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XI.—VARIOUS MEANINGS OF THE TERM "UNCONSCIOUS."

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I HAVE nothing new or revolutionary to say about the Unconscious. The whole object of my paper is to distinguish a number of different applications of the words "conscious" and "unconcious," and to define the different meanings which the words have in these applications. There is no doubt that this is a necessary, if somewhat dull, piece of work; for the looseness with which the word "unconscious" is at present used is a psychological scandal of the first magnitude. I shall not attempt to consider what evidence, if any, there is for the existence of the Unconscious or of unconscious states, in any of the senses of these words which I shall define; for the work of definition and distinction will take up enough space to make an inordinately long paper. I will only say that I see no theoretical impossibility in the existence of the Unconscious or of unconscious states, in any of the senses here defined. On the other hand, we shall see that, whilst it is practically certain that something exists answering to several of these definitions, it would be very difficult to prove that there is anything answering to others of them. I shall start with simple and obvious uses of the words "conscious" and "unconscious," and shall only gradually work up to more out of the way subjects.

(1) "*Conscious*" *and* "*Unconscious*" *as applied to Persistent Substances.* We call a stone an unconscious being, and a man or a dog or an oyster a conscious being. Thus one use of the words "conscious" and "unconscious" is to mark out two great classes of fairly persistent substances. By calling a stone an unconscious being, I seem to mean that it neither has been, is, nor will be aware of anything. By calling a man a conscious

being, I seem to mean that he has been or will be aware of something, even if it should happen that he is not at the present moment aware of anything. Thus "conscious" and "unconscious," in this sense, seem to mean respectively "capable (or incapable) of being aware of something or other." I think it will be wise to substitute the words "animate" and "inanimate" for the words "conscious" and "unconscious" when the latter are used in this meaning and with this application.

(2) "*Conscious*" *and* "*Unconscious*" *as applied to the Temporary Condition of Animate Beings.* We have now to notice that a being which is conscious, in the sense of animate, may yet be called "unconscious" in another sense. A man awake and a man in a deep swoon are both conscious, in the sense that they are both animate beings. But we should say that the former was "in a conscious condition" at the moment, and that the latter was "in an unconscious condition."

"Conscious" and "unconscious," in this sense, apply to the temporary condition of animate beings and to nothing else. We might be tempted to say that an animate being is in a conscious condition when it is actually aware of something, and that it is in an unconscious condition when it is not actually aware of anything. A little reflection shows that this definition is not satisfactory as it stands. Many people believe that there is something which they call "unconscious awareness"; and they would count a man to be in an unconscious condition, even though he were aware of many things, if all this awareness be unconscious. To meet the possibility of unconscious awareness we must say that an animate being is in a conscious condition when it is consciously aware of something, and that it is in an unconscious condition when it is either not aware of anything, or if aware of something is only unconsciously aware of it. The amended definitions are now *verbally* circular. They are not *really* circular, because a new sense of "conscious" and "uncon-

scious " has turned up. We are, in fact, defining " conscious " and " unconscious," as applied to the temporary conditions of animate beings, in terms of " conscious " and " unconscious," as applied to the process of awareness. But, although the definitions are thus non-circular, they do not tell us much until we know what is meant by " conscious " and " unconscious " in this new sense. So this must be the next subject for discussion.

(3) " *Conscious* " *and* " *Unconscious* " *as applied to Experiences.* An awareness is one instance of what we call an experience. So we may at once raise the general question: " What is meant by the words ' conscious ' and ' unconscious,' as applied to experiences ? " This is the hardest question that we shall have to tackle, and much will depend on the answer that we give to it. It will be noticed that the two senses of " conscious " and " unconscious " which we have already dealt with have been defined in terms of awareness, either possible or actual. The question naturally arises: " Can we not define ' conscious ' and ' unconscious,' in the present sense also, by reference to awareness ? " Might we not say that a conscious experience is one of which someone is aware at the time of its occurrence, and that an unconscious experience is one of which no one is aware at the time of its occurrence ?

A little reflection will show that this definition will not do as it stands, even if we can ultimately define " conscious " and " unconscious," as applied to experiences, by reference to awareness and the lack of it. It would be held by many people that there are experiences of which some mind is aware, which are nevertheless unconscious experiences. If this be so, we evidently cannot define an unconscious experience as one of which no mind is aware. The difficulty arises in an acute form over alleged cases of co-consciousness. Suppose I look for my spectacles in a certain drawer; and fail to find them at the time, although they are really staring me in the face. And suppose, for the

sake of argument, that it can be rendered probable that there really did exist at the time an awareness of the spectacles. Then this would be a clear example of an unconscious experience. Now I am certainly not aware of seeing the spectacles, in the sense in which I am aware of seeing the drawer ; and it is quite possible that, in this case, no mind is aware of this experience. Suppose, on the other hand, that Miss Beauchamp had been looking for the spectacles, and that we accept Sally's claims to co-consciousness. It might well be that Sally was aware of the experience of seeing the spectacles though Miss Beauchamp was not. Thus although this would be an unconscious experience from the point of view of Miss Beauchamp, it would not be an experience of which *no* mind is aware at the time of its happening. It is evident that, whether we think there are adequate grounds for believing in co-consciousness or not, we ought not to put forward a definition of unconscious experiences which breaks down if there should be such a thing as co-consciousness.

