What is the Sound of One Entity Yapping?

or

The Role of Error in the Formation of the Internal Voice

or

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

or

The Thermodynamics of Thought: a Rough Draft of a Brain Storm

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authored

Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.

-- From T.S. Eliot's Burnt Norton

Is there a sound addressed
Not wholly to the ear?

-- a poem by T.S. Eliot

What is the sound of one hand clapping?

-- a famous Zen Buddhist riddle

To learn is to find fault. It is the process of identifying one's errors. Identifying a new plant leaf, for example, is discovering how it differs (errs) from all other known plant leaves. And all insights or inventions are the result of errors or inadequacies in previous views or technologies, respectively.

In the abstract sense, error functions as an engine. It is what causes discontent, incites movement and evolution. In fact all intentional movement can be traced to some kind of error or disorder as a cause. It is self-evident that we cannot tolerate knowingly being in error; any event which discredits a belief (any fact which errs from the established order of thinking) necessitates response. This response can be either resolution (through which a changed, corrected viewpoint, is realized, admitted, in effect thrust upon us); or escape (in which we intentionally evade or dismiss certain facts as a defense of the "correctness" of our old views). Toleration of error or mental disorder is not a possibility. [1]

The person who seems oblivious to the violence and chaos of his own behavior and his surroundings "tolerates" his environment through evasions such as television, alcohol, drugs, fantasy or other kinds of thought. When we witness another person living a lifestyle that is more chaotic and confusing than our own, we often ask "how can that person tolerate such disorder?" But the other person's intolerance, the other's evasions, are simply not apparent to us because evasions only sometimes involve physical actions but always involve thought, which we take for granted as a constant in life. So daydreams, fantasies, endless internal monologues go unnoticed as evasive maneuvers, as signs of intolerance, discontent.

We seem to feel that thought happens, as it were, on its own; we fail to see that thought is an intentional (i.e. voluntary) action. Some kind of change is always the intention behind any action, which includes thought. Even activities that merely "pass the time" are undertaken because such actions do accomplish that; such actions do take our minds off unpleasant (i.e., erring, disorderly) matters. The endless search for pastimes implies an intention to avoid confronting the minor issues and problems (i.e., errors) that circulate endlessly in our thoughts (which we call boredom). Readers may point out that we willingly engage in boring activities from time to time. Yes, but only when we wish to avoid the consequences of not completing that boring task. The point is, thought is intention. So thought always implies an objective of either 1) resolving issues (by affecting change, avoiding physical threats, planning events, bringing something to pass or analyzing technical problems) or 2) evading issues it cannot resolve. [2]

Since thought is the intention to resolve or evade errors, it follows that thought can't arise without some form of error or disorder to incite it. Some of these evasive intentions are often as difficult to detect in waking thought as in dreams. The intention, the error inciting the thought, is

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[1] I hustle the heckling reader aside to point out that those who seem to hold on to disproven beliefs simply don't recognize the true signficance of the facts they deny. They know those facts only as irritants which call their beliefs into question though not entirely disproving them. For example, flat-earthers, if they are not merely publicity-stuntmen, are able to dismiss as studio stunts the astronauts flying to the moon and showing pictures of a round earth. But if flat-earthers were to travel to space themselves and see the earth, then, obviously, they could no longer maintain their belief. One cannot hold a belief one knows is wrong. Facts are dismissed until the evidence forces a change in view (converting mere belief into perception). In either case, facts force a response of some kind; either denial or change of view.

[2] Poetic thought is a special case that we will explain in a later footnote.

camouflaged in dream and in waking evasive thinking, which we shall try to show. The point is, where there is intention there is an issue that needs resolving or avoiding. An error or disorder, which thought, through evolution, has been specifically designed to attack.

The oddity is that thought is not equipped to resolve personal problems. It can only evade personal problems. Because a personal problem implies an error within thought itself. Internally-directed thought acts as if it is able to correct itself; just as if it were attempting to correct an objective, technical problem. But its attempts contain the error and are thus incapable of resolving the issue. So, in effect, personally-directed thought merely ends up evading an issue. And evasions of any kind are only temporary and partial "solutions." Evasive maneuvers must be repeated ad infinitum as long as the initial error remains. Because we cannot tolerate error. This we will also attempt to demonstrate.

We are trying to understand what the underlying discontent or error is that propels internally-directed thought, the internal voice, ceaselessly without resolution? What is the factor causing the brain's hyperactivity? To investigate this we will examine the role of error in the various forms of thinking.

Verbalized thinking, in whatever form, is a response, subtle or not so subtle, to shortfalls of image. Such as this recently overheard mental announcement: "I shouldn't be sitting here writing this. I should do something constructive like painting the house or mowing the lawn." It sounds straight forward. If it were said to someone else perhaps (perhaps!) it would be. But notice the motive, the purpose, of the sentence, what it accomplishes: it puts the speaker on more dignified ground again. A humble honesty is put on display. The statement accomplishes a change in identification from the lout who is not doing what he should to the reprimander who is superior to the lazy lout (but, for whatever reason, trapped within the loutish domain). It is a playact.

All internally voiced statements are playacts that accomplish distancing from an accused or erring image. This becomes clear when we consider that all communication requires at least two entities: the communicator and the other who receives the communication. So what is accomplished by talking to oneself (to no one!)? What is the structure of one entity yapping? One imagines an other listening to what is being said. What imagined audience is meant to hear a statement such as "I am a lazy lout"? Obviously those who might hold this opinion of us. The voice, in effect, demonstrates to this imagined, critical audience that it has realized its erring ways and is therefore changed, different from the erring lout.

Let's take a different example: In exasperation someone mildly whines to himself "Why do I always forget where I put my keys?!!" (with the whine accent on the word 'always'). Here the voice demonstrates (to an imagined other) exasperation, victimization. Therefore blame is placed on an other in this example. The speaker doesn't appear to do this consciously. Nevertheless, to feel victimized one necessarily imagines an other, a victimizer -- in this case, the forgetful self.

Therefore there are three aspects to the self image: 1) The described self (i.e. the erring, e.g. lazy, forgetful, self); 2) the describer or voice (which evades the error by taking on roles of superiority such as the reprimander in the first example and the victim in the second);[3] and 3): the imagined audience toward which the voice (the playact) is projected. The drama or purpose of the playact is implied by what it accomplishes: evading blame for errors. By saying "I am a

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[3] This is probably why, when one is stoned, one often miscounts the number of people in a group, counting oneself twice. Once for the speaker-self and once for the described self.

forgetful lout" the voice enacts a victimized (less guilty) image in front of an imagined audience. "It's this <u>stupidity</u> that is afflicting <u>me</u>;" thereby, the whiner (the voice) is safely distanced from the scene of the error, from the stupidity.

