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**EVERYMAN'S  
GENIUS**  
MARY AUSTIN

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# EVERYMAN'S GENIUS

# BOOKS BY MARY AUSTIN

GENIUS

A SMALL TOWN MAN

THE LAND OF JOURNEY'S ENDING

THE AMERICAN RHYTHM

26 JAYNE STREET

THE FORD

THE LOVELY LADY

A WOMAN OF GENIUS

THE LAND OF THE SUN

LOVE AND THE SOUL-MAKER

CHRIST IN ITALY

THE ARROW MAKER

SANTA LUCIA

LOST BORDERS

THE FLOCK

THE BASKET WOMAN

ISIDRO

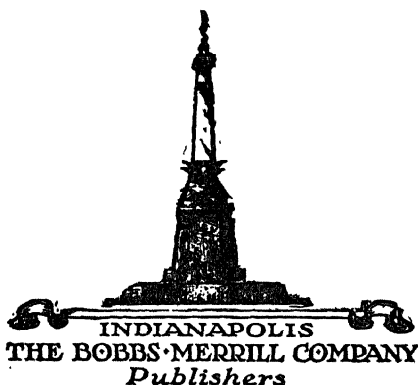
THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN



# EVERYMAN'S GENIUS

*By*  
MARY AUSTIN

*Appendix and Bibliography*  
*With Teaching Notes*  
*By Maxwell Aley*



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*To My Dear Friend*

CLAIRE DANA MUMFORD

but for whose genius for appreciation  
this book would still be a bundle of dusty  
notes in my files.



## INTRODUCTION

IN THE spring of 1922, as a result of a talk before one of Mr. John Farrar's classes at New York University, it was arranged that I should put into shape for publication in *The Bookman*, some of my observations on the interior phases of the writing life, as a corrective to the mechanization of creative processes, following on the recent practise of including courses in creative writing as part of regular university courses in English. It was an undertaking lightly begun, since neither Mr. Farrar nor myself had any idea of the instant and widely distributed interest which sprang up on the appearance of the first article under the caption *Making the Most of Your Genius*. Only three articles were originally planned. In response to the appreciative demand, these increased to ten, with a steadily widening circle of readers under which the author's reluctance to put into book form the by-product of an inquiry which is still in the laboratory stage, has broken down.

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Not that there has not always been, at the back of my mind, a notion that the results of a personal research into the nature and processes of genius, which has gone on intermittently for thirty years, should some day be so presented. But as the inquiry itself has deepened, and as the light thrown upon it by the correlative sciences of psychology and ethnology has broadened its scope, the hope of a complete and ordered presentation of the genius process has retreated, until it is doubtful if any such comprehensive treatment as was originally planned will ever be possible in the lifetime of the inquirer. And since the study was actually undertaken as an aid, in the absence of all other recognized aids, to the creative process in myself, going on during a period of nearly eighteen years in which I found myself marooned in the Mohave Desert, without books, theaters, music, pictures or intellectual associations, there does not seem any good reason why as much of it as has been proved definitely serviceable should not be passed along to be tested and, it is hoped, improved upon by others in the same predicament. What follows, then, is simply a selection, and possibly not the best selection, of instances and devices, discovered and invented

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for managing one's own mind, together with those collected from other workers either by contact or by research among the personal records of creative workers of every race and time. Probably anybody could have made this collection, and done it better, with one exception; and that is the writer's unexcelled opportunity for coming in touch with the operations of the genius process in the stone age of culture as exhibited by my friends, the Indians. Another resource not open to the conventional scholar, has been the prolonged forced contact of the author with other than the educated, "artistic" types of genius, the genius of the blacksmith, the forest ranger, the sheep herder, the village dressmaker who could take your things as they came from the mail-order catalogue, and with a twist and a tuck or two, make them over into something she had never seen except in pictures, which satisfied your utmost craving for personal expression in dress. I recall in particular the genius of a chauffeur, with whom I covered thousands of miles of desert roads—what passed for roads—whose method of memorizing the passing scene could not have been improved upon by the silver screen, and whose faculty for finding his unmapped way and re-

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covering a false lead was almost as keen as a pigeon's. All these sources yielded valuable material to an inquiry rendered keener by the lack of other sources to feed upon. Important leads were furnished by a study of sheep dogs and of the million moving flocks of the Southwest. I was fortunate, too, in coming into touch with these things while still very young, before that snobbishness about genius and talent which is the product of schools, in which the student never comes into contact with anything but the conventionally "best" examples of the completed genius product, arose to prevent my recognizing genius as the unpremeditated motion of man's mind in the direction of the racial experience.

It may be that further study, going on intermittently as occasion arises, may modify some of the conclusions suggested in this book, or possibly reverse them, but not that one about genius being the normal human possession, from which the individual is dispossessed by maladventures of birth or rearing. Nothing we know about the motions of mind has so much backing from the contributive sciences of psychology, ethnology and biology, as this; nothing is so easily confirmed in the general experience.

For the rest, the reader will find clearly in-



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licated the places in which further study is expected to clarify a process or dispel a doubt. Some of these studies have been deferred until that not impossible day when the importance of the study of genius and talent will be recognized, to the extent of providing the competent inquirer with a laboratory and the means of including thousands of cases in an inquiry which so far has been confined to the present writer's personal contacts.

The natural range of those contacts has resulted in the greater number of instances being selected from the experience of literary geniuses. More and more, however, as the inquiry proceeds, it becomes evident that the genius process differs only slightly among all types of creative endeavor. If the material offered here seems to be too much colored by the artist experience, it is chiefly because artists are usually more competent in describing their experiences than are engineers or workers in objective processes, and that curious complex of the mystical and the material, called business. The real hope of the author, in publishing these fragmentary notes of an incompleted research, is not so much to be of help to artist workers, as to evoke from some source the much needed study of the American genius for affairs.



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IN MAKING this more or less tentative presentation of an uncompleted study, the problem of terminology has been acute. It scarcely seems the part of the author to invent terms, and yet, in the present state of psychological inquiry, no entirely satisfactory vocabulary has separated itself from the schools and systems and philosophies of the nascent science of mind. Since this particular inquiry was begun, there has been such a complete alteration of all the popular concepts of the nature and mechanism of mind, that scarcely a single term in common use to-day is more than a decade old, and few will see another ten years' service. In view of which it has seemed better to select a few that are likeliest to survive, and elsewhere to invent such terms and descriptive phrases as will answer the present purpose, and yet be readily pushed aside as fast as more explicit name words are arrived at by orthodox psychologists. The great danger in all such inquiry is that it tends too easily to become word-bound and dogmatic. Since it is the hope of the author that this advance notice

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of a work still in preparation may be taken as suggestive rather than conclusive, the reader is advised that its terminology must be considered as descriptive, and not determinative.

For this volume the following general definitions will hold throughout.

*Psyche*: The individual clot of mind-stuff; the sum of mental processes in the individual, their interactions and residuum.

*Race*: A group of people having a common blood stream and societal relation, who have subjected themselves to a common environment and a common experience long enough to take on reactive capacities such as are the recognized index of their association.

*Racial Inheritance*: The sum of capacities acquired by the ancestors of the individual, to which he has access in meeting the exigencies of his immediate life.

*Genius*: The free, untutored play of the racial inheritance into the immediate life of the individual.

*Talent*: Any capacity for successful activity in a particular direction, with which the immediate-self of the individual is endowed.

*Immediate-self*: The sum of psychic experience since birth, or as long before birth as sensory consciousness begins to manifest.

*Deep-self*: All the rest of the psychic content of the individual.

*Spotlight*: The normal circle of immediate attention.

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*Subconscious:* Material or mechanism not normally within the spotlight, but able to emerge of its own motion, or to be called there by an act of attention.

*Unconscious:* Anything not immediately conscious.

*Inknower:* The mechanism of the level of consciousness which proceeds independently of sense organs or conscious intelligence.

*Intuition:* The work of the knower translated through the subconscious to the intelligence.

*Intuitive-self:* The area of consciousness which proceeds by knowing.

*Subjective-self:* The area of consciousness which proceeds by suggestion.

*Temperament:* The mechanism by which original emotion, either racial or individual, is routed through the psyche, to be recalled at other times and occasions.

*Polarization:* The psychic state in which all the items, either of material or mechanism, are in right relation to each other to insure the highest efficiency for a given adventure, particularly for the creative act.

*Invention:* The combination of items of information or experience by the faculties of the intelligence.

*Creation:* The combination of items of fact or experience by the mechanism of the subconscious in a relation which satisfies an existing concept of livingness.

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*Original:* Any concept or idea arising spontaneously within the psyche, not introduced from the outside. Originality is the capacity for producing such concepts or ideas.

*Autosuggestion:* Any suggestion given by the immediate-self to the deep-self.

*Prayer:* An act of the psyche directed to power or personality outside itself, for the purpose of affecting the existing condition of the individual.

*Auto-prayer:* A similar act of the conscious-self toward its own subconscious.

*Mysticism:* The science of the unseen way of the psyche; a system of methods by which the individual psyche approaches the Absolute independently of the intelligence or the senses.

*Meditation:* A state in which the immediate-self is quieted, in order that the deep-self may have its activities directed toward a particular problem.

*Contemplation:* A mystical state in which the deep-self confronts the Absolute, or one of its attributes.

*Supernormal faculty:* Any faculty found occurring widely among human beings, but not universally, whose capacities exceed those that are normal to the type.

*Primary technique:* The technique of the conception and realization of any creative undertaking.

*Secondary technique:* The technique of expression in form.

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## EVERYMAN'S GENIUS



# EVERYMAN'S GENIUS

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS GENIUS?

EVEN THE people who have it do not definitely know what genius is. Nor has science so much as an inkling how they came by it. Common usage classes all individuals of more than ordinary achievement as geniuses, with special reference to the arts and intellectual pursuits. When the term is used for other types of achievement, it is generally understood to be merely a handsome compliment. Galton, in his studies of *Hereditary Genius*, makes it synonymous with exceptional ability, selecting his examples from the top lists in biographical encyclopedias. By this rating, the best evidence of the possession of genius is to attain to ten lines in the current dictionaries of notability, a thousand years after your death.

Of whatever type, the source of genius and its distribution among races and families has

been supposed to be incalculable, striking as haphazardly as lightning, not subject to the ordinary laws of heredity. Probably I am the only person to be found who will insist that genius can be acquired, and very likely I shall not be able to make you agree with me. I shall begin by insisting first that genius be described not in terms of what has been accomplished by it, but by *the way it works*. Irrespective of the material in which it works,—paint, musical tone, mechanical processes,—genius is primarily a *type of psychological activity*.

All working artists, and such critics as are able to distinguish between a work of art and a method of artistry, know that in describing a particular book or statue or musical composition as a work of genius, they have merely described the process by which it was produced. Since any work of genius, as distinguished from works of invention or research, tends to be superior, we have fallen into the careless habit of using the term only in reference to works of standard excellence. But the creative worker himself knows that genius is indicated by the manner in which the work is conceived and produced. Because works of surpassing genius—works in which all the

other qualities that may combine with genius are also of first rank—are rare, we get into the way of assuming that genius itself is rare; when, as a matter of fact, it is one of the most widely distributed human traits, no age and no tribe being without its notable examples.

Genius shows itself in the individual by the sudden appearance of ideas or concepts, often of the greatest complexity, seeming to come not by way of observation or cogitation, but from somewhere above or beyond him, with sourceless connotations of authority. It is this unexpectedness and this authoritativeness which led the Greeks to name the experience genius, conceiving it to be the whisper of a spirit, a genius, at the ear of the inner mind. Practically all peoples have had some such notion of the process, noted as going on in themselves, the savage attributing it to his totem animal, or to the spirits of his ancestors. Modern psychology admits the whisper, but names the source as the deep-self, the accumulated emotional and conceptual experience of the race, expressing itself through the individual as the “race mind.”

It is this process, so universally witnessed to in the human race, that is to be studied here, as a way of the mind, studied in its operation

rather than in its results. It is to be studied as a normal operation; all the earlier attempts to explain genius as a disease, as a phenomena of psychopathy, having fortunately fallen into discredit to the extent that makes it unnecessary to discuss them here. Geniuses occur normally in every race, in every period of history, in every department of human activity. Very many interesting problems, as posed by students of the subject, as to how genius occurs, why it appears to occur locally, and intermittently as to time, why it so seldom reproduces itself in the direct line, must be passed over until more data is collected. What is proposed here is to examine the way in which this most prized human attribute *works*.

In order to discuss the genius process in the individual it will be necessary to agree upon a terminology which will hold, at least throughout this discussion. The first distinction in this field should be the distinction between genius as a *natural capacity of the individual to do work in a particular way*, and other endowments of the individual, such as talent, intelligence or the racial index. To do this intelligently we must establish some sort of map or plan of individual make-up suf-

ficiently broad to be of practical universal application. We begin by accepting the general trend of biological evolution, in which we find self-consciousness as the distinguishing characteristic of the higher types of creatures, and consciousness predicated as characteristic of all living creatures. There are not wanting orthodox scientists to allow some form of consciousness even in non-living matter, a kind of cosmic consciousness, which, if it is to be admitted as existing at all, must also be a part of man's material make-up. But at any rate, we can safely begin by postulating as the earliest level of living consciousness, an intuitive or unknowing consciousness, such as is characteristic of forms of life in which the senses are rudimentary and the intellect as yet unevolved. Every individual is aware of an intuitive or unknowing self, functioning at this early level, comprising the sum of his organic experience in such matters as digestion and assimilation of food, circulation of the blood, respiration, reproduction, and possibly as the determining factor in certain intuitional experiences to be discussed later. Next in the evolutionary sequence, man recognizes a deep-self, in which are comprised all the stages of self-consciousness lived through by his ances-

tral stem from its earliest differentiation to the date of his own birth. With that date, or possibly a little before it, begins another sum of experience, leading on to the present hour, or possibly a little beyond it, which comprises his immediate-self. The intuitive-self, the deep-self, the immediate-self, these three general distinctions are common to all men. Within any one of them there are still to be described and classified many subdivisions, layer upon layer; but these three constitute the capital upon which the individual lives. Within two of them—the deep-self which comprises the sum of racial experience, and the immediate-self, the sum of personal experience—most of his important psychological operations take place.

By the use of the terms deep-self for the repository of inheritance, and immediate-self for the repository of experience, we avoid the pitfalls of that vast vague term, the subconscious. It must be borne in mind that “the subconsciousness” is not a special faculty or attribute of the mind, as the memory, the imagination, the will. It is a term of relativity, used to describe the relation of some particular area of the individual consciousness to the bright spotlight of self-awareness. Items



of racial experience remain almost wholly subconscious. Items of immediate experience may become temporarily involved in *unconsciousness*, or, as we say, forgotten. Or they may linger in the outer fringes of awareness, until, returning to the spotlight under emotional stress or in connection with some emotionalized hypothesis, such as spirit communication, they get credit with the uninformed as supernormal. This sort of thing often passes itself off for genius, deceiving not only the onlooker, but the individual to whom it occurs.

There is another type of pseudo-genius common among children who have lived rather exclusively among grown-ups; submerged memories of things heard, discussed or read aloud, reappearing years afterward as original. The profound wish of parents to have the child prove especially gifted, will often, even when not directly expressed, produce in a suggestible child, superficial traits of genius. Many of our infant prodigies are undoubtedly of this type.

It is in order to distinguish true genius—the kind that the student may with confidence encourage in himself as a means of livelihood and his personal contribution to society—from

the hundred and one lapses from the various levels of consciousness common to all of us, that I have hit upon the terms *intuitive-self*, *deep-self* and *immediate-self* as descriptive of actual and naturally differentiated phases of psychological evolution. It was not until I had made this distinction in types of phenomena collected, that I was able to arrive at any definition of the genius process. As soon as I was able to refer phenomena of genius to one or another level of awareness, it began to appear that genius is simply the capacity of the immediate-self to make free and unpremeditated use of racial material stored up in the deep-self, as well as of material acquired in the course of individual experience, as will presently be shown.

We do not yet know very much about how the deep-self is constituted. We do not know just how experience becomes incorporated in the psychic inheritance, whether it passes with the germ plasm, the body cells, or in some way not yet determined. Intensity of the primary reaction has something to do with it, and motor habits. Long exposure to a given environment appears to produce an inheritable effect. But we know, as yet, no reason

why one race should seem to profit by its own experience from generation to generation, and another race remain practically stationary for epochs. Perhaps all we are justified in saying is, that there is a progressive amelioration of type along the line of racial experience, and that in every race, individuals appear who are able to act on the sum of that experience, without having acquired it objectively. What breeding means in human beings, is inborn capacity to deal with situations peculiar to their racial inheritance. In other words, good breeding is a genius for societal relations, as one observes it among the English, as artistry is a genius for art expression, as it is found in Russian and Italian people; genius itself being an inborn capacity for utilizing racial experience in meeting immediate exigencies.

On this basis genius becomes the most natural thing in the world. Why should not man inherit accumulated capacity for telling stories, as well as accumulated capacity for digesting food? As a matter of fact, he does. The real wonder is not that one man should be a genius, but that every man should not be. Probably if we could get our minds away from the exclusive contemplation of preferred types of inheritance, we would discover that

most men have genius of one sort or another. There can be a genius for chess-playing and for chemistry, for sex-provocation and for trimming hats. I have a friend who has a genius for cooking. She has had no training and does not know the difference between calories and calomel, but shut her up in an ordinarily equipped kitchen with a totally unfamiliar article of food, and in the course of the morning she will have arrived at the one perfect way of cooking it. This is the way genius, in the presence of its predestined material, works. The majority of instances given here are drawn from the experiences of literary geniuses, but in principle most of them will probably be found equally applicable to architecture, picking pockets, music, stock-brokering and the mechanical arts.

On this assumption, that genius is the normal capacity of the individual to distribute the energy of racial experience in particular directions, we shall find ourselves obligated to treat with equal respect, evidences of genius in every field of human activity. Also it will be necessary to discriminate between the genius process, and the other attributes of the individual which determine the direction in which a given genius works, or determine its

rank in a scale of more or less importance. We must have clear distinctions between genius and talent, between genius and intellect. We must discard once for all the assumption that to have genius necessarily means that one is born to do work that will be called "great." Greatness in any field is measured finally by the length of time a given work maintains itself in the thought-stream. Thus the savage who in some lonely desert noon discovered that the changing shadow of his staff bore a constant ratio to its height, was as great, possibly a greater man than Newton or Einstein, and the author of the first lyric a more notable, if unremembered, genius than the author of the last. Genius may be for an hour or a thousand years; its indispensable quality is continuity with the life-push. For if genius is what I think it is, it is the growing tip of the race-life, having behind it the long unbroken stem of racial experience, using the individual as the instrument of new adventures and possible increments of growth. What is behind all genius, the "drive" that carries it past inhibitions of environment, social inertia and downright opposition, is this impulse to growth, deep life demanding more life, experience aching to add experience to itself.

Its appearance in the evolution of the individual is as natural as birth. This at least is the only explanation which accounts rationally for the authority the genius impulse has with its host; for the joy and the sense of at-one-ment with the universe which its fruitful operation affords the possessor; for the terrific struggles of genius to realize itself in a given medium; and for the agony of frustration.

Very much more work will have to be done at the point at which genius either shows itself, or fails to show itself, in the individual. All the studies so far made, indicate that the genius principle is at work in us in ways as yet unsuspected and not always desired. That criminal impulses may be normal examples of its operation, that many so-called criminal tendencies are but the survival of experiential gains in directions once important to racial survival, but now outlawed, is generally accepted by criminologists. Why, indeed, should there not be a genius for manslaughter in a race which has devoted so large a part of its past activities to killing? Already we are beginning to see in military genius, especially when it occurs among the enemy, such undesirable survival.

Our present educational system completely ignores this view of genius as the irruption, into the immediate-self, of inherited capacity to deal with particular activity. So we have very little data as to the manner in which genius declares itself in the average person, and in respect to the minor activities such as blacksmithing and dressmaking. Among the very great we have instances of genius showing itself painlessly and involuntarily in childhood, as in young Mozart, composing musical themes at the age of five. The author's own studies among primitives go to show that as far back as the stone age, the tendency is for genius to come through at adolescence, and to partake of the disturbances of that perilous passage. It is natural that the struggle of the deep-self to come into working partnership with its host, would occur at the time when the mechanism for handing on the racial inheritance is ripened. So natural that I have often suspected that many of the vagaries of adolescence usually ascribed to sex-adjustment, could be handled better on the assumption that they are incidental to the attempt of the deep-self to strike a balance between the inheritance and the individual capacity.

Here again we touch an area of psycholog-

ical importance in which almost no work has been done. We do not know anything about the relation of genius, in its quality and scope, to the constitution of the immediate-self that entertains it. It is quite possible that certain types of psychic disorganization, especially that one which used to be called possession, may be the result of a failure of accommodation between the urge of the deep-self toward expression, and the instrumentation of the immediate-self. No one is able to say whether the individual has only a little genius because he has only a little cerebral or other physical capacity, or whether he has a little genius because his genius inheritance is small. Is the light dim because the lamp is of insufficient candle power, or is the current itself weak?

These questions are important because they bear directly on the practical, personal problem of making the most of your genius. They point the way for a working distinction between the genius impulse in the individual, and the resources of genius. Edgar Lee Masters insists that it is the resources that fix the distinction between great genius and small. At any rate they make the difference between the man who is a great genius and the genius who does great work. There does



exist such a distinction; as in Walt Whitman, so much of whose work is clumsy and adolescent, but whose genius was transcendent, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who bulks greatly and will undoubtedly occupy a more considerable space in the literary stream, but whose genius is neither so universal nor so shining as Whitman's.

For the purpose of this study, then, to discover how genius works, or may be made to work, we are pledged to a definition of genius as the capacity of the individual to make use of racial material. We are to think of this capacity as normal for all, varying in range and intensity, but liable to interruption and inhibition by mishandling, and *strictly conditioned by the personal endowment* of talent, intelligence, imagination, character. Thinking of genius as a psychic activity, we shall then have to think of this personal endowment as constituting the chief resource of genius.

The sum of such resources falls naturally into three groups, the racial inheritance, the talent-intelligence endowment, and the environmental endowment, such as education, social background, class and caste. In a long settled and racially unified country, all these

resources can be thought of as presenting certain type relationships, which in their turn give rise to traditional ways of accommodation, producing a fairly unified effect, called the genius of the race. But in the United States no such unification either of the impulse or the effect is possible. We have no lack of American geniuses, but as yet no strongly characterized American genius. Even under democratized education, individual resources are so varied that much of our genius energy is lost in the uninstructed struggle toward homogeneous expression. It is in the hope that, by informing ourselves of the genius process and the relations of genius to its resources, a habit of rapid and successful coordination may be established, that these studies have been undertaken.

## CHAPTER II

### RACIAL RESOURCES OF GENIUS

THERE is a sense in which all the resources of a given genius may be thought of as racial. But by race, in this connection we mean something a little more explicit than is ordinarily implied. Ethnologists, who look for a physical index, are agreed only in not agreeing on that index as absolute, so that we can expect very little help from them in problems of racial psychology.

Inside the three great racial divisions of the human species, black, yellow and white, such mixtures and variations have occurred, that the psychological characteristics of the subgroups of white or black or yellow peoples can not all be described by the same terms.

Among the causes of psychological variation we recognize differentiation of the blood stream, different societal relationships, different environments, different experiences. When any group of people has been for a long time subject to these four factors, when

it has had them in common for generations, that group begins to exhibit typical psychic reactive capacity, which we recognize under one general term as "racial."

A group of people having a common blood stream tends to have a similar range of talents and intellectual capacities,—such as the negro's for music, and the Greek gift of form,—which even in blood mixtures go along with the dominant blood stream and betray their racial derivation under any disguise. Common talents give rise to definite habits of reaction to particular experiences, and tend to set up corresponding incapacities to react in any other manner. Two such strongly marked sets of habits go a long way toward determining the environment of the individual by circumscribing his capacity to enter into and absorb an unfamiliar environment, thus keeping him forever enclosed in a thin film of race. This is notable in peoples among whom pre-determination or accident has fostered in-breeding.

Among American Indians, the purest race we know anything about, the racial quality of both art and intellectuation is very marked and therefore easily studied. Among Jews, in whom the blood stream is more mixed, but

the societal and experiential factors more restricted than those of the people among whom they lived, the differentiation between them and other modern groups is still largely based upon the talent for experiencing life. Never having experienced marriage, political allegiance or economic competition except in ways peculiar to their social inheritance, they show marked peculiarities of understanding and reaction, in directions presented to them by people whose way of experiencing these fundamental relationships has been differently conditioned.

But because the American Indian has been long habituated to the American environment, and since natural environment is so potent an influence in art form, the art of the American Indian, his poetry, his music, his design, is nearer to the present aspect of those things among native Americans than modern American art is to the art of the Jews. There may, of course, be a factor here of which we have never taken full account. If the author's suspicion is correct, that the blond whites are off the same racial stem that produced the Mongoloid peoples, from which the Amerindian stock arose, then modern Americans may actually be closer to Indians by blood than they are to Semitic peoples. What we have to

emphasize, however, as establishing differentiations of genius along racial lines, is not comparative quality, but comparative experiences. It is experience which differentiates the people of central Europe rather than blood; the blood stream contributing talent by which the residuum of experience is expressed. A study of the music of the central European peoples, studied for these two factors alone, experience and racial talent, would make all this matter of racial genius much clearer.

Fortunately the so-called Nordic, or Anglo-Saxon, stream of experience, which has so far dominated in American expression, is extremely rich and varied. It has absorbed the ancient fruit of Greek and Roman culture; exercised itself profoundly in Christian mysticism; infinitely ramified the experience of loyalty and personal service as afforded by the long European adventure in feudalism. It has included the curious and exclusive institution of chivalry, risen to the Italian Renaissance and achieved the most extensive experiment in democracy ever undertaken. In the process of this experimental journey, Greek and Latin and Gaelic and Celtic, as well as British and Anglo-Saxon, elements have been incorporated in its blood stream.

Thus it would be a very new people or one definitely inexperienced, that could not find somewhere within the American stream, familiar currents of experienceability, as the ground work of understanding for a great variety of non-Nordic expression.

William Butler Yeats does not discover any insuperable difficulty in reaching an American audience with his poetry, which is racial not only in its experience but in form and rhythm and cadence and figures of speech.

We have so much of the Celt in us—or does Mr. Yeats call himself a Gael?—and the Celt has so much of us in him and we both of us have so many common roots in Classicism and Christian mysticism, that the slight assonance of communication in Yeats' poetry becomes an added charm. In the same way we show ourselves hospitable to a great variety of types of architecture, such as housed our remote ancestral strains, readapting them to the American experience. If you go intelligently along one of our new spacious streets you will see the operation of the law of racial adaptation in creative form, springing convincingly on every side. You will see, for instance, that a synagogue of wealthy Jews will reproduce a coherent and satisfying type of Oriental

architecture, and that alongside it a society of Mystic Shriners made up principally of un-oriental northern European strains will produce with the same elements, a monstrosity.

Nobody has done definitive work in this problem of the limitation of genius by racial type, but my own studies, which are by no means final, indicate that genius never crosses the blood stream. It does not appear probable that individuals of one race can have anything but intellectual access to the deep-life of another race, although there is some reason to suspect that in rare individuals such access may become instinctive after long association of one people with another, even without intermarriage.

Thus often, when I am among Indians, I find myself possessed of enlarged understanding of them, even on points on which there has been no direct communication, as Jews living in a Ghetto, with restricted social intercourse, among Germans or Slavs, after many generations acquire an intuitive understanding of the Germanic or the Slavic mind. But such intuitive exchanges do not produce alterations in racial capacity. What we know as harmony in music is comparatively new in our racial experience, less than a thousand years old. It



seems to have been acquired by the various present European races at about the same time. As a result, in all of them there are now born a large proportion of children who not only play instruments of harmony by ear—that is, from the deep-self—but have been known to compose harmony as early as the age of five.

The American Indian, however, has not yet arrived at appreciation of harmony. Consequently, though he is exceedingly musical in his own medium—almost any Indian you meet being capable of composing musical themes and melodies in the aboriginal scale—I have never found one of undoubted pure blood who can play an instrument of harmony by ear. Indians have been taught to play and sing in harmony, but if you watch any Indian school band, you will discover that each performer is playing his part alone, and a shallow effect of harmony is produced by the aboriginal faculty for rhythmic coordination which enables all the players to come out at the same place. Half a dozen times in my search, which has extended over twenty years, cases of ear playing Indians have been reported to me, but in every case not apparent at once to the eye, a little inquiry has shown the blood to be mixed.

On the other hand the negro, who had already acquired rudimentary harmony before leaving Africa, has, while living in a social environment where harmony is the accepted musical mode, developed an almost universal genius for it. All this is important to writers in America, since it seems to indicate that genius of pure-blooded stock, but outside the Anglo-Saxon blood stream, especially if outside the Anglo-Saxon social inheritance, will not be able to draw on any racial experience but its own, and will tend to produce art forms distinct from those developed within the Anglo-Saxon stream. I say tend, because there is always the unifying effect of a common environment. There is also the possibility of the newcomer's picking up within the Anglo-Saxon stream, traits that came into it from his own blood stream. Thus an Italian or a French youth, growing up in an older American group, may assimilate himself to the Roman and Norman inheritance, which is certainly a part of our English ancestry. But a Jew or a Serb or a Slav, however much Americanism his immediate-self may take on, when he begins to draw upon his deep-self will find himself able to reach only the experience of his racial past. If he has a very acute and

critical intelligence, as the genius product begins to pass through that intelligence into a book or a play, he will be able so to modify his expression as to bring it within the understanding of other racial minds he wishes to reach. But if this hypothetical foreignly derived genius prove to have crossbred ancestry, such as is already in the American stream, he may attain a characteristic American expression of it. These are things you can verify by an examination of the fiction written in America by geniuses of many strains.

I am aware that this does not cover quite all the instances of interracial genius; how, for example, Joseph Conrad, a Pole, became an English country gentleman and a master stylist in the English language. Nor does it explain Henry James. Possibly if all the factors were known in any one such case, the explanation would prove quite simple. What I am trying to do here is not to exhaust the subject, but to make some suggestions by which the foreignly derived American genius may handle himself most successfully.

We are probably safe in asserting that to be a genius means to have the use of racial material without the trouble of acquiring it by conscious effort on your own account. But

we must not think of that material as lying wholly in the past. There is a racial life of the present, and a racial trend prophetic of its future achievement, both of which are, in the nature of things, part of the resources of genius.

The 'deep-self' is not only that part of us which preserves the affective values of the past; it is also that part of us which will hand on the affective increments of the immediate-self to our racial legatees. It must therefore be thought of as continually at work modifying the life process, as between the racial tendency and the environment. A generous endowment of genius, then, gives to its possessor not only the use of the racial inheritance, but wide range through the present racial experience, and an intimate sense of racial direction. That is how genius manages so often to be a prophetic, "ahead of its time." Just how much knowledge of its own future the deep-self has, is problematic. More, at any rate, than it succeeds in communicating to the immediate-self, but, often, enough to enable a particular genius to anticipate the conscious development of the race by several generations, as William Blake, greatest of English mystics, succeeded in doing.

In speaking of the future as one of the resources of genius, I am within the facts in a practical way that has never come in for sufficient consideration in our educational system. Every genius works for posterity, and not in any vainglorious or highfalutin sense. It is the inescapable condition of livingness that it proceeds along a line, described as "Time," in which there is no absolute demarcation between Now and Then. Though we seem to choose the point of application to that line, toward which our effort is directed, the probabilities are that we do not choose, but are constrained by the laws along which the intuitive-self operates. This possibility will come in for discussion in a later chapter. When we think we are choosing to work only for the immediate hour, we make a contribution to the future equal to our effect upon the present. No genius who hopes to have his work find a large measure of present acceptance can afford to ignore the fact that he is pouring his sweat into a moving stream, of the past of which he may be only subconsciously aware, and of the future completely unconscious, but never rid of either.

The history of artistic genius and, possibly, of scientific genius, seems to suggest that it

is chiefly through the operations of genius that the future declares itself. Thus a new art form or a new scientific principle tends to show itself at intervals some time before it wins general acceptance. Most social revolutions appear to be preceded by the contemporary appearance of new forms in a number of slightly related arts. Such, at any rate, may be discovered anticipating the social and intellectual revolutions that have occurred within the past thousand years.

Next after the racial endowment, the individual must take stock of himself as the instrument of his genius. For this, at present, we have no reliable technique. The intelligence tests, if they measure intelligence, do not, at any rate, measure anything else, and intelligence is only one of the items of individual equipment. It is not, for all types of genius, the indispensable item. There have been cases in which genius has been able to dispense with all but a minimum of intelligence, as Blind Tom, a negro with an intelligence equipment barely reaching the level of a child of five or six, displayed extraordinary musical ability, playing upon the piano to the entertainment of vast crowds. Blind Tom,

however, had to be managed by other people; the genius who hopes to manage himself will find use for all the I. Q. he carries.

In every case genius appears to be strictly conditioned by the *kind* of intelligence through which it reaches us, as the spray of the fountain is conditioned by the nozzle. It can never be exactly alike in any two people. No two of us have exactly the same deep-self from which to draw, neither do we have identical immediate-selves through which we draw it. Every attribute of the immediate-self, commonly called a talent, plays its part in determining the final expression of genius in a work of creative power.

For the purpose of these papers I am going to make a distinction between our talents and the faculties of the intellect which may not be quite the distinction finally agreed upon by the psychologists. Talents are aptitudes which appear to be tied closely to the physical constitution; like color perception, an "ear for music," a sense of rhythm, of proportion, of form. It may be that intellectual faculties, such as reason, comparative judgment, perception and cognition, are equally bound up with the body, but this is not so certain. For the present, at least, we shall have to accept

the general conclusion that all the aptitudes of the immediate-self are body bound, and can not be altered any more than the leopard's spots. There is, however, so much greater availability of our equipment to be had by proper training and handling, that it has almost the effect of talent being made.

There is also the phenomena of latent talent, which may exist quite unsuspected by the host, flaring up in the hands of a competent teacher, who frequently credits himself with its creation, for there is, even among people who deal with it professionally, very little understanding of talent in general. Special teachers who are markedly successful in detecting talent in its early stages, in their own line, usually arrive intuitively at their decisions and can give no reasons which could be systemized into general tests. Teachers of music and dancing, talents for which must be taken very early if they are to come to anything more than ordinary, lay great stress on physical make-up, quality of the hair and skin, general sensitivity, and especially in the case of dancing, quick appreciation of rhythm. Judging from the numbers of people who fail miserably at all the arts and some of the professions, there is nothing we so gen-



erally fall short of as the personal estimate of talent.

Perhaps the most usual mistake is to fail to discriminate between creative capacity and a talent for imitation. Our stage is crowded with aspirants who can give only an imitation of acting, often just as satisfactory to the audience, to be sure, and our magazines are crammed with imitation stories, deceiving the editors more often than the public. The number of art students who turn out to be imitators, either of other pictures or things that might be pictures in competent hands, is incalculable. Not that the honest imitator has not his place, often a well paid place, in the social scheme. Being honest and concerned to make the best imitation possible, he often has a more satisfying time of it than the original creator. It is only when he fails to recognize imitation as his particular field and tries for the rewards of creation that his case becomes tragic.

If we could understand that imitation is the mode of perhaps nine-tenths of the population, that the business man, the banker, the politician, the grocery man are very often spending their lives in whole-hearted imitation of an "ideal" banker or grocery man or poli-

tician, and incorporate this understanding into our educational system, much would be done to mitigate the sense of futility in living which overtakes so large a portion of the human race at one time or another. There is no doubt that self-originating capacity is comparatively rare, and that the best course for many people is to settle upon an ideal commensurate with their natural endowment, and get as much fun as possible out of working to the pattern. But it is also the case that many people do have self-originating capacity, who are never encouraged to make that discovery about themselves, or possibly never allowed by their sedulous parents to make it. They are early inducted into this most overworked business of the "Ideal" and never allowed to deviate from it.

Whether one follows an ideal, or a secret clue in his own breast, it is still important for the young person to take intimate stock of his talents. And the first step in that direction is to discard the common way of speaking of them collectively as "a talent for music"; "a talent for painting." For a high degree of success in either of these careers, a number of distinct and well coordinated aptitudes are required. For music, a talent for tone discrim-

ination, for pitch, for intensity, for melody, for time, for tone color, a musical memory, and definite qualities of emotional response to musical stimuli. For painting one requires a special talent for proportion, both linear and spacial, talent for color, for line, for composition, for color values, and the special quality of reaction that goes with these. Every general talent should be thus resolved to its components, for on the relative development of these, and their play upon one another, will depend the choice of medium and the particular field of expression.

Thus a musician who found tone discrimination his weakest talent, would make a mistake in selecting the violin as his instrument, and a pictorial artist strong in line and proportion but with a feeble reaction to color, would inevitably prove more successful in black and white than in oils.

These contributive talents constitute the instrumentation of genius. Rarely will they be found equally developed in one person. On the degree of individual variation depends the recognizable personal quality of the work. Sometimes they seem to be not quite matched with the individual quality of genius, thus producing men like Watts, unquestionably a

great artist, but never quite a great painter, and Whitman, a great mind, not well equipped for great poetry.

A talent seldom appears singly, but as related attributes, in groups of twos and threes or more, supplementing one another. Sometimes two, or even three, not very closely related groups will appear simultaneously in one person, as in Michael Angelo, painter, sculptor and poet. In other cases, such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, genius of a high order plays back and forth between two nearly equal talent groups for writing and painting. Now we have Thomas Hardy who began as an architect, became a novelist, ends as a poet; whose lasting fame will probably rest on a single dramatic work, *The Dynasts*, combining the best of all three talents for construction, proportion and interpretation. Sometimes we have genius accompanied by high intellectual capacity and rather limited talent as in George Meredith; or a genuine talent for story-telling and a moderate intelligence with not a spark of genius, as in Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Also in the United States we have many examples of pyrotechnic talent, divorced from the deep-self, on negligible terms with its intelligence, operating "on its

own" as a survey of any season's output of popular fiction will show. Occasionally we have also examples of genius imperfectly stabilized, either through uncoordinated intelligence, or through the lack of adequate talent for displaying it, so that it becomes tormented and agonizing, a perpetual gadfly to its possessor. One suspects some such constitutional incapacity for fulfilment in men like Poe and Frank Harris. Whitman, too; though he seems never to have suffered any realization of the meagerness of his poetic gifts in relation to the immensity of his inspiration.