We ought, therefore, to modify our suggested definitions at least in the following way. We might say: "An experience which is correlated with events in a certain living body is to be called 'conscious' if the mind which is in control of this body when the experience happens is aware then of the experience. It is to be called 'unconscious' if the mind which is in control of this body when the experience happens is not then aware of the experience." This definition of unconscious experiences leaves it quite possible that none of them are cognized by any mind at the time when they happen, but it also leaves it possible that some are cognized by some co-conscious mind. As soon as we admit the possibility of co-consciousness we are obliged to bring in a reference to a certain *body* in connection with which the experience arises. For we have to specify the particular mind which is to be aware or unaware of the experience, and we can only do this

by saying that it is the mind which is in control of this body at the time when the experience happens.

We have now seen *whose* awareness or lack of awareness would make a certain experience conscious or unconscious, assuming that " consciousness " and " unconscious," as applied to experiences, can be defined by reference to awareness at all. But can they be defined in this way at all ? " Awareness " is a very vague word, and it is certain that these definitions will only hold on some one particular meaning of it. Let us then see whether we can find any meaning of " awareness " which will make these definitions of " conscious " and " unconscious " experiences satisfactory.

I think we must begin by distinguishing three possible relations which a mind can have to an experience. These three relations are often confused with each other, and we can make no further progress until we have disentangled them. I will call the three relations which can subsist between a mind and an experience the relations of *ownership*, of *simultaneous undiscriminating awareness*, and of *introspective discrimination*, respectively. Let us go back to the example of looking for my spectacles in a certain drawer, and failing to find them though they were staring me in the face all the while. If I were asked whether I was at the time aware of seeing the drawer and most of its contents, I should answer " Yes," in one sense, and " No " in another. Certainly I was aware of seeing the drawer and most of its contents, in a sense in which I was not aware of seeing the spectacles. On the other hand, I was almost certainly not introspectively discriminating the act of seeing the drawer; for my whole attention was devoted at the time to the drawer itself and its contents. It is evident that, in the vast majority of cases of conscious perception, I am not aware of my perception, in the sense of introspectively discriminating it. On the other hand, I should certainly refuse to entertain the suggestion that I was not aware at all of my conscious perceptions. So I shall

say that the person in our example was aware of his act of seeing the drawer and most of its contents, in the sense that he had simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of this experience. Moreover, we can also say that he *owned* the experience of seeing the drawer ; it was a part of *his* mental history.

Thus it would seem that conscious experiences are always owned by a mind, and that the mind which owns them has always simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of them. But in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it does not also introspectively discriminate them. Do we ever own states of mind of which we do not have even simultaneous undiscriminating awareness ? To answer this question, let us go back to our example once more.

We must notice that I should not normally use the words " conscious " and " unconscious " at all in describing my experience with the drawer and the spectacles. I should simply say : " I saw the drawer and most of its contents, but I did not see the spectacles." The adjectives " conscious " and " unconscious " are added later as a result of reflection and inference. I find that the spectacles must have been physically affecting my retina just as much as the drawer and the rest of its contents did. I then perhaps persuade myself that I must have seen the spectacles. And I express the obvious difference between the way in which I must have seen the spectacles, if I saw them at all, and the way in which I certainly did see the drawer and the rest of its contents, by saying that I saw the drawer " consciously " and that I must have seen the spectacles " unconsciously," if at all. Now this phraseology does imply the possibility of experiences which are owned by me but of which I am not aware, even in the sense of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. When I say : " *I* saw the spectacles unconsciously " or " *My* seeing of the spectacles was unconscious," I imply that this experience was owned by me. And when I say that it was unconscious I imply that I was *not* aware of it in the sense in which I *was* aware of the

