself, be taken to be a rare example in his works where he felt the beauty of the external world with his heart, but here again, as in Romeo's case above alluded to, the next line confines its aesthetic value within the boundary situated under that reserved for mankind.

"*Thou art more lovely, more temperate.*"

One may rise here to protest that all these examples, with a few exceptional cases where they are taken from his sonnets, are of little use in discussing the ideas held by Shakespeare himself as they are not spoken by the poet himself but only by the dramatic characters he created. I frankly admit it, but what I yet want to say in answer to such a protest is that they are no Iagoes or Calibans that made the utterances in the examples in question—all being heroes or heroines in whose thoughts and actions the writer himself could not have borne no great antipathy. Nor do I believe Shakespeare was exceedingly capable of irony, that form of subtlety common among the recent critics. Falstaff, Jaques, Touchstone, the fool in King Lear,— there are many characters created by him who seem to have a touch of critical talent within them. But, generally speaking, the criticism they pass upon their contemporaries are more playful than serious, more superficial than deep-rooted. They only serve to glorify those kings and nobles upon whom their criticism is apparently thrown.

As I think this is a matter to dwell upon under some other title, let it now suffice to say that there is enough reason in believing that in Shakespeare's case the utterances of the characters on the stage can be trusted as being suggestive of what was in the mind of the playwright behind it, especially when the speaker is a man of high honour such as a king, a

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\* *The Tempest*: Act V, sc.1.

\*\* Shakespeare: *Sonnets*: 18

duke or a prince.

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What we have seen in Shakespeare's mode of perception is just what we see in the "Spirit" of his age, ..... the age of the Renaissance, the dawn of modern history. It was through the faculty of reasoning that the human spirit emancipated itself from the authority of medieval church enlarging the field of its activity to attain to the most glorious prosperity man had ever seen. As was evident in that dramatist's work, the human spirit literally reigned over the whole universe.

But this mode of perception has one fatal fault. It has to take something for granted as I have observed at the beginning of this essay. The age of Renaissance took itself for granted complacently seated on the throne of prosperity. It took its existent state of affairs for granted. And the most important aspect in the political world of this age was absolutism.

In that age when even the authority of God could not escape dethronement, the absolute right of the human despots was left untouched. This is not to say that all the despots in this age were tyranneous, — this system might have had its own historical cause to exist in that period, and of these rulers some were indeed benevolent dukes and masters like those in Italy under whose protection flourished the modern art whose relics are still now the pride of the world. But it is also a thing of equal importance to remember that the idea of the divine right of individuals had to wait further centuries before it was awakened, whatever necessary causes historians may assert there were.

If there was one thing taken for granted by Shakespeare, it was this divine right of kings. Everything they did, so far as they were well qualified to be a king, had to be justified in his works.

It was not without reason, considering how he depended upon the liberal protection granted by the ruling quarters of his period. To judge whether he was right in this or not is quite an irrelevant thing here to deal with. Yet it is a thing of much interest to see how he turns serious when he writes about these high-born persons, — so serious that the seriousness itself sometimes looks nonsensical as when he inserts in his *King Henry the Fourth* that unnecessary apology for Prince Harry in the form of his soliloquy,\* — an excellent model of pleonasm if used in a text-book of rhetorics.

If the political system in the age of the Renaissance was one form of absolutism, its another form will be sought in religion. This is a world where one absolute being — the God — rules. He is the source of all values in the world. I am afraid it will not be without a tint of irrelevance here to discuss the fewness of natural images in the Holy Scriptures, yet it is

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\* *King Henry the Fourth, First Part: Act I, sc.2*

remarkable that almost all the few allusions to the natural objects found in them, are those characterized by the same tendency we have seen in Shakespeare. In the world of these Scriptures all the beings in the world are grouped in three classes among which there is a strict order of value. God is seated at the top, next come human beings linked to Him with a bond of charity, and then all the creatures and things other than men.

When any natural symbol is to be found in the Scriptures it appears either as a means of allegory or as a symbol of some necessities upon which the chosen creatures called men live. The birds and lilies in the celebrated passage of Matthew offers one instance of the former case. To illustrate the latter this beautiful lines from the Psalms will be enough,

"He makes me to lie down in *green pastures*:  
he leadeth me beside the *still waters*."\*

Even this is not to praise the beauty of pastures and waters to be felt in a purely aesthetic contemplation, but to express how great is the joy of the wandering hungry people when they, by the love of God, have at last found themselves at a place of plenties suited for them to live in.

The spirit of the Renaissance superseded the authority of religion, though, strictly speaking, not the religion itself but the religious system in the secular world. This was from one point of view the replacement of one form of absolutism by another form of absolutism. And it is a thing not quite negligible to me that this coincidence in quality of the two forms is thus suggested in the mode of perception to be observed in their respective champion literatures.

If ever in this world of the nineteenth century another form of absolutism should arise to reign,—whether from the right wing or from the left wing of the existent field of human thoughts, — the literature under its system will have the same mode of perception as these champions once had. Whether one thing is absolutism or not is not so much a matter of its contents,— whether the authrity throned in the centre of its world is as noble as Jesus or as wicked as Satan, —as a matter of its mode,— how the whole system is run and maintained. Whether man can be happy under its system, I will leave the conclusion to the future. Only this much will be safely emphasized as a warning that no matter how reasonably its upper fabric may be built and furnished, it is an undeniable fact that it always has one ground that has been taken for granted by itself for no reasonable reason whatever, though, perhaps, contrary to its subjective wishes. I may add to this another little fact that its centripetal and egocentric, strange as it may sound, process of thinking may sometimes be analogous to the way of an

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\* Psalms 23-2.

egoist whom it attacks most earnestly flaring its banner of rationalism in the wind. One's attitude taken toward the outer natural objects is suggestive of that taken toward one's fellow men. And, in fact, even Shakespeare, for all his rationalism, praised as his "faithfulness to the facts", failed to embrace the whole mankind in his warm consideration. There are many types of people then existent in his age but exempted from his stage.