The happiest fortune is, of course, to be born with a first-rate intelligence, and one or two talent-groups, exactly proportioned to the scope of our allotment of genius. The next best thing is to be able to administer our gifts so that the most is made of them with the minimum of effort. Such comfortable co-ordination seldom is achieved once for all. Every time a new piece of work is undertaken there must be a new alignment of the various faculties of the self that produces it. So at the beginning of every piece of creative work there is almost always a time of struggle and torment for the producer.

Of the resources of genius acquired by the

immediate-self, or thrust upon it, such as social background, education and the whole scale of personal experience, special chapters must be made. There is also something more to be said about intelligence as an endowment, which can be better said in connection with the intuitive or unknowing level of consciousness. It can scarcely be said apart from, certainly not before, a discussion of the personal environment of genius. I would not go so far as to say that intelligence is "catching" like measles, but it is certainly intimately bound up with all that proceeds toward us from our societal environment. After many years of study, it is still a moot question in my mind whether the lack of genius may not be a direct result of environment. That both talent and genius may be successfully inhibited by social influences, and that racial inheritance may in a similar manner be rendered a burden instead of an asset, it is not possible to deny. It is, indeed, the inhibitory pressure of social ignorance and superstition in such matters, that makes a more intelligent understanding of the individual equipment imperative to the production of a highly energized society.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GIFT OF EXPERIENCE

THE ONE indispensable talent for creative art, whether of the theater, or literature, or music, or plastic representation, is the talent for experiencing. It is especially fortunate for the writing fraternity that this is one of the rarest talents with which man is endowed, for if all people had the capacity for experiencing life as broadly and as vividly as Shakespeare or Dostoyevsky or Joseph Conrad, there would be nobody left to experience it vicariously in books.

In so far as we might assume any rational excuse for the passage of Spirit through successive generations of self-conscious life, it would be that experience might be acquired. So far as there is any amelioration of types of existence, it seems to be by way of successive increments of experience, and yet, singularly, the capacity for experience is extremely limited. Thus whole races, or tribes, or families, remain, in respect to this increment, practical-

ly stationary for centuries, even for millenniums as we see among Asiatic peoples. Such a group will progress until it reaches a degree of adjustment to its food supply which enables it to maintain its integrity as a species, and present to the rest of its environment a surface upon which only the most dramatic and intense and oft-repeated items can make a dent. Even among peoples who exhibit the highest known type of experiential progress, the actual increment of gain is made at first hand by only a few individuals, and is then translated by them into art forms, music, architecture, novels, and into mechanical devices, in which forms only it can be assimilated to some extent by the masses. Whatever else art, in which general term we must include mathematics and mechanics, may be, its evolutionary function is to mediate experience and distribute its benefits. The best that the creative worker can hope for his work, then, is that it should stand in place of an experience to his audience.

It follows naturally on this necessity of the creative genius to work up his experience into assimilable forms, that the talent for experience should not only be generous, but should receive the most intensive training. Unfor-



tunately it is the one talent of which practically nothing is known. After many years of inquiry, I am uncertain whether this talent is body-bound, like a talent for music or color, or whether it is an attribute of the deep-self, and like genius can be released by intelligent handling. The fact that morons, and certain types of imbeciles, appear to be capable of psychic experience—I mean of experiences that are outside the range of ordinary habit-forming reactions of the human animal—inclines me to think of the faculty for psychic experience as separable from intellect, Mind-Stuff, whatever you wish to call the substance of which mentality is made. This is difficult to state concisely, and the author feels great reluctance to give premature form to what is a surmise rather than a conviction. But if you think of a human personality as being a kind of knot or tangle of several streams of tendency, or kinds of energy, or planes of consciousness, or whatever other figure you adopt to express the complexity of the individual, you might think of the power of entering into different phases of its environment, and collecting something from that contact, as natural to one of these streams or planes. Thus one man has the power to enter intimately into

the nature of matter and brings back knowledge of the mode of the experiences of matter, which we call physics. Another man enters into the experiences of plant life, and the enrichment of our knowledge thus gained is called botany. Still another enters into the group relations of human beings, and adds his experience to the science of sociology, while others enter into personal experience and record the knowledge gained in fiction and poetry.

The general name we give to these various dispositions to experience one kind of thing or another, is "interest." Parents and teachers watch the child anxiously for the appearance of these various "interests," realizing that they normally determine the trend of that child's activities. But I can not find anywhere a rational definition of interest other than this, that it is an innate capacity for experiencing in a given field. An interest in music is the natural index of a capacity to experience music, as an interest in literature is an index of a capacity to experience the personal life of others. The question of whether you experience it for the purpose of reproducing what you learn in your own life, or in art, has nothing to do with the primary capacity. If you

have no other talents than this one of experiencing music, you become a music lover, enriching your private life thereby. If you have specific musical talents, you become a musician, enriching the life of the group.

In taking stock of the resources of the individual genius, this capacity for a particular field of experience as indicated by interest must always be considered as distinct from, and never necessarily involved with, other talents. This is one of my reasons for suspecting that it belongs to the submerged four-fifths of us, that it does occur by itself, unconnected with the talents which we know are associated with definitely mapped brain areas. Having an interest in music or architecture or mathematics in no way implies the existence of genius or of any other talent in those fields. Having an interest in literature may mean only that your major enrichment may come by way of human experiences presented in works of literature. An interest is always worth cultivating for the very possibility of enrichment which it implies, but very many bitter life failures could be forestalled if parents and teachers did not so often make the mistake of accepting interest as the index of the power to reproduce, instead of being as it

undoubtedly is, an index of the power to experience. It is through talent alone that experience is reproduced in form, and through intelligence it is enlarged in content.

It is this range and intensity of individual interest that gives the drive. Where it is absent, the handsomest collection of talents comes to very little, and genius dissipates itself in a score of unfruitful directions. Perhaps this is the place to relate an instance from my notes, one of the earliest that engaged my attention and inaugurated the study on which these observations are based. When I was still in the public school I knew a boy who could take his slate and pencil and draw recognizable pictures of everybody you knew, not only their features but every button and ruffle and ring, and every rig that went past the school with every buckle in the harness, every mended strap in its place. He rather specialized in horses and farm implements, and for meticulous detail his talent was so admired by the neighboring farmer families that finally a sum of money was raised for sending him to Paris, the only possible center of art instruction in those days, where, it was predicted, he would speedily become a famous painter. Young as I was, I somehow realized

that young Biggers was untroubled by the vague, fragmentary ecstasies of which I began to be aware within myself, and that he did not react emotionally to magazine illustrations, which were all the pictures to which we had access. He had shown no enthusiasm for Paris and had no vision of himself such as his friends and neighbors had for him, as a famous artist. Probably it was this incongruity which attached my mind to the incident, and kept me for years alert to anything I came across in the news about American painters in Paris, expecting to see his name at the head of the list. I never did, nor did I ever hear anything except that he had remained in Paris engaged in some kind of "art work." After twenty years I went to Paris myself and after much baffled inquiry in the Latin Quarter, discovered him making his living drawing illustrations for medical works, reproducing the minutia of ulcers and operations and diseased tissues, with the remembered fidelity but without one spark of anything that could be called artistry. He told me that he had had rather a bad time when he realized that he should have to disappoint his backers, but as for himself he had "never been much interested in art." This is perhaps the most outstanding

example in my experience of a single talent, unsupported by genius or any specific drive, for Biggers himself admitted that left to himself he would have chosen farming as a vocation, had often regretted not doing so, and though he made an excellent living and took a natural human pride in being recognized as supreme in his field, he was without other emotional reaction to it. So far as I could discover there was no history of talent in Biggers' family beyond the fact that his mother was "one of those women who can take one look at your things and go home and make something exactly like it." It is by the study of such detached instances that we get some notion of the value of interest as the evidence of the capacity to enter into the subject indicated by the gift, to experience it as a preliminary to creation. It is an open speculation whether the young man in question, had he been allowed to follow his faintly indicated interest in farming, might not in time, by experiencing farming in his person, have been able to put something of that experience into his drawing, and so become an artist of country life. By his removal at the age of eighteen from the only field of activity that did arouse interest in him, he was forever cut off from anything

but the exercise of his faculty for representation.

This opens the whole subject of the authority of interest as a determinant of experience. We are none of us responsible for the environment in which we happen to be born, and it is quite possible to be born, and forced to spend our most impressionable years, in an environment offering no opportunity for the particular kind of experience into which we can completely enter. A study of the lives of great geniuses will quickly show that this was the case with many of them, and that the business of transplanting themselves into a completely experienceable environment was often painful and scarifying as is shown in the lives of Shelley and Stevenson and Henry James.

The individual confronting a situation of this sort must be careful to distinguish between an inborn capacity for special experiences, and an induced preference for particular experiences. Merely to be dissatisfied with your environment of the moment is not sufficient to warrant you in discarding it as not experienceable, since phases of dislike, of positive antagonism, are part of the rhythm of acquaintance. Where love is blind, hate often sees clearly, and pain is an excellent

educator. Very trifling circumstances can set up in the young a desire for a particular environment; a story read, a play witnessed, a mother's reminiscent account of her youth, youth's own discordant state which too often originates an attitude toward the social environment as infantile as the impulse of the child to strike the table it has stumbled against. The true test of experienceability is not liking or disliking, but the ability to do things with and to the environment. Complete detachment from the existing environment may be the result of faulty education, the reading of too many romances, a false or snobbish social ideal in the home. When it is none of these things it is more than likely the evidence of a limited capacity to experience.

Naturally, people are slow to admit that their capacity for experience is limited. What they think is that their opportunity is limited. I recall that all the time I was living in the Mohave Desert, my neighbors thought the life there bitterly circumscribed; so much so that they could not believe that anybody brought up there could ever "amount to anything." Yet all the time I was having the most exciting adventures with sand-storms and cloudbursts, with pocket hunters, sheep herders,



coyotes and cacti; and when all else failed, going off into exhilarating solitary adventures with the Friend-of-the-Soul-of-Man. Do not understand me to be describing mere imaginative indulgences, such as the psychoanalysts call "compensatory," but definite, realizable contacts which have passed the American test for veracity in experience, the test of being worth good money in the literary market. In his book *Materials and Methods of Fiction*—one of the two or three really valuable books ever written on the subject—Clayton Hamilton says that the chief literary asset of the fiction writer should be an experiencing disposition. But there is no book which tells how to acquire such a disposition when you happen not to be born with it. The most that I can undertake to do myself is to suggest some ways in which the most can be made of such a native disposition.

As with the training of all other talents, it is important to have an intellectual understanding of the difference between experiencing a phase of life and being merely informed about it. We often hear critics and professors imploring the young writer to "be himself," whereas the really indispensable thing is for him to be able to be a great many things be-

sides himself. The well endowed writer finds himself provided with a kind of capacity, of which he is the servant rather than the master, for penetrating to the very essence of dust and mire, living tree and whirling orb, rich man, prophet and hunted thief.

I mean something here much more explicit than what is generally understood by the term sympathetic. To be sympathetic is merely to react emotionally in the same direction, and to something of the degree, in which people around you act toward their experience. But there is a type of psychological liaison between the deep-self of the artist and his subject, which is perhaps the fundamental of the artist nature, for which I can think of no analogous rapport, unless it be that between the Healer and the submerged self of his patient. In some way not easy to explain, and often without the artist's connivance, his immediate-self is pushed aside, and by some subterranean passage his whole being flows into and unites itself with what afterward becomes the object of his creative impulse. This is a state akin to the psychological attitude of worship, only in the case of the artist, the object may be something which to his immediate-self is inferior, even distasteful or

reprehensible. Ask any successful fiction writer, and he will tell you that there have been many times in his life when he found himself embarrassed by such identifications of himself with people or situations of which he could not consciously approve, and which he could with difficulty explain to his friends and family.

An Irish friend once told me of going to see the poet Yeats and finding him facing the ocean with arms outstretched, and in a condition almost trance-like, from which my friend had difficulty in recalling him. The poet's only excuse, which was as adequate really, as he felt it to be, was that he was "being the sea." A poet of Yeats' capacity must have succeeded many times in being much more than the sea.

Probably this capacity, which is possessed for a time by all children, is the source of that mimesis, characteristic of primitive man, which Aristotle held to be the basis of poetic drama. I have suspected it of being the basis of all great enterprise, even that of becoming a millionaire.

The difficulty of advising the student how to handle experience in order to make it contributive to future work, is increased by the

lack of quotable data. Most people, when consulted on this point, were quite willing to talk, but unwilling to be quoted either by name or by instance. Europeans who expressed themselves in respect to the practical use of personal experience, were unable even to conceive the American predicament of mixed birthright. A few general practises, however, seemed to be in use among workers of practically all racial origins, and are given here in about the order of their prevalence.

Let the experience have way with you, not going through it timidly groping with one hand and protecting yourself with the other, but with full speed ahead, trusting to the vitality thus generated to carry you through successfully. An experience must be thought of as successful, not in the degree of its pleasantness, but in the degree to which it illuminates the participant.

Make an effort to understand your experience, if not while you are going through it, at least afterward. And in this understanding include all the people who have been associated with you in that experience, their reactions to it, and its final result upon their lives. Also see yourself as these other participants see you, and as you are seen by the

spectators of your experience. Consider no experience complete until it has been treated in this manner.

Never shirk an experience because its reactions or its results turn out to be other than you expected. Go through with it, and hold on to it as long as necessary to understand it, but never one instant longer; letting go an experience personally being indispensable to using it impersonally. Use of an experience while it is acutely personal is never profitable.

Identify your experience with the experiences of other people, or with the experiences treated of in great works of art . . . this is how Père Goriot felt, crushing his silver porringer . . . this is what made Cleopatra desert Antony in the sea fight . . . this is what Wagner expressed in the opening movement of *Siegfried*. Also in your own work, try to recover the thread of an experience which you may unconsciously have been using.

To these general methods which have been contributed by the people mentioned elsewhere in this book, the author suggests that the American worker should take pains to study his own blood stream, and to try to distinguish between the contribution of his racial inheritance and his American experience.

There is no school in which this talent for entering into things outside yourself can be educated. As far as formal education goes, the tendency is to inhibit the talent for fear that its adventures may prove fatally upsetting or that they may prove painful, or, at the least, incur the opprobrium of "queerness." It is difficult to be patient with the prevailing modern fear of pain, because pain is the best evidence that the experience has bitten through the ego into the impersonal, subjective-self, where it can be transmuted into the materials of creative art. Our painful experiences are generally the most informing, and while they need not be sought, they should never be deliberately avoided. Besides, a lot of pain that we suffer is merely the toxic effect of prejudices against particular types of personal adventure. Parents are apt to exceed their prerogative in selecting experience for us in advance, but the habit of abiding by selected experience must not become fixed in adult life. Where it seems advisable to avoid a particular experience on the ground that it may cost more than it is worth, one is safeguarded only by a clear intellectual realization of the worth of that experience in racial evolution. The more information we can have,

gained either from books or by personal exchange, about the way other people have met salient experiences, the better terms we can make with our own. It is more than likely that the present popular interest in "true" stories and personality sketches is the result of a general awakening to the value of experiment as a life factor.

The problem of experience is, for the foreign born or foreignly derived young American genius, dubious and troubling. We are never certain to what extent the racial inheritance governs the individual capacity to experience. Unless carefully watched, it will, however, govern interpretation of such experience to a distorting degree.

In nothing is this racial interpretation of experience so broadly shown as in the treatment of personal sex life in American fiction. One has only to turn over a few pages of any modern love story to know whether the writer is one who has in his inheritance the experiences of Christian mysticism and chivalry, or whether he belongs to the peoples who were, for geographical or historical reasons, left out of both these experiences. An intelligent understanding of sexual tradition among the various strains that go to make up the Amer-

ican people, would do much to soften the asperity of criticism and the insolence of affirmation. Only time can entirely clear up the confusion of personal issues, however, and we shall probably have to content ourselves in the United States for several generations still, with high achievement in the less personal fields of genius enterprise. There is, no doubt, a special French way, and a particular English way, and a characteristic Russian way of experiencing marriage and family life. But there is no French nor English nor Russian way of experiencing physics and chemistry and the strength of materials.

The European reproach of our materialistic success in America is an expression of a general lack of appreciation of the modus of genius, coupled with the ancient misapprehension of genius as functioning only in the fields of literature and art. Genius tends always to follow the open road. Here in America it is open widest in the impersonal directions, toward organization and engineering.

This, again, points the surmise that the capacity for experience takes its rise in the deep-self, since it is able to circumvent the inhibitions of social custom and moral preference.



Where the genius impulse finds the mixed social ideal of the United States repressive and annoying, it escapes promptly into the large and comparatively uninhibited space of scientific adventure.

There is no doubt that our mixed social environment does narrow the scope of social experience; or at least, it diminishes the result of such experience by rendering so much of it unintelligible to the adventurer. Every member of a social complex tends to interpret the adventure in the light of his own racial wisdom, so that there is very little progressive solution of social problems. The result is that we Americans are much more likely to be eminent in bridge building than in novel writing, for several generations to come.

This difference of approach to essential experience gives rise to fumbling and misadventure, and is the difficulty behind the question that young people are always asking, of initiating experience on its own account. That is purely a matter of the interior drive. If you go sincerely about your business of discovering the truth of human behavior, you will find as much and possibly more experience than you can manage successfully, camping on your trail. There is, however, every sober reason

to believe that the deep-self has perceptions of its ultimate performance far beyond the ken of the intelligence. Through these perceptions the deep-self often leads us into experiences the bearing of which upon our work is not made plain for years, as Joseph Conrad was drawn out of the Ukraine to become the novelist of the British Merchant Marine.

This intuition of the creative impulse operates against all prudential considerations, without any visible excuse, calling the artist to the place where the illuminating experience awaits him. In this fashion it called Stevenson, Henry James, Jack London—half your favorite authors in fact. The drive is so personal and so variously expressed that the only limitation we can put upon it seems to be its own nature. Never, I should say, undertake a serious experience on any other initiative. Neither intellectual curiosity nor sensuous lure can lead us to the whole truth behind human conduct which it is the business of the deep-self to discover.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAINING TALENT

WE SHALL arrive at a better understanding of the relation of genius to talent if we adopt the Greek habit of speaking of your deep-self as another, inner man, called by your name and subject to your direction. This is done by the hypnotist and the mystic, and so the auto-suggestionist addresses the deep-self of his patients, teaching them to call by name the recreative principle within themselves; as though it had an integrated existence of its own, quite apart from the life of the immediate-self. The more scope we give to this inner self, and the more we sharpen and train our talents for its use, the better the work it can be required to do. But, in the training of talent, this is the indispensable thing to keep in mind, that the perfecting of a talent is not an end in itself, however pleasurable the pursuit of such perfection. The object of training is that the talent may become more pliable to the genius resident in the deep-self. The

work of genius proceeds more successfully when this distinction is not only kept in view, but is associated with the training of the deep-self to act as a completely integrated whole.

Unfortunately, our educational system insists on ignoring genius altogether and treating "talent" as no more essential to the whole man than a wart is, tolerated only on clear evidence that it can be used in the business of making a living. Even then every talent is tested as if it stood alone, complete in itself.

In the public schools of our large cities we have instruction in music and design and some other rudiments of the fine arts. But few teachers in any of these departments understand that a talent for music may be the forerunner of a great engineering capacity, or an interest in design the first appearance of a genius for novel writing.

Superlative creative gifts may, and frequently do, manifest first as any one of half a dozen architectonic talents. Individual rates of development are extremely variable, but there is a general tendency of special aptitudes to appear in the individual in the order in which they appeared in the racial evolution. Appreciation of rhythm develops very early, and a sense of pattern follows close after.

These appear to be fundamental to all the arts, so that they would have to be accompanied by a pronounced disposition to express themselves in bodily movement to indicate a talent for dancing; or in color arrangements, to indicate painting; or in musical sounds, to indicate musical composition. Where there is a proper sensory instrumentation to make music possible—I mean natural “ear,” or harmonic perception, or vocal development—music may appear in early childhood as a forerunner of some other gift, to which music bears the likeness of the first leaves of the germinating plant. Every one of these might appear in early youth as indices of literary talent. They might not be recognized as literary indications even by the possessor. Innumerable writers have spent the early part of their lives in the sincere pursuit of a tributary talent. It is not until the intellectual faculties important to literary expression—such as imagination, ratiocination, or perception of character—develop, that a genius for writing unmistakably declares itself.

Everybody knows that Bernard Shaw was an exceptional musical critic and an unsuccessful novelist before he was a playwright, and that Benvenuto Cellini began by playing

the flute, became a goldsmith of note, then a sculptor of first rank; and was probably all these only that he might finally write one of the most engaging of human autobiographies. Where the natural equipment is for representative design, we have such progressions as were shown by William Morris and De Morgan, both artisans before they were artists, or in our own day by Vachel Lindsay, who was an illustrator before he was a poet. The deep-self must work with what it has. It must be thought of as exercising itself with the tools that the immediate-self provides, ready to discard them the moment the true implement is ripe for use.

This makes it highly important to educate any talent as soon as it appears. It is also important not to take any given talent too seriously, since there is no knowing that it may not be a purely tentative movement on the part of the deep-self. If this fact were clearly understood by educators, the path of genius would be materially smoothed, for there is nothing the average citizen has less patience with than the fluctuations of talent, assuming them to be evidences of inconstancy of purpose, of defective coordination, or of sheer perversity. There are, of course, plenty

of cases of sequential appearances of talent, where no drive is ever developed. That is to say, cases of talent without genius or in our terminology, cases in which there is a well equipped immediate-self and total failure of coordination with the deep-self. There are also cases of talent and genius coexisting, but without the quality of intelligence to steer them to a worthy goal.

Nine out of ten of many such cases, if properly analyzed, would show themselves to be examples of capacity frustrated by improper education. Keeping in mind the popular view that a talent is merely a natural means of making a living, it is easy to understand how, the moment a given talent appears, it is educated as an end in itself. It is popularly supposed not to "pay" to give a child music lessons or courses of instruction in design unless that child forthwith sets out on a career as a musician or a designer. Pictures of such a career are immediately set up in the child's mind, and every disposition of the talent to transform itself into something of larger scope is sternly inhibited.

If the talent is a true and direct expression of an interior drive, such measures are unnecessary. Do you suppose that E. A. Rob-

inson writes, or George Bellows drew, because some teacher kept them in after school to insist upon it? On the other hand, if a talent is merely a flourish of the deep-self, rehearsing for some more important business, there is tragic futility in trying to hold on to it under the impression that to let go is to exhibit either weakness of character or total failure of the capacity to make a living.

There is, of course, always the practical consideration. Educating a talent costs time, and frequently money. But where direct education is not practicable, a talent which is recognized as contributory rather than primary may be cultivated as a taste. Many men have thus kept alive a talent through thirty or forty years of a business career, finding in the last years of life the leisure and means to make it a direct social contribution. One may not be able to afford a course of instruction in design, but one may read books on the subject and visit the art museums. Or if books and museums are inaccessible, there is the ever present principle of design in flower and leaf, and wave and wind patterns. It is possible to get a helpful acquaintance with music through the phonographic record, and the fundamentals of drama may be studied in the



ritual of the church, the lodge, in children's plays, and in the perpetual plot and counter-plot of nature.

What the deep-self needs for creative expression, what it is reaching out to obtain through these adventitious talents, is fundamental concepts of plot, of design, of proportion in art, of rhythm in life, and of characterization in human nature. The writer will also require a talent for perceiving truth in human behavior, as the bridge builder perceives it in the laws of mechanics and materials. So long as the deep-self is aware of the existence of such fundamental concepts, discoverable in any material presented, it is perfectly able to absorb them, and to translate the knowledge thus acquired from the first medium to any other, into the desired technique. Once when I had gone to call on H. G. Wells, at Hampstead, I found him working out the construction of a Beethoven sonata with a mechanical piano player, and ready to discourse interestingly and at some length on the relation of musical form to novel writing. But Mr. Wells' intelligence is so acute that he could draw help in novel writing out of a laboratory experiment. Galton, in his *Hereditary Genius*, gives numerous examples of this

sort of transmutation taking place between two generations, the genius of the parent being passed on to operate with a new set of talents in the second generation. Thus the son of a musician becomes an engineer, and an authority on mediævalism produces the author of *Richard Yea and Nay*.

It is this intellectual recognition of the relation of what the immediate-self may be doing, to what the deep-self is trying to do, that must be cultivated by the young genius. The insistence of students that it is indispensable for them to come into contact with the perfected forms of art—great pictures, great plays, great musical performances—is not founded on any real necessity of the creative impulse, which has so many times given evidence of being able to work out a competent technique in the complete absence of all these. What the young artist really covets are the emotional values which arise out of contact with great art. So far as the question of developing a technique is concerned, these emotional reactions are largely illusory. The greatest advantage in early contacts with the best art, is the formation of a correct taste and an ideal of achievement. But there is also a danger that the ideal formed may prove to be

imitative, and the development of new and original forms thereby inhibited.

Historians of art form have remarked upon the fact that new forms are often produced out of great poverty of environment. What this means is that the creative self has been thrown back on principles of art, rather than on examples of completed form. It is sometimes a good thing to simulate this fortunate form of poverty, and compel yourself to seek for fundamental reasons behind forms of expression which you can not possibly imitate in your medium.

The indispensable condition for the transmutation of acquired skill into technique in another medium than the one by which the skill has been acquired, appears to be complete submergence of the acquired skill in the subconscious. Thus competency in design, acquired as William Morris and De Morgan acquired theirs, in textile design, must have passed completely out of sight, become autonomic, before it can be made to appear, as it did with both these men, late in their careers, as literary design.

Interesting possibilities along the line of the translation of creative power through first one talent and then another, are suggested by the

study of capabilities appearing sequentially in several members of one family, in which a slightly different stress of one or another of the same set of talents produces distinct types of workers.

It is probable that intensive research in this quarter will eventually reveal the secret of psychic inheritance, which seems to follow a somewhat different path from that of physical inheritance. Eugenists already maintain that they can predict the inheritance of talents for music and for color. If, as I suspect, incremental experience in the use of such talents can be passed through the deep-self into the racial repository *intelligently*, as we now know it is done *unconsciously*, then the problem of deliberate racial gain will be much nearer its solution.

The student who wishes to profit personally by this redirection of acquired skill, will do well to seek out the order of such progressions as they appear in gifted families, or in individuals, since the successful transmutation of technical freedom seems to be conditioned by the degree to which the principle of transmutation is accepted by the subconsciousness.

The first step to success in making such transferences for yourself, is an intelligent

realization of what you are doing, and perhaps a little help in the way of autosuggestion. Here we can take a leaf out of Coué's book and, addressing the deep-self as though it were a distinct personality, let it know what is expected of it.

The order of development for particular literary forms in the individual, tends, like the development of talent, to follow the order of racial evolution; consequently the earliest literary form to show itself is usually poetry. Probably every one of us has passed through the poetic phase, and most of us will admit it, even though the formal expression of poetic impulse was inhibited too early to have left any written records. This is another of the unforgivable stupidities of our educational system. Observing that poetry is seldom a competent means of earning a living, the average parent, knowing no other values of the poetic impulse, stamps it out of his child as ruthlessly as he would stamp out a vicious tendency. The chances are ten to one that he regards it as a vicious manifestation in any case.

The early inhibition of the poetic impulse undoubtedly affects the later capacity to receive illumination from sources generally

called poetic, and narrows the intake. Just as mistaken for the professional writer, is the disposition to hold on to the poetic phase after it has served its term. Having begun as a poet and attained a certain success, the writer finds his vanity involved in maintaining that success by self-imitation, and all the pitiful dodges of the poet who, after the fountain has ceased flowing, goes on trying to write poetry.

We must keep cases of this kind distinct from those failures of the source of creative inspiration which are due to some alteration of the drive, to psychological disaster, sorrow or shock, or ill health. I am referring now to the appearance of poetry—or story writing, which is the next step in the ontological evolution of literary genius—as a rehearsal for some form not yet revealed in its entirety. The moment the creative worker becomes conscious that there is a failure of form, while at the same time his sense of supply is keeping up, he should not only leave off struggling to keep up the old form, but put himself at once in the frame of mind most conducive to the perfecting of a new form. Even if he feels that he has not done all that he should like to do with the first form, he should still let it go; letting it go often being the price paid for the

hope of getting it back again. If Thomas Hardy ever writes—as he has half promised to do—the intimate story of how his poetic gift, repressed after two years of creditable showing, was kept alive and made to appear again with a vigor that any poet of the present generation might envy, at an age when most men have given up creative work altogether, we shall know more about this problem of the metamorphosis of genius. It is increasingly important that we should know about it, for it is in the nature of human development that, as the race advances, genius should prove more and more capable of expressing itself multifariously in the forms to which our mental evolution gives rise.

One of the most frequent reasons for hesitating to follow natural alterations of the form of creative expression, is the fear of the effect the use of one form may have on another. Only yesterday a woman who has been writing successful plays told me that she was forcing herself back into novel writing for fear she would lose her narrative gifts by neglecting them. She is much more likely to lose them by forcing, and the only excuse for violating the interior drive would be the conviction that novel writing, as practised by this particular

writer, is on a higher level than her play writing. Where there is marked discrepancy in the quality of the different modes, there is a tendency to drop permanently to the lower level. This is the pitfall that lurks in the practise of potboiling, for as the lower practise is more constantly indulged, there is, correspondingly, increase in the inertia of the higher impulses. But where the two forms are on the same level of effort and understanding, there is no possible way in which the one can interfere with the other. When the differing modes are in entirely different genres, as in the case of Rossetti's painting and writing, or Michael Angelo's painting and sculpture, and there is no loss of standard in the passage from one to the other, then there is mutual enrichment of one by the other. If you will examine all the works of several writers who have persisted in using one form only, you will frequently find that the perfection of that form was reached early, and that the traditional gain of technique in repeating the form indefinitely quite as often turns out an actual loss.

It must be kept in mind that most of the conventions accepted by genius, are made for it by the multitudes of the ungifted. The majority of people succeed only by acquiring



habits, habits of precision and industry, and reactions socially agreed upon as desirable. Habit is best acquired by repetition, hence the assumption that a painter or a writer also makes progress chiefly by repetition. But as a matter of fact his progress is made by successive reorganizations of his capabilities in relation to his interior drive. In this process of reorganization, habit plays a minor part. If too much depended upon, it may become absolutely stultifying.

Whoever, therefore, naturally uses two or three forms either alternatively or consecutively, is doing a much needed service in accustoming the public to receive several forms from the same source. The discoverable trend of modern genius appears to be toward a multiplication of the means of expression, which would naturally lead to variety of form and to a greater development of what have been heretofore considered as subsidiary, if not absolutely superfluous talents.

The possessor of two or more fairly balanced talents will find himself often in great practical perplexity between the advice of his friends and the economic consideration. He need not, however, feel any anxiety about the loss of any one of them through temporary

disuse. Contributory talents will be readily reabsorbed into the general sum of capacity. Any true, self-originating talent will not only not be lost, but will often gather power and quite strangely profit by the exercise of the other, *provided* there is no violation of its natural disposition. As a disturber of interior peace a misused talent can be quite as injurious as a Freudian complex. Probably as many reputable citizens are suffering from one as from the other, only to be released by realizing that the education of even an unwanted talent is the only way to make sure that it will not, in the end, prove an obstacle to a successful life adjustment.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RESOURCES OF EDUCATION

SO FAR as we know them, the processes of genius are shown to be the same in practically all departments of human activity. As they operate within the individual they can be treated, as referring to all subjects, as precisely the same process. But the moment they begin to come in contact with the material of expression, they call for distinctive treatment. The mastery of paint, of musical notation and instrumentation, of steel and stone and the laws of mechanics, all call for varying techniques, often of the highest complexity. The education of the genius in the technique of his chosen medium is a problem for specialists in that medium. Whether anything has been offered, other than the usual university course, as a background for genius of the musical, painting, business or engineering types, I have not been able to discover. For the type of genius who deals with ideas, however, much more has been worked out. Since writing, one

way or another, becomes the medium of such types, the author ventures a suggestion as to the formal education which might be considered as indispensably a part of the resources of a genius in the writing field.

Access to the stored experience of mankind in any particular direction is an important item in the fulfillment of creative capacity. No one can go much among the uneducated masses without coming upon pitiful or tragic examples of capacity slurred or completely negated by lack of this access. One finds inventive genius reinventing devices long familiar to the educated, or wasting energy of cognition over problems the elucidation of which has been spread abroad in books for decades, even for generations. Nothing is to be gained by cramming the mind with memorized lists of preachievement; more often than not the creative processes are retarded by the accumulation of unrelated information. It is essential, however, that the genius mind should know where to find, and how to recognize when found, all familiar facts in the field of his immediate interest. This means something more than having access to the books in which those facts are stored. It means at least the ability to translate the particular technical language

in which exact information is conveyed, into the current coinage of words, phrases, figures and analogies, tones, colors, proportions, materials, which he expects to use. It is often important for a painter to understand the language of higher mathematics and physics, in so far as they relate to form and light, for a musician to understand numbers and colors, and for a writer to know the general terminology of all the sciences. All these things, in proportion as he makes them his, must be counted as the resources of genius *in expression*. Genius may easily and often does exist without them, but the scope and final rank of the genius achievement is generally determined by them.

Since the most educable years of almost any genius are usually over before anybody discovers that he has arrived upon the scene, advice on this period would appear to be superfluous. It is only because so many young people are undertaking to fit themselves for intellectual careers without waiting for evidence of fitness, or on evidence which is purely interior, or in the belief, largely erroneous, that writing itself is a pleasant and extremely well paid occupation, that we are obliged to give some attention to educational possibilities.

The creative worker in any field is his own plant, the management and all the works. Anything that formal education can do to make him more valuable to himself is always worth attempting. It is also occasionally necessary to set deliberately about correcting the mistakes made, with the best intentions, by parents and teachers. The capital on which the creative worker adventures is his whole native endowment of health, intelligence, talent, genius, temperament and information. These do not come into his hand all at once and in a virgin condition. His parents, his social environment, the public school have all fumbled at them; and at any moment during the first ten or twenty years of his adventure, there may arise from within the works totally unsuspected developments, failures of capacity, alterations of the main drive, or the opening of new levels of consciousness demanding new mediums of expression.

Formal education for the writer—for all intellectual geniuses nowadays inevitably become writers—therefore, can not be thought of as compassed within the four years of a college course. It must become a continuing process throughout his life; and the surest intimation that his life as a writer is drawing to

a close, would be a cessation of interest in the business of learning things.

The question of the scope of the creative worker's learning is determined by the quality of intelligence that accompanies his special gift. One thing the so-called intelligence tests have done for us is to establish the fallacy of the old notion that a genius in any department of life is necessarily a fool in every other. High types of genius in any direction appear to be accompanied by high grades of intelligence. So if you suspect yourself of being one of the high types, by all means give yourself every opportunity of acquiring the best intellectual training your generation and your purse afford. Actually there are only two things in the way of formal education that are absolutely indispensable to the intellectual genius; these are to be able to read and to make marks on paper that other people can read, though as a matter of fact the maker of tribal lays—such as the Homeric cycle—probably did neither.

In order that the writing process may be comfortably successful, it is important to realize the relation between it and reading. Young writers are always asking what they ought to read; while the really important item

is *how* they read. Turn the incipient writer loose in a library and he will find his natural fodder as readily as a cat finds catnip. Unfortunately, our public schools will not let the child absorb what he needs into the deep-self by natural processes. They ignore the circumstance that every mind has its own rate of absorption, which is directly related to the rate of outgo. There is even a notion prevailing to an astonishing extent among people who ought to know better, that some sort of intrinsic merit attaches to slowness.

Thus the child is encouraged to form a dragging habit of reading in the classroom, without a suspicion that he is establishing an equal drag on his rate of writing. But a more vicious habit inculcated by the schools is that of holding up the business of absorbing the contents of the printed page for the sake of wallowing in the associated emotional reactions. Any editor will tell you that the worst difficulty of the beginning writer is to distinguish between what he has actually got on the paper, and the overtones of his own ego aroused by the process of writing. Much of this difficulty can be traced back to habits acquired in the schoolroom, under the popular impression that there is a special merit in try-



ing to "reflect while you read," or "feel what you read." The power of inhibiting reactions until the intake is completed is indispensable to the journalist and the descriptive writer; where it has been impaired by wrong habits of reading, it should be deliberately corrected. The greatest efficiency is secured by training yourself to the largest amount of intake natural to your capacity, followed by periods of gestation, and subsequent periods of direct output. Every individual has a natural rhythm of intake, gestation and output which it is a mistake to violate. The habit of luxuriating in his own reactions to what he may be writing is almost always the sign of the dilettante to whom any art craft is merely the excuse for doing that very thing. For all serious art, the habit of not being able to distinguish clearly between the situation and what is felt about it, is fatal.

The chief advantage of a university education to a writer is that of being able to do a large amount of necessary reading under the best circumstances. Whatever else the university offers by way of incentive and "atmosphere" is problematic. For a career of scholarly writing—essay, editorial, intellectual exposition and "feature" writing—the older

universities are probably the best. But I have a suspicion based upon what I know of successful fictionists in the United States, that the small colleges, where the contacts are more direct and the traditions yet to make, afford a better environment for the incubation of creative gifts.

