

IX THE FACTORS OF LIFE

Journal

What is this chapter about? *Three forces of our personality are thinking, feeling, and willing. Our disposition can be such that we get to know the world not through the senses, but through cognitional forces in the personality itself.*

What is its value? *Feeling and willing are percepts, so to be a complete reality they need the addition of a concept. Within intuitive thinking is found both feeling and will, in the depths of their reality.*

Part II Philosophy Of Freedom

Chapter 9 The Factors Of Life

Chapter 10 The Idea Of Freedom

Chapter 11 Monism And The Philosophy Of Freedom

Chapter 12 World-Purpose And Life-Purpose

Chapter 13 Moral Imagination

Chapter 14 The Value Of Life

Chapter 15 The Individual And The Genus

Ethics Of Personality

Ethics Of Individuality

Ethics Of Moral Authority

Ethics Of Purposefulness

Ethics Of Moral Ideas

Ethics Of Life's Value

Ethics Of Free Individuality

Living Thinking

The difficulty of grasping the essential nature of thinking by observation lies in this, that it has all too easily eluded the introspecting mind by the time the mind tries to bring it into the focus of attention. Nothing then remains to be inspected but the lifeless abstraction, the corpse of the living thought. If we look only at this abstraction, we find it hard, by contrast, to resist yielding to the mysticism of feeling or perhaps the metaphysics of will, which by contrast appear so "full of life". We should then find it strange that anyone should expect to grasp the essence of reality in "mere thoughts". But if we once succeed in really finding life in thinking, we shall know that the self-abandonment to feelings, or being intuitively aware of the will, cannot even be compared with the inner wealth and the self-sustaining yet ever moving experience of this life of thinking, let alone be ranked above it.

It is owing precisely to this wealth, to this inward abundance of experience, that the image of thinking which presents itself to our ordinary attitude of mind should appear lifeless and abstract. No other activity of the human soul is so easily misunderstood as thinking. Will and feeling still fill the mind with warmth even when we live through the original event again in memory. Thinking all too readily leaves us cold in recollection; it is as if the life of the mind had dried out. Yet this is really nothing but the strongly marked shadow of its real nature — warm, luminous, and penetrating deeply into the phenomena of the world. This penetration is brought about by a power flowing through the activity of thinking itself — the power of spiritual love. There are no grounds here for the objection that to discern love in the activity of thinking is to project into thinking a feeling, namely, love that is not part of it. For in truth this objection is but a confirmation of what we have been saying.

If we turn towards the essential nature of thinking, we find in it both feeling and will, and these in the depths of their reality. If we turn away from thinking towards "mere" feeling and will, we lose from these their genuine reality. If we are ready to experience thinking intuitively, we can also do justice to the experience of feeling and of will; but the mysticism of feeling and the metaphysics of will are not able to do justice to the penetration of reality by intuitive thinking. They conclude all too readily that they themselves are rooted in reality, but that the intuitive thinker, devoid of feeling and blind to reality, forms out of "abstract thoughts" a shadowy, chilly picture of the world. -Rudolf Steiner addition

Study Topics

ethics of personality

9.0 Cognitive Personality

If we call the establishment of such a thought connection an "act of cognition", and the resulting condition of our self "knowledge", then, assuming the above supposition to be true, we should have to consider ourselves as beings who merely cognize or know.

9.1 Feeling Personality

The Naïve Realist holds that the personality actually lives more genuinely in the life of feeling than in the purely ideal element of knowledge.

9.2 Perception of Feeling

To begin with, feeling is exactly the same, on the subjective side, as the perception is on the objective side.

9.3 Incomplete Feeling

Feeling is an incomplete reality, which, in the form in which it first appears to us, does not yet contain its second factor, the concept or idea.

9.4 Feeling Of Existence

The concept of self emerges from within the dim feeling of our own existence.

9.5 Cultivation Of Feeling

The cultivation of the life of feeling appears more important than anything else.

9.6 Feeling Knowledge

Attempts to make feeling, rather than knowing, the instrument of knowledge.

