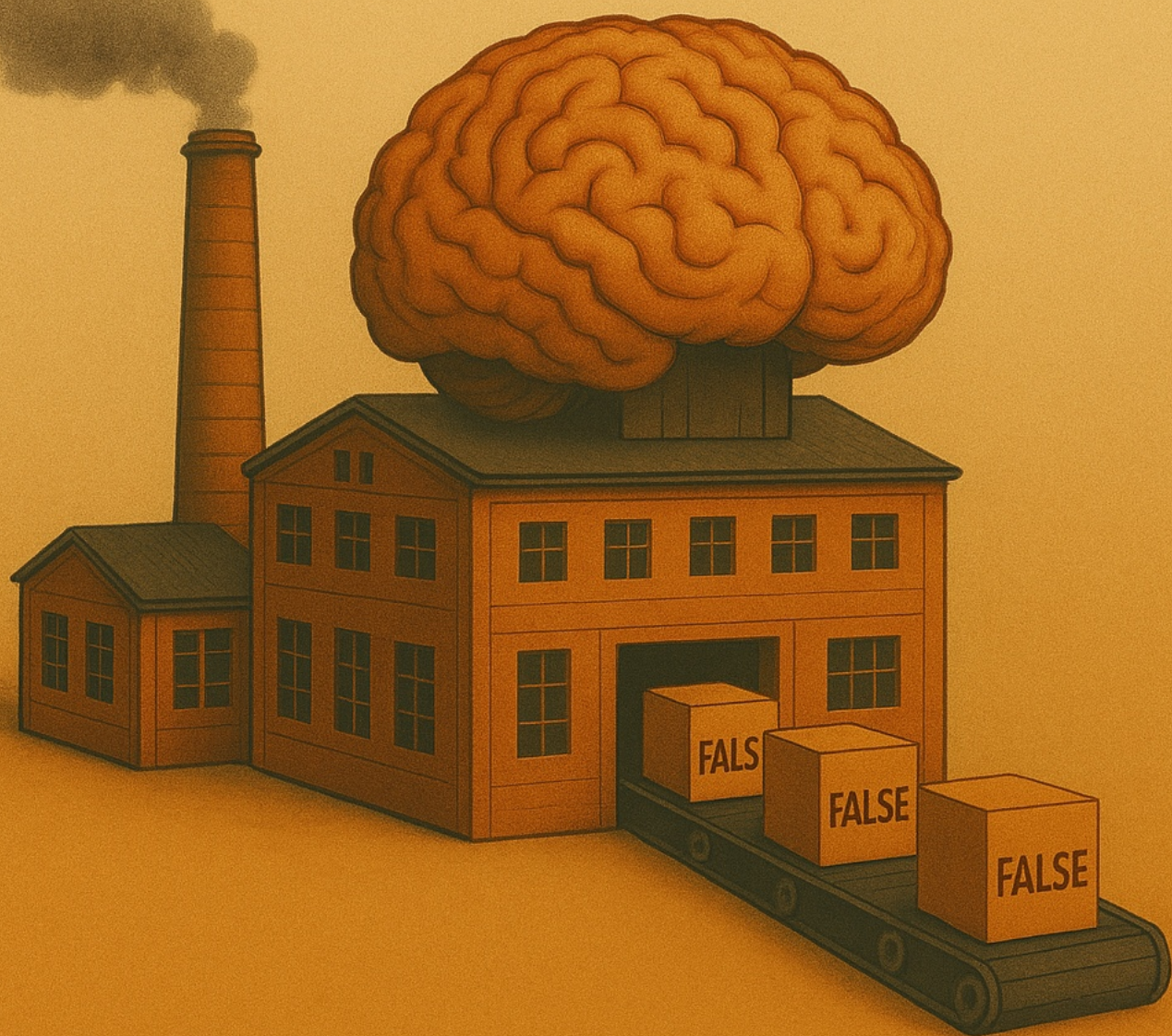


THE PROBLEMS WITH THOUGHT

THINKING FALSE



INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

SILENT PERCEPTION

The Problems with Thought

Thinking False

A meditative exploration discussing the problems with how we think.

