

The **BOOK**

ON THE TABOO AGAINST KNOWING WHO YOU ARE

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such sensitive jewels as the eyes, such enchanted musical instruments as the ears, and such a fabulous arabesque of nerves as the brain can experience itself as anything less than a god? And, when you consider that this incalculably subtle organism is inseparable from the still more marvelous patterns of its environment—from the minutest electrical designs to the whole company of the galaxies—how is it conceivable that this incarnation of all eternity can be bored with being?

IT

*J*ust as true humor is laughter at oneself, true humanity is knowledge of oneself. Other creatures may love and laugh, talk and think, but it seems to be the special peculiarity of human beings that they reflect: they think about thinking and know that they know. This, like other feedback systems, may lead to vicious circles and confusions if improperly managed, but self-awareness makes human experience resonant. It imparts that simultaneous “echo” to all that we think and feel as the box of a violin reverberates with the sound of the strings. It gives depth and volume to what would otherwise be shallow and flat.

Self-knowledge leads to wonder, and wonder to curiosity and investigation, so that nothing interests peo-

ple more than people, even if only one's own person. Every intelligent individual wants to know what makes him tick, and yet is at once fascinated and frustrated by the fact that oneself is the most difficult of all things to know. For the human organism is, apparently, the most complex of all organisms, and while one has the advantage of knowing one's own organism so intimately—from the inside—there is also the disadvantage of being so close to it that one can never quite get at it. Nothing so eludes conscious inspection as consciousness itself. This is why the root of consciousness has been called, paradoxically, the unconscious.

The people we are tempted to call clods and boors are just those who seem to find nothing fascinating in being human; their humanity is incomplete, for it has never astonished them. There is also something incomplete about those who find nothing fascinating in *being*. You may say that this is a philosopher's professional prejudice—that people are defective who lack a sense of the metaphysical. But anyone who thinks at all must be a philosopher—a good one or a bad one—because it is impossible to think without premises, without basic (and in this sense, metaphysical) assumptions about what is sensible, what is the good life, what is beauty, and what is pleasure. To hold such assumptions, consciously or unconsciously, is to philosophize. The self-styled practical man of affairs who pooh-poohs philosophy as a lot of windy notions is himself a pragmatist or a positivist, and a bad one at that, since he has given no thought to his position.

If the human organism is fascinating, the environment which accompanies it is equally so—and not

merely as a collection of particular things and events. Chemistry, biology, geology, and astronomy are special fascinations with the details of our environment, but metaphysics is fascination with the whole thing. I find it almost impossible to imagine a sensitive human being bereft of metaphysical wonder, a person who does not have that marvelous urge to ask a question that cannot quite be formulated. If, as we have been arguing, the only real atom—as de Chardin put it—is the universe, and the only real thing is everything, then what is it?

Yet the moment I have asked this question, I must question the question. What sort of answer could such a question have? Ordinarily, one answers the question "What is it?" by putting the designated thing or event into a class—animal, vegetable, or mineral, solid, liquid, or gas, running, jumping, or walking. But what class will fit *everything*? What can possibly be said about everything? To define is to limit, to set boundaries, to compare and to contrast, and for this reason the universe, the all, seems to defy definition. At this point, the mind runs into an apparently absolute limitation, and one may well argue that it is therefore a misuse of the mind to ask such a question. Just as no one in his senses would look for the morning news in a dictionary, no one should use speaking and thinking to find out what cannot be spoken or thought. Logically, then, the question, "What is everything?" has no meaning, even though it seems to be profound. As Wittgenstein suggested, people who ask such questions may have a disorder of the intellect which can be cured by philosophical therapy. To "do philosophy," as he put it, is

to think about thinking in such a way that we can distinguish real thinking from nonsense.

But this neat logic does not get rid of the urge to know which expresses itself—however ineptly—in the question. As I said at the beginning, it is just unbelievably odd that anything is happening at all. Yet how am I to express this feeling in the form of a sensible question which could have a satisfactory answer? The point is, perhaps, that I am not looking for a *verbal* answer, just as when I ask for a kiss, I do not want a piece of paper with “A kiss” written on it. It is rather that metaphysical wonder looks for an experience, a vision, a revelation which will explain, without words, why there is the universe, and what it is—much as the act of loving explains why we are male and female.