9.7 Philosopher Of Feeling

Makes a universal principle out of something that has significance only within one's own personality.

9.8 Feeling Mysticism

Wants to raise feeling, which is individual, into a universal principle.

9.9 Willing Personality

The individual relation of our self to what is objective.

9.10 Philosophy Of Will

The will becomes the world-principle of reality.

9.11 Real Experience Of Feeling and Willing

Besides the ideal principle which is accessible to knowledge, there is said to be a real principle which cannot be apprehended by thinking but can yet be experienced in feeling and willing.

9.12 Universal Will

The will as a universal world-process.

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9.0 Cognitive Personality

[1] LET us recapitulate the results gained in the previous chapters. The world appears to man as a multiplicity, as an aggregate of separate entities. He himself is one of these entities, a thing among things. Of this structure of the world we say simply that it is given, and inasmuch as we do not construct it by conscious activity, but simply find it, we say that it consists of percepts. Within this world of percepts we perceive ourselves. This percept of Self would remain merely one among many other percepts, did it not give rise to something which proves capable of connecting all percepts one with another and, therefore, the aggregate of all other percepts with the percept of Self.



This something which emerges is no longer a mere percept; neither is it, like percepts, simply given. It is produced by our activity. It appears, in the first instance, bound up with what each of us perceives as his Self. In its inner significance, however, it transcends the Self. It adds to the separate percepts ideal determinations, which, however, are related to one another, and which are grounded in a whole. What self-perception yields is ideally determined by this something in the same way as all other percepts, and placed as subject, or "I," over against the objects.

This something is thought, and the ideal determinations are the concepts and ideas. Thought, therefore, first manifests itself in connection with the percept of self. But it is not merely subjective, for the Self characterizes itself as subject only with the help of thought. This relation of the Self to itself by means of thought is one of the fundamental determinations of our personal lives. Through it we lead a purely ideal existence. By means of it we are aware of ourselves as thinking beings. This determination of our lives would remain a purely conceptual (logical) one, if it were not supplemented by other determinations of our Selves. Our lives would then exhaust themselves in establishing ideal connections between percepts themselves, and between them and ourselves. If we call this establishment of an ideal relation an "act of cognition," and the resulting condition of ourselves "knowledge," then, assuming the above supposition to be true, we should have to consider ourselves as beings who merely cognize or know.

cognition: establishment of an ideal relationship between percepts
knowledge: the change in us as the result of cognition

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9.1 Feeling Personality



[2] The supposition is, however, untrue. We relate percepts to ourselves not merely ideally, through concepts, but also, as we have already seen, through feeling. In short, the content of our lives is not merely conceptual.

The Naive Realist holds that the personality actually lives more genuinely in the life of feeling than in the purely ideal activity of knowledge. From his point of view he is quite right in interpreting the matter in this way.

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9.2 Perception of Feeling

Feeling is exactly similar on the subjective side to the percept on the objective side. From the principle of Naive Realism, that everything is real which can be perceived, it follows that feeling is the guarantee of the reality of one's own personality.

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9.3 Incomplete Feeling

Monism, however, must bestow on feeling the same supplementation which it considers necessary for percepts, if these are to stand to us for reality in its full nature. For Monism, feeling is an incomplete reality which, in the form in which it first appears to us, lacks as yet its second factor, the concept or idea. This is why, in actual life, feelings, like percepts, appear prior to knowledge.

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9.4 Feeling Of Existence

At first, we have merely a feeling of existence; and it is only in the course of our gradual development, that we attain to the point at which the concept of Self emerges from within the blind mass of feelings which fills our existence. However, what for us does not appear until later, is from the first indissolubly bound up with our feelings.

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9.5 Cultivation Of Feeling

This is how the naive man comes to believe that in feeling he grasps existence directly, in knowledge only indirectly.

The cultivation of the life of feeling, therefore, appears to him more important than anything else.



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9.6 Feeling Knowledge

Not until he has grasped the unity of the world through feeling will he believe that he has comprehended it. He attempts to make feeling rather than thought the instrument of knowledge.