experience of seeing the drawer and the rest of its contents. But it seems to me very doubtful whether we have any right to use this phraseology. The natural thing for me to say is: " I did not see the spectacles "; and the plain, straightforward meaning of this is that the experience of seeing them, if it existed at all, did not belong to me. Now it does not seem to me that the facts which are taken into consideration on subsequent reflection give us any ground for reversing this view, even if they do give us some ground for thinking that an experience of seeing the spectacles must have *existed* at the time. The facts that are adduced in favour of the view that an experience of seeing the spectacles must have existed fall into two main groups. (i) It is argued that the spectacles and my retina were in such relative positions that light from the former must have affected the latter in a way which might reasonably be expected to produce a sensation of sight corresponding to the spectacles; (ii) It may be that in dreams, or by hypnosis or psycho-analysis or some other technical method, I come to have experiences or to do or say things which are difficult to explain except on the assumption that a certain experience existed in the past and that I am now in touch with it. Even if we admit that such arguments make it probable that an experience of seeing the spectacles existed when I was searching in the drawer, there seems no reason to hold that they render it probable that this experience was then owned by *me*, in any simple sense of that phrase. No doubt, if it existed at all, it was an experience which arose through the stimulation of *my* body. It is also true that it was an experience with which *my* mind can afterwards be brought in contact by suitable technical methods. But this does not suffice to prove that when it happened it was *my* experience, in the plain, straightforward sense in which the experience of seeing the drawer and the rest of its contents was an experience of mine.

Now, if this be granted, there would seem to be no very

good reason for distinguishing between the states that I own and the states of which I have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. The only ground for distinguishing the two was that our use of words seemed to suggest that there are experiences which are mine and of which I do not have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. But we have now seen that, even if there be experiences which arise through the stimulation of my body and of which I do not have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness, there is no good reason to call them *my* experiences. Hence, I think we may say that all experiences which I own are experiences of which I have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness, and that all experiences of which I have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness are owned by me. This, of course, leaves it quite possible that to own an experience and to have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of it are different relations, just as to have size and to have shape are different qualities, although neither can subsist without the other. I am personally somewhat doubtful whether the alleged two relations of ownership and of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness do in fact differ. I strongly suspect that we have here just two names for a single relation. But it is not essential to my argument that the supposed two relations are identical, so long as it is admitted that one does not hold in the absence of the other.

I think that we can now define a conscious experience as follows. It is an experience occurring in connection with a certain living body and such that the mind which is controlling this body at the time when the experience happens has to the experience *at least* the relation of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. An unconscious experience would be one which occurs in connection with a certain living body and is such that no mind which is controlling this body at the time when the experience happens has to the experience *even* the relation of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. Now the latter

includes theoretically two possible cases, viz., experiences to which no mind at all has this relation, and those to which some mind which is not at the time in control of the relevant body has this relation. We might call these *Absolutely* and *Relatively* unconscious experiences respectively. If we accept the view that the relations of ownership and of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness agree exactly in their extension we can substitute the following more handy definitions. An absolutely unconscious experience would be one which is owned by no mind ; a relatively unconscious experience would be one which is owned by some mind which is not in control of a body at the time when the experience happens ; and a conscious experience is one which is owned by the mind which is in control of the relevant body at the time when the experience happens.

Before leaving this subject, it is necessary to say something about the *tests* for the consciousness or unconsciousness of an experience. We must always distinguish in theory, and often in practice, between the definition of something and the tests for its presence. It may often happen that the characteristics which are mentioned in the definition of x are such that it is not, in practice, very easy to note whether they be present or absent in any given case. And it may be that there are certain other characteristics, whose presence or absence it is much easier to notice, which are such that their presence or absence is a trustworthy sign of that of the defining characteristics. In such a case, these other characteristics will be taken as the practical test for x, and so the test will differ from the definition. Now I think that the test for the consciousness or unconsciousness of an experience is generally certain positive or negative facts about memory, although I do not think that any relation to memory enters into the definition of conscious and unconscious experiences. If I can remember an experience by normal means I take this as a test that it was a conscious experience ; for it is

commonly assumed that I can remember by normal means only those experiences which have formed parts of my mental history, *i.e.*, which were owned by me and of which I had at least simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. The test is not infallible. I can, no doubt, have illusory states which simulate genuine memories of my own past experiences, just as I can have illusory states which simulate genuine memories of events in the external world. Still, it is a fairly safe test so far as it goes. But it obviously does not go very far. Failure to remember an experience by normal means is no guarantee that it was not owned by me; we should all admit that there are probably vast numbers of experiences which we have owned and which we can no longer remember. Thus my inability to remember an experience by normal means is by itself no guarantee that it was absolutely unconscious or even that it was unconscious relatively to me.