It could be said, then, that the best answer to “What is everything?” is “Look and see!” But the question almost always implies a search for something *basic* to everything, for an underlying unity which our ordinary thinking and feeling do not grasp. Thought and sensation are analytical and selective, and thus present the world as no more than a multiplicity of things and events. Man has, however, a “metaphysical instinct” which apparent multiplicity does not satisfy.

What guarantee is there that the five senses, taken together, do cover the whole of possible experience? They cover simply our actual experience, our human knowledge of facts or events. There are gaps between the fingers; there are gaps between the senses. In these gaps is the darkness which hides the connection between things. . . . This darkness is the source of our

vague fears and anxieties, but also the home of the gods. They alone see the connections, the total relevance of everything that happens; that which now comes to us in bits and pieces, the “accidents” which exist only in our heads, in our limited perceptions.¹

Man is therefore intuitively certain that the entire multitude of things and events is “on” or “in” something as reflections are on a mirror, sounds on a diaphragm, lights and colors in a diamond, or the words and music of a song in the singer. This is perhaps because man is himself a unified organism, and that if things and events are “on” anything at all, they are on his nervous system. Yet there is obviously more than one nervous system, and what are all nervous systems on? Each other?

This mysterious something has been called God, the Absolute, Nature, Substance, Energy, Space, Ether, Mind, Being, the Void, the Infinite—names and ideas which shift in popularity and respectability with the winds of intellectual fashion, of considering the universe intelligent or stupid, superhuman or subhuman, specific or vague. All of them might be dismissed as nonsense-noises if the notion of an underlying Ground or Being were no more than a product of intellectual speculation. But these names are often used to designate the content of a vivid and almost sensorily concrete experience—the “unitive” experience of the mystic, which, with secondary variations, is found in almost all cultures at all times. This experience is the transformed

¹Idris Parry, “Kafka, Rilke, and Rumpelstiltskin.” *The Listener*. British Broadcasting Corporation, London, December 2, 1965. p. 895.

sense of self which I was discussing in the previous chapter, though in "naturalistic" terms, purified of all hocus-pocus about mind, soul, spirit, and other intellectually gaseous words.

Despite the universality of this experience and the impressive regularity with which it is described in the same general way,² tough-minded types regard it as a commonly recurring hallucination with characteristic symptoms, like paranoia, which adds nothing to our information about the physical universe. Just as we cannot say anything about everything, so, they argue, one cannot feel or experience anything about everything. For all our senses are selective. We experience by contrast just as we think by contrast. To experience something underlying *all* experiences would thus be like seeing sight itself, as something common to everything seen. In terms of what color, what shape—other than all mutually contrasting colors and shapes—could we see sight itself?

Yet metaphysics, like philosophy as a whole, is not something which can simply be cured or abandoned, as if it were an intellectual disease. The most antimetaphysical philosophers have, in fact, a tacit metaphysics of their own, which lurks behind the assertion that all experience and all knowledge must be of classes, and of contrasts and comparisons between them. To put it in the simplest way, they will allow that I can know and speak sensibly about something white, since I know

²For which the reader is directed to such works in the Bibliography as Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and Johnson's *Watcher on the Hills*.

white by contrast with black, and by comparison with red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. They will allow meaningful statements about dogs and cats, because they are organic as distinct from inorganic, mammals as distinct from marsupials, and, though frisky, have clearly defined boundaries which demark them from the whole world of non-dogs and non-cats.

But the underlying assumption, that all knowledge is in terms of contrasts, is as metaphysical as an assumption can be. Put it in another way: "All knowledge is a recognition of the mutual relations between sense-experiences and/or things and events." This comes perilously close to being a meaningful statement about everything. "All things are known by their differences from and likenesses to each other." Backed up into this position, the antimetaphysician can be carried, albeit with screams of protest, to an even deeper metaphysical level.

Grant that the statement "Everything is energy" conveys no more information than "Everything is everything." To describe energy, I must differentiate it from non-energy, or from mass, and thus if "everything" is to include non-energy—mass, space, or whatever—it will not only be uninformative but also nonsense to say that everything is energy. If, then, we are going to insist that energy can be known and described only by contrast with non-energy, this is virtually the same as saying that energy (or motion) is manifested—or simply, exists—only by contrast with something relatively inert. But in this event, energy depends on the inert for being energetic, and the inert depends on the energetic for being inert. This relativity, or interdependence, of

the two is as close to a metaphysical unity underlying differences as anyone could wish.