At any school the youth who already recognizes himself as elected to a literary career should first concern himself with his indispensable tool, language. He must learn a little Latin and some Greek, and have a general survey of the sources and development of the English tongue. The question of how much of the classic languages is important depends on the particular program. For critical writing some acquaintance with the originals of great literature would seem to be essential. This author made the mistake, having come upon the educational scene when the educational value of classic languages was being widely discussed, of deciding that it was better to know one language thoroughly than to have a smattering of two or three. I concentrated on Latin therefore, and neglected Greek. Afterward in all my thinking my mind kept slipping into a hole in the place where Greek ought to be, so that I was finally obliged to

turn back after my writing career had begun, and acquire the "smattering" of that tongue that I had earlier despised. Those who have learned to think in a language other than English will probably find it profitable to make English the subject of just such a study as is usually given to Latin and Greek.

Students expecting to write usually elect the English courses, which does not seem to be invariably the best thing to do. Young people who have been brought up to think in some language other than English may find a course in English composition helpful, even necessary. But it ought not to be necessary to any one born to the full English inheritance, especially when you realize that frequently the excerpts selected for class study are drawn from the works of writers who had no teaching other than a reading acquaintance with the best English writers. If there is a particularly inspiring teacher of the history of literature in your school, such a study might well be profitable. But it must be kept in mind that the professional writer's contacts with the best literature must come fresh and fresh, as his expanding outlook calls for them. The crowding of the bulk of literary reading into four years, without any immediate rela-

tion to the use that is to be made of it, stales the literary perception. Also it frequently sets up permanent incapacities for the appreciation of varieties of literary contacts that, taken at the right time, might prove informative and refreshing. The old practise of parsing *Paradise Lost* and diagramming *Hamlet*, which spoiled so many choice pieces of literature for my generation, has happily passed away, but the method which prevails in many universities of reducing all our literary inheritance to the crass appetite of the undergraduate, is not much of an improvement upon it.

There are few universities now that do not also profess to teach the art of producing literature in all its branches. But seldom is the art of essay writing taught by a master essayist, or the short story classes instructed by anybody who would dare resign the post of instructor for a career of short story writing. This means that writing is taught in our universities by people almost totally ignorant of the *interior* phases of composition, and these are the only phases that are really important. I have heard teachers of short story courses, who couldn't write an acceptable short story even by following their own directions, insist

that all they try to do is to induct their pupils into a study of story form. Now a critical appreciation of literary form is necessary to the writer, but there is also a grave danger in fixing the attention on form before the matter with which that form is to be filled and made alive has had time to grow. There are certain evolutionary sequences in all creative processes which make it plain that form is always the exteriorization of livingness. To make a mold for your own genius to flow into, in advance of knowing very much or anything at all about the scope and character of what that genius is to be, is to establish limitations from which it may later be impossible to escape.

A year or two ago I found, in a western college where I was lecturing, a young woman professing to teach "A Course in Novel Writing." But the best that could be said of it was that it really offered "A Course in the Imitation of Novels as They Have Been Written." This is the sort of thing, in which writing is taught by imitation, and the imitation is from the outside, that has undoubtedly pulled down the quality of current literature since it began.

Not that there is not much excellent work going on in universities, such work as Henry

Canby did at Yale and Stuart Sherman in Illinois, which is immensely helpful in enabling the student to take the measure of his own capacity against the requirements of writing as a mode of life expression. Much more could be done along the same lines in teaching him to manage his endowment to make it an instrument for writing. What one deplores is the number of "courses in writing" which have arisen in answer to a characteristically American demand for a little bag of literary tricks by which the problem of time and experience can be circumvented. What every writer who has arrived at any degree of literary distinction knows, is that creative power is the evolutionary outgrowth of a deep-seated drive of the subjectively coordinated psyche, and for that there is no formula. There is, however, an accumulating fund of information about the evolution of creative gifts, the management of the mind, which should be the possession of every writer who expects to make his living by the use and exploitation of his own or other people's minds. An intelligently planned course in the part played by suggestion and autosuggestion, prayer, meditation and unconscious cerebration should be open to every student in every department of creative endeavor.

The study of editorial and journalistic writing is in somewhat different case. As there is no recognized "form" for these things, the attention is directed to the intellectual processes involved and in the case of journalism, to the social philosophy of the age, to the psychology of perceiving and realizing "news." It is also important for the prospective journalist to understand something of that vast institution, the press, and some of its sociological and ethical implications. A year or two at a well conducted school of journalism could, therefore, be extremely helpful; but that it is not indispensable there are many journalists of the first rank to declare.

And if not writing as it is taught, what then? Certainly science. Scientific information is essential to the modern writer in order that he may make the widest possible contacts with his age. Field or laboratory work in science is the best possible training for the habits of close observation and accurate reporting of things observed, upon which the professional writer must depend. Finally there is the indispensable scientific habit of mind.

Every fiction writer is in some sort a scientist of human behavior. The simplest story can not be written without observing, noting, comparing and deducting, in the fields of

social and personal behavior, with precisely the same respect for authenticity that is obligatory on the astronomer and the botanist. The field of human behavior is immensely more complicated, and correspondingly difficult to check up; but over and above the qualities of style and temperament, what writers like Wells and Ibsen have to depend upon, is the accuracy and range of their observations. Wells, we know, underwent years of direct science training, and Joseph Conrad's profession of navigation involved special familiarity with certain aspects of higher mathematics. What we really mean by "mid Victorian," when we use it as a term of opprobriousness, is "unscientific." We mean that writers have scrambled together their conclusions out of their sentiments, prejudices, and predilections rather than by sharp and unrelenting research into human motive. By all means let the young writer follow any particular science for which he has special aptitude. All the natural sciences are excellent discipline in proportion as they interest us.

The student writer of high creative aims should by no means neglect the study of higher mathematics. Differential calculus is probably unnecessary for the young person whose



highest reach is *Classy Films*, or *The Saturday Evening Post*—though as a matter of fact most of the writers of that widely circulated journal are university men. But for the poet and the prospective author of the modern *Comédie Humaine* mathematics is the best possible training in the capacity to discern and work with the absolute behind appearances. I never went any higher than calculus myself, and am not prepared to say what one might get out of cones, for instance. But I am convinced by experience that, between formal grammar and plane geometry, the latter is immensely the more important study for the imaginative worker. Grammar you can acquire by persistent reading among the best stylists. Geometry must be grappled with by the innermost inner mind from which the best work comes.

This is the final test of whatever in the writer's life comes under the head of education; whether it engages the whole man. It is the test not only of learning acquired from books, but of all that comes by way of experience. The worst of even the best places where the teaching of writing is attempted is that they concern themselves almost wholly with externals.

Having selected first the studies that will be helpful in mastering the literary technique, by providing either necessary mental training or information, the next thing for the writer to do is to look about for such studies as will help him to understand his own and other peoples' experiences.

For this purpose formal psychology, and some of the sciences called social, can be immensely helpful. In every university there ought to be some sort of general course of study which would extract the essence out of ethnology, biology, sociology and psychology and combine them with a well vertebrated survey of human history, especially designed for students who find it necessary to get some notion of wholeness in respect to the human race. Since any such coordinated study is lacking, the next best thing is to follow your liking in as many authentic directions as you have time for.

Personally I have found the greatest illumination in the study of folkways. To know how a given social practise began, in what basic human impulse, how it passed from an empirical discovery to become a rite, a custom, and finally a fixed behavior, is to illuminate that behavior to its very core. American writ-

ers are fortunate in having here at home, and fairly accessible, opportunities to come in direct contact with the first tentative thrust toward art and civilization, in our own aborigines. There are some minds, however, so constituted that they can not come into fruitful contact with any society but their own. Here in the United States, and rather widely characteristic of our intellectuals, there is a certain revulsion against beginnings, almost a terror of them not unlike the reaction of those simple religionists whose whole universe is undermined by the admission of the evolution of man from anthropoid ancestry. Where the particular young writer gets his help, depends upon whether his natural disposition is toward the evolutionary sources or the inspirational centers of creative activity. If he can write better free verse by believing that that particular form was created in six days by some godlike group of modern French expressionists, than by believing that it is an evolutionary product of the American experience, then let him cleave to his gods. Help is like gold, where you find it. The only possible use in quarreling about inspirational sources is that your faith in your own gods is increased by it. Some kind of fixed belief as to origins or

sources of power is as indispensable to the young writer as a twig from which to begin to spin is to a spider.

This brings us naturally to a consideration of the value, to the preparatory years of a literary career, of a sympathetic atmosphere. There is no question that any kind of professional life begins more pleasantly among people of similar and simultaneous interests. There is some practical advantage in the exchange of experience; there is, on the other hand, the danger of narrowing contacts and the too early formation of a professional point of view. When the personal environment of the young writer is too harsh, there is danger of a rasped and outraged attitude toward society. But when we consider the work of a writer like Sir James Barrie, it is easily seen that a beautifully tender and sympathetic background can be as definitely limiting as one conspicuously harsh and cold. In pursuance of these studies I have had occasion to ask a great many distinguished people what they knew of the circumstances attending their earliest youth. I discovered that an extraordinary number of them—including two novelists of high rank, two players of the highest, a playwright and a social prophet—

were *unwanted* children. Casting up the youth of a score of writers of the first order, such as Conrad, Wells, May Sinclair, Jane Austen, E. A. Robinson, Tolstoy, Ibsen, it is easily seen that the rating is all on the side of a certain detachment from the personal environment, mounting even to antagonism. It is fortunate, therefore, that nobody knows how to tell the beginning writer where he can find the sympathetic atmosphere, the desire of which is eating out his heart.

It is more than likely that this craving for communication, this tormenting desire to *tell*, is merely the emotional register of the inward drive which is indispensable to all creative success. It is even possible that the satisfaction of this craving is the sign that the utmost mark of capacity is reached, and that growth is arrested at this point. If your literary impulse is the kind that can be satisfied by getting into a literary atmosphere, it probably isn't worth educating.

## CHAPTER VI

### GENIUS AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS

BEFORE undertaking to establish a technique for the release of the psychological resources of the individual, it is important to have a general idea of the way in which the various levels of consciousness handle the material stored there by experience. Because of the many gaps in our psychological knowledge, and the indeterminate state of psychological terminology, the best method of avoiding confusion is to stick to the evolutionary sequence revealed by a study of biology. By this method we can dependably describe three general levels: the intuitive or unknowing consciousness as it appears in all non-sensory forms of life; the subjective consciousness as it shows in the purely sensory types of organism; and the self-conscious, as it appears in the higher animals, including man. Of all these, man is the inheritor. But if you agree with many physicists and chemists that there is some form of consciousness in all matter, a cosmic-conscious-

ness, then since physical man is largely a chemical combination, he must be thought of as possessed of the cosmic consciousness also. And if your philosophy demands a Great First Cause as a center of origination, a God in short, from whom man is put forth as a branch on a vine, man as part of the unbroken sequence must also be thought of as having a God-consciousness somewhere in his evolutionary baggage.

In our study of genius activities, however, we may ignore all the manifestations of consciousness except those which we find showing themselves in greater or less degree in all creative work. We begin with the immediate-self as a kind of spotlight, having a shadowy ring of half-consciousness, disappearing into fringes of complete forgetfulness. This is the immediate-self, beginning at birth, or a little before it, and borne at the tip of an age-long stalk arising out of some unimagined source of life, by infinite accretions of experience. We have to speak in figures and analogies here, not only because the exact terms of psychological discrimination are not yet agreed upon, but because it is highly important, in the present state of psychological knowledge, not to allow our minds to close in upon hard and

fast concepts that will not admit the light of later discoveries.

What we know about the spotlight of ourselves is that nothing that impinges upon it is ever lost. Everything, the instant it passes out of the light, is, by little understood mechanisms, relegated to a place in the fringes as unconscious, or passed into the subconsciousness, from either of which it may by the proper method be recalled. I make this distinction between unconscious and subconscious, as the only way of discriminating between the rooms of a practically unlimited storage area of the psyche. When we say a man has a good memory, what we really mean is that he has good command over his storage facilities. It is, however, important to keep in mind that the items not immediately required by the immediate-self, such as the middle name of a boy you used to go to school with or the date of Julius Cæsar crossing the Rubicon, are not stored in the same room with the ancestral memories.

In working with ourselves we have always to work from the spotlight into the shadowed areas, but we will work to greater advantage if we imagine the deep-self as an uninterrupted stem of consciousness arising out of a



First Cause or a Cosmic Consciousness. We are to watch it continually pressing forward, first by intuition, then by intuition plus suggestion, later adding intelligence to itself and gathering rationality, wearing always the immediate-self as a flower on the tip of its steadily elongating stalk. At the point of their attachment glows the circle of self-awareness. Beyond this circle extends the tenuous florescence of the immediate-self, emotions, impressions, ideas, part of which are, by a little known mechanism, passed into the racial inheritance. The rest, shed, perhaps, in death, and floating like dried petals still redolent of the perfume of personality, brush the fringes of other minds still fast to their stalks, creating the illusion of after-death communication.

The worst of the best figure of speech is that it tends to create the impression that the whole ground has been covered. It is quite possible that in addition to the planes of consciousness here indicated, there is another, a supra-consciousness, partly evolved, a consciousness which makes use of the ancestral experiences, the senses and the rational faculties, but is dependent on none of them.

What the genius of any description has to deal with most directly, is the content of the

immediate-self, its talents and acquired information, acquired either by experience or observation or education. In addition, it deals with the content of the deep-self, acquired chiefly by inheritance; and with the unknowing faculty, of whose range and capability we know very little. When I say that the content of the deep-self is acquired *chiefly* by inheritance, I am making allowance for influences so subtle that we do not know exactly how they come finally to be incorporated in the inheritance, such as the influence of natural environment, climate, topography and some phases of the social environment which seem to pass into the deep-self by a process of absorption. Of the other inherited resources, we are told that they come by way of the germ plasm, in forty-eight groups; that they are derived in mathematical proportions from both parental blood streams, according to a Mendelian law, and that they occasionally cancel each other out. This is of no special importance to the individual genius, except that it helps to establish as a working condition that the individual does not have access to the *whole* sum of his ancestral history. What he does have access to is the ancestral experience which is carried by his particular chromosomes,

If this were not the case, the individual would be completely swamped by the multiplicity of creative urges bearing down upon him out of his racial past. As it is, he has to deal only with a selected number, which tend to occur in connection with the natural capacities that best sustain them, as good voices are most frequently found among peoples with a highly developed musical capacity. One of the unavoidable evils of racial cross-mating is the splitting of the psychic and physical inheritance so that the urges are badly matched with the means of expression. Temporary failure of certain types of creative expression in the United States may be due to such cross-mating, and can only be corrected in time by unification of the contributive blood streams.

The great practical consideration of the individual genius is the establishment of working relations between the immediate-self and the deep-self. Occasionally perfect cooperation may be found occurring spontaneously, so that the individual is never aware of his own processes, and is inclined to attribute to sheer perversity the difficulty that other people have. Joshua Josephson, known under the Greek form of his name as Jesus, is perhaps the best historic example of the perfectly co-

ordinated genius, shown in all the accounts of him as more or less perplexed by the want of such coordination among his followers. Joan of Arc is another type of complete adjustment, the deep-self presenting itself as voices assuming the personality of saints, but always maintaining perfect communication with the immediate-self of the peasant girl. Just how the coordination was accomplished in such geniuses as Michael Angelo and William Shakespeare, it is not easy at this distance to discover. It was probably nearly spontaneous, such progressive adjustment as shows on the surface of their work being merely the progressive mastery of a difficult technique. When Angelo was required to paint the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, the whole technique of painting was unfamiliar to him, and caused him much irritation. But the result demonstrates that it offered no restrictions to his genius.

Always it is important to keep this distinction between the mastery of the deep-self and the mastery of the medium in which it expresses itself. Mastery of words can be acquired, mastery of color, of metals, of wood, of stone, of musical instruments. There can also be a technique of expression, distinct from the

medium of expression, which can be acquired by study. This is all that great teachers in the arts profess to teach. A first-class instructor on the piano expects a prospective pupil to be able to make his hands do as they are told, to have mastered the mechanics of piano playing, to have learned musical notation, and to have a trained musical memory. The teacher then undertakes to instruct the pupil in the fine technique of coordinating all these acquired capabilities so as to express whatever he may have in his deep-self, capable of interpretation in music. Beyond that the most sanguine teacher does not attempt to go. His final judgment on the pupil's work is that he has or has not "got it in him" to be a great performer.

Now if this is true, that the worker in any creative field hasn't "got it in him," it can not be got out, but the whole of this study was undertaken in the belief that it is impossible for the individual not to have access to the residue of racial experience, which can, barring irreparable injury to the cerebral instrument, be got out by intelligent methods.

One inestimable certainty psychoanalysis has established; that whatever is in the submerged-self, can, in its potentiality, be lifted

to the level of the immediate-self, and be intelligently dealt with. Actual objective knowledge can not be dragged up out of the inheritance, but such potentiality as exists, can be brought to the use of such talent as the immediate-self finds in its endowment. This, so far as we are able to discover, is all that happens in the actual process of genius. The psychoanalysts are practising this exhuming of buried experience constantly for the relief of the individual, in the case of troubling incursions from the racial inheritance into the immediate life. By bringing the original item to consciousness, the trouble is dissipated, and there the psychoanalyst should stop. In order that the inheritance may be turned to creative power, it must, after being recognized, be pushed back into the deep-self, to return softly and in the dark to the threshold of the immediate consciousness. It sounds like a paradox to say that one must learn consciously to behave subconsciously, but this is precisely what the creative worker does and has been doing since the dawn of rational self-consciousness. Every one who has ever waked himself up at a precise hour in order to catch a morning train, has done the same thing, and every one who has got rid of a troubling mem-

ory by the determined resolve to forget it, has also been practising the same rule of conscious subconscious behavior. To do it on a larger scale, and for the profounder levels of the self, is so natural for some men that it does not appear an impossibility that it may be learned by others.

We have to begin by understanding the mode of each of the recognizable levels of consciousness; its habitual way of acting, the scope and range of its results. The intuitive level will be dealt with later, as being the least under the control of the intelligence. In this connection we have to think of the intelligence as a faculty of the immediate-self, by which all objective experiences may be dealt with. It deals successfully, but not with absolute authority, with the subconscious areas of the immediate-self, and to a limited but expanding extent with the deep-self. The content of the immediate-self is almost entirely objective, its mode is ratiocination. The content of the deep-self is experience stripped of its objectivity, reduced to potentiality; its mode is wholly subjective. It is this difference in mode which accounts for something man discovered long before there was any science of psychology—that problems presented to the

'deep-self' are solved more easily and correctly than they are solved by the methods of ratiocination. This is the secret of the resort of primitive man to dreams and states of trance, and of the complete absorption of the conscious-self into the subconscious, as practised by the mystics. The discovery that truth could be so approximated more nearly by the submerged-self than by reason and observation was made first. The explanation that supernatural beings conveyed the truth to man, in sleep or trance, arose later. People to whom the helpful emergence of the subconscious occurred spontaneously and more or less regularly, began to think of themselves as having a special supernatural attendant, or a familiar, or a guardian angel, who answered when called upon, a genius. One of the most interesting modern examples of the subjective working out of truth not yet consciously perceived, though all the material was present in the immediate mind of the percipient, is related by the Russian chemist Kukele.

He relates how on a summer evening he was riding outside on the London omnibus through the deserted streets and fell into a reverie.



"Atoms flitted before my eyes. I had always seen them in movement, these little beings, but I had never before succeeded in perceiving their manner of moving. That evening, however, I saw that frequently two smaller atoms were coupled together, that larger ones seized the two smaller ones, that still larger ones held fast three and even four of the smaller ones, and that all whirled around in a bewildering dance. I saw how the larger atoms formed a row and one dragged along still smaller ones at the end of the chain. I saw what Kopp, my revered friend and teacher, describes so charmingly in his *Molecularwelt*, but I saw it long before him. The cry of the guard, 'Clapham Road,' waked me from my reverie but I spent a part of the night writing down sketches of these dream pictures. Thus arose the structural theory.

"It was very much the same with the Benzene Theory. During my stay in Ghent. . . . My study was in a narrow alley way and had, during the day time, no light. For a chemist who spends the hours of daylight in the laboratory this was no disadvantage. I was sitting there engaged in writing my text book; but it wasn't going very well; my mind was on other things. I turned my chair toward the fireplace and sank into a doze. Again the atoms were flitting before my eyes. Smaller groups now kept modestly in the background. My mind's eye, sharpened by repeated visions of a similar sort, now distinguished larger

structures of varying forms. Long rows frequently close together, all in a movement, winding and turning like serpents. And see! What was that? One of the serpents seized its own tail and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. I came awake like a flash of lightning. This time also I spent the night working out the consequences of the hypothesis."

Almost any scientist or creative artist of the first rank could furnish similar examples of the spontaneous, unhabitual working of the subconscious, outrunning the intelligence in the direction of the dominant interest. I have selected the case of Kukele because it presents a clear case of the combination of high intellectual endowment, great resources of objective information, and a completely liberated subconsciousness coming voluntarily to the aid of the immediate-self. All that is proposed here is to suggest a method of liberating this unmeasured, submerged power in any individual. There can, I think, be no question that this case of the Russian chemist is an example of what we universally call "genius." If, then, it can be released in people to whom it does not spontaneously occur, I do not see how anybody can quarrel with our assumption that genius can be acquired, or more exactly,

released, for every person in proportion to his endowment.

It should be clearly understood, however, that so far we have not discovered any way in which the subconscious can seriously affect the endowment. The subconscious can be directed by the intelligence, can render it more pliable, more smoothly coordinate, but so far as we have gone, there are no instances of intelligence itself being amplified, or any of its characteristics altered. In other words, the subjective-self or the subconscious, simply accepts the immediate-self with all its cerebral equipment as an instrument. This means that neither talent nor intellectual faculties can be produced except as they are conditioned by the cerebral mechanism. In every case the faculties belonging to the immediate-self follow their own mode of ratiocination, as the faculties of the deep-self follow the mode of suggestion and intuition. It follows, therefore, that the best and almost the only method of modifying talent is to inform and criticize and train it by reasonable methods. And the one possible way of dealing with the deep-self, which is the source of genius, is by suggestion, since you can not by any manner of means reason with the subconscious.

There are three generally recognized methods of affecting the psyche by suggestion: environmental suggestion, which may include the deliberate suggestiveness of parents and teachers, as well as the whole social complex to which one is born; autosuggestion, which may be deliberate, and not necessarily conscious; and M. Coué's "induced autosuggestion," by which he means the autoacceptance of the physician's suggestion, framed to meet the patient's desires, is finally accomplished. I should also class under this description the unformulized sort of suggestion you lay yourself open to when you go to hear *The Tales of Hoffmann* in order to reawaken your appreciation for romantic passion, or what I go after, walking in the Penitente Trail above Taos. But none of these methods of suggestion will work in any department of consciousness except to the degree that the selected area is suggestible.

This means that autosuggestion will work perfectly in the deep-self, which is wholly subjective. It will work much less perfectly, if at all, in the immediate-self. Talents, therefore, and what we call the intellectual faculties, being born into the pattern of the immediate-self, can be affected scarcely at all, either

in their scope or quality by autosuggestion. It seems best to put this bluntly and have it over with, because there is a great deal of religio-scientific slush going about, to the effect that you can get and be anything if you first find the right formula. I can explain this better by relating one of the experiments by which I discovered for myself that the immediate-self is only slightly suggestible, and that talent can not be changed, though it can occasionally be circumvented.

To make my experiment conclusive, I began with the talent which in me registers lowest, the talent for music. I am not absolutely tone deaf, but I have difficulty in telling, of two notes on the piano, which one is higher than the other, and can not reproduce the note last struck with my voice. I had the usual small-town course of music lessons when a girl, and being extremely intelligent, with a good memory, I learned to play a number of "pieces." If, however, I forgot the proper note in any bar, I had no idea what it ought to have been, and could play nothing whatever by ear. I can recognize a number of simple melodies, such as *America* and *How Firm a Foundation*, but not more complicated compositions no matter how many times I have

heard them, with one exception. I have never quite figured out what this exception has to do with the experiment, but it must mean something, possibly in connection with my highly developed sense of rhythm and my taste for the higher mathematics. I can recognize Wagner almost any time I hear him. Living as I did so long in the desert, I heard no Wagner until I was almost thirty-five—victrolas had not been invented then. The first time I heard the overture of *Siegfried* played in the intervals of a Woman's Club convention, I recognized it. To this day I can recognize more themes out of the Rhinegold Cycle, which I never heard but once, than from any other source except the Methodist Hymn-book.

This inability to learn and remember and record musical themes was a great handicap to my Indian studies, so I resolved to overcome it if such a thing were possible. I used auto-suggestion and another method which will be described later, and I worked along two lines. The first was to try by every possible method to enlarge and train my limited ear, and my musical memory. The second, to try to express personal emotional experience in musical notation. In this latter attempt I made

some progress. I began with rhythm tunes on one note, then with a second simultaneous tune mathematically related to the first. Finally I could weave two or three tunes together in the manner of a Bach fugue. This was all done on paper, and I could not recognize my own tunes when they were played to me on the piano by some one else. I had to go and finger them out mechanically myself before I had an idea how they sounded. All I knew was how they felt. That I did not make more progress in harmony was due partly to the cost of lessons in harmony from any teacher that I would trust, and to the very great difficulty of studying it out of a book. But in all that time, nearly two years, I made practically no progress with my ear. I think I learned to distinguish thirds and fifths sometimes, but let me be out of practise for a week or two, and it was all one note to me. In spite of severe sustained effort, I was no nearer recording Indian tunes than I had been before, so I sorrowfully abandoned the experiment.

Some two or three weeks later I found my deep-self haunted by a melody unrecognized but insistent. To get rid of it I wrote it in my tune book, and went to the piano to hear what it was like. I played it once, twice. . . .

The third time I fell off the piano stool in a dead faint. For I had recognized that tune! About ten days earlier I had been collecting Spanish-American folk songs, and had come across an engaging little lullaby, one that had made me sigh for the thousandth time over my want of musical ear. And something in me deeper than my ear had caught that tune and reproduced it. I was as much shocked as if I had heard my own voice speaking the primitive tongue of my Cro-Magnon ancestry.

Nothing quite like that ever happened again, but there were plenty of other things to confirm me in the belief that there is very little to be accomplished for adult talent by suggestion, and that little only at the point where the immediate-self passes into and identifies itself with the deep-self. By the proper suggestion applied at this point, talent might become much more available, more amenable to objective training; a quick and permanent command over it might be established. But it would remain unchanged in scope and quality.

Just how much more might be done for talent taken in early youth, before the deep-self relinquishes that control which it naturally exerts over the activities of the new-born, has not yet been established. It is one of the



peculiarities of our culture that while it offers unprecedented facilities for the subnormal individual, there is as yet no laboratory devoted to the study of superior types. Stranger still, though it is everywhere admitted that the subjective consciousness, otherwise the deep-self, can be handled only by suggestion, all our schools are established in the mode of the immediate-self as if there were nothing to a human mind but ratiocination and memory. No, I am forgetting the schools of the Roman Church and perhaps of some lesser doctrinaire groups. Though the aim of the Roman Church is merely to have its doctrines accepted as a rule of life, it still makes skilful use of the methods of suggestion developed by the great Greek and Roman and Italian Renaissance cultures. If these methods were employed to release the potentialities of modern children during the most suggestible years, it would probably not be necessary for anybody to write books encouraging adults to release themselves from the indurations resulting from wrong suggestions received in youth.

As things are, the first step to be taken by the adult seeking easy command over his own potentialities is to recognize and erase the contrary suggestion still persisting, either in his

environment or as a left-over from a social background that did not believe in genius. From the early Christian conviction that a work of genius was evidence of your having sold your soul to the Devil, down to the present Mainstreetian notion of its being an evidence of your thinking yourself smarter than other people, inhibiting notions have always obstructed the path of genius. Of all the fears that humanity is heir to, this one, that you or somebody belonging to you will be "queer," is the most stultifying. All of which makes it important to realize that genius is no more nor less than the facile use of inheritable racial experience, as natural as the circulation of the blood. The queer one is the one who hasn't got it. Yet we are all charged with this ancient idea of genius as a kind of supernatural endowment.

When I first began to write, my mother wished me to use a pen name under the notion that it was not quite ladylike for a female to put forth ideas over her own name, as if she thought they were really worth something. All Americans over thirty-five have a trace of that in their consciousness, which is one reason why we have greater geniuses in business and engineering than in painting and writing and

music. It has never yet in America been thought "queer" to be a business genius. Neither is it thought immodest to talk business shop, nor a "pose" to dress and live and arrange your time in the manner best suited to running a railroad or building a Panama Canal. European genius has not felt this stricture quite to the extent that we feel it here, partly because in Europe individuals have taken their standing not so much from what they do as from whom they happen to be born, and partly because the product of artist genius has had a higher intrinsic value in Europe than it has had in the United States. But taken altogether, this difficulty about the nature and process of genius is in every country the one most necessary to overcome.

Further than that, every individual will have his own private inhibitions and complexes, often hiding coyly under the guise of modesty. These he must at least recognize before he can hope to make use of even the little we now know about the operation of suggestion upon the deep-self from which genius flows.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CREATIVE WISH

SOME twenty-five years ago, when this study was first undertaken, I made what seemed to me an astonishing discovery. It was that, in the western world, since the fifteenth century, there had been not only no advance in man's method of adjusting himself to the universe by the motions of his own mind, but a general and wide-spread decline in this inestimable art. So wide-spread that it is still difficult to find, even among religious sects that make continuous use of such spiritual exercises, anybody who can intelligently discuss the origin, evolution and comparative methods of prayer and meditation.

Fortunately, I was in a position to make direct observation of primitive prayer methods. Persistent reading led me finally to the treasure-house of fifteenth-century experience, and a later visit to Rome enabled me to pick up there the interwoven strands of Greek and pagan Italian methods, leading directly

back to what I had already learned among the Amerindian tribes. Though the great vein of Christian experiment seems to have pinched out about the middle of the fifteenth century, during the first quarter of the twentieth there has been a revival of interest in the subject on a non-theological basis, which is rapidly clearing the way to a thoroughly scientific study of the place of prayer in the life of the individual.

Man's primitive guess at the nature of the world in which he lived, was that it was made up very much as he was, of material substance and a kind of mysterious energy which he called *mana* or *wakonda*, now known as "psychic energy" or "dynamic psyche." It was, therefore, perfectly natural for the primitive to attempt to affect the *wakonda* of the world with his own *wakonda*, and to make the inevitable discovery that there was an immediate connection between getting what he wanted and the intensity of his wish for it. What the primitive man thought was that he created his wish out of the particular dynamic psyche he prayed to, by the energy of his prayer.

Back of every known system for readjusting the relations between yourself and your universe, lies this creative wish. All methods of effective prayer, under which term all such

exercises are classed, may be described as systems of successful wishing. I say all methods of *effective* prayer, because there are methods of prayer which are not effective either in the direction or to the degree that they are supposed to be. There is a form of prayer very widely in use among Christian sects, which is so far from being creative that it might almost be described as the Prayer of the Unwishful.

People in whom the power of wishing is feeble, are content with a type of spiritual exercise which tends merely to keep them in a state of spiritual equilibrium, "reconciled." It is only under the pressure of personal anxiety or disaster that they rise to the pitch of creative energy necessary to make a prayer effective. But since most people do not know the difference between creative energy and emotional intensity, their prayers, even at their best, seldom rise beyond emotional pleading, in which the wish energy is futilely discharged, and the unwishful equilibrium restored. Most people's prayers end there, in a great sense of release and consolation. Later, when it is discovered that, after all, the desired thing did not happen, it is rationalized as being not compatible with the Will of God. I was brought up on this system. But when the time came

when it was important for me to have my prayers answered explicitly, and I discovered that the state of equilibrium attained by emotional prayer meant nothing whatever in respect to the granting of my wish, I was as mad as a woman is when she first discovers that the love vows of a man are only an expression of feeling, and not of intention. I was simply hopping mad, and had I not had among my acquaintance many Indians who actually could get their prayers answered as stated, I might have concluded, as so many of my generation did, that the whole business of prayer is a superstition based upon a nearly negligible element of autosuggestion.

The difference between autosuggestion and autoprayers is explicit. In autosuggestion the wish element is wanting, or only slightly indicated. The exigencies of the immediate-self determine the nature of the suggestion, and the intelligence shapes the formula. The deep-self is called to attention, hears your voice repeating the suggestion, and is dismissed to work it out in the pattern of its own experience.

In autoprayers the whole interest of the psyche is engaged, the mechanism being set in motion by the wish energy. Capacity for crea-

tive wishing is by no means a universal endowment. Many people suppose themselves wishing, when they are merely longing, or, as Christian Scientists say, "expressing a lack." Everybody is familiar with the literary type who thinks he is creating a literary reputation when he is really pining for one, as a mid-Victorian maiden pined for her lover. People who think they are wishing desperately for money, as a matter of fact, are often expressing only desperate annoyance at not having any. Unless there is a strong, sustained, deep-seated wish, prayer is as idle as in the early 'nineties we used to think it.

Autosuggestion is addressed to the deep-self as an entity. Autoprayer is addressed to nothing in particular unless it be to the innate creativeness of mind. It is a cry for help, driven down into the subconsciousness by the energy of wishing. You wish, perhaps, to write a play. You wish it to be the best possible play you could write, wishing not only with the intelligence which advises you of all the advantages to be derived from a well made play, but with the active impulse of the deep-self, the same deep-self that pushed you out of your mother's womb when it had completed the body pattern, and is now seeking expres-



sion for itself in dramatic form. You have a general concept of the play you wish to write, not too explicit, since you already know that a better play can be produced by subconscious processes than by the immediate consciousness. But because no man really knows his whole capacity, you do not know exactly how good a play you can write. It may be worse or better than your concept, according to the nature of the more or less concealed content of your deep-self. So you push the wish down and down, seeking . . . seeking.

Presently you begin to be dimly aware of the play taking shape, flowing and changing as weed is seen to change in dim ocean depths. As it shapes, you can alter the force or direction of the wish energy, to develop the humor, to bring out the climax of the third act. That is another reason why I do not care for the term "subconscious"; as a matter of fact, the *subconscious* is never, normally, wholly *unconscious*. Or if it is, then action becomes completely automatic, inferior in character, amorphous, like the stuff that is written on Ouija boards. There is scarcely a moment, from the initiation of the autoprayers until the completed work is lifted past the threshold into immediate consciousness, when the working

artist is not to some extent aware of the process going on within him. Intervals of intensive prayer alternate with longer phases of attentive awareness. For the young worker it is important that the attitude of attention be not broken into so frequently or so sharply as to occasion suspension of the process. Probably most of the irritability popularly charged to the creative worker comes from undue interruption of creative states of mind, really as detrimental to psychic well-being as similar unwarranted interruptions of the digestive process are to the body.

But as the deep-self becomes accustomed to responding to the autoplayer, the superficial attention is more easily released. May Sinclair tells me that with years of practise, the response has become almost as instant for her as the ringing of a bell within the house at the door of which you have just pushed the button. The unaccustomed worker, however, must watch himself, lest in the relaxation of attention he begins to fill in the lapses of the creative process, set in motion by the autoplayer, with literary inventions. Or, and this is a still more serious handicap, the pride of intellect, and the dependence on imitative formulas resulting from what is called "literary educa-

tion," leads to deliberate interference on the part of the immediate-self. For the immediate-self can only invent; all creativeness is subjective. Even when the work is well along toward completion, it is safer to pray for explicit details than to try to supply them from the intelligence. It is probable that a well prayed over piece of work is conceived whole, though it may be mutilated in the delivery through temperamental failure.

Everybody uses this form of autopray, according to his disposition. I have seen Herbert Hoover so profoundly and continuously occupied with subconscious activity that the very air around him seemed to vibrate. Having been brought up a Quaker, to whom prayer is an outward withdrawal for the purpose of inward activity, the Honorable Secretary of Commerce would not object to my calling the process prayer. But a distinguished English novelist who had just told me that he made a practise of remaining absolutely quiescent as long as possible after driving in the creative wish, was shocked at my terminology—prayer in his mind being indissolubly associated with a Sunday morning, a hassock and a silk hat. Probably most people will have to rid themselves of a lot of pious

association, and of the inferential relation of prayer to moral systems and religious doctrines, before they can have free and successful use of the prayer process. That is not to say that a sincerely prayerful person may not find his habits and ethical outlook modified favorably thereby. A state of creative activity seems to be the highest state of spiritual health, and would naturally tend to be expressed in every department of experience.

This stripping of prayer forms of their doctrinal implications is especially important in making practical use of the mechanisms of prayer to Something Outside the self, particularly in Christian countries where the intermediate personalizations of power are figured as saints. Personally I don't mind praying to St. Francis, because if he is still active on this plane I am sure he would be happy to help me in some of my enterprises. And if this should prove not to be the case, I know by experience that anything prayed to answers *in the degree of my sympathetic appreciation of what the thing prayed to symbolizes*. In Italy there is many a candle burned to the Holy Hurry Up, otherwise St. Expedite, though there was never any calendared saint of that name. Owing perhaps to some temperamental

incapacity for getting help in this fashion, the Anglo-Saxon peoples have rather abandoned the saints. But around the north shores of the Mediterranean one finds saints taking the place of the lesser Greek and Roman deities, which were themselves personalizations of the more primitive notion of a sacred essence residing in each created thing. Through communication with these embodiments, it was believed, man might work that essence to his advantage. So the Greek had Aphrodite for the essential energy of sexual passion, and Apollo for the moving power of music, as pagan Rome had Mars for war and Hercules for the cattle market, "Pomona for the orchard and Liber for the vine." In the same manner Christian Rome sanctified the martyrs for the use of personal occasions—St. Anthony for things lost, Santa Lucia for the blind, St. Joseph for women on journeys or in need of husbanding.

Now no system of spiritual exercises can spread itself over millennium-long cultures, remaining practically the same in all of them, unless by good evidence and to a considerable degree, it accomplishes for man what it promises. All these personalized instrumentalities are so many ways of saying that if man puts

himself in direct personal sympathy with the essential essence of whatever he deals with, he deals more successfully. There is something in the American temperament, not too unlike the early Roman, that makes me think that if we personalized Liberty as the large, restrained, powerful thing it is, and said our prayers to it, we should do much more for ourselves than we do now with it as a word in the preamble of the Constitution, or as an emotional state generated around a soap box on the street corners.

