

# The Nature of Knowledge

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## Chapter Two

### The Nature of Knowledge

The immanent reference term of reflexive knowledge is the conscious self which can also become transitively aware of both the *notself* and its *otherself*. From this arises the whole spectrum of phenomena, observed and classified from the dual viewpoints of distinction and union.

Within Mother Nature, whilst distinction and diversity abound, there is seen a marvellous system of systems. Nature seeks order in her unity whilst abhorring any sterile uniformity that would turn her fertile womb into a barren waste or lifeless tomb. The act and art of her drama of an evolving cosmic love-affair knows elements of both comedy and tragedy.

Distinction and union figure in all psychic processes, not the least being that of laughter. Persons count and persons laugh and a fount of humour is blessed ambiguity. We are amused by expressions admitting several possible and quite different comical interpretations. Entertainers rely to quite a great extent on the double-meaning joke. In a singular unit of word or phrase, we perceive a plural distinctioning of meanings and we laugh at this seeming contradiction or paradox. The two-in-oneness of this psychical positioning or novel interpenetration brings comic relief to the brain's twin-lobed activity.

We must take our laughter seriously. It is one of Nature's most effective medicines. A body full of laughter, can experience a very profound cleansing and healing. It is in the analysis of why we laugh that mirth's two-in-oneness spree becomes a symbol and leading theme opening up and revealing patterns which give added meaning and unity to human activity.

We laugh at absurd situations. It is in the comic association of seeming opposites and contrasting situations when things by nature apparently incompatible, are found together in spite of

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their rugged differences, that the self enjoys itself become both at once. Such is the actual nature of knowledge. *To know is to become.*

Through and with and in knowledge, the self becomes now more than what it was before. The I-self becomes intentionally identified with its complement, the known other-self. Something of the latter *becomes inside* the being of the former. The *known* has a new or added existence in the *knower*. The sensory display unit of the self's cerebral computer perceives the *otherness* of the conceived information whose data is stored and processed in the brain's hardware. Such other-self-ness may be either a personal other or it may be just an impersonal thing, with or without life. Self's being wills to grow in becomingness through self-functioning iterative feedback other-dependence.

Self and other, being and becoming, are the prime dual realities whose depths and heights are sounded and visioned in this book. They are the millstones of spaced time which grind and bind gender's distinction and union into a cosmic unity of order, beauty and infinite sexistential love.

Human beings are questionable animals. Questionable, because they are able to question. They are conscious of many kinds of relations. Aware of distinction and union, they study and question relationships in order to better understand the way one thing in itself stands with respect to an other. The search for and discovery of more meaningful answers to the most important and basic questions that humans ask is wisdom and the lovers of wisdom, as their name implies, merit being called philosophers.

For Aristotle, perhaps the most famous of the early Greek thinkers Philosophy began with wonder. As long as people continue to wonder they will continue to seek wisdom. Philosophy is rooted in the desire of the conscious mind to understand the world, in the desire to find meaningful patterns in human relations and to find solutions to the problems which continually arise, teasing the mind and demanding its reflection on

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them. The most universally pondered subjects would seem to be those concerned with the meanings that selves give to the mystery of life and the purpose of their own existence.

The ability to question in wonder is not an attitude that is acquired nor can it be taught. Rather it is a basic manifestation of emerging consciousness. Little children live in a world that is for them still a wonderland, and they ask questions continually, often to the point of being tiresome and even annoying. They ask questions of their elders fully expecting that there are answers. Where do they come from? What is to become of them? How? Why? Far too often it is a pretended prudence that gives them the misleading replies of popular convention and convenience and they are left frustrated in enforced ignorance. The scandal thus done to little ones by placing obstacles in the path of their quest for becomingness deserves punishment by submersion in the sea, necklaced with a millstone. The blind continue to lead those whom they have blindfolded, and the ditches never lack for filling.

Maturity is reached when humans become childlike again in their questioning, but grown-up and experienced enough to know that, though their questions may seem to concern absolute things and values, the complete answers must forever remain in patterned webs of relativities. The human self is consciously knowledge-able. It is not agnostic by nature but only by circumstances. It has an intuition of *truth*, but more often than not self-interest has resort to a stand-over approach in its regard, rather than trying to understand where and how truth is to be found.