Inspired by the teachings of **J. Krishnamurti** and the philosophical clarity of **David Bohm**.

INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

Written by Silent Perception

“Delusion becomes illusion.” — *Silent Perception*

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INTRODUCTION

The way thought operates is determined by a biological structure and psychological configuration.

The biological structure relates to the physical way the brain and body is constructed, and how the way we see, think, learn, and act is determined by that structure.

The psychological configuration refers to the way knowledge is configured in memory (through experiences, ideologies and beliefs), and how that determines how we see, think, learn, and act.

The combination of the biological structure and psychological configuration determines our behaviour. The constraints placed upon thought by the biological structure, and the tacit assumptions placed upon thinking by the psychological configuration, produce problems that each person must be aware of in order for thought to function adequately. In this series we discuss those problems.

We discuss how the thoughts we have are the product of limited knowledge, yet present themselves to the mind as complete.

We explain how a thought that is experienced as complete, is interpreted by the mind as true, and achieves the status of reality in perception.

We state that in the absence of perceiving what is true, thought invents what may be true through the process of speculation, and we discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

We explore the feeling of security that arises from thought, and state it to be the result of what we know, and the ignorance of what we don't know.

We discuss memory to be highly malleable, but state that thought will resist change to sustain the intellectual and emotional stability of its current structure.

We explain how thought seeks security in the division created by identifying itself with nations and religions, but how that identification creates a rift in perception and thinking that produces conflict, and generates insecurity throughout society as a whole.

We state that thought creates inventions and ideologies that attain a reality independent of those who invented it. The ideology lives on through time, and the next generations grow up never knowing a time when the ideology did not exist. Without much consideration, they treat the ideology with a sense of permanence, seeing it as a physical reality that could not be any other way, instead of a mere projection of thought that could be quickly dismantled.

The series **The Problems with Thought** explains the ways thought is **biologically structured** and **psychologically configured** to cause conflict and incoherent behaviour. Understanding these problems enables the mind to psychologically reconfigure itself to alleviate the problems created by the way we think, and have a rational intelligence that can detect the illusions created by the biological structure of thought.

STRUCTURE OF INQUIRY

This section provides a basic introduction to each chapter.

Chapter 1: The Illusion of Completeness

The chapter discusses how thought is limited, yet presents its projections as complete.

Chapter 2: The Illusion of Reality

The chapter discusses how a projection that is presented to the mind as complete is interpreted by the mind as true. The interpretation of something as true turns the projection into a reality. Thought then acts in accordance with that reality.

Chapter 3: The Illusion of Facts

The chapter discusses how and why thought speculates. Following the speculation, thought acts in accordance with a reality built from **what is actually true** and **what it believes to be true**.

Chapter 4: The Illusion of Security

The chapter discusses how the projection of a thought as complete creates a sense of security. Something which appears secure for oneself may establish insecurity outside of oneself and, therefore, be no security at all

Chapter 5: The Resistance to Change

The chapter discusses how thought resists new information when it contradicts what one currently believes. Thought resists change when it fears losing the value it holds in the belief.

Chapter 6: Thought Seeks Security Through Division

The chapter discusses how thought makes distinctions, but then identifies itself with one of the distinctions. Once this is done, thought begins to distort its observations, analysis, and actions in favour of the thing it has identified itself with, whether that be a country, religion, partner, and so on.

Chapter 7: Thought Loses Track of What it has Created

The chapter discusses how thought establishes things in the physical world, such as the borders of countries. The coming generations then live within that construction, never questioning it, and acting as if it was always there and could not be any other way.

CHAPTER 1

THE ILLUSION OF COMPLETENESS

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ILLUSION OF COMPLETENESS

The Origin of Thought

The origin of thought is knowledge. You can only think about what you know.

Example:

When I ask you: '**What is your name?**' You can answer it because you know your name.