I have sometimes thought that all philosophical disputes could be reduced to an argument between the partisans of "prickles" and the partisans of "goo." The prickly people are tough-minded, rigorous, and precise, and like to stress differences and divisions between things. They prefer particles to waves, and discontinuity to continuity. The gooey people are tender-minded romanticists who love wide generalizations and grand syntheses. They stress the underlying unities, and are inclined to pantheism and mysticism. Waves suit them much better than particles as the ultimate constituents of matter, and discontinuities jar their teeth like a compressed-air drill. Prickly philosophers consider the gooey ones rather disgusting—undisciplined, vague dreamers who slide over hard facts like an intellectual slime which threatens to engulf the whole universe in an "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" (courtesy of Professor F. S. C. Northrop). But gooey philosophers think of their prickly colleagues as animated skeletons that rattle and click without any flesh or vital juices, as dry and dessicated mechanisms bereft of all finer feelings. Either party would be hopelessly lost without the other, because there would be nothing to argue about, no one would know what his position was, and the whole course of philosophy would come to an end.

As things now stand in the world of academic philosophy, the prickly people have had the upper hand in both England and the United States for some years. With their penchant for linguistic analysis, mathematical logic, and scientific empiricism, they have aligned

philosophy with the mystique of science, have begun to transform the philosopher's library or mountain retreat into something nearer to a laboratory, and, as William Earle said, would come to work in white coats if they thought they could get away with it. The professional journals are now as satisfactorily unreadable as treatises on mathematical physics, and the points at issue as minute as any animalcule in the biologist's microscope. But their sweeping victory over the gooey people has almost abolished philosophy as a discipline, for we are close to the point where departments of philosophy will close their offices and shift the remaining members of their faculties to the departments of mathematics and linguistics.

Historically, this is probably the extreme point of that swing of the intellectual pendulum which brought into fashion the Fully Automatic Model of the universe, of the age of analysis and specialization when we lost our vision of the universe in the overwhelming complexity of its details.³ But by a process which C. G. Jung called

³Academic philosophy missed its golden opportunity in 1921, when Ludwig Wittgenstein first published his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which ended with the following passage: "The right method of philosophy would be this. To say nothing except what can be said, *i.e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something that has nothing to do with philosophy: and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—but it would be the only strictly correct method. My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.) He must surmount these

“enantiodromia,” the attainment of any extreme position is the point where it begins to turn into its own opposite—a process that can be dreary and repetitious without the realization that opposite extremes are polar, and that poles need each other. There are no prickles without goo, and no goo without prickles.

To go anywhere in philosophy, other than back and forth, round and round, one must have a keen sense of *correlative vision*. This is a technical term for a thorough understanding of the Game of Black-and-White, whereby one sees that all explicit opposites are implicit allies—correlative in the sense that they “gowith” each other and cannot exist apart. This, rather than any miasmatic absorption of differences into a continuum of ultimate goo, is the metaphysical unity underlying the world. For this unity is not mere one-ness as opposed to multiplicity, since these two terms are themselves polar. The unity, or inseparability, of one and many is therefore referred to in Vedanta philosophy as “non-duality” (*advaita*) to distinguish it from simple uniformity. True, the term has its own opposite, “duality,” for insofar as every term designates a class, an intellectual pigeonhole, every class has an outside polarizing its

propositions; then he sees the world rightly. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” This was the critical moment for all academic philosophers to maintain total silence and to advance the discipline to the level of pure contemplation along the lines of the meditation practices of the Zen Buddhists. But even Wittgenstein had to go on talking and writing, for how else can a philosopher show that he is working and not just goofing off? (The above passage is from the English translation of the *Tractatus*, published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1929. Sections 6.53, 6.54, and 7, pp. 187–89.)

inside. For this reason, language can no more transcend duality than paintings or photographs upon a flat surface can go beyond two dimensions. Yet by the convention of perspective, certain two-dimensional lines that slant towards a “vanishing-point” are taken to represent the third dimension of depth. In a similar way, the dualistic term “non-duality” is taken to represent the “dimension” in which explicit differences have implicit unity.

