

It has occurred to me for some time that there should be some deposition of thought concerning philosophy, the pursuit of Truth, the means to pursue it, and a decision as to the nature of good and bad or right and wrong procedure.

The purpose of such a deposition:

In the past I have embarked upon paths of endeavor and then have been weaned away by the exigencies of a livelihood. Thus may this be written as a reminder of aims.

A person's mind is easily swayed by that for which he hungers at a given moment, and if his philosophy is not at hand, desires may supplant it with rationalizations. It is my belief that even a momentary sidetracking allows for the habit of occasional momentary sidetracking, which can evolve into a habit, which can evolve into continual sidetracking, or a life contrary to the basic intention of the thinking mind.

Deposition of Conclusions of Life's Philosophy

In the first place we must face the prospect of thinking. If we are to contemplate *Being*, discuss it, or write about it, we must employ thought. *Being* is that which man attempts to intensify with pleasure, to prolong with Science, and to extend beyond death with philosophy and proof. Perhaps we can have Being without thought, but can we have proof of it without thought?

I hold that man's right to doubt is sacred. Hence we must have proof. But is there anything really proven?

We come back to thought. The theories about thought are myriad. I used to have a little theme: do we think or do we think that we think? How many people are doing our thinking? Does a man think or does he live like an automaton with a parallel dream about what is going on, but having neither control over life nor over the accompanying dream? Or does someone else dream the whole thing...or something else dream it?

I can find little solace in the profound "*I think, therefore I am*" solution. In the first place Descartes never proved that it was he doing the thinking.

I don't believe that anything can be proven to the satisfaction of all agnostics. I do not propose to institute any such effort, mainly because words must be used and words are a highly elastic and relative medium, and we would wind up having to prove the definition of every noun and verb in the dictionary.

Many theologians say that the finite mind cannot grasp the infinite. I am not so eager to put such a restriction on the mind until we know its nature better, but I think that they are

right in this regard: the great unknown Truth, or the Infinite, will never be proven with words.

Likewise, I do not expect to prove that London exists with words, but with words I can chart a course that will bring all to London. So I set about writing this down without any attempt to define or prove.

In the quest we may wander through a thicket...we may get lost in a morass...walk aside to avoid a tree...may stray considerably...but the alternative is futility...to live until death in the thicket.

It might be granted that nothing is proven, and that for man to waste his lifetime plotting paths out of ignorance is futile. But even the futilist does things, and thus against his own reasoning. Suicide, the proper termination of a futile life, is seemingly futile also, unless we are sure we are spiting the gods.

Foolish action is not commendable. The only reasonable life is one that is governed by the most consistent reasoning.

It is possible that our thoughts and actions may be imposed on us: by mores, environment, heredity and desire. Or totally by a God. But neither of such is proven, and until we are absolutely sure that we are robots we should act as though we are free, and some of us will be impelled to seek for individuality and survival.

If we are irrevocable automatons then we cannot think, nor act, nor prove anything. Any life in the future will also be automatic as far as we are concerned, so our so-called salvations will also be fixed, *and we will have nothing to lose by our speculations.*

If we are not utter robots, but merely slaves, we will have little proof of our escape from slavery and darkness until the dungeon is pierced, since we have never yet been on the outside. We must speculate about the first rock to remove in the dungeon wall.

If we are to institute a plan it can only be a system of eliminating the unlikely *ifs* and holding fast to the likely *ifs* until they become unlikely. This is a system of reasoning.

I hold that we must admit that which we are before we can advance. If we do not know ourselves we must admit that which is possible concerning ourselves, eventually narrowing down the more possible away from the less possible.

I admit that reason is the automatic compilation of memory data. The memory is in a large, if not total sense, automatic, or involuntary at the least. Memories pile up as evidence. In reasoning we compile memories in regard to the subject at hand. The consequent action is decided by desire. We survey the different piles of evidence, pro and con, and decide which will bring that which we desire. Philosophy is the result of a compilation of desires, in memory, and the consequent decision among them of which desires are the most desirable.

For instance we desire pleasure, immortality, power and children. Then we reason. Which is the most important? Immortality seems to be because it gives prospect of prolonged pleasure, eventual power, and individual survival, and hence no need of race or species survival. If reason despairs of immortality, then we will settle on one or two of the remainder, depending on our singleness of purpose.