Almost anybody with the artistic temperament can demonstrate by a little experiment the special uses of prayer directed to the saints. A translator, for instance, might successfully address herself to St. Jerome, who made himself so lucid a medium for pouring the Scriptures from one language to another that even the lion ceased to think of him as a man, and lay down at his feet. I practised this sort of prayer for years before satisfying myself as to the mechanism involved. And I doubt whether I should have done so, had it not been that there arises among the rather primitive peoples in our Southwest, every now and then, a healer, going about in the fashion of Jesus, solitary or with a few disciples, at-

taining occasionally even to the level of newspaper notice. There was one last summer, whom we heard of and missed. We would come to houses where he had just worked a cure, or learn that he had passed the night in the camp next to ours, or hear reports of him from the Puebloños who had sought and found him on the mesa road. From everything I have been able to learn of the methods of these men, I am satisfied that their cures are by no means all accomplished through autosuggestion, nor yet by means of that state of sustained expectancy which is called faith. Repeatedly, it seems to me, there is a definite movement on the part of the healer, sympathetically to assume the personality of the seeker, in order to have power over it, as if he drew the seeker into himself, wherein the sick man is healed. This can be explained hypothetically on the assumption that the psychic pattern which we call personality, is released from its habitual fixation, and is prepared by the energy of the wish to be healed, to flow in any hopeful direction. Under the influence of the healer it flows into the shape of the healer's personality, which is a shape of perfect health, or it flows into an image of perfect health prepared for it by the healer.

Or in the case of self-healing, it flows into a pattern prepared by the imagination. All its complexities, either of health or unhappiness or insufficiency, are suddenly relaxed and reformed along the lines of the acceptable pattern.

It was thus that the fifteenth-century mystics cultivated the preferred virtues in themselves by setting up patterns of saints who were distinguished for such virtues. It was precisely in that fashion that the Greek poets first addressed themselves to the Muses before beginning their creative activities, to Thalia or Melpomene, or the particular image of the essential type of created thing. They poured themselves into the pattern conceived by the group consciousness, and being one of those rare peoples whose group concept was larger than the average individual concept, they came out themselves refreshed and enlarged.

I should not undertake to describe these subtle operations of the spirit except for readers whose own temperamental quality enables them to understand how the actor assumes the personality of the character he is said to "create." Or how the novelist absorbs the persons of his story into himself to the point



of saturation, often to discover that he is obliged to conform his story to the assumed character rather than to his original story plan. Something of the same interpenetration takes place between the prayerful seeker and his saint. Or, if no saint, then between him and the creative principle hidden within the phenomenon. For any sort of principle works according to law—its own law—so that if you create a miser for your story on the true psychological principle, he is likely to do truer things than you can invent for him. Similarly, if in your personalization of Courage or Chastity you work on a true understanding of those virtues, the saint named after them will have true power over you. In such fashion as maidens gave themselves to Vesta or the Virgin, men might give themselves to Liberty or to the Comic Spirit.

It ought never to be forgotten that the two outstanding periods in the history of literature and art, the Greek and the Italian Renaissance were periods in which men openly prayed, bowing themselves in the dusk of temples before gold and ivory semblances of the august Powers, "seeing God made and eaten all day long." Sophocles, Aristotle, Aristophanes . . . they celebrated mystic rites to

augment power in themselves, burned incense on altars sacred to the essence of the thing desired. Dante, Michael Angelo and Leonardo . . . they fingered their rosaries, carried candles on saints' days with great banners over them, genuflecting and crossing themselves. It is left for an age lacking in precisely the power they found in such fashion, to snigger at an Irish poet praying to the sea, or at our own John Muir with his head uncovered, asking a blessing from the big trees.

The whole subject of prayer, as it developed under years of experiment, need not be covered here, since its use in liberating the individual inheritance is limited chiefly to auto-prayer, that is, prayer addressed to the subconsciousness considered as an entity, and to a kind of prayer for which there is no good descriptive name, in which the thing prayed for is imaged as a being, or as a pattern thought of as expressed or presided over by that being. The prayer of reconciliation more or less emotionalized, may be used to integrate a personality shattered by stress, or having its energies dissipated by too many, or conflicting, claims on immediate attention. Before the habit of integration has been established, the creative worker often has difficulty in get-

ting himself together for the purpose of focusing his energies in a chosen direction. When the difficulty reaches the point of desperation, a desperate call for help, broadcasted, often serves the purpose of cutting out the individual from the contumuum, that is to say, from the general unconscious, the group mind, the thought stream, or whatever we call the tenuous entanglement of our personal minds with something of which we are all vaguely conscious, for which science has yet provided no competent definition. Perhaps the Freudian It will serve our purpose for the time being. At any rate, a gathering up of forces, a condensation of energy, is important as a preliminary to creative wishing. In the novice this is often brought about by a pleading prayer to It for help, ending even in tears and a discharge of excess energy, followed by the state known as "reconciliation." One must never forget, however, that this reconciled state is not itself creative, but merely the preliminary to creation. In the well disciplined psyche it becomes habitual, and the necessity of falling back upon it frequently is evidence of a failure of spiritual organization.

One is tempted to go on here with the uses of prayer in integrating a creative wish, and

escaping the pressure of commercialism, but this is, after all, a book about genius. And genius holds no charter for the exclusive use of the Great Unconscious.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GENIUS AND MYSTICISM

AMONG all the methods by which man has undertaken to enlarge the periphery of his life by the motions of his own mind, none have been so universally misunderstood as those that come under the general head of mysticism.

Mystical knowledge is knowledge which arrives at the threshold of consciousness by processes recognizably different from the familiar sense perceptions. But since so great a part of our knowingness goes on below the threshold in any case, it follows that among people who know little or nothing of psychology, many things are thought of as being mystically acquired which are entirely explicable in modern terms. Thus, early man ascribed many things that came into his head to the operation of his demon, his genius, his medicine, his guardian angel; autosuggestion was tied up with amulets, and prophecy with dreams and the totem animal. Modern man,

in a primitive state of ignorance, is more than likely to ascribe the same phenomena to spirit communication. But to say, because many psychic phenomena which were once thought to be mystical have proved to be quite ordinary and normal, that there are no mystical experiences left, is equivalent to saying that there is nothing left unknown about the operation of the human mind.

Mystical experiences still go on, especially in the life of the creative artist, so unusual as to be imperfectly studied, but not so unusual as not to be thought of as universal for all races, and normal. The experiences described by which help is obtained through prayer to saints or to otherwise personalized concepts, is mystical in this sense, that its mechanism is not yet perfectly understood; and non-mystical, inasmuch as it is a part of the daily experience of the novelist creating a character, the actor creating a rôle, the healer curing a patient, and the lover in the supreme moment with his beloved, one passing into the other, with definite reenforcement of psychic power, inexplicable but utterly familiar. Traveling this well worn path, the seeker enters into and becomes identified with powers and virtues which he instinctively personalizes in order to

make them more accessible. Whoever has been able to do any of these things deliberately and successfully is, whether he knows it or not, already advanced upon the Mystic Way.

The Mystic Way is a term used by the fifteenth century mystics to describe mystical states which are found by experience to bear sequential relations to each other. There are many of these states of which I have no direct knowledge, since they require many years' intensive practise to attain. All that I shall attempt here, is to describe two or three of which I have personal experience, as being helpful to the creative worker. I should explain, however, that my mysticism is wholly occidental in being an attempt to master the Here and Now, and not to escape it.

It is at this point that much of the confusion in the general mind has occurred. Mysticism has been so closely associated with religion that up to very recent times its practical use has been ranked as questionable, if not absolutely irreverant. Just as many of us were taught, fifty years ago, that we ought not to pray for anything but spiritual benefits, so we have been led to suppose that mystical states could not be used for any purpose but finding out The Absolute, as expressed in

the terms of a particular belief. In my youth the idea of using such states to discover some fundamental reality under our economic confusion, or to get a description of a place you have never seen, to put in your new novel, would have been judged as sacrilegious as, no doubt, to many people it will still seem fantastic.

Evalyn Underhill, who is one of the best authorities on western mysticism, makes it clear that the great fifteenth-century mystics had but one objective and one method. This was to find God, to bring the human spirit into knowledgeable contact with the Great Spirit, by the method of contemplation.

The Christian mystic renounced, for the time being, all aids from the immediate-self, learning, talent, intelligence, and retired into the deepest room of the deep-self, where he came into direct contact with God. If, however, you substitute for God, absolute reality, ultimate truth, or any other notion you have of the Great Spirit, you will find the process of Christian mysticism practically identical with that of all systems. The mystic does not seek for special powers, such as healing or walking on the water, or reading other people's minds. But having once reached the



source of all spiritual power, he brings away with him some of the characteristics of universal Spirit. The fifteenth-century mystics often found themselves, after their mystical excursions to the Source, performing miracles of healing and clairvoyance, receiving the stigmata and other signs of increased subconscious activity.

The modern experimental mystic, however, is more than likely to begin with the particular and work back to the absolute. He may begin with an attempt to heal himself, or improve his fortune, or reconcile himself to society, and his success, or the want of it, will then drive him on to more and more extended use of mystical methods.

The average person stumbles upon one or another mystical method such as have already been described, naturally, and naturally tends to reinvoke those states which he finds helpful in his business. The whole art of mysticism consists in going on deliberately from this point to uncover and make intelligent use of states of consciousness more rarely, but not the less certainly and naturally, showing themselves.

The beginning of all these adventures lies in acquiring early the art of meditation. Med-

itation, as mystics understand it, must be sharply distinguished from reverie, and totally dissociated from that other familiar process known as "thinking things over." In reverie the psyche is adrift in a tide of uncoordinated impressions, rising and swelling, taking all colors, and dying away again. In "thinking things over," the intelligence is immediately at work, fitting available items into what it recognizes as a rational pattern. But meditation, as the mystics use it, is not to be described in a sentence.

The first requisite to successful meditation is an uninterrupted session of time. The increasing difficulty of getting it under present living conditions will, before we know it, lead, as it did in the Middle Ages, to the creation of institutions adapted to this necessity of the recollected soul. The Roman Church still maintains, both here and in Europe, places where one may retire for a year or a day, furnished with all the requirements for complete "re-collection." I like this term which the old mystics used, as indicating that the individual self has been gathered together after being more or less shattered and decentralized, and shall use it as they did, to describe the psychic state necessary to be attained for successful medi-

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tation, re-collected. In every large city, synagogues and churches of every denomination, quiet and dim and architecturally designed to further meditative states of mind, are now open all day for this growing necessity. Many moderns also find that the roar and motion of a moving train make a kind of fruitful isolation. Business men who commute daily tell me that they make profitable use of the interval thus isolated.

Since, all over the world where institutions for the advancement of the contemplative life are maintained, we find cloisters, we may conclude that men have found walking up and down in a removed but limited space an aid to meditation. The next time you are in Europe, visit some of the retreats made famous by the saints, and observe how architecture and decoration, light and shadow and proportion are made to serve. Anybody who visits what is left of fifteenth-century Europe without realizing that it was, before everything else, a period in which men undertook nothing without first deliberately seeking the effective state of mind, misses the most of what fifteenth-century art can be expected to do for him. Also a little inquiry will astonish you with the discovery of what distinguished mod-

erns, poets, playwrights, novelists and players—to name no others—make a practise still of resorting to the same means and places, quite independently of their religious beliefs.

It is advisable to select a regular time for meditation, when the body is in natural equilibrium, neither tired nor eager for activity, neither full nor fasting. The early Christian mystics, starting with the idea that there was something naturally abominable about the body, made fetishes of hunger and pain and weariness, thereby creating difficulties to be virtuously overcome. To modern experience, there is nothing to be gained by thwarting normal appetites, and a possibility of harm in unnecessarily interrupting natural physical rhythms. Occasionally a novice at spiritual exercises may find it necessary to break through long established indurations by such drastic measures, or to use them as a short cut to recovery from some upsetting personal adventure. Many people get the same effect by periodic fasting. When I was younger and the personal life more insistent, I used every year to “make a retreat”: that is, to retire to some place where the re-collective process could go on under the most advantageous circumstances. But now I often go three or four

years without any interruption to my regular spiritual routine.

The use of symbolic acts and objects to induce favorable states of mind, is wholly a matter of temperament. If to light a punk stick or plant a prayer plume on a sacred mountain is a releasing act, by no means omit it.

You will find some interesting items in the works of William James on the release of energy by rites and fetishes, but immemorially the chief use man has made of them is to produce and augment, by suggestion and association, the moods of prayer and meditation. Go into any old European church, and you will find it stuffed with the accumulated devices of a thousand years, line, color, the fall of stained light, the massing of umbrageous shadows, the vibrant flicker of candle flame and the reflecting gleam of marble, "good, thick, stupefying candle smoke," the moan of the organ and the young voiced choir reechoing from the vaulted roof. There is nothing but silly superstition or sheer ignorance to prevent the creative worker from using any of these, or any modern substitute for them, as an aid to productive states of mind.

Having secured the necessary environment for meditation, the next step is to clear the

consciousness and hold it in a state of suspended attention. This is a state that is frequently described as "concentration" and is thought of as an act of the will, in which the mind is clamped down on a given subject like a tight-shut fist. But in true meditation the will does not enter, except that it has previously operated as the occasion of the act, yesterday or this morning, as the will to meditate, the determination, based upon a conviction intelligently arrived at, that you will pursue this course. In true meditation the will and the intelligence and the emotions are all in abeyance. The consciousness is swept clear as the clean round of light upon the screen before the film is run. If thought and emotion tend to cloud it, they must be pushed aside, without any effort of will or expression of annoyance. As the Hindus say, "Let the jumping monkeys pass!" Sweep clean again and hold the suspended attention *toward* the subject selected for meditation. Frequently this condition can be facilitated by beginning the meditation, or by preceding it some hours earlier, with autosuggestion of success, or with auto-prayer.

In my own practise I find it helpful to precede a meditation with a relaxing exercise,

such as the self-contemplation described in the chapter on the creative process, letting the stream of phantasy go by unobstructed, until it falls naturally into a tempo that permits of easy sweeping aside. Often after the space is cleared for meditation this stream of phantasy can still be felt obscurely flowing around its borders, until, as the meditation grows more and more profound, the stream of phantasy entirely disappears. Sometimes the immediate-self will be found in such a turbulent state that the attempt must be abandoned for that day and undertaken under more favorable conditions. It will be enough for the beginner if he succeeds for a few moments at a time in holding the glowing core of himself, vacant of thought processes, turned like an eye in the direction of the expected illumination. At this stage it is helpful to meditate aloud, allowing the aspects of truth presented to pass through you in phases and broken sentences, not thought, but *felt*.

The object of all meditation is illumination. You seek light on some subject the essential truth of which is hid from you. You would guide your conduct by principles not yet elucidated by the intellect. Or, being an artist, you would shape your work to trends, felt

rather than discovered, evolving in the realm of creative expression. The mystics of the Middle Ages also used this method to encourage in themselves the growth of preferred virtues. Somehow, I don't see the present generation of American geniuses doing that, but in case any one is curious, there is a delightful little book which can be picked up at any Catholic bookstore for a few cents, *Father Faber on Prayer*, telling quite clearly and simply how it was accomplished.

Just at this time, when the whole world is feeling that civilization is rounding an unfamiliar turn, it is an acute problem for the writer who hopes to make his work a contribution to civilization, to keep it in line with truths not yet manifest in the general intelligence. The same thing is true of literary form; we feel it changing without being confident of the principles regulating the new pattern. The great geniuses, whose work runs on and becomes an inextricable thread in the destiny of humanity, are those who have deviated least from discoverable truth, even though their work was finished and the artist dead long before the particular truth was discovered.

It is in states of meditation that the subcon-



scious is freed, to take the shapes of truth not yet elucidated in the world of thought, as happened to Kukele, in his work on the structure of the atom. In science, as in art, it is the capacity to meditate fruitfully which distinguishes the great man from even the cleverest of dubs.

The question of when, under what circumstances, and how long the meditation should last, is purely individual. Sacha Guitry has just said that the proportion of his time given to maturing a play in his deep-self, to the time when the immediate-self takes complete charge of it, is as a year to a day, although it is probable that during this incubating year the work is many times drawn up to be criticized by the intelligence. Many novelists of my acquaintance, as they approach the occasion of actually beginning a book, will spend days on end in a state of almost continuous meditation, interrupted only for the normal occasions of living.

My own practise is to meditate a few minutes every day—fifteen minutes is really a long time for primary meditation—on the work of the next day, and to follow it with a suggestion of regularity and efficiency for the particular work to be done. Although I have

never had time to cultivate the virtues by meditation, I am convinced that primary meditation on the principles involved in the work about to be undertaken, is always helpful.

By primary meditation I mean a meditation applied to the project as a whole, or to the principle involved, as a painter might meditate upon color, or a sculptor on proportion, or a musician on harmony. By secondary meditation is meant meditation applied to the particular chapter, or color combination, or musical passage. A favorite method of primary meditation is to identify yourself with the personified principle and speak in the first person, "I am the way, the truth and the life," "I am thine omniscient wisdom, trust thou in me." Secondary meditation should be in the second person as instruction delivered to the deep-self.

The difference between meditation and the process described as autoprayor is quite as explicit as the distinction between prayer and autosuggestion, and quite as difficult to state. In autoprayor the wish is the active element; it is driven down into the subconsciousness, not asking for nor expecting to find anything except what is naturally already in the psyche. In meditation the wish merely determines the

general subject of meditation: whether, for instance, it should be on the structure of the atom, or the ultimate pattern of American drama. The assumption is that there is more to be known about these things than you already know. Meditation is simply the psychic approach. From meditation we pass into contemplation in which the self has come into sight of the desired truth and absorbs it. The posture of the mind is that of complete extension and quiescence, laid open to the truth as a piece of linen is spread to bleach in the sun. This posture and this quiescence are maintained as long, or repeated as often as necessary to the desired end. Contemplation, as the mystics know it, is seldom directly attained by the novice, but there is reason to believe that the deep-self, after being trained to meditate, will go on of its own motion after meditation has ceased, probably in sleep, and actually acquire primary truth, which is later delivered to the intelligence.

The test of the success of meditation is that you actually do know more of the subject meditated upon than you knew before, *and can use what you know*. It is important to keep this in mind. Mysticism in the past having been largely devoted to the saving of

one's own soul, it has come about that its states are often indulged in for their own sake and not for the sake of what can be learned by them. Many people, particularly women, are satisfied after meditation to *feel* that they know more, without being aware of *what* they know, or making any use of it. This may be good for their souls, but it is likely to be injurious to a creative career. Many meditations may be required to elucidate a single point of what you want to know, and it is often necessary to resort to autosuggestion to get out of the deep-self whatever it has discovered by meditation. Or it may break like a bubble at the edge of the mind while one is engaged in some slight and quiet task such as whittling or mending stockings. But if it doesn't come of itself within two or three days, then repeat the meditation, at the same time calling upon the subconsciousness and demanding an answer.

By this time you will be asking: how, if the thing you meditate for is not expected to come during the meditation, are you to know that you are meditating? There are, in fact, perfectly definite indices of meditation taking place. In all mystical states, including prayer, the important item is the mind's *motion*. An

act of the mind takes place. This can not be accurately described until we know more of the nature and substance of the psyche. There is, at any rate a motion, and from that motion, emotion begins to move outward toward the objective. The Christian mystics began their meditation by exciting themselves to the love of God, to insure the right movement toward Him who was the objective of every mystical practise.

For many people there are shapes and shadows of the Truth glinting across the consciousness while the meditation is going on. It is a great mistake to leave off meditating and go chasing after these gleaming goldfish of the inner mind, because there is no danger of losing them. Hold the selected direction as long as you can, and inhibit all thinking until the meditation is over.

Another mistake is to allow yourself to become entangled in the emotions mystically aroused. Emotions are important to the creative worker, as being the means by which he is instructed in the true inwardness of other people's lives. If you do not have and register emotions accompanying experience of any kind, then the truth of that experience will come through to you as an abstraction. And

in that shape, you may make a philosophy of it, but you can not put it into a novel or a play or a poem. Ride your emotions as a shallop rides the waves; don't get upset among them. There are people who enjoy getting swamped emotionally, just as, incredibly, there are people who enjoy getting drunk, but I can not recommend either. It is just as indecent to get woozy with mystical experience as with whisky or sexual desire. The greatest mystics of the past were also men of action, St. Bernard, St. Paul, William Blake; women, too, St. Teresa, Joan of Arc.

Touching the manner in which truth comes through meditation, much is determined by the quality and extent of your information. Very simple and uninformed people often meditate successfully, but since they have no deeds or facts in which to represent themselves, that which eventuates is myth. Thus a whole Christian mythology has grown out of centuries of profound meditation on the truth of the teachings of Jesus.

The mystics of the Middle Ages, being without our vast store of natural science, of travel and book learning, had to seek symbols and analogies in the common human experiences, hunger, thirst, parenthood, marriage

and birth and death. Being usually celibate, they were burdened by suppressions which undoubtedly gave more sexual color to their interpretations of their mystical experience than these intrinsically had. It is a mistake, however, to attach any sexual significance whatever to the act of meditation. Any kind of truth will come through and find expression in any material it finds lying loose in the subconscious. It is your own fault if there is paucity in such material, and you have to fall back on a limited personal experience for your figures and allegories.

The most interesting problem in connection with meditation is: how does the new knowledge get into the consciousness? Does anything really get there that did not come through the two recognized doors of sense perception and ancestral experience? The great mystics have all been sure that something does come through from the outside. I have heard orthodox scientists insist that if one man is meditating deeply upon a creative discovery, another man, meditating upon the same or similar phases of that subject in another tongue, and another country, will get what the first man knows. This has happened too often in science to be explained as a coin-

vidence. It also happens in literature. Few orthodox scientists are satisfied with the explanation which goes by the name of "telepathy": that one mind communicates with another by a mechanism similar to that used in radio.

The explanation that seems to me best grounded is that there is a general subconscious, a group consciousness in which all our consciousness is rooted, and that there is a constant, possibly perceptible, flow among all individual consciousness, similar to the interchange that we know is always going on in the individual between the upper and lower levels of consciousness. It is certain that, in the case of the individual, the subconsciousness tends to emerge under conditions of quiescence, when we are unoccupied and drowsy. Probably in meditation there is emergence of the group consciousness into the individual. This is immensely important, if true, to the future evolution of society, and mysticism, instead of being the preoccupation of a few psychopathic individuals, becomes one of the most important of social functions.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE TECHNIQUE OF INTUITION

It is probable that the process of non-sensory perception which we agree to call "inknowing" goes on in us at all times, below the threshold of attention. Over those movements of the inknower which have to do with life- and race-preserving activities, the host has probably no control except to inhibit or modify acts to which they might give rise.

There is, however, another set of perceptions having to do with impersonal material, the use of which seems to lie more or less within the control of the intelligence. These arrive at the threshold in a variety of forms: as visions, either waking or sleeping, either direct and explicit, or presented in symbols which have to be translated with care. Or they may come as auditions, such as Joan of Arc heard, or as swift unreasoned certainties about things taking place at a distance, or in times other than now. Frequently the matter of such an unknowing reaches the attention as a

direct prompting—called a “hunch”—to act or not to act in a particular matter, or as a vague “presentiment” of things about to happen.

The hunch is the most widely experienced of all such phenomena, ranging all the way from playing a certain hand at poker to playing the stock market for a million. Many business men live wholly by a succession of hunches, between which their affairs are held together by a commonplace routine. I was once, in the land of little rain, fortunate enough to be able to study intimately the process of a professional gambler who depended almost entirely on hunches, and a few professional aids such as marked cards, cuff-link reflectors and some slight knowledge of induced suggestion. But the hunch was so much the major process of his profession, that he excused himself for abandoning his wife and child on the ground that the child's crying at night “spoiled his hunches.”

What interested me more than the excuse, was that the men of the community, while they deplored the gambler's neglect of his family, admitted the reasonableness of his ground for it. Certainly, it was agreed, a man was entitled to his hunches. All of which, taken in

connection with what I know of the way in which primitive women protect their men from household drudgery that spoils their "medicine," that is to say, the instant intake and response of the hunting experience, has led me seriously to wonder if the resistance men have always opposed to the process of domestication may not spring from experience of its interference with the unknowing processes, the hunches of an older, more instinctive habit. For what *is* an instinct but an older, stabilized intuition?

The presentiment is not so easily dealt with as the hunch. It occurs usually as an emotional reaction for which no reason appears. The hunch almost invariably refers directly to the recipient of it, and only indirectly to other people. But the presentiment refers usually directly to other people and indirectly to the recipient. Ordinarily it manifests first as a vague uneasiness, deepening to a conviction that something is about to go wrong somewhere in the extended field of our interests. Occasionally a presentiment arrives already connected with the person to whom later it is proved to relate; more often it is simply a sharp emotional reaction, such as would be natural in the event of death or disaster to

some beloved person. When the identity of the person about whom the presentiment is experienced is not clear, the recipient often, mistakenly, connects it with any member of his circle about whom he happens to be emotionally exercised.

The hunch is so widely experienced, and so easily proved or disproved, that it hardly seems worth while to offer examples; but one instance of what is called presentiment, in my own experience, which was abundantly attested at the time, I shall give for the light it throws on the difficulty of discriminating between intuition,—*i. e.* what we feel and realize,—and the unknowing by which we are made to feel and realize.

I was in my own house at Carmel, dressing to go out to dinner. Suddenly I was overtaken with violent hysteria of horror and protest. I burst out crying and sobbing, talking to myself . . . "No! . . . No! . . . No!" . . . with such vehemence that William Silva, painting the sunset in the cañada below the house, heard me and came to offer assistance. Unable to explain myself, I pretended that I had just had bad news. But the hysteria persisting, followed by all the reactions of severe shock, I was obliged to send for Grace Sartwell

Mason who took me to her house and nursed me into recovery from this inexplicable occurrence. It was found a little later to have been coincident with the murder, in the same street, a few blocks away, of a woman I had known and liked.

In another case, which I take from my notes, a woman found herself seized again and again with similar attacks of hysteria, which later were found to coincide with unsuspected infidelities of her husband.

Did the mechanism of this experience differ from another even more widely attested at the time of its occurrence? This was the occasion of the San Francisco earthquake. I had gone to the city three days before that event, and the afternoon of the third day I began to be troubled with a conviction that the roof of the Palace Hotel where I was stopping, was about to fall in upon me. This grew until I was no longer able to attend to my affairs, and I began to make serious plans for leaving. My brother, a physician, insisted that my apprehension was a natural reaction of the stale air and closed spaces of the vast caravansary, upon one accustomed to the open, and prescribed for me. My friends, to whom I was obliged to telephone and notify them of my change of

address and the reason for it, were hilarious. "Don't you worry about the roof of the Palace," said one, "it would take an earthquake to bring that down." And the next morning the earthquake did bring it down and killed several people. But I had already moved to a location that proved to be one street beyond the ravaged zone. This I believe to have been a true unknowing; delivered at the level of consciousness with rather more accuracy than is usual, owing to the fact that my super-normal faculties, if I have any, at any rate my super-sensitiveness, is of a primitive type, always working better in respect to phenomena of nature and out-of-doors.

Many psychologists would, however, refer the first mentioned experience to a hypothetical sense, kinæsthesia, the faculty of experiencing emotion at a distance. Others assume the operation of a mechanism analogous to "wireless" by which one mind communicates with another. If either of these is correct, then the presentiment is not to be classed among intuitive phenomena. And if not, it has no place in the study of genius. While I do not deny either kinæsthesia or some form of direct engagement between the minds of two or more persons, I am inclined to think many so-

called "psychic phenomena" are attributable to unknowings, imperfectly delivered at the level of intelligence. These unknowings tend to break through at the point of least resistance, which in the cases mentioned would naturally be the emotions of shock and protest. In many cases noted, after the emotional reaction has subsided, the fact reveals itself. The proof of the presentiment is clouded by the practical difficulty of locating the event which set it in motion. If, for instance, the murder to which I reacted had occurred in a crowded city like New York, I might never have heard of it, and my reaction would have passed as pure hysteria. This difficulty occurs in relation to all kinds of unknowing which involve emotional reactions.

References to unknowing in folk-lore and history indicate that not only do individuals practise it in particular directions, but that racial groups are credited, truly or not, with facility in particular directions—the Scotch with second sight, gipsies with fortune-telling, Hebrews with prophecy, and Hindus with the power of discerning events and objects removed in space. It also appears that the hunch, while not absolutely an American hallmark, takes precedence here of all other types

of inknowing. All this corresponds with what we already know of the way in which the use of ancestral material keeps to the main stream of ancestral experience and is directed by racial temperament. Inknowing being the oldest type of consciousness, the impulse to act is the oldest type of response to it. In a mixed people like ours, lacking in standardized racial pattern, the tendency of inknowing would be to express itself along the oldest traveled path, evading those in which it would be likely to be retarded by the confused content of the deep-self. Where that path is already indicated by the American necessity for rapid adjustments to environment, it naturally follows that the typical American genius is a genius for things realized in action, of which the hunch is a normal index.

Not that there are not other kinds of inknowing going on in America, but to an unrealized extent they are frustrated by the lack of an adequate symbolism for the common factors of American experience. For as soon as inknowing exceeds the sort of situations that can be dealt with in acts, when it begins to function in the field of ideas and principles, it has to express itself in symbols which tend to derive from the environment in which they



first became current. Thus in our Southwest, the snake becomes a symbol for water sources through its association with water holes and the likeness of its zigzag movement to the path of the lightning, also associated with rain. But in ancient Greece, the snake was associated with the underworld and the ancestral spirits. In New Mexico the snake is plumed, since feathers are there used as prayer symbols, and the universal prayer is for rain. In Greece the snake was bearded, beards naturally being associated with the idea of the Ancients or tribal ancestors and so with the idea of power. In both countries the snake for different reasons became a symbol of fertility. Any well coordinated people has its own set of symbols by which to express its natural intuitions; but with us, as a result of our mixed ancestry, there is a great confusion of symbols.

To realize the extent to which our national expression is affected by this confusion, we must keep in mind that many things not commonly recognized as symbols, are so in fact: story plots, social relations, art forms of every sort; not only the cross as a symbol of sacrifice, but the whole Christian myth as a symbol of man's relation to deity, and God himself as a symbol of the creative universe. Every peo-

ple that contributes to our blood stream brings its own quota of symbols, which may be unintelligible to the others; none of them are so widely accepted as to constitute a nationally American vocabulary.

The inknower being the oldest self, its disposition is to express itself in the material which it finds in the lowest levels of deep-self, translating itself from level to level of consciousness until it arrives at the threshold of understanding. Though I am convinced that there is more unknowing, more prophetic revelation of a social character going on here than in Europe, we are so hindered in our expression of it by the lack of a competent vocabulary, that we get no credit for it at all. And our writers, feeling that they have not cleared their bosoms of the perilous stuff of prophecy, fret and fume and blame the times and us for their lack of potency. This is the case whether the selected mode of expression is language, paint, musical tones, or political organization.

That intuitive feeling for the next moment which we have seen carrying the musical creator through the successive intervals of a melody, operates not less surely in social evolution. But when it operates so far below the level of consciousness that the intelligence can not rec-

ognize it, there is in the host, a sense of unease, lack of the assurance of social direction. Thus few people will see in the present craze for the cross-word puzzle, a device of the deep-self to provide itself with a larger English vocabulary in which to deliver the rapidly ripening fruit of social experience, but I make no doubt that this will prove to be the case.

Time will bring relief from this occlusion of our prophetic gift. But we ought also to give more study to the art of bringing our unknowing to conscious expression without having it intercepted by the confusion of the deep-self. There are people who have this gift. In them the unknowing consciousness and the immediate consciousness are in such close contact that knowledge can be put across promptly and with perfect clarity.

This instant spark of the inknower into the immediate intelligence occurs freakishly sometimes, without profit, as in those singular individuals who can tell you the answer to 9,567 times 7,659 instantly. But it occurs under circumstances which enable us to study its processes with the hope of repeating them, only in the genius type. For it is the outstanding characteristic of genius to be able intuitively to possess the whole of its inheritance, of which

inknowing is the oldest and most inalienable part. I have known cases in which inknowing existed side by side with the lowest types of intelligence, even with abnormal and defective types. But it is only when inknowing knows itself, concurrently with a high intellectual equipment, that we are able to be instructed in its technique.

Inknowing occurs both spontaneously and by seeking. But before undertaking to discuss the methods of such seeking or of interpreting the spontaneous appearances of inknowing, I must make a statement which amounts to an apology. It is that at this point I must depend almost entirely on my own experience and that of May Sinclair.

This is not due to any lack of the capacity for inknowing among creative workers in the United States. As a matter of fact American genius moves toward its next moment faster than the critics and the dealers can follow, possibly not faster than their audiences could follow, if the creative values of genius could be paid down to them directly, without having to be sieved through the thick fabric of conventional commercialism. In the case of engineering or mechanical, or organizational genius, in which the audience can par-

ticipate by pulling a lever or pushing a button, establishing a new motor habit, or paying a membership fee, the American response to the approaching moment is as instant as the crack of a whip. In the types of genius achievement in which the future has to be entered into by psychological readjustment, it is naturally much slower. This is particularly the case in the arts, where criticism plays on the conservative side, and in the social arts where religion and politics offer a definite resistance to movement in any direction. But the American genius himself, is singularly inarticulate about his processes. In my own generation we have had to devote too large a share of our creative energies to clearing ourselves from our environment and establishing the free use of powers for which no standard has been set up. As for England, all Europe in fact, one suspects it got into its present plight, in which the next moment threatens to be a downward one, by the slow failure of all intuitive processes, and the substitution therefor of formal intellectuation.

H. G. Wells is an outstanding example of the type of intellectual goose-stepping toward the future, stepping high but standing practically in the same place, as Galsworthy is the

type of saddened formal protest. If Miss Sinclair and Mary Austin remain surer of the function of inknowing as a concomitant of creative activity, and clearer about its processes, it is possibly because they have both been somewhat isolated, one by temperament and the other by circumstances of geographical situation, and so more dependent upon intuition as an implement.

Miss Sinclair represents a type of intuitive performance of which England has furnished us several examples—the Brontes, Jane Austen, Mrs. Browning, perhaps—a type I suspect not to be found apart from a deep sense of race. Miss Sinclair's faculty of inknowing functions steadily within the field of her work and the restricted circle of her intimates, so restricted that she does not recall a single instance of social prophecy. But Miss Sinclair lives her life to a singular degree unclouded by personal adventure, against a social background that makes a fetish of detachment; while Mary Austin lives in a country in which the spark of personal contact is the most constant and the demand made upon the individual the most insistent in the world. Far from being detached, I have so excellent an appetite for life that if there are any experi-

ences left that a woman, remaining within the law and a reasonable margin of respectability, may have, I am still hopeful of being able to compass them. This difference of approach probably accounts largely for the fact that my own unknowing is almost always social in scope and prophetic in character. Notwithstanding this wide difference of approach, Miss Sinclair and the writer are absolutely agreed as to the method up to a certain point.

We agree on preparation and approach through meditation, as described in previous chapters, and thus far we have the backing of the fifteenth-century mystics and the orthodox psychologists. But when the consciousness is cleared and kept clear, the mystics content themselves with a purely passive attitude *toward* the saint or blessed personage from whom illumination is expected to come. The Christian mystics always thought of illumination proceeding toward them from a Source, taken for granted. Thus, whatever did come had to come clothed in Christian symbols, or it was refused admittance. The modern seeker proceeds as if the power to see resides in himself, and hopes to know only the truth, uncolored by any prepossession about the make-up of the universe.

Undirected meditation will always bring some sort of result; but if you wish to make a particular kind of truth appear, or to have it appear in a given form, there must be a further act of the psyche, which Miss Sinclair calls "an act of effortless will." I am not quite sure that this is the best term for it, partly because the very term "will" connotes effort for most people; at least it suggests something to be overcome, which implies resistance, and so tends to set up reactions of resistance which are inimical to the perception of truth. For this reason Baudouin, the only psychologist who has gone into this point, insists that the will should be completely in abeyance. However, if you think of the will not as effort but as a concerted movement of the psyche in a given direction, like the movement of water down the groove between two hills, the difficulty disappears. In any case I agree with Miss Sinclair that before a particularized unknowing takes place, there must be an outgoing act on the part of the percipient.

The preliminary step for a successful unknowing is, first of all, an active desire to know, either on the part of the percipient, or on the part of the individual on whose behalf



the inknowing is undertaken. There must be a stir throughout the "feeling nature" of the percipient, either original or induced by sympathy.

There must also be a statement of the thing desired, concise, and so stated that the whole feeling nature is set in motion in the direction of that desire. . . . "I want to know— —?" Then comes the meditation, preceded by whatever autosuggestive acts are found to be helpful.

In meditation on a specific creative undertaking, as already described, the consciousness is first freed in reverie, then cleared gently and held open, so that the desired incursion from the subconsciousness may take place, welling up and separating itself from other material, which must be gently rejected. But in meditation which is simply a prelude to inknowing, *all* intrusive material should be rejected for a time, if only an instant, and the percipient should for that instant *be* the inknower, exist only at his own intuitive levels.

There are two general ways of accomplishing this, of which most others are modifications. One is the Oriental method of self-hypnosis, which is accomplished by crystal gazing, or by the repetition of the familiar

formula . . . *Om mani padme hum* . . . which is quickly broken down into the humming *Oooooom, Oooooom, Oooooom*, which for Oriental mystics represents the rhythm of the universe. I have experimented with this method with fair success, but I find that any sort of self-hypnosis is ultimately harmful, and can not recommend it.

The western method is to assume the person of the inknower, meditating aloud in the first person. . . . "I am thine omniscient wisdom within thee, trust thou in me. . . ." There is good reason to believe that this method was used by Jesus, who is the pattern of Occidental mystics. . . . "I am the way, the truth and the life. . . . Lo, I am with you always. . . ."