It is not at first easy to maintain correlative vision. The *Upanishads* describe it as the path of the razor’s edge, a balancing act on the sharpest and thinnest of lines. For to ordinary vision there is nothing visible “between” classes and opposites. Life is a series of urgent choices demanding firm commitment to this or to that. Matter is as much like something as something can be, and space is as much like nothing as nothing can be. Any common dimension between them seems inconceivable, unless it is our own consciousness or mind, and this doubtless belongs to the side of matter—everlastingly threatened by nothingness. Yet with a slight shift of viewpoint, nothing is more obvious than the interdependence of opposites. But who can believe it?

Is it possible that myself, my existence, so *contains* being and nothing that death is merely the “off” interval in an on/off pulsation which must be eternal—because every alternative to this pulsation (e.g., its absence) would in due course imply its presence? Is it conceivable, then, that I am basically an eternal existence momentarily and perhaps needlessly terrified by one half of itself because it has identified all of itself with the

other half? If the choice must be either white or black, must I so commit myself to the white side that I cannot be a good sport and actually play the Game of Black-and-White, with the implicit knowledge that neither can win? Or is all this so much bandying with the formal relations between words and terms without any relation to my physical situation?

To answer the last question affirmatively, I should have to believe that the logic of thought is quite arbitrary—that it is a purely and strictly human invention without any basis in the physical universe. While it is true, as I have already shown, that we do project logical patterns (nets, grids, and other types of calculus) upon the wiggly physical world—which can be confusing if we do not realize what we are doing—nevertheless, these patterns do not come from *outside* the world. They have something to do with the design of the human nervous system, which is definitely in and of the world. Furthermore, I have shown that correlative thinking about the relation of organism to environment is far more compatible with the physical sciences than our archaic and prevalent notions of the self as something confronting an alien and separate world. To sever the connections between human logic and the physical universe, I would have to revert to the myth of the ego as an isolated, independent observer for whom the rest of the world is absolutely external and “other.” Neither neurology nor biology nor sociology can subscribe to this.

If, on the other hand, self and other, subject and object, organism and environment are the poles of a single process, THAT is my true existence. As the *Upanishads* say, “That is the Self. That is the real. That art thou!”

But I cannot think or say anything about THAT, or, as I shall now call it, IT, unless I resort to the convention of using dualistic language as the lines of perspective are used to show depth on a flat surface. What lies beyond opposites must be discussed, if at all, in terms of opposites, and this means using the language of analogy, metaphor, and myth.

The difficulty is not only that language is dualistic, insofar as words are labels for mutually exclusive classes. The problem is that IT is so much more myself than I thought I was, so central and so basic to my existence, that I cannot make it an object. There is no way to stand outside IT, and, in fact, no need to do so. For so long as I am trying to grasp IT, I am implying that IT is not really myself. If it were possible, I am losing the sense of it by attempting to find it. This is why those who really know that they are IT invariably say they do not understand it, for IT understands understanding—not the other way about. One cannot, and need not, go deeper than deep!

But the fact that IT eludes every description must not, as happens so often, be mistaken for the description of IT as the airiest of abstractions, as a literal transparent continuum or undifferentiated cosmic jello. The most concrete image of God the Father, with his white beard and golden robe, is better than that. Yet Western students of Eastern philosophies and religions persistently accuse Hindus and Buddhists of believing in a featureless and gelatinous God, just because the latter insist that every conception or objective image of IT is void. But the term “void” applies to all such conceptions, not to IT.

Yet in speaking and thinking of IT, there is no alter-

native to the use of conceptions and images, and no harm in it so long as we realize what we are doing. Idolatry is not the use of images, but confusing them with what they represent, and in this respect mental images and lofty abstractions can be more insidious than bronze idols.

You were probably brought up in a culture where the presiding image of IT has for centuries been God the Father, whose pronoun is He, because IT seems too impersonal and She would, of course, be inferior. Is this image still workable, as a functional myth to provide some consensus about life and its meaning for all the diverse peoples and cultures of this planet?