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9.7 Philosopher Of Feeling

Now a feeling is entirely individual, something equivalent to a percept. Hence a philosophy of feeling makes a cosmic principle out of something which has significance only within my own personality. Anyone who holds this view attempts to infuse his own self into the whole world.

What the Monist strives to grasp by means of concepts, the philosopher of feeling tries to attain through feeling, and he looks on his own felt union with objects as more immediate than knowledge.



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9.8 Feeling Mysticism



[3] The tendency just described, the philosophy of feeling, is Mysticism. The error in this view is that it seeks to possess by immediate experience what must be known, that it seeks to develop feeling, which is individual, into a universal principle.

[4] A feeling is a purely individual activity. It is the relation of the external world to the subject, in so far as this relation finds expression in a purely subjective experience.

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9.9 Willing Personality

[5] There is yet another expression of human personality. The Self, through thought, takes part in the universal world-life. Through thought it establishes purely ideal (conceptual) relations between percepts and itself, and between itself and percepts. In feeling it has immediate experience of the relation of objects to itself as subject. In will the opposite is the case. In volition, we are concerned once more with a percept, viz., that of the individual relation of the self to what is objective. Whatever in the act of will is not an ideal factor, is just as much mere object of perception as is any object in the external world.

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9.10 Philosophy Of Will

[6] Nevertheless, the Naive Realist believes here again that he has before him something far more real than can ever be attained by thought. He sees in the will an element in which he is immediately aware of an activity, a causation, in contrast with thought which afterwards grasps this activity in conceptual form.

On this view, the realization by the Self of its will is a process which is experienced immediately. The adherent of this philosophy believes that in the will he has really got hold of one end of reality. Whereas he can follow other occurrences only from the outside by means of perception, he is confident that in his will he experiences a real process quite immediately.



Voluntarism

The mode of existence presented to him by the will within himself becomes for him the fundamental reality of the universe. His own will appears to him as a special case of the general world-process; hence the latter is conceived as a universal will. The will becomes the principle of reality just as, in Mysticism, feeling becomes the principle of knowledge. This kind of theory is called Voluntarism (Thelism). It makes something which can be experienced only individually the dominant factor of the world.

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9.11 Real Experience Of Feeling and Willing

[7] Voluntarism can as little be called scientific as can Mysticism. For both assert that the conceptual interpretation of the world is inadequate. Both demand, in addition to a principle of being which is ideal, also a principle which is real. But as perception is our only means of apprehending these so-called real principles, the assertion of Mysticism and Voluntarism coincides with the view that we have two sources of knowledge, viz., thought and perception, the latter finding individual expression as will and feeling.

Voluntarism can as little be called scientific as can Mysticism

Since the immediate experiences which flow from the one source cannot be directly absorbed into the thoughts which flow from the other, perception (immediate experience) and thought remain side by side, without any higher form of experience to mediate between them. Beside the conceptual principle to which we attain by means of knowledge, there is also a real principle which must be immediately experienced. In other words, Mysticism and Voluntarism are both forms of Naive Realism because they subscribe to the doctrine that the immediately perceived (experienced) is real.

Compared with Naive Realism in its primitive form, they are guilty of the yet further inconsistency of accepting one definite form of perception (feeling, respectively will) as the exclusive means of knowing reality. Yet they can do this only so long as they cling to the general principle that everything that is perceived is real. They ought, therefore, to attach an equal value to external perception for purposes of knowledge.

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9.12 Universal Will

[8] Voluntarism turns into Metaphysical Realism, when it asserts the existence of will also in those spheres of reality in which will can no longer, as in the individual subject, be immediately experienced. It assumes hypothetically that a principle holds outside subjective experience, for the existence of which, nevertheless, subjective experience is the sole criterion.

As a form of Metaphysical Realism, Voluntarism is open to the criticism developed in the preceding chapter, a criticism which makes it necessary to overcome the contradictory element in every form of Metaphysical Realism, and to recognize that the will is a universal world-process only in so far as it is ideally related to the rest of the world.



The will is a universal world-process only in so far as it is ideally related to the rest of the world.