What seems to happen while this is going on, is that a direct contact is made between the inknowing frame of consciousness and the immediate consciousness, and a perfect flow of knowing and doing established. Every creative worker and every business worker knows what this state is, and knows too, that though the conscious contact may last only a moment, the flow may go on for some time thereafter. Always there is a little click, a shift of planes, some sort of notice that the contact has been made.

Miss Sinclair and I agree upon this. It is the only way, when the inknowing power works at a distance from its object, that you can be certain that the inknowing has been accomplished, since the result of inknowing is not always delivered immediately at the threshold of consciousness.

It must be kept in mind that this sort of inknowing can and does in many individuals take place spontaneously as it did in Blake. Also for those who practise the more elaborate method, the ease and spontaneity of inknowing is steadily increased. I have described the process at length because there is no real reason for allowing the intuitive facilities to lie dormant than there is for refusing to take music lessons simply because you can not play the piano at sight. There has been so much bunk talked about genius and mysticism, that many people spend all their lives in a state of arrested development simply because they have been early inoculated with the idea that if you do not have the full use of your mind accidentally, you can not be expected to have it at all.

The final problem of how the knowledge intuitively acquired is cleared in the intelligence, is an individual problem. Miss Sin-

clair, owing to the natural clarity of her mind and the paucity of material laid down in the deep-self by dramatic personal experience, is able to translate her intuition into terms of other people's experience practically instantaneously. When she gives that intimate account of her creative activities which she owes to us, this will appear in many amazing instances, as, for example, the knowledge which informed *The Judgment of Eve*, impossible to have been otherwise acquired by a young girl.

In my own case there is almost always an interval between inknowing and the appearance of the desired knowledge at the threshold of consciousness. My habit, therefore, is to meditate about twilight of one day, and expect the clarification on waking in the morning. My personal problem is greatly increased by the necessity of translating my intuitions into the language of scholarship, which, if it happens to be not already in my baggage, has to be acquired by the usual methods of reading and research. The poet, who can use just any colorful language which he finds in his subconsciousness, any symbol, any myth, subject only to his own critical faculty, has much the easier time of it.

Here too, in the United States, the constant spark of human contacts, the general encouragement given to group thinking and group states of consciousness, give the genius rather a bad time of it. Social developments, revolutions, approaching literary forms, crises in the lives of his friends, impose themselves upon him, often injuriously.

It is only within the past ten years, however, that he has shown a disposition to take his dilemma by the horns and discovered that what has happened to him is only the next step in what is likely to happen to the creative type of mind everywhere. It is probably happening now, and is the source of part of the failure of creativeness in America, to produce an adequate expression. The attempt to force our native genius into European forms has retarded the work of genius here, but it has not been nearly so much of a hindrance as our failure to realize that the scope of inknowing is steadily widening, and calls not only for acceptance in itself, but for the application of intelligence to its methods and interpretation. For inknowing is not only the better part of genius; it is indispensable to any really satisfactory human society.

## CHAPTER X

### GENIUS AND THE SUPERNORMAL FACULTIES

ALL the movements of the psyche within itself, described as autosuggestion, autoprayers and meditation, and all forms of creative wishing, will be recognized by the reader as practical for everybody, quite irrespective of their concurrence either with genius or with talent.

Practically everybody admits that he has stumbled upon one or all of these methods, or he has found them described by great artists of the past, who had not yet developed any philosophy of the creative process. The reader, then, can scarcely escape the conclusion that autosuggestion, autoprayers and meditation are motions that genius tends naturally to make on its own behalf.

To admit that is equivalent to admitting the theory with which this discussion was begun, that genius is the untutored use of racial experience. Because the first thing the self-examining genius discovers, is that even the most mystical of his processes, that is to say,

the least understood, follow closely the mysticism of his racial strain. Everybody recognizes at once the quality of Irish mysticism, and everybody who reads the younger Irish poets regrets that it is, in expression, so closely confined to Irish symbolism. In the same way Francis Thompson and William Blake find adequate expression for their own mystical experience in Roman Catholic symbols, the natural inheritance of their blood. It is only when you read the Russian mystics that you realize that here is a race whose mystical capacities have never been developed into an ordered system, nor have they found an adequate, natively Russian set of symbols; which is one reason why they are so misunderstood by the rest of the world. American mysticism is in even worse case, drawing from so many and such unequal inheritances, and having no order nor any common symbols. Consequently we grasp hopefully at one alleged system after another: Theosophy, Christian Science, Abramism, New Thought, abandoning them all as they prove inadequate for any but a few.

But at the bottom, all mystical systems are efforts to make use of inherited results of racial experience in managing your own mind. I am not sure that anything else is inherited.

Certainly we do not inherit explicit knowledge of mathematics. Everybody still has to learn the multiplication table and that the square of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides. But we do seem to bring along with us a capacity for acquiring and handling mathematical knowledge, after somebody has, by severe intellectual application, discovered it. It is this sort of thing that individuals of the less developed races, Indian and negro, who follow in our educational ruts, usually fail at, studies which can not be acquired by memorizing merely, but demand certain inherent capacities.

Since the first of these articles was published, many writers have explained to me processes that they naturally fell into, without in the least realizing that the methods they so lightly describe, were, four or five hundred years ago, thought not possible to attain without years of struggle and self-mastery. Probably we could not now slip into them so easily if that struggle had not once taken place.

It is already recognized that there may be such a thing as a genius for mysticism. There are people who, without having any artistic or literary or inventive talent whatever, still have



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a singular capacity for using their minds in uncommon directions. Psychological investigators have come to speak of these people as having supernormal faculties.

By normal faculty is meant any faculty which is discovered to be practically universal for men in a normal state. By normal state, one can mean only what the science of the period defines as normal, for the line is not yet drawn hard and fast. It means, at least, faculties and processes not involving lesions and non-normal states such as trance and hypnotism. By supernormal we mean faculties that are discovered occurring normally in individuals, widely distributed among the races of men, not universally, but at least with a frequency that indicates that they belong in the series of evolutionary states of consciousness. We can not go so far back in the history of mankind that we do not discover individuals regarded as supernormal because of some faculty not widely possessed by other men of their period. The first man who learned how to use suggestion upon his fellow man at a profit to himself, was a supernormal in his time. In the slow process of evolution, however, many faculties regarded as supernormal, as well as processes called mystical, emerged

from the mist, and were recognized as normal for all men. We know now that the maker of amulets and spells is a primitive Coué, and the hypnotist is no longer a sinister creature imposing on weaker beings the power of a supernormal will. Phenomena of the subconscious are emerging, discriminatingly referred to various levels of the deep-self. For the instructed mind of to-day, the supernormal faculties are simply faculties that lie beyond the recognized subconscious area, at the back of a beyond, of which meditation as practised by the mystics, is the threshold.

One of the most obvious evidences of the normality of the so-called supernormal is that, though particular faculties occur rarely in proportion to the population, there is no society so primitive that examples of all these faculties have not already shown themselves, usually under the misapprehension of supernaturalism. Every tribe, including our own, seems to have believed in and practised in some fashion the following:

Power to describe and locate objects concealed from sensory observation.

Power to diagnose disease under the same conditions.

Power to describe places, persons or events removed in space.

Power to describe the same when removed in time.

Power to describe the same when removed both in time and space.

Power to arrive at truth, the rational path to which has not yet been cleared.

The common element in all these powers, establishing them outside the need of sensory contact, indicates that they all belong to one mode of consciousness. Orthodox psychology not having provided a competent term for this mode of consciousness, I adopt one which I find in use among American Indians, "in-knowing thought."

I use this in preference to "intuitive," meaning intaught, because nothing can be taught which is not first known, so that, necessarily, behind every intuitive process there must have been a definite movement of the psyche, an "inknowing." We shall hereafter speak of "inknowing" as the primary act, using "intuitive" to describe behavior of the individual resulting from inknowing acts of the mind.

Do not fear to accept this classification, which is in harmony with orthodox science in every particular. There is, in every hu-

man, an immediate consciousness, arrived at through the senses; there is an indeterminate and only slightly explored subconsciousness, which seems to be the repository of previous sensory contacts both of the immediate and the racial selves. The mode of the first type of consciousness is rational, the mode of the second is subjective. Back of both these is a third type which appears to be independent of the senses, whose mode is not yet definitely determined, the unknowing consciousness. Did not life exist on the earth for a space of time which, compared to our time, is as a million to one, by no other power than its unknowingness? Before it had ears to hear or eyes to see or nerves to tingle, life became, grew, evolved, provided itself with the whole set of senses and mental faculties, by a power of knowing and moving upon that knowledge within itself. It is this level of consciousness, which is approached by the way of meditation, that we are slowly learning to use by means of the intelligence, evolved, perhaps, for that express purpose.

Before attempting to describe the supernormal faculties, I have taken account of what may appear to be unknowing faculties, but are in reality sense perceptions lying below the

threshold of stimulation. That is to say, there are things heard or things smelled, but so faintly heard or so feebly smelled that the observer is uncertain by which sense perception occurs, and so assumes that a particular experience is supernormal or even supernatural. For example, in every primitive tribe there are individuals who are successful weather forecasters, without being able to give any reason for what they prophesy. This sort of thing is probably a multiple form of sense perception below the threshold. Again, both American Indians and Central African natives maintain that they can sense other people's reactions in their presence, and in general they refer the sensation to definite areas of the body, the same areas in both peoples. Our Indians tell me that this faculty disappears under the clothes wearing habit. So I conclude this also to be either a normal perception below the threshold of stimulation, or a hidden sense, cryptaesthesia, not yet histologically determined.

These things are mentioned merely to show that they have not been overlooked in a study of the supernormal faculties listed above, in which no sense reaction enters.

One of the reasons why we have so little au-

thetic data on these faculties, is that nobody has ever studied them in connection with genius, or a high degree of talent. It is only occasionally, when we find some otherwise ignorant and possibly subnormal person who can find lost articles, play seven games of chess at once, or correctly prophesy coming events, that the psychologist pays any attention to him. What I mean to show you is that inknowing is probably much more widely practical than we have supposed it, and that it is so often a concomitant of genius that it is obscured by its very familiarity.

Recall the original proposal, that genius can be acquired, genius being defined as the power to reach back into the psychic past and make use of acquired potentialities. The various ranks of genius, then, would depend on the length of the reach. No modern psychologist will deny that you can learn to reach back into your immediate, personal past and recall everything that has happened to you; few will haggle over the possibility of learning how to reach back into ancestral pasts. The only further step that you have to take with me, is to believe that sometime, somehow, we shall learn to reach all the way back. Just how far back that may be, we can not know,

since there is as yet no certainty about the point we started from. There are orthodox scientists willing to maintain that there is a form of consciousness in every atom of matter. Others insist that consciousness begins only with what we call life: no one denies that previous to the appearance of the higher animals, and in them for a longer or shorter period after birth, life proceeds wholly by in-knowing. All that I undertake to suggest is how we can reach back of the subjective, to the inknowing level of consciousness.

In general two types of inknowing present themselves; those that occur spontaneously to the percipient, and those that are approached deliberately by the path of meditation. In this connection let me repeat again that true meditation has nothing whatever to do with the type of genius using it. There is no discoverable difference between the psychic acts of a physician or a detective meditating on a case and a playwright meditating on a play. All three of them may arrive at inknowing by precisely the same process. The faculty of inknowing diagnosis which M. Eugene Osty describes in his book, *The Supernormal Faculties of Man*, as he finds them occurring among ignorant and superstitious subjects,

probably occurs frequently in the work of any physician of the high-grade, genius type.

Not all physicians are capable of successful meditation, but those who practise it are probably using their inknowing faculty in that business, even though they be the sort of medical men who dislike to admit that there is any such thing as inknowing. More than likely they were led to study medicine in the first place by the obscure working of an intuitive capacity for healing or diagnosis. For a doctor who does not put more into his work than he got out of the medical school is not much of a doctor.

The power to describe and locate concealed articles is much more than the amusing parlor trick most people suppose it to be. Years ago I had a conversation on this subject with William J. Burns when he was at the height of his detective career, and although Mr. Burns had no acquaintance with the patter of orthodox psychology, he knew instantly what I was talking about. He said that the capacity of the master detective to find clues where other people missed them, was quite as much due to the possession of this faculty, as it was to superior powers of observation. More than once he had gone back to a place to search for a



concealed item which his inner faculty advised him existed, and finally enabled him to find. His method of coordinating collected information, as he described it, came much nearer to true meditation than anything I had at that time met, since his capacity for what we call concentration exceeded enormously that of the average literary artist. In the field of archeological research, this particular quality of inknowing in regard to concealed objects plays an important part. Our own Frank Hamilton Cushing was so amazing an example of supernormal percipience, that it is a great pity the lack of appreciation, at that time, of such faculties, prevented a complete, studious record of his capacity.

One such experience of the writer is related, not because it is unique, but because of the probability that one in every three readers will have experienced something similar, each in his special field of interest.

I had been up in the piedmont country to look at some Small-house ruins and, returning, had stopped to rest in mid-afternoon, falling into a half trance of heat and sleepy light, meditating on the life of the Small-house period with the idea of making a story of it. I had been there very still for perhaps a quar-

ter of an hour; and by degrees I felt my attention plucked at and drawn to the other side of the shallow arroyo where I was sitting, with an insistent call to look . . . look behind that big boulder, there. . . .

"Chopo," I said to my Indian guide, stretched on the ground at a little distance, "something calls to me from behind that boulder; look and see what it is."

"Chisera, no! If it calls you it would not like me to look; some hurt would come to me."

Sauntering over to the boulder I looked carefully, and presently discovered a beautifully executed stone ax of the Small-house period, half buried in the sand.

Chopo explained that any object so found was Good Medicine. He said that the animal shaped stones carried by his people as hunting fetishes were usually so found, and had a long story to tell of how an uncle of his, during an illness, had been walking about in great despair when a little plant spoke to him in the same wordless fashion in which the ax head had spoken to me. His uncle, having dugged the plant, made a decoction of it which cured him of his illness, and had thus come into general use among his people as a febrifuge. Well, why not? If a cat knows when to eat

catnip, why should not man occasionally have the same kind of knowledge of what is good for him? There is a popular theory that early man learned all he knows by a system of trial and error; but why suppose man, of all the animals, left out of the inknowing stage of consciousness?

It offends all my scientific instincts to leave an important phase of the problem a mere suggestion, without going into the evidence of such inknowing in primitive man, and the related problem of whether the inknower is educable, especially whether it is suggestible. Did the little plant speak to the sick man because he desperately wanted to get well, and was there something in his deep-self which fooled him into fooling his immediate-self with an herbal remedy, and was his cure finally worked entirely by autosuggestion? But there could be no autosuggestion about the stone ax any more than about the sackful of Indian artifices which young Cushing found, and by finding won his chance for a college education.

But Cushing could do more than discover Indian relics in much worked-over fields. He could take unknown objects of Indian make in his hands and elucidate their use and meaning, as he did over and over again, to be

abundantly verified by later discoveries. By the methods he introduced to demonstrate his intuitions, the method of experimental reproduction, he inaugurated important alterations in the whole method of archeological study. It was while Cushing was living at Zuñi that he arrived by pure intuition, at the certainty that he should find the solution of many puzzling archeological problems of that remarkable pueblo, far to the southwest, in what, after he had uncovered it, became known as the Great House County. Holding in his hand a single specimen from unexplored ruins in Florida, he predicted many of the discoveries about those ruins which he afterward confirmed. And it was this man we let die, almost literally of underpay and overwork, with many of his most interesting, unrecoverable revelations unrecorded for lack of secretarial aid.

Perhaps the greatest of modern supernormals was William Blake, Irish-English, sometimes called a mystic, though he used none of the methods of mystics except an intricate system of symbolism to express the truths supernormally perceived. From his childhood Blake had a genius for visual imagination utterly without comparison in western civiliza-

tion. (Unless you take into account the belief of many distinguished Irishmen that they can still actually *see* the Little People.) Blake had a minor gift of clairvoyance as illustrated by his refusal to be, at the age of fourteen, apprenticed to the engraver Rylan, because he looked like a man who was going to be hanged, which proved to be the case. But Blake's transcendent gift was for visions which came, not the way of the mystic, by meditation and contemplation, but instantly and spontaneously, the genius way.

He had, for instance, visions of men of the past, whom he represented in his drawings by portraits, which, if they did not always resemble the actual portraits of these men, were so penetrating, so representative, that it is difficult not to be convinced by them. Blake's greatness both as poet and artist, makes it of the greatest importance to any competent inquiry into the relation of genius to the supernormal faculties, that some reliable, modern study of his unique gifts should be made.

We need much discriminating study at this point because of the importance of those supernormal faculties which involve the syn-  
copation of space and time, with which we are just becoming authentically acquainted. Blake

himself 'was convinced that "distance is a phantasy." So far back as we have any history of man, he has always believed that certain individuals have the power to discover what is going on at a distance from them, and to predict future events. Sufficient evidence has been collected that there are still individuals who can do one or both of these things.

Such a faculty for the prophetic trends of human affairs is of the utmost importance to the genius who deals with the social aspects of the human scene. The possession of it is, in fact, the distinguishing mark in this field between little genius and great. We have only to look on the scores of philosophies and economic and political systems built up out of pure intellectuation, and now lying ruined in the dust, to realize that without some such native faculty, man is utterly lost in the path of his own destiny. If prophecy were possible by purely intellectual processes, why would one of the most brilliant of our intellectuals so steadily fail to do more than invent startling and inconsistent improbabilities for that future toward which he yearns? In all H. G. Wells' work there is nothing that, for true, unknowing prophecy, is comparable to Emerson's poem, *Uriel*.

Innumerable examples of true prophecy, as well as of events occurring simultaneously in widely separated places, have been collected and collated, but they are almost all of the type of spontaneous occurrence. Among the many fortune-tellers, clairvoyants and the like, who claim to be exercising regularly a supernormal faculty of inknowing, I have failed to find one who can give an intelligible account of his processes. The spontaneous exhibitions of this faculty are so varied in their expression, and so often only brought to expression in slightly anormal circumstances, such as dreams, as visions, as voices, or as automatic writings, that they have given rise to a welter of theory and superstitious explanation that tends to bring the whole subject into disrepute.

One of the most usual explanations of inknowing is that it is "spirit communication." But this explanation has also been used by people ignorant of their own psychology, in perfectly normal processes. I once had occasion to examine carefully the evidence offered by the author of *Patience Worth* and other alleged "spirit dictations." There was no question of the author's sincere belief in "spirits" as the source of her work, but her explanation

contained nothing whatever that could not easily be shown to occur normally in the daily processes of almost any writer of fiction. I think it possible that Mrs. Curran may have a faculty for unknowing of concealed objects, or the contents of a closed book, but she has declined to submit herself unreservedly to the close investigation which would discriminate between the usual genius process, which she exhibits, and the exercise of a supernormal faculty. As a matter of fact the example she gives, of knowing the contents of books which she believes she has not read, is nothing like so remarkable as one related to me by Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt told me that he had been sent a book, in two or three volumes, I think, which he had never had time to read. Then the author called upon him for the purpose of discussing the economic theories in the book. Mr. Roosevelt, not wishing to hurt his visitor's feelings, trying to gain time said, "Ah, yes, that was in the second volume, wasn't it?" and crossed the room to take the book from the shelf. In the act, he suddenly found himself possessed of the necessary knowledge of the volume and chapter named.

Mr. Roosevelt was, however, a remarkably rapid reader, and it is just possible that he



may have ruffled the pages of the book when it first came to him, and had something stick in his memory after the act was forgotten. But whether this particular incident was an act of memory or an act of unknowing, there are too many well authenticated examples of it abroad to make necessary the explanation of it as spirit communication. As a matter of fact, it is no longer necessary to explain in that way any of the following:

Knowledge of objects or places unknown to the percipient.

Knowledge of facts unknown to the percipient or any interested inquirer.

Foreknowledge of events not yet manifest in time and space.

For all of these are known to have occurred to people sufficiently aware of their processes to feel certain that there is no intervention of outside intelligences.

This does not prove that, assuming survival, there may not be interchanges between incarnate and discarnate intelligences. I myself have what Walter Pater called an "invincible natural prepossession" in favor of survival, and my notion of what is called "psychic re-

search" is that it is from the wrong end. It practically all presupposes an intense desire on the part of the dead to communicate with the living, when the case is really that there is an intense desire on the part of the living to communicate with the dead. This wrong-ended supposition exposes us to all manner of difficulties arising within the deep-self by means of which we assume such communications are being made. Now, if there is another life beyond this life, there is only one thing we certainly know about it; we know that we get through from Here to There. Therefore, if we wish to learn something about that life, the only logical thing to do is to try to look through the door from our side, instead of proceeding as if they were all trying to look back at us. Since psychologists are pretty generally ready to admit the existence of an unknowing faculty in man, if I wished to know anything about that other life I should try to use that faculty deliberately to penetrate the partition wall. Indeed, I am willing to admit that certain individuals do occasionally seem to know a little about the dead, but I have never found anything which afforded me the slightest evidence that the dead—unless it be for the slight interval of passing in which by

the approach to ultimate reality time and space are syncopated—know aught about us.

Some of the processes by which this penetration may be accomplished will be touched upon later. It seems necessary to clear up this point, because both editors and publishers are still being bombarded with manuscripts purporting to be “psychic dictations.” I have interviewed at least a score of such authors without finding in their processes a single item differing from the same processes in what may be called legitimate writers. Either the writer of the alleged dictation is ignorant of the genius processes, or he is slightly anormal, and his deep-self can function only when the immediate-self is off-guard and the essential process becomes automatic. Or—this is an aspect that receives too little consideration—the assumption of psychic dictation releases his ego from the domination of the old notion that it is conceited to talk freely of your own work. But if your poem is not yours, if it is dictated to you by the “spirit of Robert Burns” or an inhabitant of Mars, then you can talk of it as much as you like, without incurring odium. We have all of us met people who would blush to be called geniuses, yet who wouldn’t hesitate to declare themselves the chosen medium

of the late William James. So far as I am acquainted with such "dictations," the only ghost that has anything to do with them is the ghost of that old notion that has classified the whole tribe of geniuses as medicine men, favorites of the gods, or of the devil, possessed of evil spirits, wizards, degenerates, or, finally, eccentrics and poseurs.

In dealing with alleged supernormal phenomena, since they all appear to come from the deep-self, it is important to discriminate between those that may have come by way of supernormal faculties, and those that have got into the deep-self by way of immediate experience. Sometimes so-called "spirit communications" can be quite obviously traced to recent sensory experience, and to half-conscious observation. Others can be followed back to experiences occurring in extreme youth, before the intelligence or memory could deal with them. But after all these discriminations, competent psychologists are generally agreed that there remain definite types of non-sensory phenomena which must, for the present at least, be relegated to the province of the knower, or intuitive level of consciousness. Since they are found occurring in animals having nothing like our nervous and cerebral

equipment, they appear to have no seat in the brain, and are not necessarily related to any known level of the consciousness which deals with the span of intelligent experience. Too little is known about these supernormal faculties to dogmatize about them, but in the present state of our knowledge they can best be handled by treating them as faculties, that is as specializations of the knower to distribute its capacities, exactly as faculties of cognition, comparison and ratiocination deal with the experiences of the conscious intelligence.

It is probable that they will eventually be found to be involved in the problem of "interest," regulating the direction and intensity of the interior drive. Great development in our knowledge of this intuitive level of consciousness, as great as this generation has seen in our knowledge and use of the subjective levels, can confidently be predicted within a few years.

## CHAPTER XI

### FETISH AND FORMULA

IN APPROACHING the problem of releasing the native capacities of the deep-self by auto-suggestion, I am taking it for granted that the reader is more or less familiar with the current phraseology of the subject, and with what has been accomplished by this method in the way of stabilizing the vegetative system and establishing a flow of health. But such success as the autosuggestionists have had is possible only because the whole health sustaining complex works by the genius process; that is, by the non-conscious rehearsal of experience gained in its age-long evolution, in the business of digesting food, aerating the blood, and reproducing its kind.

In precisely the same manner that the vegetative consciousness accepts from the immediate-self stimulus and direction as to the manner in which it shall perform its well learned office, so the genius-self will work out the structure of a novel or a Brooklyn Bridge

by the aid of its ancestral experience in these things. Whatever orthodox science has admitted as true of the suggestibility of one department of submerged consciousness, it is prepared to admit of all the inheritance. If we agree that genius is the untutored play of a liberated inheritance, to say that a flow of genius may be released and stabilized by autosuggestion, is as commonplace as to say that nervous indigestion can be cured by that method.

Orthodox science, however, does not accept for autosuggestion all that some of its practitioners, especially those who mix religious doctrines with their methods, claim for it. The advantages that may be secured by autosuggestion, though amazing, are strictly conditions by the nature of the deep-self. M. Coué went so far as to say that a mother could determine the sex of her expected child by thinking about it. But suppose she should change her mind half-way! Fortunately we are not subject to any such hazard. So far, no evidence has been produced to show that autosuggestion can be made to work against the life pattern. If you have been naturally and habitually writing like Laura Jean Libbey, do not hope to find a formula by the repetition of

which you will immediately, henceforth, write like Henry James.

Neither can a Russian inheritance be made interchangeable with an Italian, or an Oriental with an Occidental deep-self. Nor does it seem likely that any structural change can be worked in the individual by suggestion; the most that we can hope for is to direct the operations of the deep-self, as is done in the case of functional disorders of the body, so as to maintain a uniform high efficiency.

The methods most in use for securing this efficiency are autosuggestion by formula and fetish. A formula is a statement in words of the thing desired to be affected. When stated in acts, or in words and acts combined, it is usually called a rite, but as the psychological reaction thus secured is exactly the same in both cases, we will avoid confusion by using the term formula for all such statements whatever the medium. A fetish is any object, with which ritual acts may also be connected, which, by association with the desired reaction, operates suggestively. Both formulas and fetishes have been used by man immemorially. The psychological function of all these aids to the subconscious has been greatly obscured by notions, both superstitious and religious,



which have gathered around them. They have also been confused by the use of symbols in place of words or objects, or with words and acts which are themselves symbolic. Coué's "Every day in every way I grow better and better" and the business man's "Do it now!" are examples of simple direct formula. The Billikin on the business man's desk, and the gold cross worn by Anglican clergymen, are examples of symbolic fetishes, as the "lucky piece" in your purse is a simple fetish. The lighting of a candle to St. Anthony to recover something lost, is a simple rite, and Christian Communion is a symbolic rite, exceedingly complex. The purpose back of all of these, however, is the same; favorably to affect the deep-self, and to induce it to manifest in a particular manner in the plane of the immediate consciousness. Human practises, so ancient and so universal, deserve to be made intelligent use of, rather than to be left to whimsy and superstition.

The first step to such use is intelligent understanding of what every reader can prove for himself. This is the normal sequence by which a desire, originating in the immediate-self, can be formulated by the intelligence, pressed down again into the subconscious by

autosuggestion to become the source of activity. The results of this activity are in turn passed back into the fore consciousness, and finally clarified by the intelligence.

This rhythmic to and fro across the threshold of consciousness, is not only normal, but it tends to become habitual along lines that may be intelligently established. The important thing is to establish the habit as *responsive* rather than automatic. What we know about the subconscious is that it is a dark house of many doors, and that the intelligence standing at one side can determine not only at which door a particular suggestion goes in, but by which door it shall come back, and at what time or upon what occasions. We are also learning something about the kind of baggage it may carry upon its return trip. Many people, however, use no sort of selection as to the art of suggesting what shall be let in, and disdain to exercise any control over what shall come out. There is even an illusion of superiority, entertained by some people, in being at the mercy of the returning visitor. Modern psychology, however, tends to rank as superstition, the notion that the less genius knows about itself the more certain it is to be genius. People who fail entirely to establish

connection between the suggestion received by the subconscious, and the later response, are the most obstinate about refusing intelligent criticism of their work. Those unfortunate victims of this form of psychological snobbishness, whose work is entirely automatic, are likely to be much more vain about it than such notable geniuses as Anatole France and Joseph Conrad were about their own steady and long sustained control over the rhythm of intake and outflow.

For the novice, the advantage of formulas and fetishes is that they make it possible, by tying the response to a particular act or phrase, to keep a sufficient measure of control over the response, and so prevent it from becoming automatic. The formula, or the fetish, or the rite, is the key to the door of the subconscious, which prevents anybody but the master from using that particular door. Everybody should have such a set of keys and know how to use them skilfully. Every regular worker, will, in fact, be found in possession of a set of words or objects, or environmental factors, a prayer, a favorite musical composition, a certain color in study walls, or clothing, a particular pen or typewriter, which he finds releasing, or inhibiting, as the case may be.

Although we have to class among methods of suggestion, prayer, and meditation, and various induced mystical states capable of affecting the deep-self, I shall in this chapter deal only with the type most generally in use, auto-suggestion by formula or fetish. At once we have to part company with Coué and his blanket formula for the restoration of health. If you trust to saying, "Every day in every way I write better and better," you are likely to be disappointed. For the production of creative works, no two of which are exactly of the same pattern, the formula must be distinct, intelligently devised and explicit. It is also much more likely to be accepted by the deep-self if rhythmically stated. Having already written all that I know about rhythm in relation to the literary process in another book,\* I shall content myself here with saying that not only does the rhythmic formula work better, but best results are obtained by the use of a rhythm which has some relation to the values to be produced. Take for example the following, adapted from the Navajo; I never go to work in my own country, sometimes even in New York, without saying it to the indicated rhythm of my feet:

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\**The American Rhythm*, Mary Austin, Harcourt Brace & Co.

As I walk . . as I walk . .  
 The universe . . is walking with me . .  
 Beautifully . . it walks before me . . . .  
 Beautifully . . on every side. . . .  
 As I walk . . I walk with beauty.

Besides providing an easy release from obsessing preoccupations, the effect desired to be produced by that is left for the reader to guess.

The object in repeating a given formula is to have it accepted by the deep-self as a rule of conduct. It is important therefore not only to state the formula rhythmically, as the deep-self works, but in such a manner that neither thought nor any other operation of the immediate-self, can slip in between, rapidly and smoothly as prayers are repeated in the Roman Church. As Coué advises, it is better to select such times for saying a formula as are likely to be free from interruption, if possible when the immediate-self is naturally in a state of inattention, or at twilight of night and morning, when the subconsciousness tends to emerge. People in whom the immediate-self is particularly insistent, often find it necessary to occupy their surface attention with some slight employment, as a business man will chew a cigar while engaged upon a diffi-

cult problem. Never being able to find any cigars that did not taste abominably of tobacco, I early took to the use of the rosary, which Mother Veronica of the Blue Nuns at Rome taught me to use, long before I heard of the school of autosuggestion at Nancy. I always keep one in my coat pocket, so that on the subway I have only to finger the familiar beads, and I am at once rid of the dreadful necessity of reading the advertisements and the *Subway Sun*.

The rosary quickly becomes a fetish in as much as the actual feel of the beads between the fingers will, by long association, itself produce exactly the same result with or without the accompanying formula. The use of fetishes has been practised not only by primitives, but by great mystics as well as by great financial geniuses. Ida Clyde Clarke relates that she gets the same release out of red color, and often at the last pitch of exhaustion, can screw several hours more work out of herself by putting on a red dress. Only a little while ago I read, in one of those magazines devoted to the technique of practical success, the confession of a notable business "go-getter" that he always had his greatest triumphs when he wore a gray suit. It is well known that Ibsen

kept a collection of little figures on his desk, which he found indispensable to his work, the secret of which he never revealed. And what baseball hero is without his mascot?

Many people obtain a form of release by the manner of addressing the deep-self as an essential entity, calling it by name, their own or another. This also is an ancient practise, in which formerly the name of a totemic animal, a supernatural protector, guardian angel, saint, slave of the lamp or essential essence of place or occasion, is addressed. The Christian religious ejaculates "Jesus—Mary!" The Apaches have a prayer formula "O Day, be good to me!" while I have heard Paiutes exclaim, in the face of a sudden emergency, "Oh, come to me, my Power!" A distinguished Englishman addresses his subconscious-self as My Ancestors! It is quite possible that ancestor worship began in one of those empirical discoveries made by primitive peoples, that that which responds to a cry for help is, more often than not, the stored ancestral wisdom of the deep-self.

The important item, in all these devices for securing the cooperation of the subconsciousness, is to realize that they are devices for that end, and not formulas of intrinsic magic.

They should be changed frequently and adapted to the current need. As to the number of times of repetition, that is a purely individual matter. Once is often enough, and Coué's twenty times is merely a measure of security. I have a formula which I can say in the time between my name's being called, and my facing the audience, that will enable me to make a fair speech on any subject that I know anything about. That somebody may presently discover a way to know enough about anything to make an impromptu speech upon it, is a not unhopeful possibility.

The novice at autosuggestion had better begin with a general formula for coordinating the whole psyche for a given achievement, like this one from the Hindu:

May this soul of mine which is an undivided part of all that has been, is now, and ever shall be, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely Blest and supremely Intelligent, in order that it may become manifest as . . .

closing with a statement of the thing desired.

Or, more simply still, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."



When the suggestion works against a long continued habit of the deep-self, a general formula like the preceding is indispensable. But it should be borne in mind that the value of the formula lies not in the repetitions nor in the philosophy or religion that dictates its phraseology, but in the response. May Sinclair says there is something that clicks in her when she has put the suggestion across. It is not necessary, however, that the response should register, all that is necessary is that it should, at need, arise. Finally, it is important, once the suggestion is made, to dismiss the subconscious to its work, not to nag at it, or keep pulling up the suggestion to learn if it has taken root.

Among the things that can be affected by autosuggestion are:

The formation of regular habits of work.

Regularization of the flow of ideas.

Intensification of emotional response to experience.

Control of the recalled reaction.

Transposition of technique gained in one department of artistic activity, to another.

Securing instant and easy command of all you know.

The fixation of impressions to be reexamined later.

The last two items are of such importance to workers whose contact with the public is instant and direct, that they have more to do than almost all the others with determining the place a man may hold among his fellows. Anybody who recalls the Fabian Society of London in the old days when H. G. Wells and the Webbs were active in it, and G. B. S. chairman, will remember, quite apart from the interest of the debate, the speed and the spark of minds thoroughly in command of themselves. Theodore Roosevelt was the sort of man who could at any moment lay his hands on anything he had ever known. Recently I read how, when he reached England on his return from the African hunting trip, he pushed everything aside to spend a day in English lanes, listening to bird songs and comparing them with those of birds of the same species in the United States. There is probably something inherent in the voltage of minds like these that can not be imitated; but that our rate of use can be greatly accelerated by auto-suggestion, there is no question.

In the fixation of impressions acquired

under circumstances that do not admit of immediate examination, quite remarkable things can be done by this method. Jack London told me that when he required some detail from his various travels, he would recall the whole scene like a film unrolled and select the item wanted, as from a photograph, often making new discoveries in a picture recalled many times. Walking in his garden at Bishopsborne, Joseph Conrad told me that he unrolled his stored impressions like a scroll, beginning with a single item, as a bay or a mountain, or more often still with a ship's latitude and longitude, the scene developing steadily in the desired direction. In my own experience in covering vast expanses of country in the West, I find I can set my subconscious mind like a camera, and it will take in and store such diverse matters as topography, botany, landscape, bird songs and human interest, so long as I occupy the rest of myself trivially, with my horse, the trail, the camp. But if I allow myself to drift into any sort of thinking that engages the profounder reactions, the picture is lost.

As a preliminary to *The Land of Journey's Ending*, I traveled twenty-five hundred miles by motor through New Mexico and Arizona,

not taking a single note. When I began to reproduce it in a book, the only part of the picture that blurred was the end of the first and most of the second day, when physical fatigue had prevailed. I suspect that this is the way the minds of animals and very primitive men work, reeling and unreeling impressions with their natural associations; and that the faculty of recalling separate items, detached and whole, is rather a recent requirement. Reel photography is, at any rate, one of the easiest tricks to teach your subconscious mind. Notice I say *sub* here and not *un*, for though the mechanism of storage is that of the immediate-self, this process can not be accomplished without direct reenforcement from the deep-self. The whole of the psyche seems to pivot on the fore-consciousness, for the time abandoning all other activities. Every one should have read Baudouin and Coué before attempting an original adventure in this field.

In the beginning you will probably find that the dim places on your screen correspond to some lack of interest, and in that case it would be well to begin with a direct suggestion of interest. That is, of course, if it is important for you to acquire the habit of fixing fleeting impressions. It is always hard to work

against natural interests, and, where there is no special talent for dealing with a particular interest, not worth while except by way of illustration, like my attempt to write music. In any case whether it be the cultivation of a new interest or the acquirement of a new habit of work, it is the deep-self which is the instrument, modifying the pattern of immediate reactions, first cognized by the intelligence, then formulized and communicated to the deep-self by one or another method of autosuggestion.

You will have noticed that all the things enumerated here as being best effected by formulas, have to do with regulating the mechanisms of genius. If no formulas are given, it is because, in order to be effective, a formula must be an expression of some sort of working cooperation established among the various levels of consciousness; it should therefore be stated or selected by the individual using it. I have ransacked the earth for mine, combining and adapting to fit the immediate need. For autosuggestion by formula is not a new discovery; it is one of the oldest devices of man, worked out through the necessity of living in a world of which he knew next to nothing, with a self of which he knew nothing at all. I am not sure that certain activities of

what we call the lower animals, are not auto-suggestive in their nature.\* Every religion and every philosophy abounds in formulas excellently designed to secure the particular desideratum of that cult. The superior cultures of the ancient world were largely achieved by this and other methods to be described in the next chapter. If you wish to know to what extent the humble and unlearned still depend upon it, turn back and read for your enlightenment Huckleberry Finn's formula for the cure of warts,

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\*See *The Flock*, Mary Austin, Houghton Mifflin Co.

## CHAPTER XII

### GENIUS AND TEMPERAMENT

"TEMPERAMENT" is a term so generally used in reference to the artist type of genius, that the first step toward understanding it is to realize it as existing in its own kind in relation to genius of every sort. Consider the genius for sex-provocation. Coquetry, as an art, is a late comer in our social history. Among primitive peoples it exists in a rudimentary form, and only for the brief mating period. All our twaddle about the "eternal Eve" practising an instinctive beguilement is, in the light of recent ethnological science, shown to be in a class with the myth of the he-cave-man who put an end to her practises by dragging her home by the hair.