When I ask you: '**What is my great grandmothers name?**' You cannot answer it because you don't know **my** great grandmothers name.

To change our thoughts we have to acquire new knowledge. Acquiring new knowledge enables us to change the way we think or continue to think the way we do, but to a greater degree of complexity.

New knowledge is acquired through perception, a phenomenon we regularly refer to as experience. From experience we acquire knowledge, think and then act.



figure 1. The fundamental process of human behaviour

The Limitation of Thought

Experience is limited. The basis for experience is sensation and, as humans, we do not sense everything. We only sense a fraction of everything that is going on around us.

Example:

We do not see everything because we don't have eyes in the back of our head, and we can't see through walls.

We do not hear everything because sound drops off over a distance, and louder sounds mask the quieter sounds.

Our sensuous organs have limitations and, thus, our sensuous experience is limited.

Knowledge comes from experience, and because experience is limited, knowledge is limited.

Thought originates from knowledge, and because knowledge is limited, thought is limited.

Our actions are dictated by thought, and because thought is limited, our actions are limited. This means our behaviour may be an insufficient response to the situation we are presented with to varying degrees.

The Appearance of Thought

Thought presents itself to the mind as an image.

Explanation:

When the knowledge stored in the brain is energised, it appears in the mind as an image.

Example:

When the knowledge I hold about my friend is energised, an image of my friend appears in the mind. The image I see is built using the knowledge I have.

The image is a representation.

Example:

The thought of my friend is an image that represents my friend. The thought of my friend is not the actual friend: the **imagined friend** and the **real friend** are different.

The Illusion of Completeness

While the fact is that thought is limited, the problem with thought resides in the fact that thought presents itself to the mind as being complete.

Example: A Co-Worker Who Arrives Late to Work

You have a co-worker that is regularly late to work. Thought imagines the reason for the lateness to be a laziness of character on the part of the co-worker. Each time the co-worker arrives late, thought presents an image of the co-worker to itself as a lazy person. The mind believes in that image and feels a sense of frustration towards the co-worker.

In reality, the co-worker is late because they have a sick dependent at home that requires a great deal of care. The co-worker is doing their best to balance the demands of home-life and work-life, but cannot always ensure they arrive at work on time. The co-worker often works through their lunch break to make up the time.

In the example, thought represented the co-worker as lazy when, in actuality, the co-worker is not lazy, they are incredibly busy.

The images thought produced came from the knowledge one had. That knowledge was limited (one did not know about the coworkers sick dependent) but presented itself as complete. The sense of completeness created a sense of conviction in the image which acted to manifest and justify the frustration one felt.

Why does thought present itself as complete?

Point 1: Thought knows what it knows, but it doesn't know what it doesn't know.

Point 2: The mind that created the thought, is the same mind that perceives the thought.

That means, there is nothing between the **creation of an imagination** and the **perception of an imagination** that signals to oneself that the thought is limited and incomplete. Thus, we sense the thought as complete and treat it as true.

Thought appears to the mind as complete because **the knowledge that created the image** is identical to **the knowledge that judges the image**.

When thought presents itself to the mind as complete, the appearance is accepted by the mind as true. In this instance, the representation has been misrepresented to the mind. That is one of the problems with thought.

Conclusion

The knowledge that creates a thought is the same knowledge that observes the thought and assesses the validity of the thought. The whole process takes place from the perspective of **what you know**, and does not include **what you don't know**.

This means the limited nature of thought is total, so the limited thought appears, and is experienced, as something complete. You experience the thought not as simply '**what you know about X**', but as '**all there is to know about X**'.

CHAPTER 2

THE ILLUSION OF REALITY

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ILLUSION OF REALITY

In the chapter '**The Illusion of Completeness**' we gave the example of a coworker regularly arriving late to work. Thought imagined the reason for the lateness to be a laziness of character, but the reality was that the coworker had a sick dependent at home.