Frankly, the image of God the Father has become ridiculous—that is, unless you read Saint Thomas Aquinas or Martin Buber or Paul Tillich, and realize that you can be a devout Jew or Christian without having to believe, literally, in the Cosmic Male Parent. Even then, it is difficult not to feel the force of the image, because images sway our emotions more deeply than conceptions. As a devout Christian you would be saying day after day the prayer, “Our Father who art in heaven,” and eventually it gets you: you are relating emotionally to IT as to an idealized father—male, loving but stern, and a personal being quite other than yourself. Obviously, you must be other than God so long as you conceive yourself as the separate ego, but when we realize that this form of identity is no more than a social institution, and one which has ceased to be a workable life-game, the sharp division between oneself and the ultimate reality is no longer relevant.

Furthermore, the younger members of our society

have for some time been in growing rebellion against paternal authority and the paternal state. For one reason, the home in an industrial society is chiefly a dormitory, and the father does not work there, with the result that wife and children have no part in his vocation. He is just a character who brings in money, and after working hours he is supposed to forget about his job and have fun. Novels, magazines, television, and popular cartoons therefore portray “Dad” as an incompetent clown. And the image has some truth in it because Dad has fallen for the hoax that work is simply something you do to make money, and with money you can get anything you want.

It is no wonder that an increasing proportion of college students want no part in Dad’s world, and will do anything to avoid the rat-race of the salesman, commuter, clerk, and corporate executive. Professional men, too—architects, doctors, lawyers, ministers, and professors—have offices away from home, and thus, because the demands of their families boil down more and more to money, are ever more tempted to regard even professional vocations as ways of making money. All this is further aggravated by the fact that parents no longer educate their own children. Thus the child does not grow up with understanding of or enthusiasm for his father’s work. Instead, he is sent to an understaffed school run mostly by women which, under the circumstances, can do no more than hand out mass-produced education which prepares the child for everything and nothing. It has no relation whatever to his father’s vocation.

Along with this devaluation of the father, we are be-

coming accustomed to a conception of the universe so mysterious and so impressive that even the best father-image will no longer do for an explanation of what makes it run. But the problem then is that it is impossible for us to conceive an image higher than the human image. Few of us have ever met an angel, and probably would not recognize it if we saw one, and our images of an impersonal or suprapersonal God are hopelessly subhuman—jello, featureless light, homogenized space, or a whopping jolt of electricity. However, our image of man is changing as it becomes clearer and clearer that the human being is not simply and only his physical organism. My body is also my total environment, and this must be measured by light-years in the billions.

Hitherto the poets and philosophers of science have used the vast expanse and duration of the universe as a pretext for reflections on the unimportance of man, forgetting that man with "that enchanted loom, the brain" is precisely what transforms this immense electrical pulsation into light and color, shape and sound, large and small, hard and heavy, long and short. In knowing the world we humanize it, and if, as we discover it, we are astonished at its dimensions and its complexity, we should be just as astonished that we have the brains to perceive it.

Hitherto we have been taught, however, that we are not really responsible for our brains. We do not know (in terms of words or figures) how they are constructed, and thus it seems that the brain and the organism as a whole are an ingenious vehicle which has been "given" to us, or an uncanny maze in which we are temporarily trapped. In other words, we accepted a definition of

ourselves which confined the self to the source and to the limitations of conscious attention. This definition is miserably insufficient, for in fact we know how to grow brains and eyes, ears and fingers, hearts and bones, in just the same way that we know how to walk and breathe, talk and think—only we can't put it into words. Words are too slow and too clumsy for describing such things, and conscious attention is too narrow for keeping track of all their details.

Thus it will often happen that when you tell a girl how beautiful she is, she will say, "Now isn't that just like a man! All you men think about is bodies. OK, so I'm beautiful, but I got my body from my parents and it was just luck. I prefer to be admired for myself, not my chassis." Poor little chauffeur! All she is saying is that she has lost touch with her own astonishing wisdom and ingenuity, and wants to be admired for some trivial tricks that she can perform with her conscious attention. And we are all in the same situation, having dissociated ourselves from our bodies and from the whole network of forces in which bodies can come to birth and live.

Yet we can still awaken the sense that all this, too, is the self—a self, however, which is far beyond the image of the ego, or of the human body as limited by the skin. We then behold the Self wherever we look, and its image is the universe in its light and in its darkness, in its bodies and in its spaces. This is the new image of man, but it is still an image. For there remains—to use dualistic words—"behind," "under," "encompassing," and "central" to it all the unthinkable IT, polarizing itself in the visible contrasts of waves and troughs, sol-

ids and spaces. But the odd thing is that this IT, however inconceivable, is no vapid abstraction: it is very simply and truly yourself.