Man has to be pretty well along on the way from animalism to civilization before he begins to abuse his mate, or she to deceive him. Early humans mated with no more fuss about it than canaries make, probably less, and that little was made by the male. Among stone age

myths we find not a trace of the female coquette, but occasionally, in song and story, a man who preens himself on his skill at it.

It was not until marriage had become thoroughly identified with economic support that it became necessary for woman to practise upon the susceptibilities of the male, as an economic necessity. During the dark ages of womanhood, when combat was the major occupation of men and women were plunder, they learned that their best chance of getting what women want most—children and a reasonably easy way of bringing them up—lay in arousing and holding the interest of the master man. Then coquetry became a serious art, the tradition of which was handed on from mother to daughter, as it is still in some sorts of society. By this means a vast amount of experience was laid down in the female inheritance; and every now and then some woman is born with that direct access to this stored stock of experience which we recognize as genius.

We have all of us known at least one woman who, without any instruction or previous experience, sometimes even without wishing it, has the capacity to produce on almost any man an effect that most men delight to have



produced. But the career of that woman, while it may take its direction from her genius, will eventually strike a balance between that and her talents and intelligence. If she has not much of either she will quickly run her course to the Home for Unfortunate Women. With a reasonable equipment she may take to the theatrical profession, or end as a high-class merchant of unmentionable wares. Where the endowment of intelligence is high, she may become a great lady of romance; in some periods of the world's history, a saint. Fortunately there is enough printed about all these types of genius for sex-provocation, for every reader to supply his own examples. As a matter of fact this is the only kind of genius the world knows much about. The operations of literary genius are obscured by myth making, and the newer sorts, engineering and finance and the sciences, have so lately come into our inheritance that they have been little studied.

If, therefore, you will arrange the great geniuses of sex-provocation, historical or fictional, all the Liliths, Helens, Cleopatras, Du Barrys, Nell Gwyns, according to their type, you will discover that their rank depends on their success in deploying all their equipment creatively, that is to say, in a manner which

made each situation in which they played the provocative part, appear as fresh and original, a living situation. These women did not play at great passions, they lived great passions, each one as though they had never lived any other. They went through one such affair after another as a novelist goes through one novel after another, with perhaps an improved technique, but without carrying over anything from one to the other, without imitating themselves in any particular, feeling out each situation freshly exactly as a novelist feels *creatively*. And in both cases, it is this capacity for feeling a situation as it arises that makes the distinction between invention and creation. It is this capacity, in whatever field, of holding the whole capacity for emotional reaction in a state of flux, so that it may flow of its own energy in the indicated direction, that we call temperament. For this state of psychic flux must, if either woman is to be great at her art, engage the whole reactive capacity of its possessor at each new adventure. You can not be a great lover by parroting situations any more than you can be a great novelist by that process. In the case of Cleopatra the emotional values are worked directly into the situation as they arise. In the case of the nov-

elist, the poet, the actor, the sculptor, often, too, in the case of the painter, the emotional values must be recalled in circumstances completely removed from their initial rise.' Thus we have come to speak of temperament as the gift of recalling emotion, "in tranquillity." In every case, however, the experience must first be lived through, and afterward reexperienced at its initial value.

That the experience itself must have been registered somewhere in the deep-self is indispensable, probably many times, in ancestral history before it can become a part of the equipment of genius. Temperament, like every other genius attribute, takes its range from the racial history.

Half a dozen times I have erased the word "emotion," and then erased the substitution and written in "emotion" again. Strictly, emotion is any movement arising within the psyche in response to stimuli, so the term would include the deeper and more elusive stir of a creative idea. But in ordinary practise the word has been so weakened by being used to describe only the more violent visceral reactions, love, anger, disgust, that at the first sound it may not seem to include all that I mean. Having genius, in the first place.

means to have your reactive capacity reenforced by the stored experience of the deep-self. But to make your genius effective you must have temperament, which is the power to recall and repeat, at other times and places, the original stir. You must have the *power* to do this on your own times and occasions, and the quality of your temperament is determined by the degree in which the recalled emotion approaches the intensity of the initial experience.

The capacity of experiencing original emotion intensely is the groundwork of temperament, but does not necessarily imply temperament, since without the power of recalling the original range and fire, the early intensity is of only intellectual avail. It is an aid to original understanding, but to become creative, emotion must be actually reexperienced.

Because all genius processes appear so much alike, I suspect that temperament is much the same in all departments of human activity in which temperament enters to any degree. It is curious, considering how our age is characterized by them, that nobody has made a study of engineering genius or the business temperament. If financial genius is the natural capacity for utilizing the stored

experience of the race in mastering the economic environment, should not business temperament be a similar capacity for reenacting, in any given transaction, all the elusive responses of the psyche to such situations? We all know business men who lack this capacity for response. Though they sometimes grow exceedingly rich, they never become great in the sense of affecting the economic interests of society in a favorable direction. They accumulate but do not create. Speaking of business here, I mean the effort of man to make himself at home in the material universe, to prove, whether or not he knows what he is proving, that there is no real difference between spiritual and material. If this is the case, then all the business dubs, the innumerable tribe of Babbitts, are simply the men without temperament, lacking the capacity for throbbing with the remembered rhythms of racial achievement as a shell with the sound of the sea. I do not actually *know* that this is the case with business genius, but as nobody gives any sign of knowing, there is no harm in guessing. When that intimate, informed study is made of Henry Ford that our time is entitled to, there will be a flood of light thrown on the problem of the business genius.

Neither is it certainly known whether we are born with or without this fairway through the psyche for recalled emotion. But if temperament inheres in the natural constitution of the individual, then there must be something in our type of civilization unfriendly to it, for all my observation goes to show that among much more primitive types of culture the percentages of the temperamentally endowed are much higher than in ours. Among African negroes and American Indians it is the exception to find one who is unable to recall emotion, some time after the event which gave rise to it, with sufficient poignancy to express it in one or another of his available mediums. Among Americans the exception is in the other direction. Possibly the multiplicity of inhibitions which environ the civilized child, the number of things he must not touch, the places he must not go, the subjects he must not talk about, paralyze the mechanism of temperament. In a democracy like ours the fear of being "queer," or of seeming to think yourself superior because slightly different, is a powerful deterrent to favorable variation of the individual.

Here, also, and to some extent in all countries having a dominant Anglo-Saxon strain,

there is a rather general substitution of the sympathetic temperament for the artistic temperament, and a difficulty about discriminating between the two. Having the artistic temperament, you feel the situation; having a sympathetic temperament, you feel *about* the situation. Most Americans feel deeply about a number of things, the starving children in the Near East, the unregenerate pro-Germans, the moral impeccability of George Washington; and they don't care who knows it. But they are notoriously unable to come to valid conclusions about a situation arising around these centers of sympathy, because so largely incapable of experiencing the situation itself.

All this is prominently reflected in our literature. Our most popular fiction is written not in the pattern of the veridical reactions of the characters in the story, but in the reactions of the author who happens at the moment to typify the reactions of the greater public. Yet this kind of writing can take place on rather a high level. Mrs. Humphrey Ward, for instance, had not a throb of temperament, but she had a keen intellectual appreciation of what her characters were going through, and a clever way of telling it. Emile Zola boldly threw his temperament, if he had it, out of the

window, and told all he could discover about his characters with the zest and accuracy of a scientist. Sinclair Lewis, for God knows what reason, likes to pretend that he hasn't any. Mr. Wells has temperament, and when he is able to retain it steadily throughout a novel he holds his reader on the snaffle. But in many of Mr. Wells' later books he appears to live through the reactions of the story before it is finished, so that in the last chapters he is merely writing about his characters, rather than being them. Perhaps the best modern instance of temperament swinging steadily through the whole arc of literary achievement is Joseph Conrad, when in such novels as *Typhoon* and *The Nigger of the Narcissus* he completely disappears from the story, sopped up by his characters as though they were so many sponges. In the same way Henry Ford seems to be absorbed into his enterprises until it is difficult for the average person to distinguish between Henry and the things he does.

We have not many writers in America that can do what Conrad did. Not only is the temperamental quality frequently missing, but it is, in the best examples, unevenly maintained, which I take to be a reflex from our democratic assumption that one man is exactly as



good as any other. By subtle and persistent ways the reactions of the crowd involve us in a losing struggle to be faithful to the experience of the characters we have chosen. Perhaps one of the reasons why scenario writing is not yet an art is that it openly abandons the struggle to represent the true emotional sequences of its characters, clumsily substituting the reactions of its audience for the true ones. I asked a successful motion-picture producer once why, when he presented a story about aristocrats, he didn't have it acted by somebody who looked the part, and he answered that American audiences didn't like to think that there was a special aristocratic way of looking. He might have added that neither do they like to admit that there is any other way of feeling than the way they feel.

Where an attitude of this sort prevails to the extent that it does in the United States, you can not, to save your soul, help being touched by it. I have awful, agonizing moments myself when I wonder whether it is really polite for me to go on writing about things which few people care for and fewer understand. And yet, the essence of creative literary art has always rested in this temperamental quality; this capacity of the artist to

route through his own psyche the true reactions of the situations lived through by his characters. We can not imagine that it will ever be anything else; so that it becomes of prime importance for the writer to know how variations of temperament in himself can be recognized and fostered.

I doubt whether there is any certain way by which, all at once and forever, the writer can reckon with his own temperament. Jack London at forty was only just beginning to realize that, though he could get completely inside his men, his women had no insides. They were show window dummies on which Mr. London hung whatever feminine trappings his story required. In all except the greatest temperaments, and perhaps even in these, there are dead places, which the knowing learn to avoid. Some of these may be racial. That is, the writer may have nothing in his racial history by which capacity for certain types of experience has been developed or exercised. I have just read a novel written by a German Jew, based upon his own experience, in which he has attempted to Americanize his characters by giving them New England names and location. But how can any one suppose that the path a given experience

would take through even the most highly sensitized consciousness of a German Jew, would be identical with the path of the same experience in the life of a New Englander? The only thing to do with a strongly marked racial temperament is to admit it, and to maintain strongly its validity as such. If it proves more or less liberated, more deeply or more shallowly experiencing, it is always a contribution to have proved so much.

The path by which the sequence of emotional reactions is routed seems to be influenced by racial traits and by early training to such a degree that it is doubtful if the possessor of it can do much to alter it. But a great deal can be done to keep your own temperament working effectively. And the first step in that direction is to understand that temperamental difficulties arise, nine times out of ten, out of temperamental lack. Either you haven't got it in the first place, or you haven't learned the trick of managing it, or it has formed habits of working only under special conditions not easy to secure, or for some obscure physical reason your nervous mechanism will not carry an emotional charge of sufficient intensity.

Temperament is the state of psychic equilibrium which permits the passage and repass-

age of given emotional states through the sensorium, under the control of the individual. This state can be disturbed by ill health, by shock or prolonged anxiety, or by obsessing counter-emotions. To pick up this state day after day, for months, sometimes for years as a novelist does, at any selected point, and to accommodate its tempo to your rate of writing, is an achievement that seldom comes as a birthday gift. I do not know any writer who does not admit having difficulties, in the beginning of his career, in managing his temperament. Once understood, it can be made to operate so smoothly and continuously that popular opinion accounts it a virtue to the possessor. Here again we feel the lack of reliable description of the temperament native to a genius for affairs.

Temperament works somewhat in this fashion. The writer is struck by a situation; he allows it to take possession of him, feeling out its contacts and measuring its implications. His sense of form begins to work upon the material, enlarging and eliminating. If he is a new hand at this business, he will find himself involved sometimes painfully in its emotional reactions, but if he is an experienced writer he will relegate all that to its proper

He pushes the material down into his deep-self where it is enriched by racial values. From time to time it is lifted up to consciousness and criticized, or pushed back to grow a little longer. Presently the whole mass is electrified; the time has come to write. Then the temperament begins to work, synchronizing the reactions of the writer with the character written about; he is penetrated with subtle and intriguing appreciations of experience, recognized as veridical for the situation involved. This is a happy state, and where the psychic energy thus generated can be discharged on paper or canvas at a rate commensurate with its own movement, there is corresponding relief.

But suppose there is no talent capable of carrying the energy, or a talent not sufficiently practised. Then it tends to be discharged in tempers and more or less violent irritability. No doubt a great deal of modern vice is chargeable to our failure to provide outlets for people who have temperaments—normally we should all have them—and yet have no talents pronounced enough to utilize the temperamental reactions. Situations like this can be extremely agonizing to the victim. More trying still are the cases in which there is

talent, even genius, and for one reason or another a failure of temperament. When the failure is constitutional, I do not know of anything that can be done about it. Or perhaps I should say, I conclude that temperamental lack is constitutional when I do not know what can be done about it. Sometimes when the writer finds himself with perfectly good creative ideas and no temperament to give life to them, it is a matter of obscure physical insufficiency which can be remedied by application to a physician. I have read several books about the endocrine glands, professing to throw light on this difficulty, but find nothing which demands quotation. It is probable that glandular secretions have a great deal to do with the capacity to react emotionally in the first place. Of course if you haven't any reactions to recall there isn't much use having the mechanism for recalling them. If a worker has, however, had all the normal equipment for good work, and finds himself temperamentally impotent for reasons unknown, he ought first to see a physician. The rest can be done by autosuggestion.

It is these unhappy individuals for whom the creative movement begins—and stops—that have put the very term “temperament” in

bad odor. The mechanisms are jammed, the energy of reaction dies out in faint and fainter rings. Then begins the immortal anguish of the balked genius, which is all most people know about temperament. They see the victim thrashing about in desperate efforts to recapture the lost power, getting drunk, running amuck, falling in love, and find it vicious or ridiculous. We all know artists who are redeemed from temperamental futility only by alcohol or passion. Sometimes these difficulties are physical, but more often they are the result of inhibiting "notions" about writing, or about how a literary career should be carried on. "I can't write *unless* . . .," says the victim, the "unless" being often some childish inhibition originally cherished under the illusion that it proved him a superior person.

I have often been asked about the value of psychoanalysis in cases of temperamental impotence. If you psychoanalyze yourself, good enough, but I can not recommend professional advice for the reason that though I have never read a psychoanalyst who did not suppose he knew all about the genius process, I have never read one who did not demonstrate his complete ignorance of it. I know one man who has tried

this remedy and is very happy over the result, but he does not know that to his friends it seems that, whereas once he had a temperament that gave him considerable difficulty, he has now no temperament to give him anything whatever. He not only does not react in the direction and degree that his characters naturally would, he does not react as he would naturally in identical situations.

What seems to have happened is that he has been lifted out of the plane in which temperamental reactions occur into levels in which the place of such reactions is taken by rationalizations; but unhappily creation does not come by way of rationalization. An English poet, suffering from shell shock, was relieved of his nervous troubles by psychoanalysis but has since written no poetry. Until a psychoanalyst appears who has achieved creations himself, on a high plane, it is safer to jog along with even a defective temperament than to run the risk of losing what you have.



## CHAPTER XIII

### ACQUIRING GENIUS

IN THE first chapters the author expressed a belief that genius could be acquired. Perhaps "acquired" is not quite the word. If genius is, as we suppose, the untutored play of the deep-self, with all its inherited capacities, into the immediate-self, with its full equipment of talent and intelligence, then genius is natural. Seeking for it, the individual does not so much seek to add to himself something from the outside as to uncover that which is within. It is, as a matter of fact, impossible to think of a man as cut off from his psychic past any more than he is from his physical past. To acquire genius, therefore, all that he has to do is to extricate the mechanism of the deep-self, in which the past registers, from the inhibitions imposed upon it by misadventures of the conscious life.

It is probable that the genius—that is to say, the man with full use of himself—is the normal type, and that the rest of the world is

going about maimed, lopped of the most important limb of the mind, or at least with the limb hobbled and underdeveloped.

The first thing to be done by people who feel a lack of freedom in the racial limb, is to learn to recognize the processes by which it is made available. And that is something that surprisingly few people can do. In wishing for genius most of us are really wishing for talent, for talent of a particular scope, for a rich temperament, and for intelligence to make use of them. What the average person pines for is not the process, but the product of genius. "I wish I could write a great play," he says, or, "I wish I were a great dramatist," when his wish, to be effective, should read, "I wish that I had a free use of the dramatic possibilities that belong with my inheritance." For there is no wish man may make about himself that is not subject to the limits of his instrumentation.

By his talents and his intellectual faculties, man is constituted the instrument of the racial drive. But talents and faculties are so securely tied to definite brain areas that default or injury to the one means the destruction of the other. In my notes I find an instance of a young woman student at the Beaux Arts, with

every indication of great gifts, until she suffered an accident in riding and a severe injury to her head. On her return to the school, it was discovered that though she could draw as well as ever *single objects*, she could no longer draw several objects and keep them in true proportion to one another. This is what I mean by limitation of the instrument. Trilby of the perfect voice box and the total lack of talent for tone discrimination, was by no means an unusual example of the failure of coordination between talent and instrumentation. If you examine yourself carefully, you may find that you have one or even two or three little tags of talent that you have never been able to make use of in your business, or secret yearnings for expression in directions for which you have no talent whatever, like mine for ability to remember and record musical themes.

In wishing for genius, then, it is important to have a perfectly clear concept of yourself as an instrument, and not to wish for more or less than suits with your endowment. You would as well wish that your brown eyes would turn blue as wish for talent not inborn. You can seek for talent within yourself, drag it out from under any inhibitions that your

faulty education or your mistaken notion of the nature of talent may have imposed upon it, and, having found it, carefully train and intelligently exploit, but so far I have not been able to discover a single instance of talent exceeding its cerebral mechanism.

A study of the distribution of talent and genius among men and women throws some light upon the nature of their relation to individual accomplishment. Talent being the fortunate variation of the individual instrument, and men tending to vary more than women, it follows that men have had more, and more exceptionally differentiated, talents than women have. They have talent for music, for sculpture, for mathematics, for poetry and representative art, far in excess of women's endowment. There is, however, no reason to believe that men have more genius than women. I am not able to make a statistical report; but it seems likely from observation that genius is more generally the possession of women than of men. That is to say, of a given thousand women, a higher percentage will be geniuses than for a given thousand of males, but the greatest genius of them all, and the best endowed, will more than likely be a man.

It is easy to see how woman, being closer

to the business of race continuation, has had a more constant need to revert to the stored experience of the race, thus keeping available, and fixed, the habit of such reversion in the form that we now know as intuition. It is also possible to realize how the restricted activities of the mothers of the race have narrowed the range of their variation. Man, on the other hand, ranging freely in directions not constrained by problems of race continuation has developed talents accordingly, without the constant necessity of bringing them back to the exigencies of the immediate generation. It would be easy to go on from here to demonstrate that the modern uneasiness of woman is due to the tardy discovery of the limitation of her talent in directions in which she feels called upon to express herself. In fact the only talent, besides that for organization, which woman has developed commensurately with men's talent, seems to lie in the direction of her genius for personal relations. She has as much talent for acting as man has, and for the writing of fiction, and there is every reason to believe that as soon as she leaves off blaming men for her limitation in other creative departments, there will ensue a rapid development of talent in women in the direction of the feminine drive.

For though talent can not be developed in one generation, it can in ten. The most casual survey of the evolution of talent in men and women shows the lines of divergence narrowing back along the track of major activities to the point where these had not begun to demand a differentiated instrument of expression. Among primitive women both painting and design rank as woman talents, quite as well developed in them, or even superior to the same talent in men, as also mechanical inventions and agriculture. The evolution of diversified talents among women will go forward rapidly under the impetus of the intelligent wish for them, but it is probable that feminine talent will always follow the racial exigency more closely than the male talent, and consequently never vary so widely, and less seldom reach the highest mark.

The confusion in the average mind between talent and genius, is nearly equaled by the muddle over genius and intellect. It is, however, far less troubling. Within the ranks of admitted geniuses and near-geniuses, one finds a perpetual fret for more and still more talent—never enough to satisfy even the most richly endowed. But it is not often that you find people fretting for more intellect. When

they are so found, they are usually victims of an indiscriminating educational system, or—and this is particularly the case with those wistful creatures who haunt night schools and university extension courses—they are going through the motions of intellectuation, under the impression that this is the key to all the other things they want and do not attain. For the most part, by a provision no doubt merciful, people are very well satisfied with the intellect they have. They no doubt do well to accept themselves on that basis, since the authors of the intelligence tests agree that the natural scope of intelligence in the individual does not alter much with age or education. Perhaps I ought not to venture an opinion upon this point, certainly not insist upon my opinion; yet all my study of genius, resulting in the belief that a flow of genius can be set up where it does not natively show itself, leads me to suspect that the same thing may ultimately prove to be true of a flow of intelligence. What I suspect about the intelligence tests is that they do not test intelligence, but prevailing patterns of intellectuation. It seems to me just possible that intelligence, like genius, is not determined, but merely conditioned, by neuron patterns formed extremely early in

the habit of the individual. And if this should prove to be the case, then all that is measured by the intelligence test, is the capacity to make a response, the path to which has been cleared by hetero-suggestion and fixed by habit. If a way could be found, then, to prevent the fixation of these response patterns, there is no reason why the quality of intelligence could not be improved in the same way that the quality of the genius response can be improved by intelligent wishing.

For the present, however, it would be well to confine our wishing to that department of the psyche which we know to be suggestible, to the subconscious areas of the deep-self.

Having made all the necessary distinction by which genius is cleared from the operations of the immediate-self, we find that it consists solely in the capacity to make use of inherited psychic material. This then is what one wishes for—a prayer wish, pushed down into the deep-self from which the answer to the wish must come: “Oh, deep-self of me, become manifest in the free use of my inheritance, in the direction of—”

It is assumed that you have already taken stock of yourself and know in what direction it is most profitable to direct your creative ef-



fort. It is also likely that most people who are desirous of genius, already have had some intimation of having it. What they really wish is to establish the flow as deep and constant.

But suppose the wisher has never had the slightest intimation within himself of the existence of his racial inheritance? Then the beginning must be made at a point farther back, the point at which presumably the inheritance was mislaid. For it is not logical that a normal man's racial past should be wholly lost to him. There do, however, seem to be millions of people who are cut off from everything in their inheritance except the ordinary race- and life-preserving activities, making practically no advance even in the experimental exercise of the social life function.

This is one of the most obscure points in the evolution of the human instrument. How can we talk of progress in the race until we discover the secret of the escape of the few, or the penalization of the many? Is the norm, as I believe it, the escape into life, *plus* the experiential inheritance, or is it the other way about, and is the normal man the one who repeats, pendulum like, the arc of his father's life, without any experiential gain? And is

the genius then, a freak, an accident of evolution? Recent psychology gives us hope, by suggesting that the failure of the individual to arrive at life with a full bag of inherited tricks may be due to birth trauma, that is, to the psychic shock of birth, or to such shock sustained during early life by underfeeding or disease or neglect. When we think of what birth entails for the infant, in modern life, especially where it occurs without any of the alleviations of modern gynecology, as it still does for nine-tenths of the human race, this seems more than likely. It must be remembered that the actual physical stress of birth has been increased with civilization, and that the care received by the young infant among the poorer classes is hardly to be counted among favorable influences.

Where the failure is not due to lesion, or defect of cell formation, then it can only be due to accident of early education. Somehow or other, indurations have formed between the deep-self and the immediate-self which prevent the easy play of one into the other. This can so easily happen under our educational system, which wholly ignores the existence of the deep-self and works only for the exposition of the immediate consciousness! Fre-

quently the stoppage of this necessary interplay can be traced to ridicule visited on the child because of some early, unconscious display of the genius process. More often than not parents will be found to have worked sedulously to destroy the subconscious connection under the obsession that it is not "practical." Occasionally the inhibiting idea is one that was seriously entertained by psychologists or educators of our youth, and since proved mistaken. Religious concepts are often responsible for obstructing indurations. A great many people, since these articles first appeared, have made opportunity to discuss with me the use of the prayer process which I recommend. Most of them have some obstinately entertained notion of what can or can not be prayed for. A few admit that you may safely pray for the quality of your work, not for its success; others that you may pray for success, but that to pray for genius is conceited, and therefore disallowed. Many are shocked at the idea of praying for money. Answered by quotations from the Founder of their religion, they admit that you might pray for just enough to keep you from starving, but no more.

Practically everybody, however, admits that

you may wisely pray for health, and on that basis ought not to oppose prayer for the free and happy interplay of all the levels of consciousness which constitute psychic health. The point is, that whatever the inhibiting notion is discovered to be, it must be got rid of before satisfactory results can be secured in liberating the inheritance.

Next, after knowing what you want, and as nearly as possible why you haven't got it, it is important to recall the nature of the genius consciousness which you desire to affect. Genius is subjective, it lies below the threshold of immediate consciousness, and tends to remain latent unless called into activity by the exigencies of the immediate-self. It is therefore suggestible, not in its content but in its activity. You can not by suggestion change your genius inheritance from a Russian to a British inheritance. But you can by suggestion make it deliver up every item that it contains, relative to a particular British or Russian experience.

Neither can you by the recommended measures, demand of your deep-self that it deliver up what is not there. If your inheritance has been skimmed by your ancestors, it will come down to you poor and thin as they bequeathed

it. And this is the whole of my meaning in saying, as I did in the beginning, that genius can be acquired. The following suggested technique must not, however, be taken as the fixed and only path to accomplishment. There is an Oriental proverb to the effect that the altars of the gods must not be adorned with faded flowers, but with those freshly plucked in the garden of the heart. All formulas tend to fade quickly, and are much more effective when freshly formed to meet the personal need. They might, however, advantageously follow this general direction which begins with the generation of an effective wish.

The only wish that is worth working with, arises spontaneously out of an inward need. It can be given form and clarity by reviewing examples of the nearest thing to it in the work of other people. With an open and quiet mind, approach the chosen example in any department of creative art and absorb yourself within it, noting from point to point where it exceeds your wish and where it falls short, taking care not to formulate your wish too narrowly, but to have a definite realization of the place and general scope of its unrealized parts.

Do not formulate the wish in words until

realization has taken place. It is possible that in arts which do not make use of words, such as painting and music, the formula ought not to use words, but keep as close as possible to the preferred medium, presenting itself as a vision or as a hearing rather than as a statement. But for all other types of activity, words are important, and the formula should be repeated a sufficient number of times and in a manner to insure its acceptance, as described by autosuggestionists.

Most people find it necessary to secure practical isolation and freedom from personal interruption during the wish, but it is possible to acquire a habit of inward isolation in the midst of crowds and noise, through methods amply described by the mystics.

This power of inward isolation is a great gain, since time is of so little force in the inward life that a single instant of such complete psychic detachment will accomplish more than many hours of mechanical isolation can bring about without it.

Meditation upon the nature of the inward self to be affected by the prayer wish, is an important and often indispensable aid. The best practise is to begin with a primary meditation upon the principle involved. Meditate

upon the unity of all life; upon the evolution of consciousness as manifest in man, upon the continuity of life experience as exhibited in the personal inheritance.

Meditate upon the suggestibility of the submerged levels of consciousness, recognizing in recollection all that you know about the manner in which the subconscious becomes manifest in consciousness. In this type of meditation, the subject is held suspended in the mind, allowed to expand until it fills the whole consciousness, but should never be deliberately crystallized into ideas. Close your meditation with a statement of the preferred manifestation, as definite as you can make it, in some such fashion . . . O, thou latent consciousness within myself . . . measure of my capacity and source of all my power . . . awake . . . arouse . . . be acted upon by my faculties in the direction of my desires . . . become active throughout the whole of my deep-self to the full extent of my inheritance . . . bring and deliver to the threshold of my conscious mind all that I know and have . . . especially bring all that I require in relation to (here name the subject of your prayers) and in such form that I may best make use of it in the accomplishment of my desire. . . .

Since the above was published in *The Bookman*, I have had many letters inquiring as to the necessity, for successful practise of auto-prayer and autosuggestion, of the attitude of mind called faith, which enters so largely into religious prayer. Faith, it must be understood, is not the same thing as intellectual belief. But it is hardly to be supposed that the matter would have been pursued to this point by anybody without intellectual acceptance of the general proposals herein described, that genius is the normal possession of all human beings not actually defective. In general, too, the practise of autosuggestion as recommended by distinguished psychologists, is accepted as valid. Without ordinary intellectual belief in these, it is unlikely that anything in the way of personal release would be begun. And very likely intellectual belief alone will be sufficient to fire the train of psychic causation, bringing about the condition known as faith, which is, for the subconscious, the equivalent of belief for the intelligence. Faith, as the early Christian mystics understood it, is "the evidence of things not seen," that is, it is the sort of evidence accepted by that part of the psyche which does not see, but knows. What the subconscious



knows it acts upon; it acts upon knowledge handed down to it from the seeing, feeling, hearing consciousness, or arising from the unknowing consciousness. This subconscious state of conviction, leading on to acts, is the state described as faith. "According to thy faith be it unto thee," is a statement of the law of subconscious behavior.

All that is necessary, then, for the student to do is to give intelligent direction to his subconscious in such a manner as to secure acceptance. If, as will be the case if we are right in our definition of genius, the intuitive-self acts also on the side of the intelligence and confirms the suggestion, the expected release can not fail to come, after a reasonable effort, in proportion to the inheritance and the instrumentation of the individual.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CREATIVE PROCESS

BY FEW people is any clear distinction made among the creative processes, such as creation itself, invention, imagination and pure intellectuation. Many psychologists, notable in other fields, fail completely to discriminate between imagination and the act by which a work of art is brought forth, or between the creative act and the ordinary process of phantasy. By almost everybody, creation, in the sense in which creative workers use it, is held to imply what is otherwise described as "originality," the bringing into existence of something that up to this time had not yet been produced. On every side there is a disposition to make originality a test of creative genius, which it is only in the strictest sense, when the thing originated is absolutely new, and is brought to consciousness by an outgoing act of the psyche. As a matter of fact, things original, in the sense of being not before

known, are frequently the result of accident, or the by-product of a search for something else, and reflect no particular credit on the discoverer.

Psychologically, what is original is merely that which has its origin in the mind of the user. It is therefore new to him, but not necessarily new to others. Nor is it necessarily new in all its elements, every one of which may be drawn from recognizable sources, to be combined in an original manner. The material, however, may be entirely new without requiring any supernormal explanation. We are surrounded at every moment with an environment so vast, so complex, that we have only to realize it by the smallest fraction more in any direction, to find ourselves in possession of material previously unfamiliar. In view of the fundamental differences in perceptive power among human beings, no two have ever exactly the same environment, and as everybody is likely at any time to break forward another step, the real improbability would be that anybody could pass through this life and wholly escape being occasionally original. Probably nobody does.

In those instances in which it has seemed to the majority of people that an astonishing

new thing has been discovered or invented, it will later be revealed that specialists in that particular line have been working in close vicinity to the point of new departure. Thus, Einstein's discovery was not startlingly new to astronomers and mathematicians, as it seemed to the masses who know nothing of either science.

The increment of the unfamiliar added to the sum of the human inheritance is often of an importance all out of proportion to its mass, but it is a mistake to permit our idea of originality to be colored either by proportion or importance. The true quality of originality resides in the idea having taken shape in the mind of the observer, as a result of original movement within his mind. Since, however, no two individuals are ever in exactly the same place toward their common environment, it follows that people are continually being original in ways that were original to other people in other places and times, centuries and continents apart. Two persons may, in fact, live under the same roof, remaining in respect to their progress toward intimacy with the immediate environment, thousands of years apart, and yet both be making original discoveries about it.

Any one living in remote communities, such as are to be found in the mountains of Kentucky or New Mexico, will have discovered for himself individuals who have worked out on their own basis, philosophies that were the accepted hallmark of originality in philosophy, a thousand or two years ago. To the observer, recognizing such original philosophies as errors or half-truths, having their place in the long history of truth approximation, these village sages seem merely quaint and amusing; they are, in fact, as original, in respect to their social environment, as Plato and Aristotle were in theirs. They have the misfortune to come after Plato and not before him, as no doubt other unrecorded seekers in the same direction did come, but failed to express or record their modicum of originality. The patent office at Washington receives every day applications for patents upon inventions absolutely original with the inventor, but unfortunately late in their day; and every editor's or publisher's office is subject to precisely the same evidence of the belated sequence of discovery of ideas. So far, then, as originality is associated with the notion of newness, except for the commercial value of newness, it has nothing to do with the creative process.

Absolute originality, that is to say, a break into the environment by one mind, sole and unaccompanied, is seldom of any use to the originator. What people want is not the absolutely new, but the novel, that which is sufficiently original to seem new, but not unfamiliar, "novelty."

Novelty may be invented. That is to say it may be something put together out of more or less familiar material, by the exercise of intellectual ingenuity. In this, the distinction between invention and creation is clarified. Invention is primarily an intellectual process, it belongs to the immediate-self, and takes place almost wholly in the conscious plane, or a little below the threshold. Creation is of the deep-self, and is self-originating, while invention is a conscious response to an intellectually appreciated need. Invention, as a faculty or trait of the intellect, may work cooperatively with creation, especially in those fields in which the expression of a creative concept has to be worked out objectively in many materials, as in the production of a play, or the building of a cathedral.

Thus the dome of the Cathedral of the Duomo at Florence was created as a whole in the mind of the architect, and made possible to

realize in stone by the brilliant invention of constructional devices not new in themselves, but newly brought together and applied. In the finished work it is not easy for the uninstructed person to discriminate between what is created and what is invented. Such discrimination can be soundly made only by critics, themselves familiar with the creative process and the history of the particular medium.

What we mean by imagination in this connection, is the faculty by which all processes and materials of a given work are realized in the mind *in their true relation*—or such approximation of truth as human beings are capable of—at least in a *workable* relation—before they are brought together in objective reality. In the case of a cathedral or a Brooklyn bridge, the failures and faults of imagination are quickly realized in the process of construction, because steel and wood and concrete, unless they are in a true relation, will not “work,” or work so badly that the failure is obvious. But in the case of a novel or a play, the thing imagined is not actually made, but described by means of words, or by the figures of actors. The test of the truth of this sort of creation then, is really in the perceptions of the

audience, who, if they perceive human life in a manner similar to the way in which the author perceives it, will accept his version as true. This does not mean that they will accept it as esthetic, or that the work will necessarily engage their interest. What they do accept is that the given book or play is truly imagined, it "hangs together" by virtue of a common imagining of the period in which it is produced. In one year, or twenty, or a hundred, the image is discovered by the process of experimental living, to be superficial, or actually false, and, unless the work has some other strongly marked quality, it will disappear out of the popular consideration.

The power of producing complete and vital, that is, *working*, images of a projected piece of creative work, and of testing those images by all the powers of the intelligence, is indispensable to successful creation. The imagination, however, may work subconsciously, and probably works best when least observed. It can be trained by the study of the natural sciences and the higher mathematics, by any sort of study in which attention is fixed on governing principles and natural sequences underlying phenomena, rather than on the phenomena themselves.



The function of the imagination is to create the psychic mold in which the pattern of the created work is cast, or, better, the blue-print which guides the creator while at work, for frequently in the actual process of creation, faulty imagining reveals itself and is corrected by the intuitive consciousness. The creator will find his mind haunted by an uneasy "hunch" about some part of his work, in response to which he gives it new attention, thus discovering weaknesses of structure before unsuspected.

In attempting to describe the creative process we shall have to be more explicit in defining the term "creation" than is the general practise. It is now the fashion to speak of "creative thinking" as distinguished from actual creation in works of art or organization. By creative thinking most people really mean thinking which is stimulating, awakening the creative process in others. Strictly speaking, creative thinking is a term that can be applied only to little understood types of group thinking in which a social concept is actually created by the fusion of individual contributions. What we have to do with here is the creative process in the individual, *made manifest in form*, as a story, a play, a building, an institution, a "business,"

In the beginning of this study it almost seemed that there is no general creative procedure recognizable under the varieties of individual experience. But gradually as a vocabulary was formed, by which creative workers could communicate, and as modern psychology developed a technique for raising the subconscious processes to conscious attention, so that they can be intelligently examined and described, a general outline began to appear, and a sequence of procedure was defined. In the appendix will be found several individual accounts of this process which illustrate both the outline and the variations. That other individual reports may seem to contradict these, is largely due to a fact that few people take account of; the varying rate at which in different people, subconscious processes arrive at the threshold.

A combination of elements already in the mind may take place so deep down, or while the immediate consciousness is so completely otherwise occupied, that it may not arrive at the threshold until after some other combination, taking place later in time, has fully declared itself. This accounts for the fact that creators can not always definitely say which process preceded which. They belong, all of

them, in the revolving wheel of the inner mind, of which who can say what precise turn brings them uppermost. The sequence given here seems to the author most likely to represent a generic progress and refers, as stated, only to works brought forth in recognizable forms, called usually "works of art."

Creation, however, much as it may be supervised and criticized by the intelligence, takes place wholly within the subconscious, can not take place anywhere else, since by the act of being lifted to the surface it automatically passes under the control of the intellect and becomes invention. William Archer gives an interesting example of this difference, in describing how he and another English writer undertook to "make" a play, by purely conscious processes. Time and again they seemed to themselves to have produced a satisfactory movement, only to discover later that all that they had done was to recombine elements from other plays, originally created by their authors. Mr. Archer gives it as his final judgment that drama can not be invented, but must proceed from a true creative impulse.

Just where the creative impulse originates is not certain. My studies tend to show that it is native to the intuitive-self. It is indicated

among the lower animals, and is probably universal among men, however feebly manifested in a particular man. In another ten years, I shall be able, perhaps, to speak with more certainty on this point.

For the present we have to begin with the impulse as it first declares itself to its host, as a procreative stir in the deep-self, a feeling of "something trying to happen," about to explode. This creative feeling is distinctly emotional in quality, so much so that it may be awakened by an emotional experience of high intensity, or it may itself be the prompting toward emotional experience such as would tend to develop the creative feeling.

