

CONSCIOUSNESS.

Zur Kritik des Seelenbegriffs: einige Bemerkungen beim Studium der Wundt'schen Psychologie. ALLEN VANNÉRUS. Archiv für System. Philosophie, Bd. I. Heft 3, 360-400. 1895.

Wundt rightly maintains, says his critic, that the subject of psychology, from the psychological point of view, exists in the activity of the psychical process and not as a substance lying back of it. But his opposition to the theory of a substantial soul rests on a restricted conception of substance, which need denote no more than the real ground for determinations not absolutely independent or be more than an abstractly conceived factor in a continuously changing whole. And his denial of the applicability of the conception to inner reality on the ground that the latter is reality at first hand, and therefore not constituted by a category which is its own product, rests on a mistake as to the facts. For only an actual content of consciousness is directly intuited, whereas other aspects of psychical reality, the fusion of sensations, for instance, can only be inferred. Wundt's emphasis of the process in mental life seriously threatens its real unity. But change without permanence is impossible. It is psychologically impossible because the relating activities of consciousness presuppose at least a relatively permanent subject, and because, without some constancy in the subject, not only would all mental states eventually pass into nothingness, but, except by a miracle, no mental state could ever arise. Logically, again, all activity implies a constant factor; otherwise reality is 'a hideous mystery of limitless possibilities.' Finally, the theory of parallelism requires an original psychical reality as the subject of the development of consciousness and the basis of its various modes. This original psychic basis of mental life is constant, not as a substance 'lying back' of experience, but in the sense that it is self-identical in its different functions. Wundt, however, makes the unity of the mental life consist in the connection of the psychical events themselves. But if these events are not functions of the same subject, how is such connection possible? We must postulate their creation *ex nihilo* and assume as many egos as states of consciousness. The truth about the soul is that it is a living, organic unity. The psychical life is a single undivided whole and itself the real unitary subject. This concrete living self consists in given ideas, feelings and volitions and the activity by which these functions are conditioned; the whole, however, is unified by a factor which in itself is the abstract ego and from the empiri-

cal point of view one side of that psychophysical substance in which Wundt finds the substrate and basis of the soul's unity.

Wundt's reply to this argumentation in the current number of the 'Philosophische Studien' (XII., 37 ff.) is to the effect that his critic has not sufficiently grasped the distinction between physical science and psychology, according to which the latter is science of experience as immediately given, whereas the standpoint of the former requires it to deal with objects constructed by thought. Consequently a physical hypothesis is tested by its utility, a psychological by fact, and the fact is that no other unity is found or required in the psychical life except that which exists in the connection of its processes. This is singularly unsympathetic and avoids the real issue. The real question is, Is there discoverable, whether by direct inspection or by reflection, in the movement of our subjective experience, any constant factor? Is the psychical life like a stream which simply flows on or is it a process of self-development? Sameness without change is asserted by nobody; change with the sense of sameness is a fact. Is the sameness predicated really there? That is the real question, as James puts it. Theories of 'actuality' and 'substantiality' are altogether subordinate, mere names. And the question is not to be set aside by the arbitrary distinction of hypothesis of fact and hypothesis of utility nor referred for answer to such irrelevant illustrations as Kant's elastic balls, which, if they were conscious, would be obliged to suppose, as we are, that they themselves were the subjects of experiences referred to the past but appropriated by the present self, whose identity with the past self would be, if illusion, then a necessary illusion.

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Le Moi des Mourants. V. EGGER. *Revue Philosophique*, XLI., 26-38. Jan. 1896.

Many persons who have survived an accident that seemed to be fatal report that at the time their whole past life came up before them. This experience, which is not, however, to be taken literally, M. Egger is disposed to connect, not with pathological exaltations of memory in epileptics, etc., but with quite normal phenomena. Noticing that children apparently do not have the experience, he refers to the aggregation of memories with which the ego is continually being constituted from youth to age, and which is particularly marked in the aged, and the fact that the civilized adult about to die and capable of reflection normally realizes his personality in a form vivid and significant. But with regard to their experiences we want more evidence. The