We have, however, another kind of memory which we should commonly express by the phrase that "we remember *not* having such and such an experience." To remember not having the experience x is quite different from not remembering this experience. The former might be a test for the unconsciousness of an experience, whilst the latter certainly is not. What exactly do we mean when we say that we remember not having a certain experience? It will be best to appeal to an example. Livingstone said that he remembered not feeling any pain when he was in the jaws of a lion. I take this to mean that, while in the jaws of the lion, he actually introspected and tried to notice painful sensations, and that to his great surprise he failed to find any. By saying that he remembers not having painful sensations he means that he remembers looking for them at the time and failing to find them. Thus I think that to remember not having the experience x means to remember looking for x under conditions in which one could hardly have failed to notice

it if it had been a state of oneself, and to remember that the result of the search was negative.

Subject to the general possibility of delusive states which simulate genuine memories, this is a good test for concluding, either that no such experience as x existed at all, or that, if it existed, it was unconscious. It does leave open the possibility that x did not exist at all, and thus by itself it is no proof of the existence of an unconscious experience. But, if we can add to it some positive ground for thinking that the experience x really did exist, the combined evidence would be strongly in favour of the view that this state was not owned by me, and therefore, was either absolutely unconscious or at any rate unconscious relatively to me. Again, I may sometimes be able to infer from my memory of my past actions that I did not own a certain past experience, and therefore that, if it existed at all, it must have been unconscious, at least relatively to me. Take the example of the spectacles. I can remember that I was looking for them, and I can remember that I failed to find them. It is reasonable to suppose that, if an experience of seeing the spectacles had existed at the time, and if it had been owned by me, I should have found them. As I did not find them it is reasonable to conclude, either that no experience of seeing them existed at all, or that, if it did, it was unconscious, relatively to me at any rate. To decide between these two alternatives further information of a different kind is needed.

(4) "*Unconscious*," *as applied to Traces and Dispositions.* We can now pass to an entirely different use of the words "conscious" and "unconscious." It is found that, in order to account for many everyday facts about our ordinary conscious experiences, it is necessary to refer to experiences which we had in the remote past. Memory is the most obvious example of such a fact. I remember now something which I saw or heard last year, and of which I have not thought in the interval. And, of

course, there are plenty of other facts about our present experiences which can only be explained by reference to other experiences which we had long ago. We may sum up this whole mass of facts under the name of "Mnemic Phenomena," borrowing this phrase primarily from Mr. Russell and ultimately from Semon. Now, either we must assume a wholly new kind of causation, in which one part of the total cause is separated from the rest and from the effect by a considerable gap which contains no relevant events, or we must fill in this gap by some hypothetical persistent entity. Mr. Russell has tentatively suggested that the former may be the right course to take; but no psychologist has taken it as yet. We have so far assumed that such gaps are filled by something which we call "traces," and it is very doubtful if we shall ever be able to do without some such hypothesis for explaining mnemic phenomena. It is supposed that experiences leave these traces; that the latter persist; and that, when suitable stimuli excite them, they either give rise to new states of mind, such as memories, or modify states of mind which are, in the main, due to other causes.

Along with these traces we must include innate dispositions. These are assumed in order to explain those differences between the mental states of individuals which cannot be completely accounted for by differences in their past experiences and present circumstances. Dispositions are, of course, as purely hypothetical as traces. They differ from traces in their origin; since they are supposed to be innate, whilst traces are due to experiences which happened within the life of the individual. They also differ, in one respect at least, from traces in their consequences. Traces may lead, amongst other consequences, to memories of the experiences which left the traces; dispositions naturally cannot do this, for, if they were formed by experiences at all, these experiences took place in the lives of our remote ancestors. Apart from these differences, dispositions and traces would seem

to be very much alike; and, as both are purely hypothetical and are known only by their effects, there seems to be no harm in lumping them together.

Now it is usual to call traces and dispositions "unconscious states," and some people even call them "unconscious *mental* states." They are certainly unconscious, in the sense that we have not even simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of them. And they are no doubt states of something or other. But we have no right whatever to call them "mental states" or "states of mind," except in some highly Pickwickian sense which would need special explanation. To use such phraseology implies that we know that they are of the same general nature as the only mental states with which we have any direct acquaintance, viz., our own experiences. And there is not the faintest reason to believe this. The fact is that we know nothing whatever about the intrinsic nature of traces and dispositions; they are simply the hypothetical causes of certain observable effects and the hypothetical effects of certain observable causes. True, these observable causes and effects are experiences; but this is not the least ground for supposing that the traces themselves are of the nature of experiences. This is disguised by the silly metaphor that past experiences are "stored up in the unconscious." Literally interpreted, this phrase is unintelligible nonsense. Suppose I am bitten by a dog, and afterwards remember the experience from time to time. The experience may have lasted for five minutes and ceased twenty years ago. To say that the experience has been stored up in the unconscious literally means that, in spite of this, the experience has *also* been existing for the last twenty years. Moreover, the dog was an essential factor in the experience; and the dog has long been dead. But, if the experience of perceiving the dog literally persists in the unconscious, the dog himself must literally persist in the unconscious to be the object of this perception. Of course, it will

be said that no-one does mean anything of this kind when he talks of experiences as persisting in the unconscious. It is true that everyone makes haste to reject such preposterous consequences when once they are pointed out. But I think there is no doubt that many people do hold views which, if they could be induced to state them clearly, would be found to lead to these consequences. For instance, Rivers in his *Instinct and the Unconscious*, asserts that the content of the Unconscious is suppressed experiences, and gives as an example of such an experience, a fright which one of his patients had had many years before with a dog in a passage.