The natural response to this creative stir is a movement on the part of the host to aid the process in various ways, by listening to music, by seeking the society of persons who have an evocative power over him, by walking in the open country, by prayer or reading or whatever other means are practicable.

Before this impulse can operate successfully, certain other operations must have gone on to a greater or less extent in the individual. The material with which the creative impulse works is the content of the psyche *in motion*. There is, as we have seen, a constant flux be-

tween the conscious and subconscious. There is also a constant movement of the whole content of the psyche, passing under the spotlight in all directions. A state of psychic health demands that this flow, which for the purposes of this chapter I shall call the stream of association, should be general and continuous, and that the operations of immediate consciousness should be suspended from time to time in order that there may be the greatest possible freedom of association. Dead spots appearing in the stream, or obstinate clots of association, such as tend to form around unwelcome items, quickly develop into pathological conditions requiring attention from the neuropathic specialist.

This condition of free streaming association known as reverie, is often confused with day-dreaming, in which the stream is not entirely free but is directed by some impulse originating in the immediate-self, such as the erotic impulse, the ego impulse. Under any such impulse the stream of association tends to be selective and to shape more or less explicitly into the day-dream, with the dreamer as the central figure. If day-dreaming is excessively indulged in, it tends automatically to create currents and eddies and backwaters in what

should be a fresh, free flow. If prolonged, such egocentric patterns become habitual, inhibiting and crippling. Recognition of this possible evil, and failure to discriminate between reverie and day-dreaming, has led in the past to an educational discrediting of the whole flow of association. Thus it became an educational ideal to inhibit reverie altogether, or to substitute for free association, selected "ideal" patterns. What our educational system should charge itself with, is the responsibility of teaching youth the importance of free association, and the function of education as a method of increasing the stream of association and enriching it with material stored in books.

The creative worker who knows himself as such, will have already done everything in his power for the enrichment of his own stream, and acquired naturally the habit of pushing aside the activities of the immediate consciousness in order that he may observe the flow with detachment. While thus watching, he will often observe with delight new and interesting combinations and juxtapositions, which he will later recall to the service of a particular creative undertaking. This process of increasing the stream of association and registering its incidental patterns goes on throughout the

life of the creative worker, giving color and body to his work. Nothing is more easily detected in the work of any artist, than thinness of the stream or failure in the freedom of association.

The critical faculty will often make contributions to the stream in the shape of "bully ideas," the direct fruit of daily contacts. Such ideas are of little use to the creator, until they have been emotionalized and their impetus so transmitted to the deep-self. Sometimes the idea itself develops out of a primary emotional experience, and sometimes it arrives from the outside with such impact that it instantly creates an emotional reaction, as Mark Twain somewhere describes an idea for one of his books—*The Gilded Age*—reaching him, like a bomb bursting into light. On the whole, however, the idea translating itself into emotion appears to be less effective than the emotion which translates itself into idea.

These two processes of increased free association and ideation, will have been going on in the creator some time prior to his recognition of the particular creative stir below the threshold. If the stir should arrive at an inopportune time, it can be held in suspension, just as the impulse of the body can be, under severe

necessity, by autosuggestion; not just yet . . . to-morrow . . . next week . . . next year, provided that the postponement is justifiable, and the promise of ultimate release a true promise and not an evasion. It is also easier to control the fruition of a creative impulse toward a piece of work calling into play many talents and occupying much time. Where the form called for by the impulse is such that it must be completed with a single creative gesture, such as a lyric or an etching, the whole work is likely to be lost by refusal of the impulse.

It is during the period of incubation, after the stir has made itself felt, and before it has taken form, that auto-prayer, as described in a previous chapter, can be most effectively used as an aid to formulation. The prayer must be driven deep down until it fires the amorphous mass of association and polarizes it in the preferred pattern. Sometimes all the elements of a creative work will leap together with the effect of electrical combustion; as Jack London used to say, "it sparks," or as May Sinclair expresses it, the pattern springs together "with a click." Frequently several processes may be syncopated, so that the creator not only knows at one stroke what he is to create; the form, the



content, the mood and something of the detail of the final work. With others, and this is especially the case with a long and intricate piece of work, the spark, or click, or the white flash is experienced, but pattern and detail are not revealed until later, as needed. What seems to take place in this spark, which may in truth be a veritable spark of an electrical nature, is the indispensable process of polarization.

Polarization is a term taken over from electrical science to indicate that the various elements are now arranged in their right relation to one another, as molecules are arranged in a magnet to sustain the electrical charge. It is immensely important for the creative worker in any field to learn how to keep himself polarized; indispensable for those undertakings which require months, even years for their completion. Every such worker has had experience of the temporary failure of polarization, the falling apart, even active repulsion, of the elements, which can with difficulty be repolarized in the original pattern, as Joseph Conrad told me happened with *The Rescue*, which hung fire for fifteen years. Personal quality may have something to do with the ability to retain an effective polarization, as

soft iron becomes a magnet only so long as the current is turned on, and the instant it is turned off becomes soft iron again. Or a failure of polarization may occur through some personally upsetting accident. I know of no good method of increasing the capacity for sustained polarization except the habit of prayer and mental discipline as already described. If you will study the great novelists with this in view, you will discover in the best of them evidences of the failure of polarization, the scattering and confusion of elements toward the close of the story that should have been drawn to the fine point of crystallization. Among all creative workers, the novelist and the business man have the worst of it here, for their work can not be blue-printed in advance as completely as is the case with the architect and engineer.

After polarization has taken place, the occasion of beginning work is a matter of personal convenience. The indispensable thing is to keep the uncompleted portions of the work well below the plane of conscious attention until the moment when they are absolutely needed. Held too long on the plane of conscious attention, the vitality of the work tends to evaporate.

By far the majority of creative workers report that they criticize their work as it comes forth, passing directly under the spotlight, and that they do little revising otherwise. Others find that they can not revise successfully until all the work is in the rough. Probably it is a matter of the priority of habit.

One of the aspects of creation which has never been satisfactorily elucidated, relates to the problem of evocation. Suppose the creative impulse to be native to the deep-self,—how far is it subject to the demand upon it for a particular quality or kind of creation? This is important because to produce what is not wanted at the time of production, results often in serious economic difficulty. There seems every reason to believe that the creative impulse is sensitive to evocation from the social consciousness. Let the people desire truth of a particular kind and the creative mind appears to work automatically toward that truth. In the same way particular form may spring out of a practical demand for form, as Lady Gregory told me the Irish plays sprang to meet the need of the Abbey Theater. Such demands are not personal, they are often not direct; they are subjective and social, and raise interesting questions as to the true relation of

creative genius to the culture of the period in which it shows itself. Apparently creative power in man is subject to the same law of operation that prevails in the whole scale of creative evolution; power exists, need arises, desire takes shape, creative energy flows into the mold so prepared.

I am inclined to discredit the idea of personal evocation, dear dream of women though it has been. What most people mean when they say that another person has inspired them, is usually that another person has supplied the releasing occasions or provided the favorable environment.

Love has been credited with being the inspirer of creative work, largely on the basis that any opportune emotion—and for men, in the past, sexual passion has been always opportune—is an aid to creative feeling. Men workers not infrequently fall back on the willingness of some woman to emotionalize their occasions, simply because the man is too lazy to do for himself what the woman freely does for him.

The fact that many people can be shown to have poured their energy freely into the work of a great artist, wife, mother, friend and servant, has nothing to do with inspiration, but

relates to the social aspect of genius, which there is not now space to discuss.

Genius being subjective in its nature, true evocation is from the subjective centers, which are social, that is to say, evolutionary. Whitman should have enlarged his statement about poets to include geniuses of every sort since they all, for the greatest expression, require great audiences.

## CHAPTER XV

### GENIUS AND THE CREATIVE LIFE

IN OUR common speech, any reference to genius life is interpreted solely in reference to the life-history of geniuses, and the assumption, which in accepting, universally we protest against, that there exists on the part of the individual endowed with genius, a necessity for a life differently patterned from the lives of his contemporaries. Before this assumption can be discussed with intelligence, we have first to inquire whether there is any such thing as a life history of genius, a beginning and a middle and an end of the genius endowment, quite apart from the personal life-habit of the host. If our assumption is true, that genius is the liberated inheritance playing along the line of the life push, the racial drive, or whatever term is adopted for the progressive extension of consciousness which we seem to discover in the human species, it is evident that the immediate-self of the host can not always be completely in command of its operations. Since genius is, in

any case, subconscious in its mode, the relation of the host toward his own genius must be that of the driver of the machine, the man at the wheel, ever alert and attentive to his business of steering it along the road in which he finds himself best able to direct it. The important question, then, is whether genius has a life-history of its own, a curve of evolution, a sequence of evolutionary phases, a susceptibility to peculiar accidents and particular failures, a rise, decline and death going on more or less independently of its host.

No absolute answer can be given to this question until we know more about the relation of genius energy to physical instrumentation. The trend of my own inquiry however, reveals distinct type histories, indicating that the distribution and intensity of genius energy are influenced by considerations with which the host has very little to do; that he is, in fact, often the victim of genius, possessed by it rather than the possessor. If this is the case, then the question of a special personal or social pattern for the accommodation of geniuses, must be referred to the pattern of genius itself.

I find it more convenient to speak of the pattern of genius even while uncertain whether the pattern—the curve of development of a

particular genius—is in the nature of genius energy, or is in the nature of the instrument. There are two principles here that must always be kept in mind. The first is, as the whole science of biology shows, and the science of psychology confirms, that the genius impulse, creative energy, whatever you call it, has the power to an extent as yet undetermined, to modify its instrument. The other is that the instrument, by innate stubbornness, incapacity to yield at certain points as it does at others, may finally impose itself upon the flow of creative energy until a fairly stable pattern results. Between these two tendencies, individual genius comes forth in three or four recognizable types.

In the first of these the genius quality is evident from the first showing. The quality of the product improves rapidly, and in most cases directly relates to inexperience and want of familiarity with the selected technique. Fluctuations occur, such as may be traced to conditions of health, overwork, inspiring or upsetting personal experiences, or profound social disturbances (such as the French Revolution or the late war); but the dips and rises are never very serious, and the most notable examples of creative product are as likely to



occur near the beginning of such a career as near the end.

This is especially true of individual progress in creative form, as distinguished from content, which naturally tends to be richest at periods of greatest life enhancement. This type of genius does not usually show itself until rather late in the life-history of its host, and carries well into old age, with longer and longer rhythms of production, but often without diminution of quality. Where such diminution occurs it will usually be found in the case of workers who have confined themselves to one rather restricted type of performance, or highly specialized medium as in the novels of Henry James. Great geniuses of this type are Michael Angelo, Thackeray, Anatole France, Joseph Conrad, Darwin; but it can not be said that this type of development is peculiar to the great. If it seems so it is simply because we are more familiar with the great instances. Lesser writers, such as Cooper and Longfellow, will be found developing along similar lines.

Another distinct type of genius shows itself very early, develops consistently and brilliantly for a period of ten, fifteen or twenty years, wavers, occasionally comes to a complete stop,

reappears on another level with marked differences of manner, and runs another period of about the same length, and, in the case of long and robust physical life, declines, and reappears in a third manner. That this rising and falling rhythm of manner in production is not fortuitous, but is in some way related to the structure of the deep-self, seems quite certain. It is as if the various levels within which polarization may take place, thus enabling the creative impulse to proceed unimpeded, were marked off from each other by insensitive intervals. Instead of working from a single, all embracing stream of association, there are currents and backwaters, shoals and sargassos through which the impulse must work its perilous way. Mr. Kipling is an outstanding example of this type of genius, with a first and extremely youthful period, in which he at times glimpsed the open sea of his shorter and more important development. From this he drifted on a lee shore, at an age which makes it still possible that he may sally forth on a third—quite certainly if it had not been for the serious interruption caused by the Great War to all creative effort everywhere, there would have been a third—and even more significant—period. No reliable data for interpreting

the periodicity of genius has yet been collected. My own notes suggest that it may arise out of a mixed inheritance, intermarried strains of experience possibly tending to break up the stream of association into distinct currents, the content of any one of which may be strictly limited. The same phenomena appears in the lives and work of scientists, and philosophers whose output is not conditioned by form as is the case among artists.

It is probable that the type of genius whose work runs out disappointingly after ten or a dozen years, is simply suffering from a failure to get his second wind, to strike into a new current on his own underground stream. It is not his genius which has failed in this case, but his intelligence or his character. There might be several ways in which such a failure could be made permanent; ignorance, of course; and fear—usually engendered by economic pressure—to let go the form and manner of the dwindling period, to rest and recover before the rise of the next. Vanity is a potent factor in the disposition of the creative worker to hold on too long to a form once successful, but no longer suited to the later movements of his mind. Another, and possibly in the present age prevailing difficulty, is the inability of the

worker to reconceive the creative career in the prevailing mode. This has been notably the case both in England and America with writers who formed a concept of the literary life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, on the basis of the literary life as it had been lived by the geniuses of the Victorian age. The social changes that have occurred in the first quarter of the twentieth century have so altered the tempo and societal relations of the creative career, that many workers whose high capacity was easily proved by the first decade of nineteen hundred, have been unable to adjust themselves to the alteration. Their own stream of association definitely parts company with the stream of the hour, and their rhythm of contact with the public is completely dislocated. Less to be commiserated, but equally a loss to the public, is the worker who fails to rise to a second level of achievement out of a complex of habits created for him by success in the first. This is particularly the case with those gifted individuals who strike a high and acceptable note very early, evoking the response of highly paid popularity. Those of us who were close enough to Jack London to observe the movements of his career, know very well that he had it in him, had he had the

will to rest and dig himself into deeper levels of our Anglo-American inheritance, and suffer the adventure of creating around himself a new legend and a new audience, to fulfill our utmost expectation of him. But in fact his feet were snared in the circumstance he had spun for them out of his earlier success. However he rationalized his own situation to himself, it was there patently for the observer to read, and be lessoned in according to his capacity.

Among the most interesting of the fluctuations of recognized genius, is the flash-in-the-pan. Workers whose general performance keeps a low level of talent and intelligence, may have one, or even two or three such flashes, occurring usually near the beginning of their careers. Or the flash may occur without even the accompaniment of the talent performance, as many of our best loved songs have occurred.

In some cases this can be traced to personal emotion at high intensity, sufficient to break through the indurations of ordinary psychic habit; in others it appears as an automatic performance, the conscious mind being put out of business temporarily from one cause or another. I have two such cases in my note-books,

both women, the first a woman of native ability, no literary background, practically uneducated. She produced one book, characterized by many minor illiteracies, but marked by the genius quality. It met with instant success, whereupon the author developed a literary consciousness, fell into the hands of "teachers," and produced nothing worth spoiling white paper to write.

In another instance a maiden lady, about the time she accepted, with what secret stress of protest who can say, that she was never to be anything else than a maiden, wrote with power a novelette which attracted the attention of the most distinguished critics of her decade, wrote several other works of diminishing merit, fell into impotence and eventually appealed for aid. But so persistent and so cunning was she in protecting her inhibitions and evading her own release, that she died, some years later, without ever again touching the genius mark. That was before the popular canonization of St. Sigismund, but it is possible a psychoanalyst might have set free the creative impulse without destroying the temperament, which in her case, was feeble.

Another curious and to the victim, utterly inexplicable lapse of genius, is likely to occur

to the best established worker, who may, between two high standard productions, put forth something utterly banal, without recognizing the fact, often, indeed, under the conviction that he has done his best work. Examination of such cases indicates that the work in question has come forth out of a period of exhaustion, in which the creative mechanism seems to go on automatically, without engaging either the mechanism of temperament, or the stream of association; a condition of hypnosis by fatigue, which may overtake any worker for short intervals, and is occasionally prolonged until the creative gesture has been completely described. When these fatigue areas begin to show themselves, rest and a change of environment will usually restore the quality of the production. Every worker will have his own rhythm of incubation, production and recovery, which it is ruinous to thwart, although unfortunately, he may not always be able to prevent interference through the long continued strain of economic pressure.

Economic pressure, however, must not be made to bear more than its due proportion of responsibility for the checks and temporary repressions of the creative process occurring in mid-career. Since the first condition of power

in any field is restraint, poverty not infrequently proves itself an effective element in the integration of the worker's equipment.

The commonest cause of falling off in content or power, among writers, is the failure constantly to enrich the stream of association and renew the path of emotion. For either or both of these, success can be as inhibiting as poverty ever is, possibly more so, since success makes easy so many satisfactions that might otherwise act as a spur to the formation of new contacts. This is especially the case with the worker who finds his life bound up with other lives, reluctant to be disturbed by any stir which may be necessary to his psychic refreshment.

It is at this point that the question most often arises as to the need of a life for geniuses patterned otherwise than the lives of their unendowed contemporaries. But this question is seldom asked except on behalf of the type of genius whose expression goes by the general term "artistic," of, or related to, works of art. It is not thought of as involving the engineering genius, the military genius, or the genius for the creation of wealth. All those inheritors of our common experience whose own effort is widely distributed, without reference to spe-



cial capacity for appreciation, or for equivalent special production of other sorts, are thought of as being able to live by the common pattern, and to be satisfied with the average allotment of personal satisfactions.

It is perhaps inevitable that genius tradition should have gathered about particular endowments in the direction of music, drama and literature, since these are the oldest types of special inheritance in the human line. The ability to make agreeably graduated noises and expressive rhythmic movements is possibly older than speech. The gift for communicating experience in a manner that adds the fruit of that experience to the common fund, is certainly as old as speech, and one of the fundamental urges which led to the development of a highly perfected medium of communication. Even among such primitives as are left, we find these gifts exceeding the gift, arriving later in the evolutionary series, for producing wealth. In fact, the particular complex of talents and faculties and inheritance which go to make up what is now called "business genius," developed so slowly, and was for so long confused with, and obscured by, the purely animal exercise of force—strength and swiftness and physical endurance—that it is

only within the past century or so that we have come to realize anything whatever of the nature of the genius for wealth-producing. Thus the business genius finds himself in possession of a social life pattern which suits fairly with his requirements as a background for the development of his genius; which pattern and background he assumes as the human norm. Not recognizing as genius anything except the type endowment that differs radically from his own, he fretfully assumes that a genius is something wilfully and inexplicably *demanding* difference. Seldom does he realize that if he were to find himself the sole business genius in a society made up chiefly of "artistic" people, his own demand for a background and a pattern allowing free exercise for his gift, would be as insistent, and possibly seem quite as perverse to the artist genius.

If, however, our definition of genius as the free play of man's inheritance in any one of all particular directions, could be accepted, it would instantly be seen that there is no more, and exactly as much, necessity for a special kind of life pattern and performance on the part of the poet as on the part of the business man. In other words, the need of the creative worker for a special kind of life is normal and

permissible in so far as he does actually need it. He has no manner of right to, and it is utter nonsense for him to demand, any traditional kind of "artist life," except as, in the evolution of his genius in contact with society, such difference is specifically required. For the young genius to seek a traditional life, on no better basis than the existence of that tradition in connection with other geniuses, and to set himself to that pattern before the interior need for a specific pattern has declared itself, is not only stultifying, but can be ruinous to native gifts. All life practise, to be fruitful, must be original in the sense of arising out of original need. Until such need arises, the individual can usually be best accommodated by a judicious selection out of innumerable tried and tested practises, lying at hand in the common social tradition. When the question of personal practise is one relating to social and personal exigencies not directly related to the evolution of personal expression through the liberated inheritance, the friction developed by behavior markedly opposed to the existing social environment often presents an obstacle greater than the corresponding release.

It would be idle to overlook the fact that the question of a distinctive life for the creative

worker is most often asked in connection with marriage, the family and related problems. It is probable that the group of associations which go with all this business of sex, is not one whit more exigent for the artistic genius than it is for any other type genius. There is, however, on the part of the artist a necessity for truthful living, since life itself is his material, that appears not to exist at all for the worker whose material is impersonal. Actually I have not been able to discover that the writer or painter genius has any more or more startlingly irregular sex adventures than the business genius, but he is constrained by the nature of his obligation to truth, without which art can not be produced, to have them openly. He is also likely to choose a higher type of companion for his adventures, which of itself, makes for publicity and for social inconvenience. But the fact is that there is not only a vast amount of ignorance at the bottom of this demand for sexual freedom for the creative worker, there is also a very great deal of bunk. It is, of course, always easier for a man to depend on some woman to stimulate him, and indirectly arouse his creative energy by working on his sex susceptibilities, than it is for him to produce the necessary effect for himself by spirit-

ual discipline. The second-rate man will almost invariably take this easier way. Ignorance, often honest, which is the source of much of our confusion on this point, is chiefly a left over from an idea still persisting in some quarters, of sex as the primary urge, and other sorts of creativeness as sublimations of sex; an idea without countenance from biology, but not important to be discussed here.

Probably true genius is much more independent of its host than is commonly believed. The insistence on a special kind of life is too often what the psychoanalysts call a defense formation put forth as an excuse for failures of function primarily due to ignorance, lack of discipline or downright spiritual indolence.

THE END



## APPENDIX

## CONTRIBUTORS

ALEXANDER HARVEY

ALAN S. HAWKSWORTH, R. F. S. A.

ROBERT EDMUND JONES

KERN RIVER JIM

RYAN WALKER

BERTHA WARDELL

DOROTHY S. LYNDALL

LOUIS WOLHEIM

FANNIE HURST

MARIANNE MOORE

CHARLES R. KNIGHT

AUGUSTUS POST

WILFRED LEWIS

BILL ROBINSON

MAXWELL ALEY



## FOREWORD

In view of the fact that this study was initiated more than a quarter of a century ago, before the new vocabulary of the unconscious was invented, and when people were shy of talking of their psychic processes, especially shy of assuming genius, or even talent for themselves, and because there was at that time no precise idea in the author's mind of presenting the material collected in book form, much valuable material was obtained without any provision for such presentation, and often under many solemn promises *not* to make use of the material except under strict anonymity.

It seemed wise, therefore, to present in the form of an appendix, examples of the sort of documentation upon which the conclusions described in the book were based, collected from creative workers still active in their respective fields. The personal accounts following have either been written by the relator or have been obtained by interview, afterward submitted to the speaker for complete authentication. They have been selected for interest and variety rather than for any special agreement with the thesis of the book, and the author would not only welcome, but would be extremely grateful to any reader who would volunteer to furnish similar authentic accounts of interior processes in any field of human activity, to further the work of inquiry.



# NOTES ON PERSONAL METHODS

ALEXANDER HARVEY

CRITIC, ESSAYIST AND TRANSLATOR

NEW YORK

First of the writings that throw light on the processes of genius are those that have to do with the inner experiences. Those men who heed the inner promptings and subjective experiences may not write about them with perfect clarity but they are far more important. Consider from this standpoint, Cowper's letters (complete), and Southey's biography of Cowper . . . and the circumstances in which Christopher Smart wrote *A Song to David* . . . an episode calling for the closest scrutiny for all who would gain an insight into the primary technique of genius.

During this primary technique of genius the eyes of the spirit seem to be opened and the ears of the spirit to hear. Dante had his vision during such a state. He alone among poets mastered both the primary and the secondary technique. The secondary technique of genius is a capacity for taking pains in the observation of the external world, and in mere writing-style, form and all that. Charles Read's note-books, Charles Dickens' observation of types, Balzac's compilation of facts about the cost of furniture and clothes, and his intimate observation of daily life preceding the composition of a tale are all "secondary" technique. In this type the genius gets his inspirations not by flashes of spir-

itual illumination, but by the operation of an exquisite intellect informed by good taste or by a sense of humor. Balzac is a splendid specimen of the genius of the type who has only a secondary technique. Read what he says about the artist's need of industry in *Cousin Bette*. He is talking about secondary technique, but he doesn't know it! Secondary technique is more than knowing how to write, of course, but it includes that.

The writings of Walter Savage Landor should be searched for side-lights on the processes of genius. Landor understood genius in its secondary processes, but the primary technique eluded him as it eludes most Englishmen and most Frenchmen. The pagans of antiquity had more of it than the moderns. Hence the importance of Greek literature.

ALAN S. HAWKSWORTH, F. R. S. A.  
INVENTOR AND MATHEMATICAL ENGINEER  
NEW YORK

In tackling a hitherto unsolved problem in physics—say in exterior ballistics—at first you see no way to solve it. But you walk around it and make many attempts. Generally you come three or more times to an impasse or blind trail. Constantly one mulls over it; especially when apparently resting—before going to sleep, while walking, in the park, at the theater, etc. Suddenly you see the way accurately to solve it and you rush to your desk and work frantically, even to physical exhaustion, to get it out of your system and down on paper. In so doing the theme proliferates and expands enormously; you see also the solution of numerous other problems that hitherto you never suspected were analogous. And you also clearly see three, or more, companion solutions that are even better than your original one—until the problem that originally looked so dark and insoluble now appears too simple and self-evident to be worth any fuss!

In pure mathematics, on the other hand, the procedure is quite different. It is of little use to peg away and try to worry out a solution. But now I carefully get my data correct and then forget all about it. My subconscious mind then takes charge; and an hour, a day, a week, or six months later, the full solution emerges in my conscious mind. It is a

process that you can not hasten or assist. Just entirely forget it and in its own good time the sub-conscious mind, at its unhastening leisure, will completely solve it.

In a somewhat parallel way, when one is reading very advanced mathematics and comes to some passage one can not understand, read it carefully over and pass on to the rest of the work. Then go back and reread, three or four times if necessary, when you will find all is easily comprehensible. Time and familiarity seem to be as essential elements in intellectual digestion and comprehension as they are in physical digestion.

But all the foregoing relates to talent, not to genius. I have a talent for mathematics which I love and cultivate and which expands with cultivation. But the essential note of genius is that it creates—full born and perfect. I have had an experience with genius but thrice: a Latin poem, an English one, and a piece of music. Each of the three came to me as an impromptu inspiration without preparation or any foreknowledge. And were each exquisite, flawless, and immeasurably beyond any improvement that my clumsy conscious intellect could suggest. I have written many poems before and since—good, bad and indifferent, mostly the latter. And I have composed other music of little merit. But my inspired music sang itself, instantly perfect, and the work of a master. And the Latin and English poems were also complete and perfect in a moment and far beyond any work of mine that I had laboriously built up and amended. And in thus extravagantly praising the music and two

poems, I have no sense of egotism. They seem to be memories, as it were, of some previous existence that I had suddenly recalled and in a real sense were not mine at all. It was like when one suddenly remembers a rhyme or song learned in childhood and hitherto forgotten.

I think that this is the supreme distinction between genius and talent. With the latter one toils and manages and grows in expertness. But genius can not be forced or called up at will. It comes entirely unforeseen and with no discernible origin in, or even helpfulness of, time, place, mood, or need.

ROBERT EDMUND JONES  
DESIGNER OF THEATRICAL SETS  
PROVINCETOWN PLAYERS, NEW YORK

"I am thinking now of the piece of work that seemed most real to me," said Mr. Jones. "After I had agreed with Mr. Arthur Hopkins in a general way about the play we were to undertake, the first thing I did was to increase my associations in every way by reading everything I could find in connection with the play and its period. Then I went away to New Mexico and diverted my mind, allowing as much time to elapse as possible, without thinking about the work. Of course I was going on with it subconsciously all the time. I would pull it up once in a while and turn it over—meditate upon it as far as I know how to meditate—but never really thinking about it. Just feeling it out, you might say, rather than thinking it out, and pushing it back again."

"Did you pray?" I wished to know.

"Well—not precisely. Prayer to me means a nasty thing of sore knees left over from my Calvinistic upbringing. But yes; something like what *you* mean . . . an attitude of mind made up of desire, quiet humility and readiness. If that is prayer, yes, perhaps."

"It is, exactly— And then?"

"When the time came, I made a quick sketch—"

"How did you know when the time came?"



"Why, I just sort of felt it, felt that something was going to happen. So I began to sketch rapidly."

"Did you criticize it as it came, or afterward?"

Mr. Jones reached for a pencil and a magazine cover and began to recall the original gestures of his sketch.

"Yes, yes . . . I would start a line, so, and almost before the mark was made, I would alter it, so . . . as you say, criticizing it as it came through. But only in expression, not in the fundamental idea. No, I don't revise much. Not fundamentally. I can't patch and piece. If the thing fails, it fails . . . like the tiger, you know. If he misses his first spring he has to go back and start over again. But, you understand, it is only the *idea* that I put down in that first sketch . . . a house there, some trees, the landscape line. I don't put down my opinion of it, my feeling about it. I amplify the idea, without substantial alteration. It sort of comes to me. Yes. I think it has been there all the time; I bring it forth into the scene. No. I don't always sketch the scenes in their regular order, as they appear in the play. It is the scene that interests me most that generally comes first; the significant scene. But there is no absolute rule about it. Sometimes one, sometimes another. But they all hang together; they are all parts of a whole."

"Then you think that the background of the play is conceived whole in your subconsciousness?"

Mr. Jones visibly rehearsed the process in his mind before replying.

“Yes,” he said at last, “I think that whatever one creates (as they say), exists already formed in a kind of reservoir of energy—complete. It comes to me while I am reading the play, sometimes at the first reading, sometimes later. Not visualized, but a kind of feeling of its being there waiting; as you say, it rings a bell in me. Then I know I’ve got it, even though I don’t always know what I’ve got. But it is a whole thing to me, very much as I suppose, the play is a whole thing to the playwright. Even when it comes through slowly, bit by bit. Like a ship coming through a fog; first a mast, then a bit of the bow, or a corner of a sail. But the ship’s all there . . . *created*.”

THE POET OF THE STONE AGE  
KERN RIVER JIM  
CALIFORNIA

Sometime you see Piutey man singin', and he cryin' when hee's sing: 'taint what hee's singin' make him cry, it's what hee's thinkin' about when he sing. That's what hee's cryin' about. It's what he thinkin' make him sing—what hee's thinkin' in hees heart. What he think in hees head, Piutey man do; what he think in hees heart, he sing. All-time thinkin' in hees heart. Then maybe so when Piutey man asleep, hee's dreamin' he singin', and when he wake up he remember that song. I think so Old Man Coyote bring him that song when he sleepin'. Not all-time that way, but all-kind medicine song, thass the way Piutey man get that kind. Then sometime Piutey man make bad medicine. Old Man Coyote take that song away.

When Piutey man make song for himself, he make it in hees heart, so when he been singin', he thinkin' all-time in hees heart about those things that make him sing, about hees friend, hees girl, about everything that happen in hees heart. So thass what make him cry when he sing. Tain't the song make him cry. Not them words. . . . White man's songs, they talk too much . . . Injun songs talk little. Just talk enough to make Injun think about what he sing inside him. Thass the way. Thass inside song, thass what make him cry, make him laugh. . . . I tell you. . . . You know that Piutey song

“Ha ha! The feast is spread,  
Come to the feast, my friends.”

Long-time those Coso Injuns, they fight with Paiutes. Then those Paiutes they make war; they kill all those Coso Injuns. Every damn one. Those Coso, they lie on the ground and they swell up. Those buzzards, they go round and round in the sky; many, many buzzards they come from everywhere. They smell those Coso. Then Piutey man he dance and he sing—

“Ha, ha! The feast is spread.”

Thass how it iss. My father hees father tell him, hees father tell him, hees father . . . all the way back. When Piutey man go to war after that he make that song, so he will have the same heart inside like the man that make that song. Then he kill all hees enemies. He dance that dance. Not for the song, but for how it makes in hees heart. In the heart that song begins, it ends. How I care where iss goin' between? Like the winds. What for you always askin' words, words! Sometimes Injun songs they got no words. They no talk all time like white man's songs. They singin' in hees heart.

RYAN WALKER  
CARTOONIST AND ESSAYIST  
THE GRAPHIC, NEW YORK

"I suppose there is no one way of making a cartoon. My best ones come by themselves, though I will often accept a commission for a general subject, in which I work out my own ideas. They always come easily, without any sense of effort such as you sometimes see in cartoonists who struggle for their ideas until it is agony to be around them. My best ideas come to me about five o'clock in the morning, when I first wake up. No, I don't ask for them particularly, except as I am always asking . . . humbly and thankfully, of course. Not in words, but in an attitude of mind. When I have to produce something in the day time, I sit down and begin making random marks on paper, not thinking . . . like this . . ." (Mr. Walker began to sketch lightly, vague suggestions of human figures, lines running off into confusion again before the figure was half formed.) "Presently," he said, "these lines work themselves into cartoons. Some of my best ones have come this way. Really, I do not think at all while I am making a cartoon; it just comes."

"But you do think, you do study. You have one of the finest collections of cartoons I have ever seen."

"Oh, yes. I study all the time, not just when I

happen to want something, but continuously. I do this so that my work will not grow old-fashioned and imitative. And I am always keeping myself—what you call the deep-self—on the job.”

“Do you have any special prayer or formula?”

“Well, in a way. I say to myself, ‘I will accomplish. I will accomplish!’ Sometimes I have said that a hundred times a day, even yet I use it. Walking along the street, when I am struck by one of our magnificent sky-scrapers, I say to myself, ‘Ordinary men made that, men like me. It was drawn and blue-printed and all the measurements accurately worked out, but it was built by ordinary men like me. What other men have accomplished *I will accomplish.*’ ”

“Then you think of the cartoon you want to make as existing somewhere, complete?”

“Yes . . . it’s like something that comes to you by radio . . . you keep turning the dial and you get nothing but confused noises at first, you pick up one station and then another, but finally you tune in, and the thing you want comes through.”

“And your Henry Dubb series?” I suggested, recalling the high praise that Bernard Shaw has given it.

“Well, for a long time I had been thinking that there was no comic strip with an economic or political significance. I have always been interested in economics and especially the problems of labor, and the more I got to know about them the more I thought that they would make a good subject for a strip cartoon. It is that sort of cartoon that has

to be approached studiously, the one that is meant to live for more than a day and carry some sort of a message. I had spoken to one of my editors about this idea of a labor strip, and he kept encouraging me, and I kept telling him that nothing had come through yet. Then I was out in Girard, Kansas, at a labor conference, and one afternoon my wife and I went out to a little mining town called Cherokee . . . and as we were coming home there was a magnificent sunset. I don't know how it is, but the sunset always has a powerful releasing effect on me . . . all at once in the midst of that sunset, I visualized the whole thing, the idea of the strip, the people, their names, everything just as it afterward worked out, and ran for twelve years, all over the world. Even yet, it is being used in London."

"Do all cartoonists work as you do?"

"Oh, no. Many cartoons, especially political ones, are worked out in conference with the editors, and then drawn afterward. Bob Miner makes several large drawings of his idea and spreads them out on the floor, and invites his friends to discuss them and decide. Often the final choice is for the one that seems to me the least successful. I have a number of his original drawings which seem to me much superior to the one he published. I don't mean in technique, but creatively."

"Then you make a distinction in your mind between cartoons that are creative and those that are not?"

"Yes. A creative artist must work within himself, *inside* of himself I mean. He must *feel* his work

instead of *think* it. I don't know how else to express it. I almost never *think* of my work, but I am almost always conscious of it there inside me, and I often turn it over . . . riding on the train, or walking, but I don't actually think it or visualize it until the time comes to turn it out on paper."

"When you actually get down to drawing, do you require any special conditions for good work?"

"No. Working in crowds so much, as a newspaper man, I have learned to shut all that out. Neither noise nor conversation has any effect on me at such times. It's an inside job."



BERTHA WARDELL AND DOROTHY S. LYNDALL  
PLAYHOUSE FOR THE DANCE  
HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

In presenting dances in the theater, there are two creative processes involved: first, the making of the dance form; second, the translation of this form into theatrical terms. We are not interested in dancing as acrobatics. For us, all dance forms must have what we call a "dance idea" to give meaning to the movement. In other words, we must have some reason for dancing other than the mere manipulation of the body. The "dance idea" may be narrative, lyric, or dramatic, but it must be "danceable"—that is, able to be adequately expressed through rhythmic movement. The first of the creative processes, the making of the dance form, deals with the "dance idea" and the music, the music determining what actual rhythmic expression the idea shall take. The second process, that of the translation into theatrical terms, is the further projection of the "dance idea" through the dancer's interpretation of the dance form, bringing in the elements of style and character, and enhancing these by the theatrical devices of costuming and lighting.

In making a dance form, two things are necessary—a "dance idea," and the music which expresses that idea. The idea may come from something that I read—poetry, rhythmic prose, folk lore or mythology; but, it does not develop (that is, ex-

ist as anything but an intellectual concept) until I find music to which it is possible to think in terms of the "dance idea." For instance, when I have an "elfin" idea, I must have "elfin" music, for a Russian dance, Russian music, if the dance form evolved is to be true.

When the dance comes, it appears as a tiny figure dancing to the music to which I am listening. The figure is on the back of my forehead. I pay no attention to it unless it is dancing directly in the center because the things it does to one side or the other are not good. Sometimes I have consciously to fill in gaps when the figure is not clear, but I think it keeps on dancing just the same even though I can not see it. The figure, itself, has no sex and has no other outlines than that of a body—even in recreating national and folk dances there is no characteristic dress. The extremities are the most distinct. The face can not be seen at all.

The dance idea does not always come first. Sometimes, I find music which I feel to be "danceable," but I am not sure just how, or, sometimes, when the music is strong, the figure appears dancing but I don't know what about. However, this makes little difference—I find that if I have a dance idea or danceable music that the missing one tends to associate itself very quickly. I would say that lyric and dramatic dances without plot and national and folk dances tend to have the dance idea suggested by music, whereas, with narrative and character dances and recreation of ritual dances I usually get my dance idea from reading. In order to recreate native dances I must have native music.

as primitive as possible. (For this purpose we use foreign records made by native musicians.) If I react to this music immediately, I never fail to include in the dance form movements which I find later are characteristic of the native dances. For instance, I made a "Voodoo Dance" using a recording of Voodoo music from Haiti, and afterward found through some friends who had seen the Voodoo rites, that the movements were correct. In fact, they would hardly believe that I had not myself seen some of the Voodoo practises. I never attempt to check with the facts until after the dance form is complete.