In the words of a Chinese Zen master, "Nothing is left to you at this moment but to have a good laugh!" As James Broughton put it:

*This is It
and I am It
and You are It
and so is That
and He is It
and She is It
and It is It
and That is That.**

True humor is, indeed, laughter at one's Self—at the Divine Comedy, the fabulous deception, whereby one comes to imagine that a creature *in* existence is not also *of* existence, that what man is is not also what everything is. All the time we "know it in our bones" but conscious attention, distracted by details and differences, cannot see the whole for the parts.

The major trick in this deception is, of course, death. Consider death as the permanent end of consciousness, the point at which you and your knowledge of the universe simply cease, and where you become as if you had never existed at all. Consider it also on a much vaster scale—the death of the universe at the time when

*From *The Bard and the Harper*, recorded by James Broughton and Joel Andrews. LP-1013, produced by Musical Engineering Associates, Sausalito, California, 1965.

all energy runs out, when, according to some cosmologists, the explosion which flung the galaxies into space fades out like a skyrocket. It will be as if it had never happened, which is, of course, the way things were before it *did* happen. Likewise, when you are dead, you will be as you were before you were conceived. So—there has been a flash, a flash of consciousness or a flash of galaxies. It happened. Even if there is no one left to remember.

But if, when it has happened and vanished, things are at all as they were before it began (including the possibility that there were no things), it can happen again. Why not? On the other hand, I might suppose that after it has happened things aren't the same as they were before. Energy was present before the explosion, but after the explosion died out, no energy was left. For ever and ever energy was latent. Then it blew up, and that was that. It is, perhaps, possible to imagine that what had always existed got tired of itself, blew up, and stopped. But this is a greater strain on my imagination than the idea that these flashes are periodic and rhythmic. They may go on and on, or round and round: it doesn't make much difference. Furthermore, if latent energy had *always* existed before the explosion, I find it difficult to think of a single, particular time coming when it had to stop. Can anything be half eternal? That is, can a process which had no beginning come to an end?

I presume, then, that with my own death I shall forget who I was, just as my conscious attention is unable to recall, if it ever knew, how to form the cells of the brain and the pattern of the veins. Conscious memory

plays little part in our biological existence. Thus as my sensation of "I-ness," of being alive, once came into being without conscious memory or intent, so it will arise again and again, as the "central" Self—the IT—appears as the self/other situation in its myriads of pulsating forms—always the same and always new, a here in the midst of a there, a now in the midst of then, and a one in the midst of many. And if I forget how many times I have been here, and in how many shapes, this forgetting is the necessary interval of darkness between every pulsation of light. I return in every baby born.

Actually, we know this already. After people die, babies are born—and, unless they are automata, every one of them is, just as we ourselves were, the "I" experience coming again into being. The conditions of heredity and environment change, but each of those babies incarnates the same experience of being central to a world that is "other." Each infant dawns into life as I did, without any memory of a past. Thus when I am gone there can be no experience, no living through, of the state of being a perpetual "has-been." Nature "abhors the vacuum" and the I-feeling appears again as it did before, and it matters not whether the interval be ten seconds or billions of years. In unconsciousness all times are the same brief instant.

This is so obvious, but our block against seeing it is the ingrained and compelling myth that the "I" comes into this world, or is thrown out from it, in such a way as to have no essential connection with it. Thus we do not trust the universe to repeat what it has already done—to "I" itself again and again. We see it as an eternal arena in which the individual is no more than a

temporary stranger—a visitor who hardly belongs—for the thin ray of consciousness does not shine upon its own source. In looking out upon the world, we forget that the world is looking at itself—through our eyes and IT's.

Now you know—even if it takes you some time to do a double-take and get the full impact. It may not be easy to recover from the many generations through which the fathers have knocked down the children, like dominoes, saying, "Don't you dare think that thought! You're just a little upstart, just a creature, and you had better learn your place." On the contrary, you're IT. But perhaps the fathers were unwittingly trying to tell the children that IT plays IT cool. You don't come on (that is, on stage) like IT because you really are IT, and the point of the stage is to show on, not to show off. To come on like IT—to play at being God—is to play the Self as a role, which is just what it isn't. When IT plays, it plays at being everything else.