These three aspects of self, however, must not be pictured as independent images. Do not picture the voice as the "real self" who evades blame by inventing an erring self. All three are equally and merely images, three aspects of a single image. This image-complex arises in reaction to error. Around the kernel of a wrong-doing a protagonist coalesces who is error-free, or at least less-guilty than the (implied) audience's estimation. In other words, the very fact of a voiced image (which arises only because there has been some accusation or recognition of error) implies a contrasting guiltier <u>image</u> as seen by <u>others</u>. In other words, the guiltier image and the audience are implicit aspects of the voiced image. And likewise, when we periodically estimate the opinions others hold of us we <u>imply</u> a division between the protagonist image and the judged image. The point is, at any given time, all three images are involved in one; while one is explicit the other two remain more or less implicit. What makes this difficult to detect is that we switch rapidly and often from one explicit image to another.

Perhaps this is clearer if we recognize that others define us through their spoken opinions of, and behavior towards, us. We learn to see what they think of us. This implies not only that we interpret their reactions by estimating or imagining the countenances of an <u>audience</u> but that we also interpret or imagine their opinions of <u>us</u>. If those opinions are in conflict with our preferred protagonist image, then the estimated opinions of the audience function as the erring image from which the voice demonstrates or enacts (to an implicit audience) non-relation, distance.

In fact, any self evaluation <u>implies</u> an evaluation from the perspective of an audience. Others' opinions are all we have to work with in apprehending the self. If we don't agree with what others think of us we have no choice but to identify with a different <u>outside</u> perspective. There is no <u>internal</u> perspective. A mental image of anything implies an objective (or, metaphorically speaking, audience's) perspective. Everything is objectified in thinking.

Readers feel that this is not entirely correct. They recognize that the erring image and the enacted voice are both imagined, therefore both projections apprehended as if by others. However, they point out, some entity nevertheless projected these images. They argue that the word 'I' obviously refers to that entity beyond thought.

Therefore, I interrupt, the 'I' should be used only as metaphor. But we don't use the term in that manner. We treat that word's corresponding image as if it is real. We do not treat images as symbolic representations of an entity that actually exists but cannot directly be known. The phrase "entity that actually exists" causes us to believe there <u>is</u> such an entity. It makes us forget that even this belief is thought. And what is the meaning of an entity 'beyond thought'? All known things are thought. There is no 'beyond'; 'beyond thought' is also a thought. So the phrase is without meaning. Quite bluntly, we <u>make believe</u> there is 'beyond thought'; we make believe there is a self. We forget the make-believe nature of the "I" and treat it as reality.

Symbols and metaphors of being and of 'beyond thought' are always misleading to us.[4] Contrasting words like thought/thing or thought/reality cause us to think we know the difference between them. We fail to notice that our notions of "reality" are thought also. We imagine reality without realizing we're imagining it. It is the (literally) unimaginable extent of thought that trips us up. We do not know where thought or metaphor stops and direct perception starts. The point

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[4] See "Negative Geography" by Shambearnoise. Murgh: Paper Bag Printers, 1986.

is, direct perception of self never starts. We never distinguish between the two because self consciousness is nothing but thought. Even our certainty of being is thought. (The metaphorical use of "we", as in "we project the image", is unavoidable because of the way language is organized. And since thought is to a great degree language, we will be inevitably mislead into regarding what the language makes us picture as being a true representation of reality. We need to point out knowledge's metaphorical nature whenever possible.)[5]

So we do not project the self image in front of an imagined audience. That is, there is image but no imaginer; the imaginer is also image. "We", the erring self and the audience are implied aspects of a single drama or image-making process (which I call selving).

The process begins when we notice or we imagine how others are critical of us in some justifiable or unjustifiable way or when we notice our own errors. We recognize the erring image someone has or would have of us. The degree to which we feel a need to outwardly or inwardly react to those opinions is the degree to which those views become our "erring image", as discussed earlier. At this point, theoretically, we could resolve the error (and therefore lose all concern with image, because that's the past, its done with). But if we are at all concerned with image -- and we must be if we maintain one -- then resolution is not what we are concerned with. (We will examine this issue in more detail in a while). At any rate, the very existence of an erring image implies division between "us" (the image-maker, which is also an image) and the erring image, to a certain degree, because "we" are talking about ourselves or our habits and tendencies as if they were forces affecting us, as if the tendencies and the speaker were separate entities. Nevertheless, most of us are not entirely split personalities. A feat of magic even more illogical and odd is performed; identification with the described entity (the erring self) is maintained even while the role of a separate, victimized, reprimanding or somehow superior, blameless persona is enacted. We remain linked to the erring self because that is the viewpoint others have of us; it is, therefore, also our image. And yet the voice also enacts an improved, reactionary image. The voice, too, is the estimated viewpoint of others. The voice is the

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[5] We will show more clearly from a different angle a bit later in the letter that we are unable to detect the metaphoric nature of pronouns as we use them. We understand such metaphors in theory but not in action. We can recognize that the word "I" is not I, that the word is merely symbolic of the thing. But we failed (and always fail) to notice while speaking the previous sentence that the sentence's implied opposite "true self beyond words" (the "we") is also a notion, also useful only as a metaphor. In his book, WHOLENESS AND THE IMPLICATE ORDER, David Bohm experimented with a new mode of language that forces the user to regard the metaphoric nature of words while using them. He called this the "rheomode" -- "('rheo' is from a Greek verb, meaning 'to flow') (p 31). The language was created solely to call attention to the degree to which unconsciously used metaphor prejudices our view of the world. The language itself is much too complex to be demonstrated in a footnote but his comments while introducing the rheomode are of value. (I underlined the key phrase):

> "The reason [language continually leads to fragmentation] is not only that the subject-verb-object form of the language is continually implying an inappropriate division between things but, even more, that the ordinary mode of language tends very strongly to take its own function for granted, and thus it leads us to concentrate almost exclusively on the content under discussion, so that little or no attention is left for the actual symbolic function of the language itself. ... It is here that the primary tendency toward fragmentation originates. For because the ordinary mode of thought and language does not properly call attention to its own function, this latter seems to arise in a reality independent of thought and language, so that the divisions implied in the language structure are then projected, as if they were fragments, corresponding to actual breaks in 'what is'" (p. 31-32).

viewpoint we would like others to have. So there is the effort or intention to change others' opinions of us from that of the erring image to that of the voice, the improved image.[6] There is the effort to <u>avoid</u> the erring image and <u>become</u> the voiced image. The avoidance and becoming are two aspects of the same effort.

This is true even though the greatest volume of internal thinking does not seem to deal with criticizing ourselves in the manner of the first two examples but with disputing or correcting other people's opinions of us and defending our ideals and the things we cherish. It amounts to the same thing. The victimized "Me" or "I" in the first two examples and the defended "Me" or "I" are both portraits of our actions from the vantage point of others, both <u>erring images</u>. In the sentence "why do I always forget my Keys?!", the "I" is enacted as a victim, and therefore judged as if by others as a victim. Likewise, in defending ourselves, it is other people's opinions we are trying to correct.

So, all verbalized selving can be summed up in this manner: after 1) perceiving the erring image, feeling constrained and unfairly restricted by it, we go about 2) trying to change it, trying to change the estimated opinions of others. To do this, we project how we would rather be seen. This projection includes two quick changes -- 3) conception of an improved role or image in the form of a verbalization (script) or action characteristic of such a role; and 4) the verbalization or action itself. The two follow in almost imperceptibly rapid sequence. We can notice this, however, in the sense of echolalia we usually have in talking internally. We know what we are going to say immediately prior to saying it. And yet we follow through with the statement anyway, plainly with the purpose of displaying the characteristics to someone (though there is no one there).