I use poetry, etc., to keep me in the proper mood until the dance has appeared. The length of time elapsing after I have found both music and the idea until the dance formulates itself depends on the amount of time I have at my disposal to give to listening to the music. If I am interrupted in the process of creation, I am never worried, I always feel as if the dance were being well taken care of even though I am not consciously working with it. There are times though, when I am very tired and can get nothing from the music, reading, or thinking—then I play jazz and let myself go to it—just dance around. After I am completely relaxed I play the music with which I am working and the desired response comes. I find I create best in a room where there are no distractions, nothing unfamiliar, where I can concentrate on hearing and feeling.

It is not necessary for me to dance the dances myself, sometimes I go through them in a sketchy

way to fix them in my mind; but I am not a good enough dancer to execute many of them and others have movements of which I have known nothing before.

The only thing which seems to be essential to the creativeness in me, is love; it may be love for the dance idea or for the music. I can only express what I mean by love by saying that to me it is a state in which I give up myself utterly, or open myself to what really is. I must have this feeling of love or the dance idea and music will not appear in dance form. I can stimulate this feeling in myself by reading something beautiful, by being with some person of whom I am very fond, or by looking at flowers. Sometimes, I have this feeling about a dancer—then the whole process varies a little. I find some music which expresses her to me, and sit and think of her very strongly to the music. Then the little figure takes on the coordinations peculiar to that particular dancer. When I feel love for the music, for the idea, and for the dancer herself, then it's heaven!

The dance form complete is only a skeleton. The dance pattern—that is, the direction and arrangement of the movements on the floor, and the penetration of the form with the subtle differences of moving and feeling which give style and character and make the dance true, are left for the dancer.

My own process, that of translating the dance form into theatrical terms, is as follows:

First, I dance over the movement rather sketchily, to get the "feel" of it, and, as I do this, I become conscious of how the movement should be exe-

cuted. Of course, in dancing there are many techniques which differ widely—particularly with folk and national dances, each of which has its own characteristic style of motion. It is the indiscriminate use by a dancer of one technique no matter what the dance, that makes so much dancing false. I can only describe my process by saying that, after doing the movement very easily without any thought other than to get the sequence of movements, the proper execution of them—that is, the use of head, torso, arms, and the emphasis and phrasing, follow spontaneously. To me the “feel” of doing strictly ballet dancing engenders an entirely different body psychology from that of Slavic or Latin dances, for instance. My body seems to exercise selection and criticism of the movements included in the dance form as being true or false to the “dance idea.” This body feeling operates for dances which “belong to me,”—especially those of Anglo-Saxon or Slavic peoples, and abstract lyric or dramatic dances. There is no response to the Spanish or the Italian while the pseudo-Oriental dances common hereabouts are so revolting that to do them makes me physically ill. The only Oriental dances that have ever “belonged” were some native Japanese dances I once learned.

After I have the sequence and the general outline of the dance form with whatever else has come spontaneously, I leave the dance for a day or two. During the time when I am not actually practising comes the second part of the process. This consists, first of all, in enriching my associations by reading everything that may have to do with the

dance—fact or fiction. If the dance is of a suitable type, I try to put the essence of it into writing. I find that the expression of an emotion or the delineation of a character will clarify itself if I can describe it in words which please me. I also use what might be called a form of meditation. I think over the dance not trying to see it too clearly or forcing the order of it if it doesn't come easily. Then—usually just before I go to sleep—I see certain parts of the dance, a characteristic pose perhaps, or some movement which is a key-note of the whole. This appears as a figure in costume more or less distinct. Then when I execute the dance I find that those parts of it which have visualized themselves offer no physical difficulties, even though I have not practised them. I have never succeeded, however, in seeing an entire dance and the gaps in between have to be consciously worked with.

In regard to the details of actual presentation I find that the spacing and direction decide themselves gradually. I might think this the result of theatrical experience were it not that there are people who seem to lack this sense utterly and to whom it can not be taught. I am happier if the properties, costumes, and lighting, come during the first time I work on the dance so that I can feel it as a whole. I don't actually see the color or the light, but I know what they should be. I *think* the color, intensity and source of light, as well as the outline of the costume while I dance.

When I have been working on a dance, I find myself doing parts of it spontaneously—that is, not at a regular practise time. I am helped in my practise

by the presence of certain personalities, who help me to an intensity of characterization or a technical facility which I could never accomplish alone.

After the dance has actually taken shape I find that I never dance as well in rehearsal as I do in a performance. There is a flow between myself and the audience that removes me from thinking to feeling—in some way I am transported to a larger world. Afterward I have no memory of what has happened other than this feeling of flow. If it is not there—to dance is insufferable! The flow is dependent on a sympathy within me with everything in the world which dances. I practise no regular spiritual exercises other than those I have mentioned, but I try to be out-of-doors as much as possible, to read poetry, highly imaginative prose, and books of travel, and never to harbor resentment. Anger, hate, or any of the destructive emotions kill creativeness,

LOUIS WOLHEIM

PLAYER

PLYMOUTH THEATER, NEW YORK

"I am not an actor," said Mr. Wolheim. "I am a mathematician and an engineer. I taught mathematics at Cornell. Curious about the higher mathematics. There is nothing of reality in mathematics, and yet wherever a man goes to look for the truth, whatever objective he starts from or for, he finds himself sooner or later involved in the principles of higher mathematics. Take Newton's discovery of calculus—"

With difficulty Mr. Wolheim was diverted from calculus as the fundamental of all arts, to his acting career.

"I wasn't wholly satisfied with mathematics, nor with engineering. I wanted something more . . . more expressive, but I didn't know what. Then when I was feeling rather uncertain about myself, Lionel Barrymore offered me a job in the moving pictures with him. Barrymore is a great man, not only an actor. He thinks. He—"

With firmness I disengaged Mr. Wolheim from praises of his friend and pressed the question of how he came to go on the stage.

"I didn't care much for the movies either, and Barrymore offered me a part in one of his plays. I knew nothing about acting, and at first I refused. Then one day I was watching a rehearsal and I saw



that one of Barrymore's supers was not handling him right, and I asked for the job. I played it all season. That was all the training I ever had."

"You mean that you had *no* secondary technique? But surely, in the *Hairy Ape*—"

"It was simply a question of letting myself go. I gripped fast hold of O'Neil—the part as he wrote it—and let myself go. *Into* the part. You have to begin away back in yourself and *flow* into the part. Not build it up from the outside by what you call secondary technique. A newspaper woman asked me once if I had studied stokers. When I said no, she wanted to know how I made the part so true. I asked her, 'Have you studied stokers?' 'No,' she said. 'Well, then,' I said, 'how do you know that it is true?' That's what I mean. The part must be inside the actor and come forth the way something comes forth in the audience to tell them that the acting is right. If you haven't got the truth inside you . . . well, it's like the principle of mathematics. You can solve any problem so long as you have the right principle, but if you haven't—if the part is built up by secondary technique, by producing an effect, it's like children looking in the back of the book for the answer and trying to solve the problem by that."

"Then you think an actor needn't bother with secondary technique?"

"Well, there's a technique of letting yourself go. You have to work at that of course, you don't just lose yourself in a part by wanting to. It takes time and rehearsals. I rehearse with the others, and then I rehearse to my wife, who is a first-rate

actress herself. My wife has a saying that reverses the old one about genius being an 'infinite capacity for taking pains.' She says genius *has* an infinite capacity for taking pains. And she says I had more to start with than I realize."

"Higher mathematics, you mean." (I had already been told by Mr. Wolheim's friends that he had real genius in that field, and might yet be expected to make notable contributions to it.)

"Anything that helps you to get away from the particular and back, *away* back into the principle of the thing, is a help," Mr. Wolheim admitted. "And general education; you know, I once had a notion of going in for a Ph. D. But what I mean is that I think it is a mistake for an actor to go in for the technique of producing an effect. If he gets his mind fixed on that too early, it may prevent him from getting anything else. As I said, the part must come forth from inside you."

"How do you know when it comes?"

"Well, it clicks."

Questioned, Mr. Wolheim was explicit on this point; what he was conscious of was a definite movement of psychic adjustment, similar to that felt by some novelists in creating a part. Mr. Wolheim said he did not instantly produce the part at rehearsals after he had the click of notification that it had arrived. (Mrs. Wolheim, who watches him closely, says that there is no outside evidence of this interior adjustment, but a steady evolution of the dramatic character. "He blooms the part," she said.) Mr. Wolheim himself said that sometimes a part came very slowly, but once he had experienced

the click, he never lost it again, and never tired of it, no matter how long played.

"The part has to be taken into the actor's sub-consciousness, clear out of sight," he said, "and then brought up again as if it were the actor's own experience. For this is the great difficulty of the actor, that he has to speak thoughts that are not his thoughts in words that are not the words he would choose. The whole business of technique is to say them as if they were his own, out of himself."

"That," I said, "is what I call primary technique, the technique of managing your own insides. How do you do it?"

On this point Mr. Wolheim was inarticulate. He had no formulas, no regular practise of meditation or concentration. He rather thought it was *not* having anything of the kind that helped him. He never allowed himself to think about, especially not to worry over, the outcome of his work, not even to *wish* for a successful outcome. "I do the best I can, and leave it at that." He thought that any practise which fixed the actor's attention on himself might stand in the way of that complete abandonment of himself which is indispensable to the successful creation of a part. He did not pray.

"If a man prays, what can he pray for except for himself?" he said. "He brings himself forward and emphasizes himself. And the great thing for an actor is to give himself up."

Mr. Wolheim had never heard of *Brother Lawrence* and *The Practice of the Presence of God*, though it expresses his attitude better than anything that has been written. When I asked him if

he had read that, and certain of the fifteenth-century mystics he said simply, "I was brought up a Jew. Hebrew of the Hebrews. Polish. As far back as any of the family know, mine is the only Gentile marriage."

This brought up the matter of racial inheritance, as discussed in Chapter II, and the problem of crossing the blood stream, which I thought an unlikely possibility. Yet as the stoker in *The Hairy Ape*, and as Captain Flagg in *What Price Glory* it appears to have been done successfully. Mr. Wolheim's stoker is a roughneck of possibly mongrel origin, who could never be mistaken for anything but an American, of dominant Nordic strain; and Captain Flagg is a hundred percenter whose people might have settled in Massachusetts prior to the Revolution. I wished to have the evolution of the two out of the subconsciousness of a Polish Jew, explained to me.

"I never thought of it before," said Mr. Wolheim.

"Perhaps that's the explanation."

Mr. Wolheim was inclined to take this seriously. "I was never conscious of myself as a Jew, as being anything so individual as a type. As a boy, here in New York, I gave other boys black eyes, and got them myself, for calling me a Jew. At college I refused to belong to a Jewish fraternity. Why draw a circle about myself? Maybe it is easier for a Jew actor to get into other parts because the Jews have had so much experience in getting along with other peoples in assimilating their ways. But I never think of things like that. As an actor I have to get

away from race and type, get out of what you call the blood stream into what I call the human stream. Anyway, I *am* an American. And I have an English wife." (It is also possible that further back than his family record goes there was a crossing of blood streams. Mr. Wolheim has brown hair and no pronounced Semitic characteristics; his forehead has the sharp jut above the eye of the primary tribes that by their genius for mimesis created the cultures of northern Europe.)

"Do you think," I wished to know, "that any racial group could let go its racial traits and put on an American type as easily as you do, supposing that was what they wished to do?"

"I think they all hug their racial traits too much. There's something bigger than race, some kind of subconsciousness . . . the human race. . . . Yes. I'm sure we can all get into it. Not by any thing we do. Not by trying to be something. . . . I can't explain . . . by letting go, letting it *take* you . . . that's all I know about it, that it *does* take you. That's all I know."

FANNIE HURST  
NEW YORK

I remember, when about ten years younger, hearing both Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett and Mrs. Gertrude Atherton dwell at some length upon the growing importance of the play of the subconscious in their work.

At that time, my attempts at creative writing seemed to me to lie clearly within the bounds of my conscious effort.

I remember in particular my astonishment at a statement from Mrs. Burnett to the effect that she only attempted to write when impelled to do so by feeling a little jerk at her arm, as if some one were tugging at her sleeve to attract attention.

I still feel that to be an extreme expression of the subconscious at work, but each subsequent year of my writing experience is emphasizing how much of my impulse for creative expression takes place in the sub-stratas of my consciousness.

In fact, my last two novels have even suggested to me that I may be rather an extreme example of one who writes with a growing dependence upon the uncharted territories of human consciousness.

Which does not mean that the conscious processes of writing are any the less difficult. In my own case the manner in which the genesis of a theme arrives is identical in almost all cases.

My stories never suggest themselves by incident or character. There usually arises in my mind, apropos of nothing in so far as I am able to directly trace, the beginnings of the idea, some such question as this: Given a combination of certain conditions, how will a given human being react to them? The story then builds itself around this central query.

With one exception, I have never taken an incident, a character, or a situation directly from life.

Indeed, as I continue to write, I find that less and less am I dependent upon concrete examples of human behavior.

In the excruciatingly slow and laborious processes of my writing, I find that combinations of facts present themselves to me from some no-man's land of my consciousness.

I suppose that psychologically these facts actually represent composite sub-conscious impressions that have got themselves caught in my brain-grooves but there are times when these impressions seem to march themselves out, reluctantly it is true, on to my typewriter roll in a fashion over which I have no particular jurisdiction.

Time and time again I have rebelled against the behavior of a character who would behave no other way.

Time and time again I have found myself writing an incident for which I could find no particular reason at the moment only to find later in the book that the reason was there awaiting me.

Time and time again I have described a concrete place without ever having seen it and then jour-

neyed there afterward to find that my copy needed no change.

Of course none of these incidents is mysterious, but it does mean that the author whose mind works that way is soon to discover that his mental fireless-cooker is going to do a great deal of work for him.

I have written pages, not only in the torment of composition, but in the torment of wondering if that mysterious force in the uncharted areas of my brain was reliable, or was only a madness lurking there.

My only consolation is that apparently the best of my work has been written from those unexplored realms.

It gives one a sense of power and it gives one a terrifying sense of helplessness.



MARIANNE MOORE

POET

WINNER OF THE DIAL AWARD FOR 1924

NEW YORK

An attitude, physical or mental—a thought suggested by reading or in conversation—recurs with insistence. A few words coincident with the initial suggestion, suggests other words. Upon scrutiny, these words seem to have distorted the concept. The effort to effect a unit—in this case a poem—is perhaps abandoned. If the original, propelling sentiment reasserts itself with sufficient liveliness, a truer progress almost invariably accompanies it; and associated detail, adding impact to the concept, precipitates an acceptable development. To illustrate: a piece of armor is impressively poetic. The movable plates suggest the wearer; one is reminded of the armadillo and recalls the beauty of the ancient testudo. The idea of conflict, however, counteracts that of romance, and the subject is abandoned. However, the image lingers. Presently one encounters the iguana and is startled by the paradox of its docility in conjunction with its horrific aspect. The concept has been revived—of an armor in which beauty outweighs the thought of painful self-protectiveness. The emended theme compels development.

CHARLES R. KNIGHT  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NEW YORK

My interest is primarily in animals. When I began to paint and model animals it was because of this interest rather than any desire to become an artist. In the business of drawing and modeling animals I had to learn a great deal about animal anatomy and also animal psychology. It was many years before I did anything in the way of restoration of fossil remains, and then because at the American Museum they had discovered that successful restorations could not be made by the anatomist alone; there was need for the artist and the psychologist both.

First I wish to correct a mistaken impression that in the work of restoration the image of the prehistoric beast is simply pulled out of the subconsciousness of the restorer. The subconsciousness *may* enter into the work, but not until after science has said the last word that can be squeezed out about the remains in question.

We have to begin with the anatomy of the nearest living species and work back carefully to the specimen we have. This is done by a number of people in conference. When the bony skeleton is completed the muscular structure is also worked out as indicated by the points of muscle attachment.

My work does not really begin until this anatomical reconstruction is completed, though of course I work at the anatomy with the others.

I am supposed to know all there is to know about the habits and psychology of the living representatives of the animal or group of animals selected. But naturally as soon as I know that I am to undertake a particular restoration, I begin to increase my associations in every way, looking at photographs, at drawings and especially at the living animals at the zoo. Reading everything I can find. When I finally take charge of the work I have everything thought out in my mind, but it is not yet fully developed. It exists as an assemblage of facts and gradually the whole idea for the group comes to me the way a picture comes. I turn the composition over in my mind and criticize it both from the standpoint of an artist and a scientist. As to the animals themselves they are not some phantasy of the imagination but embody the anatomical reconstruction that has been scientifically worked out. What I have to do is to put life into it from my knowledge of the character and habits of recent animals. That is something the scientist can not do. For my own benefit I often make models of the creatures in question as a help to my visualization of the animal in the three dimensions. This process fixes the image in my mind.

I create the image by careful study; but there is also something, the livingness of the animal, which comes from long association with an intense interest in the life of animals in general.

Take my restoration of the mammoth and rein-

deer herds. As an artist I put the reindeer on a hill to balance the mammoth herd, but I had to know as a scientist that that is the way reindeer go over a hill together, just as I had to know the way an elephant herd, the nearest relation to mammoths, bunches up in passing.

The subconscious mind does not in my opinion have much to do with this subject as it is so concrete from first to last that it seems to require very *conscious* thought and study *all* the time.

If I may be permitted to sum up my own work along the lines indicated, I should say that it is the result of a long course of study of the habits and characteristics of *modern* animals applied to those of the past. As to why as a child I took such an intense interest in this study, I am unable to say. An only child, with few friends, I presume I turned to animals for companionship, and my later work in fossil things was merely a matter of chance, as I happened to be about when a man was needed for this branch of artistic endeavor.

On account of this particular branch of my work being unique, I have entered fully into the processes I employ in producing it. As a matter of fact, my fossil work is merely an incidental, my principal work being the painting and modeling of modern animals, birds and fish. I am also interested to a certain degree in painting portraits and landscapes.

**AUGUSTUS POST**  
**AVIATION EXPERT**

Glenn Curtiss said "any one can fly who wants to fly—*badly enough!*" The point of the statement is in the last two words. The vital urge must be strong enough to crash through the conscious or unconscious inhibitions. Possibly some of these may come from an underlying conviction, handed down through centuries, that men can't fly—the Darius Green inhibition—at any rate, the flyer must get past these as an inventor must overcome the weight of popular disbelief and the obstacles of personal interruptions while he is in a trance of creation.

I witnessed the training of the first two men ever taught to fly, or rather, taken as pupils. One of them started off without a hitch, never had an accident, became a world-famous aviator, flew for years without a crash, and is to-day sound and hearty, retired from active flight. The other took his place in the machine, the engine started—and he just *locked*; did nothing at all. The machine went a little way of its own accord, crashed, he broke his arm and never flew again.

In my own case, I had been waiting four years for the chance to fly and watching for days the training of others. When my moment came, I got up and flew. I had learned what to do, and I was close enough coupled so I could do what I wanted to do. Some years before that, Capt. Baldwin having

pointed out in a few words the features of the simple mechanism of his early one man dirigible—the operator sent it up or down by walking backward or forward on a ladder-like structure suspended beneath the balloon—said “Go up,” and up I went and maneuvered it over the heads of the crowd.

Flying should all be subconscious: you can’t see the air, you must sense it. Science is not enough; you must have prescience: whatever happens you must know it just beforehand. Your feet on the levers, your eyes on the dials, the purr of the motor in your ears—if something goes wrong you pick it up instantly, but so long as it goes right your mind has nothing to do with it. That is left free for direction, drift and navigation, for the map and the weather. Those who fail are those whose minds do the flying.

The means at the disposal of the balloonist are simpler—he can only spill a little sand or let out a little gas—but these are used with such delicacy that ballooning is diplomacy rather than engineering. The free balloon is literally a living *thing*. In managing it you must determine whether you will “balloon” or “shoot the air-currents.” To find the air-currents you may have to spend some ballast and curtail the duration of your voyage, but if you are successful in finding a swift and steady current you will be carried rapidly with it and make up more than the time you spent looking for it. On the other hand, the wind may change and by remaining in the air for a longer time at a slower speed you may exceed the distance made by going faster for a shorter time. It is a gamble with your

ballast, and you must sense what to do; sense, for instance, whether the balloon is rising or falling from a loss of equilibrium or from the rising or falling of the air-current with which it is drifting. For the moment you must be in tune with the universe.

BILL ROBINSON  
BUCK AND WING DANCER  
KEITH'S VAUDEVILLE

Ever since I was a kid it seemed like there wasn't anything I cared much about but dancing. I never had any teacher, nor anybody that started me off at it. I just danced out of my head, just as it came along. I kind of thought that when I was dead if people said, "Well there was Bill Robinson, he did a good buck and wing," it would be about all I cared for. I wanted to do it *good*. And I did. There's not many that can do tribbles, and I can do three or four different ones. I work all the time. Every day I practise in the kitchen at home until I have it the way I want it.

I don't get it from the music. I get it out of my head. I don't have any music to practise by, but I kind of hum something and I have it orchestrated to suit me. Understand, I dance to the music, I dance every note. But it has to be made right for me, the way I want it. Why, if the orchestra gets out a single bar, it throws me out. And it has to be good music. Not any rag-time. I can't dance to jazz. But I have danced to some high class music, like *The Brazilian Dance*, and I go up the stairs to the *Melody in F*. I can't make the music myself, I don't know anything about that, but I have it made to suit me. I have a brother who is a musician; the best drummer in his regiment.



I can't say exactly how the dances come into my head. It's not anything that happens to me that makes them come. They just sort of spring up. Sometimes in dreams. I dream that I am dancing for the king or for some big person in some foreign country, and when I wake up I try to remember what I danced, and I work out the taps.\* That one where I dance up the steps. I remember I said to my wife, "I dreamed I was dancing for the king last night and all the time I was dancing I was going up the stairs, and, golly! I'm going to see if I can do it." And I worked it out. Going up and down, like a kind of tune.

Yes'm, I'm religious. More than most. When I've been out on the road and I get back to the church on 136th street, well just as soon as I get in it seems like I'd just got home. Do I pray over my work? I sure do. That sort of thing and dancing, they go together. There's nothing I care about the way I do about my work. But not caring so as to worry over it. I take everything the way it comes. Unless it comes light and easy it isn't right for me nor for the audience. Maybe you noticed that I went off the stage once. Well, that was to wipe my face . . . it's pretty warm work. The way I feel about it is that it oughtn't to seem like work. It sort of spoils it for me if I lose that light feeling. That's why I say I take everything just as it comes. Some

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\*Folklorists tell us that the original of the Buck and Wing was a religious invocation for the increase of spiritual power. It is possible that in this dream origin we have a reversion to racial sources slumbering at the bottom of the deep-self. The suggestion of the stairs is significant.

people are always fretting about where they come. But I can follow anybody or go before anybody. You mustn't think about those things; you must just give yourself up to it. It sort of carries you along. Times when I'm feeling a little sick or tired, just the minute the music begins, I'm all right. I just ease into it. I can't explain; there's something sort of takes you.

WILFRED LEWIS  
INVENTOR AND EFFICIENCY EXPERT  
HAVERFORD, PA.

"On first undertaking a piece of work, what is the first thing you do?"

"The first thing I do is to state the case or problem as clearly and concisely as possible."

"Do you ever deliberately turn your problem over to your subconscious to work upon it?"

"Yes, I frequently let it rest a while, or revert to it casually and the solution sometimes comes like a flash just as one finds a long lost treasure when not looking for it."

"Do you have any particular way of thinking out a problem, either consciously or unconsciously, or any special time for it?"

"I generally dig at it until I get it, but when the answer is delayed or unsatisfactory I sometimes dream about it and get another point of view. I never give it up because I revel in difficulties as nothing more nor less than unusual opportunities."

"Do you have any little tricks or habits which you use as aids, such as smoking, walking up and down, shutting yourself up in your room? Do you have any 'lucky piece,' any charm or fetish or formula of autosuggestion that you use?"

"No, I have no tricks or turns or superstitions of any kind."

"Do you connect any sort of religious feeling or practise with your work? Do you pray over it, or feel yourself helped from the outside?"

"Not at all."

"Do you ever have 'hunches,' and how do they act with you?"

"Yes, I always have a hunch in the sense of an idea as to how the problem may be solved. When one fails to bring results, I try another."

"Do you study or read or travel or otherwise deliberately try to increase your mental efficiency?"

"Yes, I read and study and travel and write a good deal, but my work grows and blossoms more in mental pictures than in words."

"Describe some particular undertaking as fully as possible, in its interior phases."

"As a Mechanical Engineer, my work lies chiefly in the fields of Research and Invention. When I see something wrong I immediately begin to analyze and correct. For instance, in foundry practise, molds for pouring molten metal had been rammed for forty years by jarring machines, which were mechanisms by which the mold, full of soft sand, was elevated a few inches and allowed to drop on to an anvil, thus packing the sand as a grocer packs sugar in a bag by bumping it on the counter. But as these machines became larger they became destructive in the ground shock developed. Finished molds were destroyed by this vibration and buildings were unsettled on their foundations. So I said the anvil should rise to meet the falling table and that 'hunch,' if you please, led to the invention of

the Shockless Jarring Machine, which works like the cracking of two stones together in mid-air.

“Again, in 1892, I read a paper on the Strength of Gear Teeth, leaving one point unsettled as to the effect of speed upon strength. After twenty-eight years of neglect toward that problem, I began to see how it might be solved and in five years more the Gear Testing Machine made its appearance. After twenty-eight years something happened to revive my interest in that problem and nothing held me to it but the pleasure in creative work.

“About sixty other inventions might be cited to my credit, just as plain matters of business in the pursuit of success, but as a rule I think there is more satisfaction in the realization of ideals than in their financial returns.”

# NOTES ON TEACHING METHODS

MAXWELL ALEY

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

As a supplementary text for any university course that touches upon creative work, Mrs. Austin's book covers something new and of real value. Most attempts to teach creative work—especially to teach writing—put all the emphasis on the secondary technique. They take the product of genius and dissect it to find out how much of this and how much of that went into the making. Something may be learned in this way; it is possible that a sense of form already present may be sharpened; but the really creative element defies the dissector. The process has never, to my knowledge, produced anything that can be called a work of genius.

Mrs. Austin's book concerns itself with the genius mind and the manner in which it works: with the real creative process. She goes further to show that we each have genius of some sort if we can bring it up into consciousness and make it work for us. Her attempt is to show us first how to know ourselves, and then how to make the most of what we find we are.

Since most of her illustrations are drawn from literary genius, a teacher thinks first of the book in relation to the courses in writing which all of our universities offer. Perhaps its real place in a university curriculum is in the department of phil-

osophy. The university of the future will, I hope, have a general course along the lines Mrs. Austin has laid out. At present its applications to the courses in writing—particularly fiction writing—are most apt to find wide acceptance.

I am a professional editor, not a professional teacher, so my views on the teaching of writing and the use of this book may be too un-academic; but I buy yearly for a magazine of national circulation some seventy to a hundred short stories, and half a dozen novels, and I am interested in seeing less hack journalism turned out and more work that is really creative. Here in America we have had too much emphasis placed on secondary technique and not enough on the creative side of writing. We have much "clever" fiction, but a smaller amount of good fiction, and still less that can be called great. We have an endless number of competent hack writers and the aim of teaching appears to be—if one may judge by the popular-class method—to produce more: more people who can turn out easy reading into which no real creative element enters. Every editor will agree that he is surfeited with this sort of fiction, and wants the story of the other kind.

Three years ago I diffidently took up an evening class in fiction writing at New York University, and I have tried to feel my way toward something beyond the conventional academic handling of such work. I was fortunate in the support of Professor J. M. Lee, head of the department of Journalism, who let me have my head and experiment. I had heard Mrs. Austin put forth some of her views then, and I was influenced by them in what I tried to do.

When the chapters of this book began to appear in *The Bookman*, I began putting more of her ideas into effect.

My experience in those three years has convinced me that outside the help one may give the student through criticism, and such clarification of his ideas as may come in class discussion, one may help him to real creative work only as one can help him to understand himself: to find his own creative process and pattern and the real things deep within him that he has to say.

To help the student find himself, I have him first write an autobiography—write it as rapidly and freely as he can. I tell him to “cut loose” as though he were writing a letter to some one he wished to have know all about him and understand him. I want the train of memories opened up, the half forgotten things, which are often so very significant, brought to light. I ask him to tell me of his early life, his ancestry; (see Mrs. Austin’s chapter on Racial Traits and Genius;) what interested him most deeply as a child, and what things he liked to do best then; his earliest dreams and ambitions; his adolescent period, with details of education, ambitions, play, and of when the desire to write first became manifest; I ask him to try to classify himself psychologically as an introvert or an extravert, or whatever combination of the two he thinks he is. When the student is a mature person I ask him to give me such details of his later life as may throw light on what has held him back in the realization of his creative desire.

It is interesting to note that sometimes the mere



writing of such an autobiography releases inhibitions and starts the individual writing freely. This has been true with older students particularly. I suspect that if any of us did it we would find that our inferiority complexes weren't nearly so well founded as we thought they were, and that we really had much more to go on than we had believed. Aside from giving the teacher valuable information which may help him to put the student on the right track, the autobiography is a grand device for bolstering up courage.

Much of the work in such a class is done in individual conferences. I give each student as many such as seem necessary. These conferences check up the difficulties encountered in a given piece of work which has been submitted and take up personal problems. The autobiography is the chief basis for these discussions.

I have used Mrs. Austin's material during its appearance in *The Bookman* by assigning individuals certain articles to study where it seemed that the material applied especially. I have read some of the articles in class and taken them up afterward in detailed discussion.

The book is not "easy" reading. No good book on such a subject could be. It needs to be read and pondered and discussed and then reread. Its meaning and its applications will grow with each new perusal. One of my advanced students who had little grounding in psychology had much difficulty with the book and only kept at it because I insisted. In the end she came to me and thanked me, and said that the book had done many things for her, chief of which was to teach her to work while she read.

I am not recommending the book for courses in freshman composition. *Everyman's Genius* fits into the university class in fiction writing, which presumably is a course for seniors and post-graduates or especially talented under-classmen, and which should always be a seminar. Or it fits into those rare courses which sometimes happen in universities where a really gifted teacher has a small class in writing—any kind of writing that the individual student wishes to do. It would fit better into a course of that kind than into any other; perhaps, even, there is somewhere some one with perspicacity enough to create such a course around it. My own experience goes to show that one gets the most out of Mrs. Austin's work by taking her at her word and treating this study of genius as notes from an uncompleted inquiry and making it the basis for research by the student.

Now that the material is available in book form I plan to have each student read the entire book outside and then to take up a chapter at a time for class discussion. I have no intention of forsaking the discussion of writing problems for the discussion of Mrs. Austin's material, or of eliminating the study of short-story form and fiction technique. Those things are a necessary and important part. But I think that in trying to teach creative writing the things which Mrs. Austin discusses are ultimately more important. I believe that this study of practise and technique can be coupled successfully with the study of creative method in any field, and the whole directed toward helping the student to make the most of whatever he has.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## NOTE ON BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

We have not attempted to list more than a few outstanding volumes in this field. The reading of biography and autobiography is exceedingly valuable to the student of the genius process. This applies particularly to autobiography, where the truth—often unintentionally!—manages in many cases to shine through. The present method of biography, which tries to be psychoanalytical and is too often merely destructive, errs as far, perhaps, in the opposite direction as did the eulogistic volumes of the past. The truth about a genius is not an easy thing to uncover, but it is always interesting to pursue.

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AUSTIN, MARY. *The American Rhythm.* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1923.

Valuable for its study of the psychological origins of poetry as illustrated among Amerindian tribes, and for the relation of motor habits to literary form. Also a summary of scientific study of rhythm and its subconscious transmission by inheritance.

'AUTHORS' LEAGUE. *My Maiden Effort; being the personal confessions of well-known American authors as to their literary beginnings, with*

*an introduction by Gelett Burgess.* Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1921.

Mostly bunk for the purposes of publicity, but containing some brief and sincere accounts.

BAUDOUIN, CHARLES. *Suggestion and Autosuggestion.* Translated from the French by Eden and Cedar Paul. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1921.

A standard work on the subject, doing full justice to Coué, and correcting his errors.

BERGER, P. *William Blake, Poet and Mystic.* E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1915.

Blake should be studied not only for the high imaginative quality of his works, but as an example of diverse and equal talents, as a genius in the field of visual imagination and as a mystic for whom "distance is nothing but a phantasy." A study of his highly complex symbolism throws much light on the problem of the racial subconscious.

BEVERIDGE, ALBERT J. *Life of John Marshall,* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1916.

America's greatest legal genius revealed in a masterly biography.

BUTCHER, S. H. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics.* Macmillan Co., New York, 1902.

CELLINI, BENVENUTO. *Autobiography.* Everyman Edition. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

Exuberant genius coupled with extraordinary talent.

COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR. *Biographia Literaria.* Harper and Bros., New York, 1853.

COUÉ, EMILE. *Self Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion*. American Library Service, New York, 1922.

An excellent account of Coué's own experiment, but must be read cautiously in view of M. Coué's limitations in the biological field. Many excellent suggestions for the making and use of formulas of self-help.

CRASSET, JEAN (1618-1692). *Meditations for Every Day in the Year. From Christ. Considera.* Edited by Rev. T. B. Snow, O. S. B. 2 vols. R. Washbourne, London, 1888.

Simple methods of Christian prayer and meditation, based upon the system of St. Ignatius.

EASTMAN, CHARLES ALEXANDER. *The Soul of the Indian*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1911.

A first hand account of the way an Indian's mind works.

ELLIS, HAVELOCK. *A Study of British Genius*. Hurst & Blackett, London, 1904.

Objective study of geographical distribution, parentage and physical constitution of eminent Britishers.

ELLIS, JOHN EDWIN and WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS. *Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic and Critical*. Quaritch, London, 1893.

FABER, FATHER FREDERIC WILLIAM. *Prayer*. Benziger Bros., 36 Barclay St., New York.

One of the best descriptive accounts of the two great prayer systems of the Middle Ages. Any Catholic bookshop.

GALTON, SIR FRANCIS. *Hereditary Genius*. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1871.

The standard work, treating genius as exceptional ability, and chiefly valuable for historic data, and examples of the transmission of genius from generation to generation distributed through varying talents.

HAMILTON, CLAYTON. *Materials and Methods of Fiction*. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1908.

Probably the best book dealing with secondary technique in fiction available. It touches upon creative method incidentally, and has an excellent chapter on experience.

HOFFMAN, ARTHUR SULLIVANT. *Fiction Writers on Fiction Writing*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1923.

Advice, opinions and a statement of their working methods by more than a hundred contemporary writers. While most of it has to do with secondary technique, there are interesting bits of the really creative side.

HUNTINGTON, ELLSWORTH. *The Character of Race, as influenced by physical environment, natural selection, and historical development*. C. Scribner's Sons, New York, London, 1924.

A study of racial genius as influenced by environmental factors and social relations. Modern and interesting.

JAMES, WILLIAM. *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1902.

Invaluable of its kind.

BROTHER LAWRENCE. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.



An invaluable book on the technique of personal poise.

LOWELL, AMY. *Life of Keats*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1925.

MAUROIS, ANDRÉ. *Ariel: the Life of Shelley*. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1924.

OSTY, EUGENE. *Supernormal Faculties in Man*. Translated from the French by Stanley De Brath. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1923.

Well documented report on laboratory study of supernormal faculties, such as clairaudience, clairvoyance, psychic diagnosis of disease, foreknowing, finding of lost objects and similar phenomena. Reliable and readable.

POE, EDGAR ALLAN. *The Philosophy of Composition*.

See any good edition of Poe's works. Has also been reprinted many times.

ROLLAND, ROMAIN, *Jean Christophe*. Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1910.

A biographical novel in which a great French modern says much about the genius process.

SPEER, ROBERT E. *Race and Race Relations, a Christian view of human contacts*. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1924.

Excellent discursive study in the light of recent research.

STEPHENSON, NATHANIEL WRIGHT. *Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1922.

More than any other biography of Lincoln, this shows the forces that went to make him, and the genius of the man in operation.

STUART, JOHN A. *A Critical Biography of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1924.

An interpretation and explanation in the light of modern thought.

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS. *Learning to Write*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1921.

TATHAM, FREDERICK. *The Letters of William Blake Together with a Life*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1906.

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID. *Walden and A Week on the Concord and Merrimac*. Any good edition.

All of Thoreau's work is full of suggestive material for the student working along the line of this book, but these two are particularly recommended.

TROLLOPE, ANTHONY. *Autobiography*. Harper & Bros., New York, 1883.

Talent uncomplicated by genius. A book well worth the student's time, however.

TROWARD, THOMAS. *The Creative Process in the Individual*. Robert M. McBride & Co., New York, 1915.

The best work of the kind for the advanced student. Recommended by William James.

TWAIN, MARK. *Mark Twain's Autobiography*. Harper & Bros., New York, 1924.

Valuable, as much for what it does not say as for what it says. One of the great American documents of genius.

UNDERHILL, EVELYN. *The Essentials of Mysticism*. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1920. *Practical Mysticism*. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, New Edition, 1918.

A study of the nature and history of mysticism for the average person. For the more advanced student of Christian mysticism, see *Mysticism*, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1911, and *The Mystic Way*, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1913, by the same author.

BRIMHALL, DEAN R. *Family Resemblances among American Men of Science*. The American Naturalist, Vol. 56, No. 647, pp. 504-547, Vol. 57, Nos. 648-649, 651, pp. 74-88, 137-152, 326-344; 1922-23.

DRINKWATER, H. *Inheritance of Artistic and Musical Ability*. Journal of Genetics, Vol. 5, 1915-1916.

GAW, ESTHER ALLEN, *Survey of Musical Talent*. Psychological Monographs, University of Iowa, Vol. 31, No. 140, pp. 128-156, 1922.

STANTON, HAZEL M. *The Inheritance of Specific Musical Capacities*. Psychological Monographs, University of Iowa, Vol. 31, No. 140, pp. 157-204, 1922.

The above are excellent examples of the research being conducted by American scholars into the pedigree of specific talent.