The reflexive self is the reflecting subject and reflected object of its own conscious self-activity. Absolute truth is known only in the quiet, still depths of the self's inner consciousness, where its true other self speaks in silence. A self's witness to integration's real and consistent becomingness is true, is truth. Disintegration is unbecoming and self's willed acceptance of such bears an untrue witness. Consistency demands freedom from all contradiction

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while any real becomingness implies positive growth. The latter implies change in time and spaced time itself is the great cosmic mystery in which the self is immersed.

Two terms are needed to form a relation, namely, a first or alpha term, the term from which the relationship begins, and a second or omega term, the term to which the relationship is directed or ends. The two terms are not the relation but the things related. The relation is really a third term, being the specific oneness or togetherness link (or modification of it) between the distinct terms and is positioned by the unifying activity of the psyche. It is the conscious self that looks for and discovers relations between distinct things through personal identification with both at once.

Another name for two-in-one is *biune*, and for three-in-one *triune*; their abstractions follow as *biunity*, and *triunity* or *trinity*. In the next Chapter, we shall introduce four-in-oneness as a *quaternity*. In a biune relation, two *ones*, i.e., a *one* and a *one*, become a *one* two. Two unit atoms of hydrogen join together to become one unit hydrogen molecule. In and through their unity, a new *one* proceeds. The two related terms remain distinct but unified and a third *one* emerges. Three *ones* are now involved, the two *ones* we started with and the *one* these two become. Every biune relation is by its very nature also triune. Every biunity is also a triunity or trinity. The trinity of knowledge comprises three terms, the knower, the known and the knowing-act of the knower becoming the known.

Knowledge is a relation of a special sort. Inasmuch as it is basic to the very nature of psychical existence, it might well be called a self↔other existential relation whose simple harmonic functioning may be reflexive or transitive or both. All thought's act and art proceeds in a self-other-functioning feedback system, in the personal self and other unity whose identity can be expressed as an infinite set where self  $\eta$  {self, otherself} [  $\eta$  is the identity sign ]. Cognition is the two-in-one-ness of a conscious

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being and its becomingness, the biunity of the I-self and its otherself. The conscious surfacing of this psychical conception is expressed verbally in what is termed an idea or concept.

I am conscious of my “I am” self as *oneself*, grammatically a *first* person, the person speaking. When I become aware of an other self outside of my own “I am”, I acknowledge this otherself as “Thou art”. “Thou” and “you”, being the person or persons spoken to, are said to be in the category of the *second* person. Though this objective outside otherself may be physically distinct from me the subject self, nevertheless when I knowingly accept its reality, it is because it has become a psychical unit in intentional union within my psychical existence. The object of knowledge takes on a new dimension of existence when it is known by the knower. The knower and the known both subsist in the Existential Relativity of human self-other-consciousness. Is it possible to have such an existential relationship of this nature with an otherself within one’s own inner space?. Children gain much pleasure and satisfaction in dialogue with an imaginary indwelling *otherself*.

One of the most intriguing situations of this nature to contemplate is that of the relationship of a pregnant woman and her offspring in her womb. What is the nature of this self-other-life shared in human pregnancy? This is discussed at length later in Ch. 5 The foetus is physically consubstantial with its mother. They are not merely joined by the umbilical chord, but the sense of *withinness* is ingrained in the mental data of both. Without being consciously aware of it, the cerebral computer and memory of the foetus is programmed with an otherself’s soporific rhythmic heartbeat as well as its own and with the coziness of being immersed in a warm friendly space. The I-Mother can monologue with the potential You-otherself in her womb. The growing brain of the latter is not yet sufficiently evolved to reciprocate such psychical co-consciousness, but the dual lobe circuitry is already being established whereby the Existential

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Relativity of self and other, of “I am” and “Thou art” can function.

Experiences may or may not be verbalized internally and-or externally. Words are the spaced time representations of ideas and are the sight-sound signs with which a self relates to an other. Whilst all language takes place in the psychical now-continuum of a self's consciousness, it is relativistic and quantized, being made up of discrete particles, namely words, and continues to evolve. New words are coined to stamp new experiences and new meanings are associated with old words and their combinations.