What does it accomplish to say something we already know? And to whom is it said? When working out a difficult problem words can be used to clarify and check logic. But internal statements are not merely of that nature. They are not intended merely as objective, fair presentations of facts. They are role or image enactments, as we are trying to demonstrate, with the purpose of skewing or influencing judgement; as in the above, critical example when the voice enacted the role of 'victim.' Or sometimes verbalizations resemble defensive Walter Mitty-style daydreams, arguments with an imagined or remembered antagonist, or some other enactment of a righteous or improved role. The purpose of all these verbalizations is not to clarify an objective issue but simply to display an improved persona.

But whose judgement is to be skewed? There are no others actually hearing the enactments so can the voice possibly accomplish anything? Yes, to a degree, because others' opinions of our actions are estimated, or recreated, by us. Therefore, one need only voice a new role or image to establish a different estimated viewpoint of others. Because, again, the role or image <u>is</u> the imagined viewpoint of others. So the purpose of saying something we already know -- the reason for echolalia, the experience of rehearsing and enacting a verbalization -- is not simply to clarify knowledge. When I say "I am a lazy lout", the critical attitude, reprimanding tone and phrasing style (for example, use of the prejudicial term "lazy lout") imply that more than mere knowledge is being communicated. Separateness in the relationship between the criticizer and criticized (the speaker and the "lout") is primarily being communicated, demonstrated. The knowledge, the erring fact, is meant to refer not so much to the speaker as to the speaker's "self." The intention is to express this distancing.

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[6] While still maintaining belief in a consistent personhood. We will examine this contradiction in more detail in a few pages.

After all, knowledge of laziness exists prior to formulating the sentence. It is obvious that I rework this knowledge in a very peculiar, manipulative manner so as to skew others' judgements of my relationship to that erring fact. (That is echolalia). So verbalization is intended not to clarify knowledge but to act so convincingly that it justifies changing our estimation of how others would judge us. We verbalize a script, or enact a role, and at the same time judge that role as an other would judge it. So not only do we see the enactment from the perspective of an other -- not only is the image observed objectively -- the purpose of the voice is to simulate an image that we want others to have of us.

But because the image is an estimation of others' views, we are not entirely free to simulate images as we would like them to be. That is why we have to go through the effort of staging new voices, new images, new estimations of others' judgements of us. We are what others think of us. Readers are insisting that others do not hold this much power. They argue that I'm too worried about other's opinions. A strong showing eventually changes others' opinions, they note. And to heck with them anyway. I counter that our confidence in the face of hecklers is partially the security of knowing that those who mean the most to us remain (in our memories at least) confident in us. We internalize the faith others have had in us. Our courage to ignore hecklers merely means that hecklers are less important to us. False guts, I quip. We give ourselves away when we glowingly chronicle our brave act of standing against the tide of opinion; it was "brave" because others' opinions matter in an essential way.

This concern with the image is nevertheless peculiar. Why do we care whether we erred in the past or not? If it turns out that I forgot where I put my keys 50,000 times in a row, why should that mean I AM forgetful? If I've forgotten my keys 50,000 times in a row then, by all means, any sane Other person should take notice that his keys are in immediate danger in my hands. Nevertheless, when I pick up the keys this time, I am not lifting 50,000 missing keys and one so-far-not-missing key. I am lifting only one not-missing key. Do I need to know anything about my past in order to keep track of the keys in my hand? The image serves me ill if at all. I don't need it. I merely need to pay attention to the present keys, not to some image of all my past wrongs.

If I were to successfully keep track of the next 25 key interactions it would probably not be enough to outweigh the massive forgetfulness-of-my-past in the minds of my accusers, my image holders. I am seen primarily as a string of events from the past through to the present and projected into the future. It makes a stable individual around whom others can easily organize their daily comings and goings. Therefore others are understandably conservative in their changes of opinion. And quite frankly they couldn't care less. So 25 successful key interactions won't make news. The oddness here is that I stop paying attention to my keys to argue with others about the proper interpretation of my past key losses. (I argue "my memory is improving"; they counter "there's been no significant change.") The oddity is that the image takes on a life of its own, becomes more important than the issue at hand, the keys. Even if I'm finally successful in convincing them that I'm no longer forgetful, all I've really done is given the past power over the present. In other words, I've argued with them about the past as if it has bearing on what I do now; as if being forgetful in the past means I am forgetful; as if I am limited to some extent by what I was. That is, the memory of mistakes I've made -- my forgetfulness -- is what fully occupies my mind; the present (the key in my pocket) recedes into the background. So the overall effect of winning a new image -- that is, a new interpretation of my past -- as a less forgetful person is that I am even more constrained by the past. The only dubious improvement is that before my success I had no expectations of succeeding with keys;

now I have the added burden of living up to a string of 25 successful key interactions! Now I hardly know where I'm laying my keys because I'm too distracted with trying to prove I'm worthy of everyone's improved image of me. One mistake, I realize, will be enough to secure my place in history as a forgetful lout. It's less work, from this perspective, to live up to one's worst expectations than to go through the bureaucratic struggle of repealing a reputation.

The point is, however, everyone who defends or criticizes himself internally in daydreams (or outwardly for that matter) is doing this kind of thing. Though the last example may have been exaggerated, any kind of internal talking is proof that one has an image and is therefore held captive by the views of others and by the past (because, again, images are others' opinions of our past actions). No matter how spacious and confidence-inspiring that captivity may be, he who talks internally is lobbying others for a change in image. Power, therefore, rests in others (and in the past).

And not only does internal verbalization imply an image but any intention to change implies an image; implies an effort to be better than the forgetful (erring) self. Some readers are complaining that images have nothing to do with it; they claim that some people merely try to be less forgetful, try to pay attention to the keys at hand. They claim I am complicating matters. But I ask them what they struggle against when their keys sit there clearly in front of them? Let's say, for example, that I am suddenly distracted by another activity and so I don't pay attention to where I lay my keys. I go on about my business and then suddenly realize my keys are missing. Then perhaps I struggle to remember where I was when I last had them. But that kind of effort is directed toward the specific goal of remembering something. The effort to be less forgetful in general, however, is the oddity. Because that effort arises only in response to the memory of episodes of forgetfulness. When someone says "I have been forgetful, I must try harder not to be," at what is that person's efforts directed? No keys are missing yet so he's not trying to remember anything specific. And yet there's the effort to be less forgetful. What is he struggling against when the episodes of forgetfulness are in the near or distant past? It seems obvious that he's trying not to be that person; trying not to have that forgetful persona. He is struggling to maintain the image "I'm improved, I'm less forgetful." He's trying to hold that in his head. And when an episode of forgetfulness suddenly occurs he usually responds with renewed effort, with vows against this general tendency: "I will try even harder to be less forgetful." Effort even though these forgetful episodes already happened! Even though it is clearly ridiculous to struggle against something that is now a memory. It is the image that is struggled against. The memories.