Of course, what persists is not the experience, but is the trace which the experience leaves. And there is no more reason to suppose that the trace of an experience resembles it or any other experience than to suppose that deafness resembles an attack of scarlet fever. The plain fact is that we know nothing at all about the intrinsic nature of traces, and that we ought therefore studiously to avoid all phrases which suggest that we do know something about it. I propose to call traces and dispositions by the innocent name of "mnemic continuants." The reason for calling them "mnemic" is obvious. The words "continuant" and "occurrent" have been introduced by Mr. Johnson in his *Logic*. Our ordinary states of mind are occurrents, *i.e.*, states which happen from time to time, last for a little while, and then cease. In contrast with these, we can call traces and dispositions continuants, because they are supposed to persist for long periods, and to fill the gaps between our occurrent states of mind. The phrase "mnemic continuants" has the twin advantage that it does express all that we know about traces and dispositions, and that it does not tacitly imply anything that we do not know about them.

(5) "*Unconscious*" *as applied to Inaccessible Experiences.* We must now consider yet another sense in which the word

" conscious " and " unconscious " have been used. To explain this I will take the example just referred to from *Instinct and the Unconscious*. Rivers quotes the case of a patient who had suffered from claustrophobia for many years. By analysing the patient's dreams, Rivers was able to show that the claustrophobia had been started by a terrifying experience which the man had had as a small boy in a narrow passage with a fierce dog. This experience, the patient was wholly unable to remember by normal means. Now Rivers quotes this as a typical example of an unconscious experience, and practically defines the unconscious, for his own purposes, as consisting of such experiences. It is perfectly clear that this is an entirely new meaning of " unconscious." When the experience originally took place it was, in all probability, an ordinary conscious experience which the patient owned. There is no reason whatever to suppose that the boy was unaware, at the time, of seeing the dog or of his feeling of terror, at any rate in the sense of simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. In this the experience contrasts sharply with that of Livingstone and the lion. Livingstone noticed that he was not aware of any pain ; and the circumstances were such that if he had been aware of pain, he could hardly have failed to notice the fact. Hence, we may conclude either that there was no experience of pain at all in Livingstone's case, or that it was an unconscious experience, in the sense that it was not owned by the mind known as " Livingstone." The case of River's patient is quite different. To say that *his* experience is unconscious, means only that he cannot remember it by normal means ; it does not mean that it was an experience of which he had not even simultaneous undiscriminating awareness. It seems to me to be misleading in the highest degree to use the word " unconscious " in these two utterly different senses. Rivers would no doubt say that the experience was conscious when it happened and became unconscious afterwards. This, however, does not alter

the fact that "conscious" and "unconscious" are here being used in two senses which are quite disconnected with each other. In the first sense, an experience either is conscious or it is unconscious; and if it is one it can never become the other. In the second sense, one and the same experience may sometimes be conscious and at other times unconscious, since there might well be times when a person could remember it normally and other times when he could only be got to remember it by special technical methods.

The situation which Rivers is describing is a real and important one; but the terminology which he uses to describe it is hopeless. I shall substitute for the words "conscious" and "unconscious," when used in this sense, the words "accessible" and "inaccessible" respectively. An experience is accessible when it can be remembered by normal means. It is inaccessible when it can only be remembered by special technical methods or when it cannot be remembered by any means. One and the same experience may be accessible at some times and inaccessible at others. Also there will probably be degrees of accessibility. Even when an experience can ultimately be remembered by normal means it is sometimes easier and sometimes harder to do this. And I suppose that when technical methods have to be applied they sometimes succeed easily and sometimes with difficulty. Corresponding to the distinction between accessible and inaccessible experiences there will be a distinction between accessible and inaccessible mnemic continuants. Innate dispositions, so far as we know, are wholly inaccessible, *i.e.*, no methods will enable us to remember those experiences of our remote ancestors which presumably were the ultimate source of many such dispositions. Traces will have various degrees of accessibility, but there will be a broad division between those which normally give rise to memories and those which can only be made to do so by special technical methods.

