

It is therefore obvious that, if it did not betake itself to a symbolical substitute, our consciousness would never regard time as a homogeneous medium, in which the terms of a succession remain outside one another. But we naturally reach this symbolical representation by the mere fact that, in a series of identical terms, each term assumes a double aspect for our consciousness: one aspect which is the same for all of them, since we are thinking then of the sameness of the external object, and another aspect which is characteristic of each of them, because the supervening of each term brings about a new organization of the whole. Hence the possibility of setting out in space, under the form of numerical multiplicity, what we have called a qualitative multiplicity, and of regarding the one as the equivalent of the other. Now, this twofold process is nowhere accomplished so easily as in the perception of the external phenomenon which takes for us the form of motion. Here we certainly have a series of identical terms, since it is always the same moving body; but, on the other hand, the synthesis carried out by our consciousness between the actual position and what our memory calls the former positions, causes these images to permeate, complete, and, so to speak, continue one another. Hence, it is principally by the help of motion that duration assumes the form of a homogeneous medium, and that time is projected

Our successive sensations are regarded as mutually external, like their objective causes, and this reacts on our deeper psychic life.

into space. But, even if we leave out motion, any repetition of a well-marked external phenomenon would suggest to consciousness the same mode of representation. Thus, when we hear a series of blows of a hammer, the sounds form an indivisible melody in so far as they are pure sensations, and, here again, give rise to a dynamic progress ; but, knowing that the same objective cause is at work, we cut up this progress into phases which we then regard as identical ; and this multiplicity of elements no longer being conceivable except by being set out in space, since they have now become identical, we are necessarily led to the idea of a homogeneous time, the symbolical image of real duration. In a word, our ego comes in contact with the external world at its surface ; our successive sensations, although dissolving into one another, retain something of the mutual externality which belongs to their objective causes ; and thus our superficial psychic life comes to be pictured without any great effort as set out in a homogeneous medium. But the symbolical character of such a picture becomes more striking as we advance further into the depths of consciousness : the deep-seated self which ponders and decides, which heats and blazes up, is a self whose states and changes permeate one another and undergo a deep alteration as soon as we separate them from one another in order to set them out in space. But as this deeper self forms one and the same person with the superficial ego,

the two seem to *endure* in the same way. And as the repeated picture of one identical objective phenomenon, ever recurring, cuts up our superficial psychic life into parts external to one another, the moments which are thus determined determine in their turn distinct segments in the dynamic and undivided progress of our more personal conscious states. Thus the mutual externality which material objects gain from their juxtaposition in homogeneous space reverberates and spreads into the depths of consciousness: little by little our sensations are distinguished from one another like the external causes which gave rise to them, and our feelings or ideas come to be separated like the sensations with which they are contemporaneous.

That our ordinary conception of duration depends on a gradual incursion of space into the domain of pure consciousness is proved by the fact that, in order to deprive the ego of the faculty of perceiving a homogeneous time, it is enough to take away from it this outer circle of psychic states which it uses as a balance-wheel. These conditions are realized when we dream; for sleep, by relaxing the play of the organic functions, alters the communicating surface between the ego and external objects. Here we no longer measure duration, but we feel it; from quantity it returns to the state of quality; we no longer estimate past time mathematically: the mathematical estimate gives place to a confused instinct,

Eliminate the superficial psychic states, and we no longer perceive a homogeneous time or measure duration, but feel it as a quality.

capable, like all instincts, of committing gross errors, but also of acting at times with extraordinary skill. Even in the waking state, daily experience ought to teach us to distinguish between duration as quality, that which consciousness reaches immediately and which is probably what animals perceive, and time so to speak materialized, time that has become quantity by being set out in space. Whilst I am writing these lines, the hour strikes on a neighbouring clock, but my inattentive ear does not perceive it until several strokes have made themselves heard. Hence I have not counted them ; and yet I only have to turn my attention backwards to count up the four strokes which have already sounded and add them to those which I hear. If, then, I question myself carefully on what has just taken place, I perceive that the first four sounds had struck my ear and even affected my consciousness, but that the sensations produced by each one of them, instead of being set side by side, had melted into one another in such a way as to give the whole a peculiar quality, to make a kind of musical phrase out of it. In order, then, to estimate retrospectively the number of strokes sounded, I tried to reconstruct this phrase in thought : my imagination made one stroke, then two, then three, and as long as it did not reach the exact number four, my feeling, when consulted, answered that the total effect was qualitatively different. It had thus ascertained in its own way the succession of four strokes, but quite other-

wise than by a process of addition, and without bringing in the image of a juxtaposition of distinct terms. In a word, the number of strokes was perceived as a quality and not as a quantity : it is thus that duration is presented to immediate consciousness, and it retains this form so long as it does not give place to a symbolical representation derived from extensity.