After all, what exactly needs changing? Something that changes must pre-exist; it must carry a past. So what is in our minds when we try to change? It is the memory of our long string of missing key episodes or whatnot. In other words, our image. And this image-making, this thinking, this intention, this effort (!!!) is not the same thing as paying attention to the keys. So what good does it do to have an image of oneself? What is the good of effort? These things certainly don't help us pay attention to the keys at hand. In fact, keys are the last things on our minds! We're too busy fighting the glorious battle, struggling to change. (How much more noble to battle our history of forgetfulness than to watch after a couple of stinking keys, anyway). In other words, either one pays attention to something or one is pre-occupied with other thoughts. The effort to pay attention when putting the keys somewhere is a distraction from the keys, is a pre-occupation with the image of being less forgetful. Internally directed effort always implies image and pre-occupation. It always implies separation between the struggler and the struggled against (just as verbalization implies the describer and the described). But of course there really

aren't two people in one's body (and an audience to boot!). Therefore effort is a useless and very odd tool for change. It is directed only (and always) at the past, at the erring self, not at what is happening. And of course we are not suggesting that we should stop our efforts. (After all, what would we stop? The memories of our past efforts?) No, we bring this up only so we can savor the rich madness of what is known as a natural, normal life.

That last paragraph forces us to confront an apparent contradiction we touched upon earlier. We said that the self pre-exists, carries a past, and at the same time is an expression of distancing from the past. In other words, selving involves two apparently contradictory motivations: maintaining an image and disclaiming connection to the erring image. That is, we believe we are continuous, consistent personas even though, in fact, any expression of selfhood, as we have been demonstrating, is an effort to disclaim relationship to that erring (past) persona. "The Me tries to be always the same at the same time it tries to be different/Yes, it puts on a different coat."[7]

The apparent contradiction is explained by recognizing that the voice distances only an interpretation of the past. In fact, it invents a new past for itself wherein its virtue is untarnished. The voice does not simply claim to have sprung to life from the ashes of a past erring self. It camouflages this phoenix-nature by arising complete with its own past. It provides itself with an errorless history almost as an alibi. When the voice says "why am I always so forgetful," in effect, it is saying "I have always been a victim of this tendency or trait or fault beyond my control." Thereby the voice claims blamelessness from the erring past even while claiming ownership of that past. The voice takes the same liberties with logic that dreams are famous for taking in order to maintain continuousness of being even while enacting distinctness from the past deed.

It is the belief in our continuousness over time that convinces us of the need to try to change what has already happened (i.e., change or reinterpret our image). In other words, we feel the need to react to what has already happened, to something that is recalled, that is now in fact image-inary, because we imagine ourselves to be continuous beings. We imagine ourselves having an existence now and in the past and projected into the future as if all three time-states actually existed right now. So memory and the projection of memories into the ideal future is the structure of our being and we are forced to work on memory and ideal in order to change that structure.

Readers dispute the assertion that continuousness is imaginary. Yes, of course, readers, there is history; the person's body progresses from childhood into adulthood. Our histories form our personalities, skills, language, etc. but the events of our history nevertheless do not remain. An event may cause our ruination and thus haunt us and, in that sense, continue to live on in our ruination. It is implicit in our ruined state. However, that is meant poetically. 'The continued existence of the past' was intended only as a metaphor; but it seems we also take that metaphor too literally. The event, in fact, does not continue. The ruined person is in the habit of recreating the event in his or her memory. The point is, it is relived now, not in the past. The past is dead.

This sounds odd because our verbalized thoughts (which entirely occupy the mind) are entirely in the grip of the past: "I am lazy, I must stop this, I am right, he is wrong." These, and all other verbalizations, we have tried to show, are directed at our recent or distant histories. In our minds, therefore, the past (and its projected ideal future) loom larger and more real than the present, as

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[7] From a discussion between J. Krishnamurti and Professor David Bohm.

if the present is only a cutting edge between the other two. This landscape of continuousness is what is illusory. It is this illusion of continuousness that T.S. Eliot refers to in his poem <u>The Dry Salvages</u>:

> You cannot face it steadily but this thing is sure,
> That time is no healer: the patient is no longer here.
> ...
>
> Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;
> You are not those who saw the harbour
> Receding, or those who will disembark.
> ...
>
> While time is withdrawn, consider the future
> And the past with an equal mind.
> At the moment which is not of action or inaction
> You can receive this: "on whatever sphere of being
> The mind of man may be intent
> At the time of death" -- that is the one action
> (And the time of death is every moment)
> Which shall fructify in the lives of others:
> And do not think of the fruit of action.
> Fare forward.

We also need to point out that this 'death of the past' is not the same thing as a rejection of one's past. Again, the rejection of one's past erring self is done because one thinks one is connected to, or continuous with, that erring image. We try to throw it off because it <u>does</u> appear to be us. The belief in our existence extending across the borders of an imaginary time landscape (containing past, present and future as if they existed side by side or simultaneously in us) leads to our hyperactive rejection of the erring image. That is the "fruit of action" within time (that is avoidance). But "when time is withdrawn", Eliot (and others) suggest, an entirely different movement occurs (which we have been calling resolution). That is the "one action" that is "neither action or inaction". It is an unmotivated change. Neither purposefully waiting for this change (inaction) nor purposefully trying to achieve it (action) will bring it about. Because both action and inaction imply the motivation to become someone more ideal (the voice) than what one has been (the erring image). Therefore action and inaction are both self-centered efforts reaching across the field of time (to transform the past erring self into the ideal (future) self). Resolution on the other hand is the mere perception that the past is dead, requiring non-action on a personal level; a corrected viewpoint is merely realized, thrust upon the eyes and the mind without motive, spontaneously; thus this change occurs outside the field of time.[8]

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[8] Although thought cannot bring about such resolution, a mind that has resolved a personal issue can utilize thought to communicate its point of view. Both poetic and true scientific thought are the conscious use of metaphor (though metaphors of being still cripple both forms). Good poetry and science and certain dreams are the perception or resolution of patterns of error. These perceptions are spontaneously expressed (without motive) in symbolic or

In fact, there is no way to think of myself without thinking of the past; the past is all that I am. I _am_ an image. Therefore, it is not entirely correct to say (as I did in the last paragraph) "one thinks one is connected to that image", as if "one" and "that image" were two different things. The point isn't that we have a wrong view of ourselves. It is that any view of ourselves involves this illusion of continuousness. The perception that the past is dead resolves this kind of thinking. (Which is not so mysterious. It would mean the loss of a certain amount of ridiculous, wasted effort -- the hyperactive thinking aimed ridiculously at stopping or distancing the errors that have <u>already occurred</u>).

At any rate, whether defending oneself or criticizing oneself, the voice contrasts with the erring image. The intolerableness of being in error or in mental disorder triggers the voice which perhaps works towards resolution but <u>inevitably</u> evades resolution, perception, of its error.