The work of the psycho-analysts enables us to state one at least of the causes which tend to make certain experiences inaccessible. If the memory of a past experience would be specially painful or shocking to the present self, there is a tendency for this experience to become inaccessible. It is sometimes said that the painfulness or shockingness of the original experience tends to have this effect, but I think that this is only true in a derivative way. The essential factor is the emotional effect which the *memory* of the experience *would* have if it arose *now*. Now the memory of many experiences which were quite enjoyable at the time may be shocking or painful to the present self. Such experiences will tend to become inaccessible in spite of their originally pleasant character. Again, the memories of some experiences which were at the time painful or shocking may be quite pleasant and amusing to the present self. I see no reason to think that such experiences would be specially likely to become inaccessible. All that we can say is that, in a good many cases, the memory of an experience which was painful or shocking when it happened would be likely to be itself painful or shocking to the present self. So far as this is true painful or shocking experiences will tend to become inacessible.

(6) "*Unconscious*" *as applied to Undiscriminated, Misdescribed or Unacknowledged Desires and Emotions.* I think it is necessary to recognize yet another sense of "unconscious," which applies specially to desires and emotions. It is rather closely connected with the sense which we have just been discussing, but it must, I think, be distinguished from this. I have said that we have simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of many experiences without introspectively discriminating them. Introspective discrimination involves a special act of attention, which we can make or not as we like. And, if we choose to make it at all, we can take more or less trouble over it and carry it out more or less thoroughly. Even if we choose to make the

attempt, and perform the discrimination to the best of our ability, we can make mistakes as to the right analysis of our experiences, just as we can make mistakes in trying to analyse and describe external objects which are presented together in a confused jumble in our field of view. Introspective discrimination is a difficult and tiresome process, and no one who is not used to it is likely to avoid mistakes.

Now there are two classes of experience about which we are specially and systematically liable to make mistakes, and these mistakes may take several different forms. The two classes in question are desires and emotions. Desires and emotions are *the* experiences *par excellence*, about which we pass judgments of praise and blame on ourselves and others. If we find that we have certain desires and emotions, we are obliged to think badly of ourselves; and, if we tell other people that we own such desires and emotions, they will think badly of us. We thus have a strong tendency not to discriminate these desires and emotions; or, if we do discriminate them, to misdescribe them to ourselves; or, if we discriminate them and describe them rightly to ourselves, to refuse to acknowledge them to others.

Now, in the case of emotions, we can go wrong, either about the state of mind itself or about the nature of its object. There is, perhaps, hardly any emotion which is regarded as intrinsically bad, *i.e.*, as bad no matter what kind of object it may be directed to. The rule seems to be that one and the same emotion is good when directed on to one object and bad when directed on to another object; and, conversely, that of two emotions directed on to one and the same object, one may be good and the other bad. It is considered virtuous to hate *sin*, but wicked to hate even sinful *people*. And it is considered virtuous to feel *emulation* towards one's rivals, but wicked to feel *envy* towards them. There are thus three methods of saving one's self-respect when one feels a certain emotion towards a certain object and when

one thinks that this sort of emotion ought not to be felt towards this sort of object. One method is to ignore the existence of the emotion altogether, *i.e.*, to refuse to turn our discriminating introspection in this dangerous direction. A second method is to discriminate the emotion properly, but to substitute for its actual object a pretended object of such a kind that it *would* be respectable to feel this emotion towards *this* object. I may really hate Smith or hate Germans, and may recognize that I am feeling the emotion of hatred. And I may persuade myself and try to persuade other people that what I hate is, not Smith or Germans as such, but the special wickedness of Smith or of Germans. A third method is to make no mistake about the object, and to recognize that I do feel an emotion towards this object, but to substitute for the emotion which I actually feel, and which I know that it is not respectable to feel towards that sort of object, another emotion which it would be respectable to feel towards it. I may recognize, *e.g.*, that I feel a certain emotion towards the success of a fellow philosopher's book, and I may pretend to myself and others that this is the respectable emotion of healthy rivalry when it is really the disreputable emotion of disappointed envy. This method is easiest when the real and the pretended emotion really do resemble each other or contain common ingredients, as envy and rivalry do. Methods two and three may, of course, be combined with the happiest results. The two emotions of malice and of righteous indignation are different, but they certainly contain common factors. And their objects are different, but have something in common. Both involve pleasure at another's pain. If now I actually feel malice towards Smith, I can easily retain my self-respect and the respect of others by persuading myself and them that I am really feeling an exalted kind of satisfaction in the thought of Smith's moral improvement through suffering. One of the chief reasons for the extreme popularity of war with women and other non-combatants is that

it renders such substitutions easy, and enables quite ordinary people to go about swelling with pretensions to moral superiority which would be exploded at once in a more normal atmosphere.