In the absence of knowledge about the sick dependent, thought speculated the reason for the lateness to be laziness. The thought of laziness was experienced not as simply '**what you know about the coworkers lateness**', but as '**all there is to know about coworkers lateness**'. This caused the thought of laziness to attain a status of truth, and transition from the appearance of a **speculation** to the appearance of a **reality**.

Example:

The thought was experienced as '**the coworker is lazy**' rather than '**I imagine the coworker to be lazy**'.

The transition moves the thought from the **appearance of a possibility** to the **expression of a reality**. Once this is done, thought perceives, thinks and acts according to the reality it has imagined.

When what one imagines is coherent with reality, one's perceptions, thoughts and actions operate in harmony with reality.

Example:

My imagination that the restaurant near my place of work cooks food quickly, enables me to travel there, eat lunch, and return to work on time.

Our example of the coworker, however, shows an incoherence between what one thinks and reality. When what one thinks is incoherent with reality, the process breaks down because my imagination begins to usurp reality, rather than move in harmony with it. This causes thought to perceive, think and act in accordance with a false reality which, in turn, causes innumerable problems in the real world.

Conclusion

When a thought presents itself not as simply '**what you know**' but as '**all there is to know**', the thought attains a status of truth that transitions it from **appearance of a possibility** to the **expression of a reality**.

CHAPTER 3

THE ILLUSION OF FACTS

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ILLUSION OF FACTS

In the chapter '**The Illusion of Completeness**' we gave the example of a coworker regularly arriving late to work. Thought imagined the reason for the lateness to be a laziness of character, but the reality was that the coworker had a sick dependent at home.

In the absence of knowledge about the sick dependent, thought speculated the reason for the lateness to be laziness. Speculation is a feature of thought that must be handled with care because:

Speculation cannot always be avoided.

Speculation is not always necessary.

As such, speculation is a tool that must be kept on a leash and, often, it is not clear how tightly you have to hold that leash.

Speculation means that in the absence of perceiving a fact, thought invents the fact. Speculation can be beneficial or detrimental.

Beneficial Speculation

In the absence of perceiving a fact, you can invent a speculation that helps move you in the direction of finding the correct answer.

Example:

I am late to work and cannot find my house keys. I remember having them in my pocket when I got home last night, then I fell asleep on the sofa. I **speculate** that my keys may have fallen out of my pocket and down the side of the sofa. I then look under the sofa cushions and find my keys.

Detrimental Speculation

In the absence of perceiving a fact, you can invent a speculation that leads you in the wrong direction and hinders you finding the correct answer.

Example:

I am late to work and cannot find my house keys. I remember that last time I lost my keys my son had moved them. I **speculate** my son has moved them again, but this time he hasn't.

My desperation to my find keys, the speculation that my son has moved them, and the fact that my son actually hasn't moved them this time, coalesce into an argument that is completely unnecessary.

Whether speculation is beneficial or detrimental is determined by the **situation** and the **attitude of the speculator**.

Speculation Determined by the Situation

In the example of the late coworker, it is much more appropriate to ask them why they are late than to imagine why they are late. If, on the other hand, you were talking to a spy, it is much less likely that asking them a question would result in a true answer.

Speculation Determined by the Speculator

Realising that you do not know something causes a degree of discomfort, and the discomfort demands to be alleviated.

If the speculator only cares about alleviating the discomfort, they will accept any speculation the mind creates that soothes the discomfort.

If the speculator is interested only in finding out what is true, then they will **not** accept any speculation the mind creates, but assess the validity of every speculation the mind creates.

The adherence to truth is a foundational constituent of a rational mind.

Conclusion

In the absence of perceiving a fact, thought invents the fact. When thought believes the invention without being able to prove its validity, thought is operating within the illusion of fact.

CHAPTER 4

THE ILLUSION OF SECURITY

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ILLUSION OF SECURITY

A thought that is presented to the mind as **complete** is interpreted by the mind as **true**. A thought that is considered to be **true** attains a status of **reality** in the mind. This enables a **thought of protection** to make the mind feel **secure in reality**.

Note:

Many thoughts produce a feeling of security. We are only using the thought of protection as an example in this chapter.