For instance, even the term "the voice" leads one to think that it is an entity in its own right. As if <u>it</u> is responsible for fooling <u>us</u>. As if <u>it</u> adopts a role. As if <u>it</u> has a mind of its own and victimizes <u>us</u>. But in the context of this letter, the voice is supposed to refer merely to 'that which is being spoken <u>now</u>.' It is supposed to refer to us, to the very act of saying "the voice." But it can't. It is impossible for the voice to refer to itself, to what is happening <u>now</u>. Experiment by trying to be aware of what is happening now; try to be aware, for instance of the internal voice as it speaks this sentence. What is on our minds as we listen? In one form or another, we are likely to be thinking "this is us", is that not so? The notions "us" and "this" are merely image-ined, conceived objects. They symbolically refer to what is being heard. But they do not even symbolically represent the act of thinking "this is us." The act of thinking "this is us" is actually what was happening at that moment. It went completely undected by us. We thought we were aware but it was an imaginary awareness. Thought and voice cannot conceive of their actions (now) because they deal only in memory, knowledge (i.e. known or past things), images. This is the <u>inevitable</u> error that arises with a voice: the described is always a memory (image, past); but the voice is used erroneously as if it could refer to itself, to something that is happening 'now.'

Is it possible, then, for thought (the voice) to realize this error in its functioning? If the voice claims to know that it <u>is</u> in error then this claim must also be included in its reckoning (because, again, knowledge does not refer to what <u>is</u> voicing this). The <u>claim</u>, in other words, is also an error. Part of being in error is not knowing you are in error.[9] We can <u>know</u> about the <u>past</u>. We can know we were in error very recently even. But we cannot claim knowledge of the present. The voice which "knows it is in error" does not like to be told it is in error for saying that. It was happy enough to blame the image of itself. But if someone takes that seriously and responds "you're mistaken to believe you can know you're in error" the speaker, if he can follow the logic, is usually quite irritated to be blamed for being in error. Even though that error is exactly what he supposedly tried to admit to! See how the voice which says "I know I am deluded" or "I know

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metaphoric language. Though the meaning of that symbology may later be lost to thought, there was a clear recognition of relevance when those symbols or metaphors were selected. Though thought cannot lead to intelligence, intelligence can utilize thought.

[9] In fact, as we touched upon in footnote 1, it is not that the voice, or any thought directed at personal problems, evades an error. As if it knew what and where those errors were located and tries to hide it (from whom?). It simply has not seen its error. It doesn't know that the error is in its own voice. It can't even locate its voice (now). And that is its error. It fails to resolve an issue because it fails to see the nature of the problem. And of course that is self-evident. Once Dorothy sees the wizard behind the curtain it is impossible to continue believing the wizard is real. After the erring facts are confronted the wizard is forever changed in her opinions.

I am in error," and so forth, regards itself implicitly as in the know. This is only to demonstrate that there is delusional madness in internalized verbalization. Because all internalized verbalization claims some knowledge of self; and regards this knowledge as if it were more than mere memory, more than mere image. That is the error that motivates verbalized thinking to redo itself better with each successive voice. It does not realize itself as thought, it thinks it is describing a real world. As a result, it is faced with these errors and contradictions of its own making, which it then tries to sort out with a new voice, new thought.[10]

These facts present the possibility that we are always in error, or rather, that error is inevitable as long as there are voices we identify with, as long as we think voices can depict the present, and are not themselves image. And we have also seen evidence that we never realize these errors. As in the example above, the "I" gets the blame, not the voice. One must look very carefully to detect these shenanigans because, again, it is the affect of the voice that its connection to a described error is unwittingly camouflaged. Which is why, despite confronting an endless sequence of errors (evidenced by our endless verbalizations in response to them), at any given time we feel correct. Again, you may say, "but I don't always feel correct, I Know I have erred." The point is, however, at this given time you are correcting me. You feel correct in saying this. And we should know enough now not to trust our memories of these events. We have shown how easy it is to say "I have erred," "I am a lazy lout," "I am forgetful of keys" and still escape blame. Indeed, that is the way to escape blame, as we have tried to show. It appears to be in the structure of thought that if you admit to something, then you and that something are separated, thus inadvertently allowing you to feel correct at all times.

So thought, we have discovered, cannot by nature admit error. An error is the past, is what <u>has happened</u>, and the voice is the present contrast to the erring past (contrasting in feeling correct and superior by being able to recognize error). So the voice is separated from that which it

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[10] Samuel Beckett's THE UNNAMEABLE is the record of thought confronting this unavoidable error in itself. The narrating voice realizes that the "I" is always an objectified image: "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not me" (pg. 3). It is the error of always being one step short of being real: "...I could employ fifty wretches for this sinister operation and still be short of a fifty-first, to close the circuit, that I know, without knowing what it means" (71). He has recognized that despite his knowledge of the error, or because of it, the error continues. His voice continues, though it is not "his." Stranded as he is among unreal "I's" and imaginary things, with no ability to be distracted from 'his" incessant voice (since he lies in a dark room, apparently paralyzed (he's not sure)), the narrating voice miraculously recognizes the admittedly gallows humor in the madness. So he raises this error to a consciously absurd height, giving each successive voice, each "I that is not I", its own name because "this cursed first person, it is really too red a herring" 77). He has named a long succession of unrealizable images stretching back to characters in previous books: "I am neither, I needn't say, Murphy, nor Watt, nor Mercier, nor -- no, I can't even bring myself to name them" (p. 53). Yet the very purpose of the voice is to become real, that is, to end the voice, to stop creating images outside itself, the most recent being the image he calls Worm: "I'm Worm, no, if I were Worm I wouldn't know it, I wouldn't say it, I wouldn't say anything, I'd be Worm" (83). What propels the voice in this quest? "Can it be I am the prey of a genuine preoccupation, of a need to know as one might say?" (p.8). Perhaps the voice is propelled by its own intolerance of illusion, of error; this intolerance soon becomes anthropomorphized or symbolized, as a "master" or a "they", an audience which beckons the voice to become Worm; in other words, beckons the voice to bridge the gap separating describer and described. "If they could only begin, and do what they want with me, and succeed at last, in doing what they want with me, I'm ready to be whatever they want, I'm tired of being matter, matter, pawed and pummelled endlessly in vain....But they are not of the same mind, they are all of the same kidney and yet they don't know what they want to do with me, they don't know where I am, or what I'm like, I'm like dust, they want to make a man out of dust. Listen to them, losing heart! That's to lull me, till I imagine I hear myself saying, myself at last, to myself at last, that it can't be they, speaking thus, that it can only be I, speaking thus" (p. 84). A footnote is not sufficient to bring out the full relevance of the book.

describes 1) through time (present to past); 2) by wisdom (i.e., the voice is in the know, has correctly assessed the error); and 3) through image (i.e., that which is described -- the erring self -- is by nature different than the described). These are inadvertent evasions of blame. But intention, too, is evinced by the very existence of the internal voice. We have long assumed that nearly continuous verbalized thinking (or thinking of any kind for that matter) is "natural"; which is to say, we have never stopped to think how odd it is. Because it is evident to us now that the voice, far from being beyond our control (that is, far from being natural like an arm or a leg) is something we do; we initiate each new sentence, therefore each sentence has an intention and is voluntarily undertaken. (Who else is there after all that would be responsible?) In other words, the response -- the adoption of the voice/described self/audience image -- is an intentional recoil from our erring act and the erring image that would result from it. Which means that as soon as there is intention to evade an erring fact, the entire mechanism is put into play. And the playact becomes all important, thus the intention is lost to perception. Intention is thought. And verbalized thought has natural qualities that evidently inadvertently assist in the intention to evade blame.