Meaning itself is an elusive thing to define. Like knowledge with which it is associated, it is a relation, the relation between words and a self's experience of its known becomingness. Each self's experience and knowledge is unique and is conditioned by the selective programming of its brain's cerebral computer. Genetic inheritance, parental influence, formal instruction, education, environmental factors, cultural milieu, all leave their software imprint stored in the brain's hardware memory. Hence different shades of meaning become associated with different ideas and words. Many words now exhibit a plurality of meanings, and ambiguity can be both a real blessing and also a curse.

At times, selves achieve a more effective communication of their inner experiences by means of literary devices which make use of a play on words to stimulate psychical activity, as in the pun, paradox and various other figures of speech. In the latter class and of special importance, is the metaphor. In metaphor, a word or phrase in common use and literally denoting one kind of object or idea, is used by way of suggesting a likeness or model for new depths or heights of experience. Poetry makes extensive use of metaphor,

*Selflife as I is Woman, Man as Thee*  
and She's enough of everything, save He.

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Prose too can be made more imaginative by it. In the language of metaphor, this book is the author's brainchild, conceived years ago and after a long gestation finally come to birth.

Underlying the use of metaphor and conjoined with the very nature of meaning itself is that special kind of relation between experiences brought about by what are called *symbols*. Symbols are things, physical or psychical, which suggest something other than their mere selves by reason of relationships, associations or conventions. They may be in the form of words, ideas, actions, pictures, sounds, dreams, anything. They serve the self well as models and catalysts for a more profound sounding of levels and richness of meaning. They speak, by insinuation, for our unconscious and subconscious activity. They help stimulate and perfect conscious communicative relations between persons, often with meanings which are known only to the initiated, as the fish symbol for the early Christians. Myths are cultural symbols of cosmic realities.

Symbols are more than mere signs. A sign just denotes the object to which it is assigned, as does a badge, a trademark, or an abbreviation. Mathematics uses signs. The numerals 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on, are signs of numerical experiences called numbers. Symbols act intuitively without and beyond the grasp of reasoning and motivate and channel self's being into the becomingness of something other. Religion, Art, and Science make extensive use of symbols, indeed they would be completely impoverished without them. Symbols catalyse and fertilize, begetting new meanings and enabling a self to transcend its own limiting singularity by simulating and suggesting an enriched plurality of experiences.

There are degrees and types of knowledge. There is simple sensory perceptual knowledge. This is intuitive, i.e., without any conscious process of reasoning. Through our senses we become linked with the physical world by virtue of the complex psychical images in our imagination, which as a sensory display unit, is a necessary adjunct to the brain's cerebral computer. This faculty of

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the imagination must not be confused with the ability to fantasy and is what human beings have in common with all animals and living things which enjoy sense perceptions.

A higher type of human knowledge is meditative and conceptual with ascending levels of understanding and abstraction. Conscious reasoning forms part of this and the conclusions arrived at are the results of both deductive and inductive processes. Meaning is linked with understanding and experience. Often plausible new meanings like scientific models are conceived, not as arising from laboured manly reasoning, but as flashes of womanly intuition.

Finally, there is contemplative experiential knowledge. The self listens, hears, sees, feels and knows its distinction of being in the phase of becoming an implosive union with all other. Not only does the self know, but it knows that it knows. It is here in self's mothering queendom within that words are made flesh afresh and psyche's eternally indwelling child grows in wisdom and stature, full of grace and truth.

Contemplation is not just the name for a peculiar type of thinking as practised by the initiates of some esoteric cult. In the traditional and technical sense of Western Culture, and as used in this book, it is contrasted with discursive meditation. Both words are equally at home in secular as well as in sacred contexts. Both deal with modes of thought and types of knowledge. Meditation is active, transitive, ratiocinative, reductionist, concerned with analysis and the multiplicity of parts as parts. It tries to distinguish the various instruments of an orchestra; it hears the different sounds that each produces; it appreciates the technique of composer, conductor and player. It is preoccupied transitively with the external differentiation of parts. Symbolically, it has overtones of the masculine.

Contemplation is more passive, reflexive, intuitive, holistic, concerned with synthesis or the building of a whole, a unity of parts, a oneness. Contemplation enjoys the unique aesthetic

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experience of total music. It becomes absorbed reflexively in internal integration. It has undertones of the feminine.