We can use a tribe to demonstrate how a thought offering protection is accepted by the mind, and makes one feel secure.

Example: The Protection of the Tribe

You are part of a tribe. Each day you see the warriors go out hunting. The warriors are strong, resourceful and brave. By identifying yourself with the tribe and contributing to it, you gain access to the protection of the warriors. Acknowledgement of that protection makes you feel secure.

The Security Established by Knowledge and Ignorance

In our chapter '**The Illusion of Completeness**' we made the statement:

'Thought knows what it knows, but it doesn't know what it doesn't know.'

The sense of security created by the tribe exists as a result of **what one knows**, but also exists because of the **ignorance of what one doesn't know**.

Explanation:

What one Knows

I feel secure because the top warrior in my village is tall and strong. He is the strongest man I have ever seen.

What one Doesn't Know

I don't know of anyone who is stronger than our villages warrior.

The sense of security I feel transitions into a sense of insecurity when I see the top warrior of another village. The warrior from the other village is taller and stronger than the warrior from our village. The other villages warrior is the strongest man I have ever seen. The identification with my village creates the notion that the other village is against me and, thus, the other villages warrior is against me. That realisation makes me feel helpless and insecure.

The Illusion of Security

Humanity is essentially an indivisible whole, but becomes divided when individuals identify themselves with something (such as geographical areas or ideologies), thus forming a group.

'Grouping is not the unification of parts, it is the fragmentation of the whole.'

Once one identifies themselves with a group, thought acts in favour of the group and to the detriment of the other groups. Self-identification establishes a sense of division that propagates conflict.

Division is the basic building block of insecurity. So, the security felt personally through self-identification is an illusion of security that propagates insecurity throughout humanity as a whole.

'Only when the individual does not divide himself, is humanity whole. Then, insecurity is not.'

Conclusion

When thought finds security in division, it has established an illusion of security. The division must inevitably distort one's thinking and bring about conflict in society.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The Necessity for Change

The brain holds knowledge in memory. Some of the knowledge we have is correct and some is incorrect. Incorrect knowledge is liable to change. Occasionally, new knowledge disproves old knowledge and requires the old knowledge to change: the old knowledge may be falsified entirely and negated, or falsified partially and adjusted.

Example:

You speculated that the coworker was late because they were lazy, but you later learned it was because they had a sick dependent at home. The knowledge of the sick dependent prompted you to change your image of the coworker from a lazy person to a busy person.

The Ability to Change

By its nature, knowledge is malleable, so it can change immediately in light of new information.

‘When thought realises it is wrong, change follows.’

The Resistance to Change

While it is illogical and irrational to do so, it is possible for thought to resist change.

Example:

We have all seen arguments between people where one person refuses to acknowledge some wrongdoing on their part in an effort to avoid embarrassment.

The **factor that makes thought change** is the **realisation that it is wrong**. Thus, to successfully resist change, thought must not realise it is wrong.

Resistance, in this context, means **the avoidance of the realisation of wrongness**.

Resistance arises when thought refuses to see that it is wrong.

How Thought Resists Change

The mind uses various techniques to prevent itself from realising it is wrong. The resistance to change acts at varying levels:

Level 1: Avoidance

The refusal to listen.

Level 2: Distortion

The distortion of what I hear, when I do listen.

Level 3: Contradiction

The immediate contradiction of the others opinion, when I don't distort what is being said.

Why Thought Resists Change

Thought resists change when change implies losing something valuable.

Example: A Christian in a Christian Community

I am Christian, my wife is Christian, my children are Christian, my community is Christian, and I work for the church.

One day, I learn something about life that contradicts my Christian beliefs. I see what I have learnt to be true, but accepting it risks detrimentally affecting my relationship with my wife, community and occupation.

I have built a life around my faith in Christianity, so the new thing I have learnt hits me at my core. While true, it creates a great sense of instability in me. Thought then reacts to the instability, seeking to alleviate it, and bringing the mind back to a state of order.

Thought resists the change as a means of bringing stability back to the mind.