The difficulty here is that we automatically picture someone putting thought into action. We picture both a thinker and a thought. However, we are discovering that both are thought; that thought is not put into action; that there is no driver behind it. Which brings to mind one of the biggest illusions we suffer from. The illusion that we can control our thoughts. As if there is someone outside of thought who can direct it. But look at the structure of so-called control. Take, for example, someone who wants to stop thinking bad thoughts. He gets very determined. His eyebrows furrow a bit, perhaps, and he stares and waits like a polar bear over a seal hole for the evil thoughts to raise their heads. The more intensely he stares the fewer evil thoughts appear. If he lets up his intensity they come leaping to the surface again, the little devils. So he stares at them again, yelling at them, No, No, I will not allow myself to think these thoughts. And they scurry back down their holes. So he naturally deduces from this that control is effective. I can control thoughts as long as I concentrate real hard like a polar bear, he thinks to himself.

Let's question the controller's interpretation of events. Isn't it possible that instead of controlling evil or erring thoughts, he simply started thinking something else. His thoughts merely switched from a particular evil to 'stop the evil.' In other words, he no longer thought any evil or erring thoughts only because he became pre-occupied with the (absurd) attempt to stop what he previously thought (and as an added benefit, feeling superior and blameless compared to the "other side" of him that did the evil thinking). Acting like a placebo, the very belief in the effectiveness of control generates the enthusiasm to think something else. Or, from another angle, the very belief in an independent, good or blameless controller generates the enthusiasm to enact the controlling drama (thereby distracting the brain from its previous evil thoughts). Yes, this kind of 'control' is somewhat effective. Evil thoughts are temporarily squelched. But not through any real control; again, only by being pre-occupied with other thoughts. This is the mechanism of control. And it's wonderfully beautifully mad.

Appreciate the absurdity of someone who has successfully controlled his temper or his fears. Remove the pronoun from this scenario and the absurdity will be apparent. It is not that a person has angry thoughts, as if a person and a thought are two separate objects. We are thought. Now watch as anger arises: First, as a reflexive, conditioned response to some circumstance, an angry/righteous self-image arises. Then the opposing, controlling/righteous image complex arises as a conditioned reflex in response to those angry thoughts. So where have the angry

thoughts gone to? Can you detect the absurdity in that question? Thoughts don't go anywhere.[11] There are not separate strands of thoughts in continuous battle as we have been taught to believe. Control is unnecessary because there is nothing there to control. If you could see the neurons of the brain lit up like patterns on a screen you might see one area alighting with anger, then suddenly another area alighting with control. You would not see both lit simultaneously as if they emanated from independent entities. The internal voice is the effort to control what are in fact illusions of other entities. The brain is ceaselessly in action because it thinks entities occupy it. But it is only occupied (if you recognize the metaphoric nature of that word) by imagination. So the controller sitting patiently over his seal hole is literally sitting on his own memories, treating the memories of his past actions as if they belonged to another strand of thought or another "side" of himself.

In other words, 'control' is adopting a superior role toward the imagined entity which erred. If the error is particularly evil in nature, we imagine an evil persona to take the blame, leaving the superior, controlling (and also imagined) persona free from blame. The fact that the evil is squelched by this effort seems to confirm our belief in control and in a somewhat independently evil or devilish "side" to us. (See how this tendency to spin off personas can lead one to imagine that a fully independent subconscious exists. See how intense fear or paranoia during the spinoff could lead one to abandon the overriding belief in continuousness. In that case, the spinoffs would appear like entirely separate personalities. The famous split-personality Sibyl's various characters' senses of continuousness-of-being extended to separate sets of behaviors. But Sibyl is only an extension of what we already are. One could say that an illusion of continuousness is all that prevents us from becoming Sibyls. Because the internal voice is always an enactment of a superior, blameless persona compared to the spun-off erring persona, as we have demonstrated. Both our voice and Sibyl's many personalities are of the same illusory nature).[12]

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[11] This absurdity is illustrated by an interesting anecdote from Zen Buddhism. Here is a quote from Alan Watt's THE WAY OF ZEN: "On one occasion Ma-tsu and Po-chang were out for a walk when they saw some wild geese flying past. "What are they?" asked Ma-tsu. "They're wild geese," said Po-chang. "Where are they going?" demanded Ma-tsu. Po-chang replied, "They've already flown away." Suddenly Ma-tsu grabbed Po-chang by the nose and twisted it so that he cried out in pain. "How," shouted Ma-tsu, "could they ever have flown away?"

[12] Most of us probably recognize that the numerous selves of people like Sibyl are imaginary. It is the task of the psychiatrist, in such cases, to return the patient to a single personality. (We call that a sane state). It is interesting to note that each personality faces their own death in the resolution of the dilemma. But whether, like us, there is only one sense of continuousness, or whether there are multiple, relatively independent, senses of continuousness, it is the same dilemma of personality-death. The doctor is required to show the split-personality patient that their own death is ultimately the death of an imaginary being. An underlying real livingness continues. To the patient, however, the underlying life of the body seems abstract; he or she faces "death," the same intense fear of death that we face. Because both are deaths of personality. We recognize, from our superior perch, that the person who is split will not die and that all that is lost is a mad fragmentation of the mind. But the individual personalities cannot perceive their own illusory nature; their very efforts to understand presume their own reality and independence; their efforts merely strengthen the sense of fragmentation. Rather, the mind as a whole must recognize the pattern of its delusion. (Pattern-recognition arises instantaneously, in the pause between motivated activities; it is evidenced in the ability to recognize those popular hidden 3-D pictures). When the patient recognizes this pattern, the confusion of metaphor prevents a more thorough resolution. He or she immediately interprets this wholeness of mind as a oneness. Similar sounding but not the same at all. Oneness is immediately interpreted as the consistent two-ness we all know so well. We picture our selves (our one continuous self) and are thereby permanently fragmented into speaker, described, and implied audience as we have discussed. There is no psychiatrist available to midwife us out of this dilemma. (And no schools willing to give it a moment's notice). But consider this for a minute. Is our relationship to life as a whole similar to the

At any rate, we now see that despite appearances control is illusory. Despite the overwhelming sense of a real self directing, leading, planning and controlling thoughts, thinking is nevertheless always spontaneous. For instance, no one can plan thoughts. The planning is spontaneous thinking. We can't direct thoughts; the directing is spontaneous thinking. We don't control thoughts; controlling is spontaneous thinking. Thinking, then, appears to be an uncontrollable freewheel of conditioned reflexes. This is a rather interesting paradox: it is both uncontrollable and yet not free (because entirely conditioned). The freedom T.S. Eliot alluded to has nothing to do with this uncontrollable nature of thought. He implied that we are conditioned or constrained by our histories, our image, only because we fail to discern the illusion of continuousness, the illusion of control (of that which has already happened), the illusion of effort (to become someone different than the erring (past) image). This discernment or resolution is the only movement that is not conditioned.