In meditation, one looks at the individual pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, their shape and colour and multiplicity. In contemplation they are all put together as a unified or melded whole. Matter's particle-wave duality finds its reflection here. Meditation deals with discrete particles. Contemplation, on the other hand, tries to capture reality as a continuum, a whole, a unity of units. Contemplation perfects and transcends meditation. In the Western tradition, what is now popularly called T M, Transcendental Meditation, is really a type of contemplation and modern meditation movements, in an historical sense, are misnomers.

The act of contemplation involves a unique experience of wholeness in the unity of the alpha-self's *I* with its complement, the omega-other-self, not merely as a surface concept, but as an in-depth or volumed perception as well. By its inner personal nature this unique implosive awareness of unity is not communicable. It cannot be directly shared with another person. The discursive fruits of surface meditation can be shared verbally, but the act of contemplation is different. It can only be described symbolically, in a roundabout and suggestive way with analogy, metaphor and paradox. Some techniques to dispose the mind and body for its development can be explained and useful background factual knowledge can be assimilated.

Though some simple kind of direction may be useful, it is not absolutely necessary, since it remains up to the virgin self to follow the path of enlightenment, through contemplation, as a lone traveller. Because it involves the self in a new, redeemed, liberated, higher or more intense state of consciousness, progress in it can only be achieved by the self's systematic and assiduous practice of it. Under the guidance of an *inner other*, the self teaches itself how to use a *Do-it-yourself Kit*.

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Figuratively speaking, in meditation one swims, in contemplation one floats. In meditation one rows, but in contemplation one sails. Though vastly different, yet they are not opposites in the sense of having conflicting interests. They are complementary. True meditation is not an end in itself. Its left-lobed, cerebral father-activity is meant to be as a passing fertilizing factor and to be transcended slowly as a step-by-step ladder serving to scale the heights of contemplation. The latter's grand finale is acted out on the stage of the redeemed and risen self's ascended experience to right-lobed, maternal brain activity, whence all things are conceived again and born anew.

It is in the psychical realm of developing and perfecting the self and its consciousness in inner space that evolution is still inexorably proceeding. It continues in this only with both the active and passive cooperation of each individual self, freely involved and dedicated to its consummation.

All human endeavour should be directed primarily to this end. Physical well-being and excellence, sensual satisfaction, knowledge, whether factual, fictional, scientific or philosophical are only means to this objective and merit but secondary consideration. Not growth in external personal possessions, but the possession of internal personal growth, should motivate and direct all truly worthwhile human ambition. All personal growth is self-functioning and other-dependent.

The learning process requires the assimilation of knowledge. Food for our bodies must be chewed, swallowed and digested before it can become part of our physical being. In a similar way what is presented to our minds as food for thought must be subject to a kind of similar cud-chewing process. We must reflect on our superficial knowledge in order to experience, in the inner senses of our being, a more profound perception of what we already know only conceptually. This is what understanding really means. When we try to *under-stand* something we try to make sense of it within ourselves through recollection and reflection,

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and not just content with factual information. Chewing our psychical cud enables symbolism to extend and deepen the meaningfulness of our existing ideas. In discursive meditation, we try to enlarge our factual conceptual knowledge *about* things. In intuitive contemplation we know things by experiencing them in their psychical actuality within our own whole physical selves. The difference is simply like knowing about another person by hearsay or through reading, and then meeting such a person in the flesh. It is like reading a play or watching a stage performance of it and then being an actual performing actor on stage creatively interpreting the role.

In a companion book, *Faith Fact Fiction*, this author gives a modern scientific approach to the ageless Art of Contemplation. There it is insisted that the act of contemplation, which perceives and conceives all being and becoming as a lovable whole, a unity of units, is the goal of biological and psychical evolution and climaxes human cultural development. Voluminous love wills the self-other becomingness of surface thought. Contemplation is the perfection and highest level of personal knowledge and experience. *It is the act-art of self making love to its other, perceptually, within the inner spaced time of the human mind.*

Chapter 7 of this book is taken from *Faith Fact Fiction* and bears the same title *Dialogue in Mime*.