The Priority of Thought

One function of thought is to ensure the stability of the mind. An unstable mind is chaotic and exhibits a mental experience of confusion where one feels desperately torn apart by competing opinions or desires. An unstable mind produces a disordered thinking process that generates the suffering of uncertainty.

When the **mind** is **unstable**, **thought** prioritises **stability** over **truth** for the purpose of **ending the suffering**.

Example: The Stability of False Beliefs

A mind can establish order through accepting false beliefs. The issue with false beliefs is that they are inevitably contradicted by truth, and cause the established order to be shattered.

It is clear that accepting the truth and reorganising one's belief structure is the optimal response, but thought does not do this. Instead, thought opts to alleviate the instability as quickly as possible by nullifying the truth and continuing on with the false.

Freedom from belief is an essential requirement to nurture the mind in truth. This is because the value one holds in false things distort the value one receives from true things.

Conclusion

When the mind has built value around a false belief, thought resists change as a means to remedy the immediate instability it feels, this action takes place at the cost of one's long-term psychological wellbeing.

CHAPTER 6

THOUGHT SEEKS SECURITY THROUGH DIVISION

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THOUGHT SEEKS SECURITY THROUGH DIVISION

One of the functions of thought is the ability to distinguish and identify.

Example:

Thought must be able to distinguish edible objects from inedible objects in order to eat, stay nourished, and survive.

Thought distinguishes edible objects from inedible objects, safety from danger, and friend from foe. The ability to distinguish enables thought to identify things in the world, it is an act of intelligence that propagates safety and comfort when it is done right.

When it is Done Wrong: Self-Identification

The ability to distinguish and identify becomes ineffective and dangerous when thought identifies **itself** with the distinction.

Example:

Thought distinguishes **Religion-A** from **Religion-B**. Thought then identifies itself with **Religion-A**

Thought distinguishes **Country-A** from **Country-B**. Thought then identifies itself with **Country-A**

Distinguishing **Religion-A** from **Religion-B** is fine, it is only when thought identifies itself with one of the distinctions that the trouble begins.

Explanation:

When thought distinguishes **Religion-A** from **Religion-B** there is no problem. Thought is able to observe, analyse and respond appropriately to **Religion-A** and **Religion-B**.

The reason for this is that there is no distortion between one's observations and actions. The reason there is no distortion is because there is no personal bias in favour of **Religion-A** or **Religion-B** because one has no personal investment in what one is perceiving.

When thought identifies with **Religion-A**, thought begins to distort its observations and analysis in favour of **Religion-A**.

The identification with **Religion-A** establishes a distortion in the observation and analysis of religion as a whole. Once thought has identified itself with **Religion-A**, it naturally distorts its relationship to the betterment of **Religion-A**, and to the detriment of **Religion-B** and other religions.

Side Note: Observation and Analysis are Distorted by Self-Identification

It is important to acknowledge that once thought has identified itself with a distinction, both observation (what one sees) and analysis (what one thinks) will become distorted. This happens because knowledge is used both in the analytical process and the observational process.

Explanation:

Commonly people understand that **knowledge is doing the thinking**, but a lesser known fact is that **knowledge is doing the looking** as well.

The **establishment of self-identification forms a bias in knowledge** that results in a **distortion of what one thinks and what one sees**.

The distortion that follows self-identification is a total distortion of the thinking process. Only the acquisition and acceptance of new information that contradicts the validity of the self-identification can free the mind from the distortion.

The Purpose of Self-Identification

The reason thought identifies with something is for the purpose of the establishing security.

Example:

When I identify with **Religion-A** it makes me feel secure. **Religion-A** makes me feel comfortable, reassured, and like I belong.

Freedom from Self-Identification

That which **one identifies with** is what **one is attached to**.

Freedom from the self-identification, and the distortion that inevitably arises out of it, comes only when thought understands that the thing it has attached to, which it hoped to find security in, there is actually no security in. Once there is this realisation the self-identification is dropped and the distortion alleviated.