At any rate, it is apparent that thought is not PUT into action; there is no driver behind it. Rather the entire image-complex forms in the manner of a cloud. No one forms a cloud; a cloud simply forms. Likewise, no one imagines an image or thinks a thought; thinking, imagining merely arise. Certain atmospheric conditions are the precursors of clouds. Certain errors are the precursors of thought. Atmospheric conditions don't CAUSE or CREATE clouds so much as clouds ARE atmospheric conditions themselves. Likewise, errors don't cause thoughts so much as thoughts ARE error-laden themselves. In a sense, thoughts are natural in the way that clouds are natural. But neither are inevitable like arms or legs. Clouds form as long as certain conditions are existent. Hyperactive, internally voiced, thoughts form as long as there is error in the understanding of thought, of what it can and cannot accomplish. There are forces within clouds that keep it going or build it into thunderstorms. There are intentions within thought that keep it in perpetual motion.

What we are suggesting is that there is both intentional evasion (duplicity) and inadvertent evasion in thought. Intentional evasion is keeping facts hidden from someone else. Like habitual con men, we are hardly aware of how we re-interpret facts to affect others' opinions. We try to fool others because our image is in others' hands. It is unavoidable. Every internal verbalization, we are demonstrating, is an example of this. Inadvertent evasion is maintaining an incorrect assessment of the location or nature of the underlying, unrealized error. Somewhat like a fly buzzing at a partially closed window, certain to his dying breath that the trick of getting free is smashing himself even harder against the invisible barrier. He evades the realization of his error by being too certain of his assessment of the situation. To perceive an error is to resolve it. (See footnotes 1 and 9 again). The fly does not evade his knowledge of the underlying error consciously; he himself is in error, ignorant of the error. The point is, the inadvertent, unrealized, error in our thinking is what makes us stupid enough to talk to ourselves; stupid enough to pursue change by lobbying and conning others; stupid enough to be conditioned or constrained by the past. The inadvertent, underlying, precursor error is what gives rise to the whole error-filled cumulus of thought.

Thinking, which takes a more condensed form as internal verbalization, is kept continuously roiling because it apparently attempts to break away from its own confusion, to set personal

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split-personality's relationship to the life of the mind as a whole? (Another minor tangent: this dilemma is obviously a central issue in every one of our efforts. So why have these issues never been raised in schools?
Even those schools that seem inspired to provide more than merely technical knowledge fail to follow the issues to their very interesting and shocking source).

matters out objectively, to get a grip on personal events, which it cannot do. It cannot break away from itself without being deluded or confused. Which it tries to clarify or dispel by speaking clearly of itself (though that is image), to change the present confusion (though thought is a structure made entirely of memory). Thus it inadvertently establishes an unreal, image-inary world in its attempt to assert reality. In a sense, each new verbalization is an attempt to end thought, end image, end life as an argument between memories. Each voiced sentence we emit does not know itself as thought. It acts as if, for the first time, it has broken free of the unreal dream. That is its motivation and its effect.

See how this underlying error lies behind all thought. Yes, uninterested reader, even behind some of our most pleasurable thoughts, reminiscences and daydreams. To see this we must investigate the initial cause of a particular activity. If someone walks into a room where a favorite song is playing, he or she is likely to sing along or drum or dance -- mental/physical activities inspired by the music itself. The music makes one happy, the activity arises spontaneously, without motive. We do not need to think 'I will dance in order to have fun.' But it is clear from observation that this is not the most common type of event. The <u>turning on</u> of a radio is a different event entirely and more common. What is our mental condition just prior to turning on the radio? If we are motivated to have fun, then obviously we are not <u>having</u> fun. Nothing is happening that is capable of occupying our attention. But is nothing happening at all? What is the structure of the boring moment? Stop for a second and you are likely to experience it. (Yes, smart aleck reader, continuing to read also achieves this). Isn't boredom simply thought that goes 'round and 'round? Isn't it simply a monotonous sequence of unresolved thoughts? The usually minor problems, errors, inadequacies and insecurities, and the internal voice, which arises with the effort to distance these irritations. But the voice cannot do this satisfactorily because of the underlying, unrealized error in its makeup: the voice itself is imaginary. The thought-drama of a righteous voice (the hero) in contrast to the erring image (the bad guy) seen from the perspective of an estimated (imagined) audience is essentially a daydream of resolving a previous daydream. Such thought accomplishes nothing and therefore becomes in its own right a boring voice. Monotonous because thoughts fail to achieve anything and yet forever adopt the same strategies. Flies buzzing all the harder against the cranium, unable to free themselves from the past, from the image, from the dream.

In fact, the internal voice is ultimately no more satisfactory, no more capable of resolving anything personal, than wishful dreaming. It is fairly common, for example, to dream we are going to the bathroom as if that could relieve the underlying (literally!) pressure and save us the trouble of waking and rising from the bed to use the toilet. While the wishful dream progresses we are indeed somewhat relieved (especially if we have a tendency to enact our dreams while sleeping!). But as the dream sequence comes to an end (and if we have not wet our bed), obviously, the pressure remains. It was not satisfactory and so another dream is necessary, ad infinitum, until we resolve the situation by waking and shuffling off to the bathroom. "Man alone is that creature who cannot escape suffering by flight"[13] (that is, cannot escape through flights of fancy, fanciful evasion).

Our own voice becomes boring because it is ultimately useless, resolving nothing, requiring endless repetition to keep the effects of the underlying error of thought at bay. We do not realize the underlying error of thought but it is the cause of our efforts, of our voice, of our continuous

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[13] From a poem by T.S. Eliot.

though camouflaged struggle to become a better persona. Also camouflaged is the fact that there is no resolution, no ultimate satisfaction of being. We are always in transit from the erring self (past) to the improved self (future). The present (which is all there is, in truth) plays no part in "our" world, in the world of the internal voice, the "I". (Because in "our" world, the present is translated into a notion, an image, memory, past, as we have discussed. The present, in other words, is merely another one of those mishandled metaphors).

At any rate, each voice becomes the voice rejected as erring and inadequate and boring by the next new voice. We look for something more entertaining than the wretched internal narrator. Search continuously. Restlessly. We can't help it. New material quickly gets threadbare and we begin to glimpse again the background glow of error (synonymous now with discontent, boredom). Keep going! The talent hunt continues.

The point is, the internal voice and pleasurable little past times share the same engine. Innocent activities to 'kill time' share the same duplicitous roots; their raison d'etre is to avoid the effects of an unrealized error. Those effects usually amount to nothing more than boredom. Which we can easily sidestep. But only with continuous, hyperactive movement, especially the movement of thought. The brain squirms under the pressure of unresolved illusion. It cannot effectively eliminate the unreality at the heart of its life. Though for the most part its evasions camouflage that unreality. Nevertheless, nothing is resolved. And so it is easier to accept continuous squirming as a part of life than to expose these duplicities.