The case of desires is in one way simpler than that of emotions. There do not seem to be intrinsically different kinds of desire, as there are intrinsically different kinds of emotion, such as fear and envy. So far as I can see, desires differ only in their intensity and in their objects; and the rightness or wrongness of a desire depends almost wholly on the nature of its object. If then I entertain a desire for some object which it is disreputable to desire, there are only two courses open to me if I want to keep my present high opinion of my moral character and to confirm other people in their high opinion of it. I must either ignore the existence of the desire altogether, or I must persuade myself and others that my desire is for some different object which it is considered respectable to want. As our motives are nearly always mixed, this process is childishly simple. It is only necessary to emphasize that part of the total desired object which is considered respectable, and to slur over that part of it which is considered disreputable. It is needless to offer examples of a process which we are all doing continually.

There is one other point to be mentioned about desires. It has been brought out very clearly by Mr. Russell in his *Analysis of Mind*, though I do not think that it covers nearly all the cases to which Mr. Russell applies it. What we desire at any moment is what we then think will satisfy us. This may be extremely different, both in outline and in detail, from what really would satisfy us. Now we have no infallible revelation as to what kind of state will bring a certain kind of uneasiness to rest; we cannot learn about this by introspection, however careful or thorough, but only by personal experience. The recorded experiences of others may provide us with the basis for a probable inference on the subject; but, in the main,

the only policy is to " wait and see." Now sometimes it is said that what we " really desire," is what would in fact satisfy us. With this terminology it is certain that we are often not conscious of what we really desire, even though, in another sense, our desire is perfectly conscious. I think that this is an unfortunate terminology. It is much better to contrast what we desire or want with what we need. I may set before myself the idea of a large fortune and strive to acquire it. If so, it is preposterous to say that I only think I desire money ; I really do desire it. On the other hand, I may find that, when I have made a great deal of money, the same kind of dissatisfaction persists. And it may be true that this dissatisfaction would have been brought to rest by the acquisition of fame. If so, I *needed* fame. But it is preposterous to say that I *desired* fame, if I never put the idea of fame before myself or strove after it as an object.

What is true then is that needs give rise to desires, and that what I desire may be different from what I need, because I have not found out what I do need. But needs are not desires, and therefore a need of which I am unaware cannot properly be called an unconscious desire. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that one of the meanings which is given to the phrase " unconscious desires," is needs of which their possessor is unaware. I shall call " unconscious desires," in this sense of the word, by the less misleading name of " unrecognized needs."

Having considered this rather special use of the term " unconscious desire," which applies to cases where there is no deception about our states of minds or their objects, but only honest and unavoidable ignorance as to what would actually satisfy our needs, we may return to the cases discussed earlier in this section. Here we have genuine desires and emotions, about whose existence, nature, and objects, we need make no mistake if we choose to introspect carefully enough. We must now say a little more in detail about the process of ignoring such experiences.

If I am going to ignore a certain desire or emotion, which I actually own, I must, in some sense, know that it is there and that there is a reason for ignoring it. Now I have suggested that we have at least simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of all the experiences which we own. I suggest now that this kind of knowledge suffices to warn us that the ice is thin in certain places, and that we had better not turn our discriminative introspection in those directions. The question might now be raised: "How far is this aversion of discriminating introspection from certain desires and emotions a deliberate process?" In answer to this, I think that the following considerations are of importance:—(*a*) If we have a desire to ignore certain experiences, because we suspect that they would turn out to be unflattering to our self-respect, this desire is itself an experience which we shall tend to ignore. For it is not flattering to our self-respect to recognize that we can only keep it by averting our attention from certain of our desires and emotions. It follows that, if we do deliberately ignore certain desires and emotions, we shall almost certainly refuse to acknowledge the fact to ourselves, and still more so to others. Thus I think that the aversion of our discriminative introspection from certain of our experiences is much oftener deliberate than it is admitted to be; (*b*) An aversion of introspective discrimination which starts by being deliberate will quickly become habitual. An analogy will make this plain. If I have a tender tooth I shall at first deliberately try to avoid biting on it, and shall sometimes make mistakes and hurt myself. But very soon I shall automatically avoid biting on it. Now emotions and desires tend to recur, and if I at first deliberately avert my attention from some of them, I shall very soon learn to do this habitually in the future. This habit, like any other, may eventually grow so strong that it cannot be overcome by deliberate volition; (*c*) A method which we very commonly use is to put a ring-fence

round a certain region, to label it " dangerous," and to avert our attention from the whole of it. All patriots do this with the whole subject of the virtues of their enemies and the faults of their fellow countrymen; many scientists put such a fence round all the subjects which are investigated by Psychical Researchers; and the minds of most clergymen appear to be full of regions guarded by barbed wire and a notice that " Trespassers will be Prosecuted." Once this has been done it becomes very easy to assert with perfect good faith that we are not deliberately turning our attention away from any assigned desire or emotion which falls within such a region. We can truthfully say that we never thought for a moment of this particular experience and therefore cannot have *deliberately* ignored it, just as a thief might truly say that he had never touched a certain necklace if he had merely pocketed the case which in fact contains it.