We should therefore distinguish two forms of multiplicity, two very different ways of regarding duration, two aspects of conscious life. Below homogeneous duration, which is the extensive symbol of true duration, a close psychological analysis distinguishes a duration whose heterogeneous moments permeate one another ; below the numerical multiplicity of conscious states, a qualitative multiplicity ; below the self with well-defined states, a self in which *succeeding each other* means *melting into one another* and forming an organic whole. But we are generally content with the first, i.e. with the shadow of the self projected into homogeneous space. Consciousness, goaded by an insatiable desire to separate, substitutes the symbol for the reality, or perceives the reality only through the symbol. As the self thus refracted, and thereby broken to pieces, is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular, consciousness prefers it, and gradually loses sight of the fundamental self.

There are therefore two forms of multiplicity, of duration and conscious life.

In order to recover this fundamental self, as the unsophisticated consciousness would perceive it, a vigorous effort of analysis is necessary, which will isolate the fluid inner states from their image, first refracted, then solidified in homogeneous space. In other words, our perceptions, sensations, emotions and ideas occur under two aspects : the one clear and precise, but impersonal ; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property. If we have been led to distinguish two forms of multiplicity, two forms of duration, we must expect each conscious state, taken by itself, to assume a different aspect according as we consider it within a discrete multiplicity or a confused multiplicity, in the time as quality, in which it is produced, or in the time as quantity, into which it is projected.

When e.g. I take my first walk in a town in which I am going to live, my environment produces on me two impressions at the same time, one of which is destined to last while the other will constantly change. Every day I perceive the same houses, and as I know that they are the same objects, I always call them by the same name and I also fancy that they always look the same to me. But if I recur, at the end of a sufficiently long period, to the impression

The two aspects of our conscious states.

One of which is due to the solidifying influence of external objects and language on our constantly changing feelings.

which I experienced during the first few years, I am surprised at the remarkable, inexplicable, and indeed inexpressible change which has taken place. It seems that these objects, continually perceived by me and constantly impressing themselves on my mind, have ended by borrowing from me something of my own conscious existence ; like myself they have lived, and like myself they have grown old. This is not a mere illusion ; for if to-day's impression were absolutely identical with that of yesterday, what difference would there be between perceiving and recognizing, between learning and remembering ? Yet this difference escapes the attention of most of us ; we shall hardly perceive it, unless we are warned of it and then carefully look into ourselves. The reason is that our outer and, so to speak, social life is more practically important to us than our inner and individual existence. We instinctively tend to solidify our impressions in order to express them in language. Hence we confuse the feeling itself, which is in a perpetual state of becoming, with its permanent external object, and especially with the word which expresses this object. In the same way as the fleeting duration of our ego is fixed by its projection in homogeneous space, our constantly changing impressions, wrapping themselves round the external object which is their cause, take on its definite outlines and its immobility.

Our simple sensations, taken in their natural

state, are still more fleeting. Such and such a flavour, such and such a scent, pleased me when I was a child though I dislike them to-day. Yet I still give the same name to the sensation experienced, and I speak as if only my taste had changed, whilst the scent and the flavour have remained the same. Thus I again solidify the sensation; and when its changeableness becomes so obvious that I cannot help recognizing it, I abstract this changeableness to give it a name of its own and solidify it in the shape of a *taste*. But in reality there are neither identical sensations nor multiple tastes: for sensations and tastes seem to me to be *objects* as soon as I isolate and name them, and in the human soul there are only *processes*. What I ought to say is that every sensation is altered by repetition, and that if it does not seem to me to change from day to day, it is because I perceive it through the object which is its cause, through the word which translates it. This influence of language on sensation is deeper than is usually thought. Not only does language make us believe in the unchangeableness of our sensations, but it will sometimes deceive us as to the nature of the sensation felt. Thus, when I partake of a dish that is supposed to be exquisite, the name which it bears, suggestive of the approval given to it, comes between my sensation and my consciousness; I may believe that the flavour pleases me when a slight effort of attention would prove the contrary.

How language gives a fixed form to fleeting sensations.

In short, the word with well-defined outlines, the rough and ready word, which stores up the stable, common, and consequently impersonal element in the impressions of mankind, overwhelms or at least covers over the delicate and fugitive impressions of our individual consciousness. To maintain the struggle on equal terms, the latter ought to express themselves in precise words; but these words, as soon as they were formed, would turn against the sensation which gave birth to them, and, invented to show that the sensation is unstable, they would impose on it their own stability.

This overwhelming of the immediate consciousness is nowhere so striking as in the case of our feelings. A violent love or a deep melancholy takes possession of our soul: here we feel a thousand different elements which dissolve into and permeate one another without any precise outlines, without the least tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another; hence their originality. We distort them as soon as we distinguish a numerical multiplicity in their confused mass: what will it be, then, when we set them out, isolated from one another, in this homogeneous medium which may be called either time or space, whichever you prefer? A moment ago each of them was borrowing an indefinable colour from its surroundings: now we have it colourless, and ready to accept a name. The feeling itself is a

How analysis
and descrip-
tion distort
the feelings.