Religions respond to pleasure-seeking by prohibiting it to varying degrees. They blame pleasure seeking for error (sin). They prohibit turning on the radio. But obviously the effort to stop turning on the radio is illusory in all the ways we have discussed. Simply put, all effort is an expression of pleasure-seeking. We act to bring about a more pleasing (or less erring) scenario. Action implies the illusion that we are free enough from any given fault to act to stop it. It implies the same illusory daydream of speaker, erring self and audience. It implies the same ridiculous effort against what has already occurred.

Since all effort implies the same illusion, no effort, no intention, can resolve this illusion. Whether we repress the effects of this illusion or indulge in the effects, the discontent and hyperactive, ineffective responses to these illusions continue. In other words, though we cannot act, the situation nevertheless begs for a proper response. Appreciate the subtlety of this paradox. It is wonderfully, beautifully mad.

These letters seem to be an attempt to put order to a psychological scare I had when I was 13. That scare may be defined as an interlude of solipsism. According to the dictionary, solipsism means "1) the theory that the self can be aware of nothing but its own experiences and states; 2) the theory that nothing exists or is real but the self." I think it was a kind of half-assed insight that elevated normal, adolescent egoism to the mad level of solipsism. I had been memorizing astronomy facts in my room -- an activity that had become in weeks leading up to this a flagrant obsession -- when I got slapped with an hallucination. That's what I call it now but at the time it seemed like a direct perception. I was sure that I had glimpsed that everything and every was concocted in imagination. It scared me because it was impossible to disprove. All experience could be said to be concocted. Any sense perception is real thanks only to the reconstructive, interpretive talents of the brain. Touch, taste, sight, sound are all realized or recreated by the brain or duplicated (as imagination) in the brain and can conceivably be prompted in the brain directly chemically or electrically. This threw doubt on the reality of the objects of my <u>perceptions</u>. In other words, I was scared by this but I could still rest assured that my brain was experiencing a coherent, real universe, even if only a real facsimile that had been chemically or electrically or somehow contrived. If this had been my only problem it would have been rather intellectual. A theoretical scare.

However, this theoretical scare occurred at the wrong time -- while I had a kind of nightmare or flashback hallucination. I had a strong vision that nothing was real, all was dream. It did not feel as if this was thought or imagination any more than my own conception of self seemed imaginary. In fact, in searching earnestly for reassurance in reality I found only images, imagination, which seemed to confirm my fears. Everywhere I turned to seek proof that objects were not contrived, I found thought already waiting there, like a dream I couldn't awaken from. And my reactions to recognizing imagination in everything was assertion, contrivance, belief, assumption, in short, more facsimiles and concoctions. At that point, I experienced tremendous doubt about reality itself -- i.e., doubt about the act of <u>perceiving</u>. This is a tremendously personal problem. Because as bad as doubting the reality of objects may have been, the problem remained primarily outside myself; the fault was in the universe. In the second condition, there was no ground unaffected (i.e. there was no reality) and no where to turn for security. Nevertheless, we are all compelled to be secure and so I turned to the most real-seeming object I knew -- my self. But the harder I struggled to make this self feel solid and real, the more I noticed that it too is a contrivance, an image, a belief. Then even that famous statement by Descartes -- "I think therefore I am" -- proved nothing. So there were these truths, one might say, in that partial hallucination:

A) No thought itself proves life because thought is memory and memory is concoction. Try to find proof of existence. The only proof is what I am doing now. But what I am doing now is over once I conceive it. Because conception is memory; and it is concoction. There is no Now, no reality, while thought occurs;

B) And thinking, concocting, is continuous. No perception occurs without being re-

created, concocted, as thought; and

   C) I also am thought.

So the hallucination was in part a realization of the extent of my gullibility. But these facts were only partially comprehended and were misinterpreted. I suppose the brain attempted to pare down that half-grasped ganglion of identity-upsetting notions to fit the brain's 13 year old confines. And made a balls of it. So here's this 13 year old brain, filled up with baseball and football statistics, television programs, spit-wad gun designs, etc., oh, and this notion that perhaps it lives in an eternally isolated chamber of unresolvable illusion among fragments of some wicked manipulator's experimental hell. Was it possible that the world had only one consciousness which concocted out of fear or confusion all these imaginary others? After all, I saw nothing but reactionary concoction. There was only proof of one consciousness. The rest was based on hearsay.

And in a sense, one consciousness was a fact that was also misinterpreted. For if I am thought, how then does "my" Me differ from anyone else's Me? One may say there is only one consciousness, therefore, because consciousness is the common content of thought. Consciousness -- the Me which we feel is unique or beyond thought -- is never more than another thought (which everyone feels in the SAME way, which is, in fact, the same notion, a shared notion).

But the problem was that one consciousness caused me to picture myself alone in the universe. It lead to images of isolation and, finally, to images of manipulation. That is, an image of one entity always implies a second imaginary entity that views the one. This implied second image made its mark on consciousness symbolically as a sinister manipulator. The recognition that both the manipulator and the vision of one consciousness were images ended the spell. In other words, despite glimpsing the unreal nature of the self, I had continued to believe in a real self. It was a knee-jerk sense of self, unquestioned because too close, too intrinsic, to all thought. I had not noticed it operating. From it sprung the fear of unreality. My sense of self, in other words remained real enough to feel the suffering of being unreal! I realized then that unreality was limited to me, to what I was doing (thinking); I created both the manipulator and the manipulated. Without thought, no being was there to dupe or be duped. So only thought resulted in unreality; only thought was unreal. In a sense, it was as if I had discovered thought for the first time. Picture a fish being told all his life that he lives in water. He would assume he knows what water is. But until that fish jumps into the air he had no way of realizing the real meaning of water. Until that hallucination, thought had not stood out enough to be distinguished from perception. If thought was unreal, everything seemed unreal because there was no way to distinguish. I was completely unconscous of the metaphoric nature of pronouns.

The meaning of gullibility was exactly what Krishnamurti was dealing with. His conversations hovered around the implicit refusal to see facts (the making of images for instance) in the urge to become an ideal (someone who did not fabricate images). Conversations also circled around how assertions or ideals -- since they are wishful, not what is, but what is wanted, and, therefore, established in imagination or on someone else's authority -- imply dependence on someone else or on one's imagination. And

dependence on an expert or on one's imagination, in the psychological field, is the foundation of gullibility. And conversations also circled around how these motives may be implied even in sitting down to converse on these subjects. Because what was interesting and somewhat humorous was he never proposed a way out of this predicament, but only cared to show how such proposals were further examples of the rejection of facts, the onset of gullibility. Samuel Beckett also very humorously dealt with this. Recently someone finally approached Beckett's writings from this direction. I include a quote from "Beckett & Zen" which discusses this very same undoubtedly common but tremendously significant psychological scare:

"...Watt [a Beckett character] has perceived the fact that the I-as-object has no validity and that the subject of such perception is thereby implied. He admits that the discovery is a distressing realization -- often, when that fact is discovered accidentally, the experience can be a considerable shock -- for nothing could be affirmed as real, that is, not bearing the stamp of the conceiving part of the mind. He describes phenomena in this moment of realization as 'false' and adds that he finds the experience more disturbing than anything else that had affected him" (BECKETT & ZEN p 42).