Now I think it is quite certain that what are called " unconscious " desires and emotions are often simply desires and emotions which have been habitually ignored in the ways described above. I propose to substitute for the word " unconscious," when used in this sense, the phrase " habitually ignored." An experience which is unconscious in this sense is not unconscious in any of the senses which we have already noted. It is owned by the person who ignores it, and he has simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of it. And such experiences cannot be identified with those which have become inaccessible. Many experiences which have become inaccessible were not ignored when they happened, and many which were ignored when they happened have not become inaccessible. Nevertheless, there probably is a close connexion between ignored and inaccessible experiences. Experiences which it would be painful or shocking to discriminate are generally those which it would be painful or shocking to remember, and these, we know, tend to become

inaccessible. Moreover, the mere fact that a certain experience is habitually ignored probably tends to make its trace less definite and more isolated, and therefore to increase the difficulty of remembering it by normal means.

The two other processes by which we deal with emotions that fail to flatter our self-respect may be called respectively "misdescription" and "dislocation." Misdescription consists in confusing the actual emotion with another which is considered more respectable under the circumstances. Dislocation consists in substituting for the actual object of an emotion an imaginary object towards which it would be respectable to feel the emotion in question. As we have seen, misdescription and dislocation often take place together and help each other. Undoubtedly, many experiences which are called "unconscious" are simply experiences which we habitually misdescribe or dislocate. Such experiences are conscious, in all the senses of that word which we have previously recognized. If the question be raised whether such misdescription and dislocation be voluntary, almost exactly the same remarks may be made as we made when this question was raised about the ignoring of certain experiences.

(7) *Summary and Conclusion.* I will end by collecting together the various meanings of the terms "conscious" and "unconscious," which we have elicited: (i) As used to mark off different kinds of substances, like men and stones, they simply mean "capable, or incapable, of awareness" respectively. In this sense they are best replaced by the words "animate" and "inanimate." (ii) An animate being is said to be in a conscious condition, if some mind is in control of its body at the time, and this mind is actually aware of something. It is said to be in an unconscious condition, if no mind is in control at the time, or if the mind which is in control is not then aware of anything. (iii) An *experience* is said to be conscious, if some mind which is in control of a body at the time when the experience happens has

at least simultaneous undiscriminating awareness of it. It is said to be relatively unconscious, if the only mind which has this relation to it is not in control at the time. And it is said to be absolutely unconscious, if no mind has this relation to it. As it seems probable that ownership and simultaneous undiscriminating awareness always go together, we can substitute the former for the latter relation in the definition. This is the only *literal* sense in which we can talk of unconscious *experiences*. Whether there is any adequate ground for believing in their existence is left undiscussed in this paper, though certain tests are suggested by which we could decide that an experience was unconscious provided we had reason to think that it happened at all. (iv) Traces and dispositions are often called "unconscious states." But there is no reason to suppose that they are, or are anything like, experiences. It is therefore best to call them by the neutral name of "mnemic continuants." (v) Dr. Rivers has applied the name "unconscious" to experiences which were conscious, in sense (iii), when they happened, but which their owner can no longer remember by normal means. It is best to call them "inaccessible experiences," and to say that their traces form part of the "total mnemic mass." Such experiences do not themselves literally form part of the Unconscious, in any sense of that word; and it is merely confusing to say that the unconscious consists of such experiences. (vi) Lastly, the name "unconscious" is often applied to ordinary conscious experiences which are not properly discriminated by their owner because the recognition of their true nature would be unflattering to him. According to the different methods which are adopted for evading the recognition of such experiences we may say that they are "ignored," "misdescribed," or "dislocated." Experiences to which this happens are most often desires or emotions, and they have a tendency to become inaccessible.

There seems little reason to doubt the existence of unconscious

states in any of the senses defined, except the third. There is indeed no kind of *a priori* impossibility in the existence of literally unconscious experiences in the sense defined under (iii). The most interesting question that remains for future discussion is whether there be any facts which force us to accept the existence of experiences which are literally unconscious, in this third sense; or whether we can account for all mental phenomena in terms of the other, and less exciting, senses of unconsciousness.