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As in the world of politics the principle of the divine right of individuals was first established in the age of the French Revolution realizing one vital side of the emancipation of humanity that had been left untouched in the ages of the Renaissance and the Reformation, so in the world of literature the mode of perception, alternative to the function of *mind*, was first awakened in the age of the Romantic Revival, one philosophical ground of which is, as has been rightly suggested by Mr. Read in his new studies\* of Romantic poetry, to be sought in German idealism.

The idea of Romanticism is generally taken to be the alternative to that of Classicism or Pseudo-Classicism covering the century preceding its time. But picking up, among the rest, this problem of the mode of perception, I wonder if we cannot extend the idea of Classicism back to the literature of the Elizabethan age, with Shakespeare as its representative hero, and down to some trends now found among the contemporary writers. When the mode of perception one trend of literature is based on is that of reasoning, it is Classical, and it is Romantic when its essential mode of perception is that of feeling.

One of the most important aspect of this romantic philosophy will be observed in its dualism, — taking everything as a symbol composed of two coexistent elements quite contradictory to each other, whatever be the name given to them, — external and internal, visible and invisible, or, in a more vulgar terms, material and spiritual. A cuckoo-bird may have two aspects of existence, the concrete and tangible side, i. e. what we *judge* it to be, — a singing bird in the spring-time, and the ambiguous and intangible side, i. e. what we *feel* it to be — a shadow of something "still longed for, never seen," something beyond human knowledge.

When we are *reasoning*, as we have observed above, we start on our way of inference with that one thing we take for granted, the subject of perception, whether it be our individual subject or the non-individual "spirit of the age" insinuated to, and incarnated in, our inner being. Then what

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\* H. Read : *The Voice of Feeling*'

we acquire in the course of our inference has its ground of existence in ourselves. All are nothing but our own reflections. No wonder that they are concrete and tangible for they stand upon the surest of the sure grounds—upon ourselves. But this is, so to speak, a kind of ring-wandering, —started from ourselves and ending in ourselves. In Goldsmith's "*The Traveller*" we see a nice picture of such a wandering. The traveller's thought is always turned to his home he has left behind, and he

"drags at each remove a lengthening chain"

We go on and see many other parts of the infinite space establishing our villas everywhere. We live in the villas safe and contented still keeping the mode of living we once had at home. And do we say we are experiencing a foreign life? Lo! we are still as we were. Nothing changed! Everything that is strange and new is falling away from our observance.

When we are *feeling*, on the other hand, our journey will have a quite different aspect. Taking nothing for granted, we are free to be influenced by anything in the outer world. We cannot, need not, judge whether it would be right or wrong, conformable or non-conformable to the standard we had before we left our home. All we feel there are but dim shadows of what is unknown. We have no villas, nay, no place to rest our head on, though "foxes might have their holes". As a citizen of the boundless universe

"We pass, like night, from land to land."\*

See how the wandering steps of the young poet in Shelley's "*Alastor*" were led even to where

"The red volcano overcanopies  
Its field of snow and pinnacles of fire  
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes,  
On black bare pointed islets ever beat  
With sluggish serge, ....."

and how, even at the last moment of his life terminated in a desolate nook of a moor, the world was yet as enigmatical as it had been when he left his cold fireside and alienated home in his early youth.

The philosophy of Romantic dualism, of course, never refuses to admit the function of mind — reasoning — to have its own field of activity. Even Shelley called himself a revolutionary rationalist when he wrote Queen

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\* S. T. Coleridge: *The Ancient Mariner*. Book 7

Mab. Only we must not overlook one simple fact that the romantic philosophy was humble enough to acknowledge the limitations imposed upon the scope of human knowledge and give liberty to divine scepticism to rise against anything achieved by human reasoning itself. Not that Shelley despised the reality of human existence when he sang of the "forms more real than living man",\* but that he was at the same time too conscious of the mystery of existence too deep for him to master.

It is a question whether such is what Wordsworth called "natural piety", but it is strange that, from this point of view, "egocentricity", the alleged fault of romantic poets, seems to be a vice, if it is a vice at all, to be conferred not upon them but to their antagonists. Now, which mode of perception, reasoning or feeling, we should keep in our life is not a question I am to decide here. Nor is it a problem I am qualified to solve. Only, it is yet a positive fact that, for all our great heap of knowledge in this atomic age, there are still innumerable things left unknown and unfelt. And we cannot take anything for granted without smothering the spirit of human progress, for progress means the never-ceasing denial of the present.

I do not think literature should exist for literature's sake alone, — it must serve life, — but I do believe it should at least have right to have its own way in serving life. And life itself is a mystery consisting at least of two contradictory elements, actuality and reality. Literature speaks in words, and there is not a single word in the vocabulary of human languages that is not a mystery itself. No words other than itself can define in full the meaning it conveys. ....

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To speak is not to speak. To write is to leave everything unwritten. What am I doing with these words, words, words—? It is no use *reasoning* about literature, still less about life. Oh, Fair Calvero,

"Heart and Mind, what an enigma!"

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\* *Prometheus Unbound*: Act I, sc. 1.