The Conflict of Self-Identification

Identification with a distinction produces a distortion that skews opinion and behaviour. The skew forms the distinction into a division and causes conflict to arise.

'The identification with a part sets up a division in the whole.'

Example:

Person-A identifies with **Religion-A**. **Person-A** then acts for the betterment of **Religion-A**, even if that is to the detriment of **Religion-B**.

Person-B identifies with **Religion-B**. **Person-B** then acts for the betterment of **Religion-B**, even if that is to the detriment of **Religion-A**.

Person-A and **Person-B** are, thus, eternally in conflict with each other.

Conclusion

The ability to distinguish is a necessary function of intelligence that enables a person to skilfully navigate the world.

When thought identifies itself with a distinction, it distorts observation and analysis in favour of what thought has identified itself with. The identification brings about a behaviour that is holistically divisive and propagates conflict.

CHAPTER 7

THOUGHT LOSES TRACK OF WHAT IT HAS CREATED

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THOUGHT LOSES TRACK OF WHAT IT HAS CREATED

Thoughts are more than images in the mind. Through action, thought can manifest itself in the physical world.

Example: The Invention of the Car

The invention of the car was first an imagination, and then thought worked out how to bring that imagination into reality.

Once a thought has been manifested into physical form, it attains a reality independent of the mind (or minds) that created it. Following its creation, other people interact with the creation, developing its meaning, and transforming it, over time.

Example: The Development of the Car

The first car has been developed into the cars we see today.

Because the creation has an independent reality, the next generation grow up with that invention, never knowing a time when it didn't exist. To any who do not contemplate its creation, the creation attains a sense of permanence: the notion that 'it has always been that way, will always be that way, and couldn't be any other way'.

Example: The Establishment of a Country

Long ago, England was established as a country. Today people are born, and grow up considering themselves to be English without even questioning what it means. Some are even willing to put their lives on the line to defend England.

Nevertheless, when you go to the border, you see there is nothing there. England is an imagination that people believe in. The belief is maintained and strengthened through the flag, the monarchy, the passport, and so on.

The belief in England creates a real division between England and the other countries, and it also creates the illusion of unity within its borders. There is no unity within the borders of England or any other country. The political powers of that country are opposing each other, and the companies incorporated within that country are competing with each other.

The Problem with Thought Losing Track of what it has Created

It is possible for thought to lose track of the fact that it invented the car and, continue to develop the car. This does not create a problem in society. This is because the creation of the car was not a 'wrong turn'. The creation of a country, on the other hand, was a wrong turn. It was a wrong turn because it established a division that prevents humanity working together.

Explanation:

The problem with nationalism is that it promotes the notion that division is a reality, and relegates progression to the activity of conflict.

Thought losing track of what it has created causes an ignorance that prevents thought coming upon the solution to the problem.

When one takes the country to be a fact, thought is relegated to thinking in terms of division:

Example:

How can we improve relations between England and the United States?

How can we improve the security of England without threatening another country and provoking a war?

Thinking in terms of division is incapable of solving the problem because the problem is the division itself. By accepting the division as a premise of its thinking, thought considers '**what can I do about the division?**' rather than '**why do I create the division?**'.

Example: Social Anxiety

When the mind accepts anxiety as a fact, it asks itself:

How can I avoid my anxiety?

How can I reduce my anxiety?

How can I defeat my anxiety?

When the mind sees that it is the one creating anxiety, it can pose the correct question, which is:

Why do I create anxiety?

The problem is not '**what should thought do about X?**', the problem is '**why is thought continually creating X?**'.

The same is true for the country. Thought maintains the problems of nationalism by thinking and acting in terms of 'my country'. When thought ceases to act in terms of 'my country', there is no country and no problem (of that kind).

Conclusion

When thought loses track of what it has created, it relegates itself to combating the reality it believes to exist.

When thought realises what it is creating, it can then challenge why it is creating it. That change of perspective has the potential to free thought from operating within that framework. When thought is no longer operating within that framework, that particular problem no longer exists.