Then comes the actual philosophy. The mind has found that which it wants, so it builds a heap of rationalization as to why it wants it. A Spinoza may fill a book with pleasure philosophy, a Nietzsche may do the same in preaching for the power of Superman, and there is no need to list all the books that pretend to tell the proof of the author's private heaven and the passports to the same.

In a sense all are right. Spinoza is right because all decisions are the result of a desire for the greatest pleasure...eternal heaven. Each to his own conceit of it. The immortalists merely say that the greatest pleasure is heaven, and go on from there. And he who loves power wishes to be a god, and that engenders immortality.

This all makes the mind look rather mechanical. To a certain extent. Perception may be pre-ordained. Memory is definitely. We can only remember that which we experience. The reaction (reason) is regulated by the desires, which are only checkmated by stronger desires, and surmounted only by a single overwhelming desire, which is planted in us from outside.

Remove the survival desire from organic life and creation crumbles to dust.

Now someone may say we live in fear. That we conform to laws for fear of punishment. That we embrace religion because of fear of death. That which we fear is the cessation of pleasure (life). When life ceases to be a pleasure for long enough man becomes indifferent to the fear of death. Some even find pleasure in embracing death.

Fear is merely the con. Desire is the pro.

We start out intently thinking that we are able to analyze our being, to prove something. The process of proving seems to point to fatalism. Fatalism eliminates the ability to act. We may only observe ourselves. But it is not yet proven. Heredity is forced upon us. Mores are a part of our social inheritance, but they can be opposed if the desire is strong enough. The same with environment. We can desire a change, but can we change our desires?

Our desires narrow down to the desire to learn, the desire to have fun, and the desire to prolong life. The desire to learn may surprise some, but even the amoeba seems to demonstrate some curiosity. The cow wanders more quickly on a full stomach. Many are carried away by curiosity and spend much time in learning, and little in fun, until they learn enough about fun to make it a checkmating desire.

It has seemed to me that this inbred curiosity generally terminates or aims at pleasure. The desire to have fun is generally climaxed in sexual pleasure. We may enjoy nature, but we will enjoy it better with a companion. When we see that sexual pleasure leads to having children, and children will deaden our spirits somewhat to pleasure, we may inhibit the organism somewhat, but then curiosity will return until new avenues of pleasure tempt us, until in the end we are still tricked into pregnancy.

The desire to prolong existence is a necessary seed in all life forms, to prevent curiosity or the appetites from leading us into destruction before the purpose of life is carried out. All this seems to hint that we are foreordained. The insect lays its eggs and dies. The spider breeds, devours its mate, then bears its young. There are more people having children than there are monks and nuns. This latter would indicate that the strongest urge given to man is the desire to propagate. The parent rationalizes a kind of immortality through his posterity and obeying the divine law.

But all this does not mean that we must raise children. There is nothing proven that the trends of the majority are infallible. It merely means that the maker of mankind was first aiming at a larger and larger herd.

We cannot choose the basic desires, but we can choose among them.

To epitomize this writing so far:

- Nothing can be proven with words.
- Hence this is merely a compilation of what seems more probable to me.
- Thinking is largely held back by a feeling of fatalism, due to heredity, environment and basic desires, and even possible total control by a superior being.
- We are either robots, or slaves with slight hope, but in either case we can lose nothing by speculation.
- Thought is the reaction of sense perception to recorded data (memory).
- Reason is a specialized compilation (sorting and evaluation) of that data, with desire as the yardstick. It differs from thought in that it terminates in action, or plan (which is a form of action), whereas thought is merely a chain reaction among memories, caused by the stimulus of a new perception, without any definite sequence expected of it or any planned action resulting.
- Desire, in turn, is threefold basically. To learn, to enjoy and to perpetuate.
- In choosing between these three desires lies our chance for free will, if we can be said to have a chance at all.
- The seeming intent of creation was reproduction, while curiosity and the desire for immortality were balancers against anything that might hinder procreation.

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If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please read his books, which are available at www.tatfoundation.org or www.rosepublications.net.