being which lives and develops and is therefore constantly changing ; otherwise how could it gradually lead us to form a resolution ? Our resolution would be immediately taken. But it lives because the duration in which it develops is a duration whose moments permeate one another. By separating these moments from each other, by spreading out time in space, we have caused this feeling to lose its life and its colour. Hence, we are now standing before our own shadow : we believe that we have analysed our feeling, while we have really replaced it by a juxtaposition of lifeless states which can be translated into words, and each of which constitutes the common element, the impersonal residue, of the impressions felt in a given case by the whole of society. And this is why we reason about these states and apply our simple logic to them : having set them up as genera by the mere fact of having isolated them from one another, we have prepared them for use in some future deduction. Now, if some bold novelist, tearing aside the cleverly woven curtain of our conventional ego, shows us under this appearance of logic a fundamental absurdity, under this juxtaposition of simple states an infinite permeation of a thousand different impressions which have already ceased to exist the instant they are named, we commend him for having known us better than we knew ourselves. This is not the case, however, and the very fact that he spreads out our feeling in a homogeneous

time, and expresses its elements by words, shows that he in his turn is only offering us its shadow: but he has arranged this shadow in such a way as to make us suspect the extraordinary and illogical nature of the object which projects it; he has made us reflect by giving outward expression to something of that contradiction, that interpenetration, which is the very essence of the elements expressed. Encouraged by him, we have put aside for an instant the veil which we interposed between our consciousness and ourselves. He has brought us back into our own presence.

We should experience the same sort of surprise if we strove to seize our ideas themselves in their natural state, as our consciousness would perceive them if it were no longer beset by space. This breaking up of the constituent elements of an idea, which issues in abstraction, is too convenient for us to do without it in ordinary life and even in philosophical discussion. But when we fancy that the parts thus artificially separated are the genuine threads with which the concrete idea was woven, when, substituting for the interpenetration of the real terms the juxtaposition of their symbols, we claim to make duration out of space, we unavoidably fall into the mistakes of associationism. We shall not insist on the latter point, which will be the subject of a thorough examination in the next chapter. Let it be enough to say that the impulsive zeal with

On the surface our conscious states obey the laws of association. Deeper down they interpenetrate and form a part of ourselves.

which we take sides on certain questions shows how our intellect has its instincts—and what can an instinct of this kind be if not an impetus common to all our ideas, i.e. their very interpenetration? The beliefs to which we most strongly adhere are those of which we should find it most difficult to give an account, and the reasons by which we justify them are seldom those which have led us to adopt them. In a certain sense we have adopted them without any reason, for what makes them valuable in our eyes is that they match the colour of all our other ideas, and that from the very first we have seen in them something of ourselves. Hence they do not take in our minds that common looking form which they will assume as soon as we try to give expression to them in words; and, although they bear the same name in other minds, they are by no means the same thing. The fact is that each of them has the same kind of life as a cell in an organism: everything which affects the general state of the self affects it also. But while the cell occupies a definite point in the organism, an idea which is truly ours fills the whole of our self. Not all our ideas, however, are thus incorporated in the fluid mass of our conscious states. Many float on the surface, like dead leaves on the water of a pond: the mind, when it thinks them over and over again, finds them ever the same, as if they were external to it. Among these are the ideas which we receive ready made, and which remain in us without ever being

properly assimilated, or again the ideas which we have omitted to cherish and which have withered in neglect. If, in proportion as we get away from the deeper strata of the self, our conscious states tend more and more to assume the form of a numerical multiplicity, and to spread out in a homogeneous space, it is just because these conscious states tend to become more and more lifeless, more and more impersonal. Hence we need not be surprised if only those ideas which least belong to us can be adequately expressed in words: only to these, as we shall see, does the associationist theory apply. External to one another, they keep up relations among themselves in which the inmost nature of each of them counts for nothing, relations which can therefore be classified. It may thus be said that they are associated by contiguity or for some logical reason. But if, digging below the surface of contact between the self and external objects, we penetrate into the depths of the organized and living intelligence, we shall witness the joining together or rather the blending of many ideas which, when once dissociated, seem to exclude one another as logically contradictory terms. The strangest dreams, in which two images overlie one another and show us at the same time two different persons, who yet make only one, will hardly give us an idea of the interweaving of concepts which goes on when we are awake. The imagination of the dreamer, cut off from the external world, imitates with

mere images, and parodies in its own way, the process which constantly goes on with regard to ideas in the deeper regions of the intellectual life.

Thus may be verified, thus, too, will be illustrated by a further study of deep-seated psychic phenomena the principle from which we started: conscious life displays two aspects according as we perceive it directly or by refraction through space. Considered in themselves, the deep-seated conscious states have no relation to quantity, they are pure quality; they intermingle in such a way that we cannot tell whether they are one or several, nor even examine them from this point of view without at once altering their nature. The duration which they thus create is a duration whose moments do not constitute a numerical multiplicity: to characterize these moments by saying that they encroach on one another would still be to distinguish them. If each of us lived a purely individual life, if there were neither society nor language, would our consciousness grasp the series of inner states in this unbroken form? Undoubtedly it would not quite succeed, because we should still retain the idea of a homogeneous space in which objects are sharply distinguished from one another, and because it is too convenient to set out in such a medium the somewhat cloudy states which first attract the attention of consciousness, in order to

By separating our conscious states we promote social life, but raise problems soluble only by recourse to the concrete and living self.