

Flying Saucers

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FLYING SAUCERS

THE recent sighting of so-called "Flying Saucers," whatever their origin, should remind philosophers that man's belief in his central, privileged, and unique metaphysical status in the universe may be mistaken, and that elsewhere intelligent life may have occurred equal in some respects, and in some or perhaps all, superior to his particular brand. This belief, although its astronomical, astro-physical, biological, and psychological props have been knocked from beneath it, leaving it dangling with only a slippery handhold on metaphysics, still prevails in much western philosophy, theology, and ethics. It has indeed been occasionally challenged, but with no serious disturbance to human smugness.

Science, however, admits the probability of such life. Spencer Jones, the Astronomer Royal, believes it may exist on one in a thousand or even only one in a million of a comparatively limited number of solar systems scattered among the million or more galaxies perceivable by our present telescopes.¹ But the Cambridge astro-physicist Hoyle estimates the number of inhabited planets as at least a hundred thousand in our galaxy alone,²—a sizeable population for the observed universe, if our galaxy is typical. The existence of life close at hand on Mars, which is a dying planet, a *memento mori* to the earth, has been much debated. Almost certainly there is still vegetation there, and in the past, at any rate, life existed possibly in higher animal and intelligent forms.³ Indeed the Mexican astronomer Ancona Albertos thinks it not impossible that, although other animal life is now extinct, a superior species, better adjusted naturally and capable of adapting itself artificially to the slow decline of the planet, may have taken refuge in its interior.⁴ Heard, who believes the flying saucers come from Mars, says that this species may have survived on the exterior as an insect of no great size but of great intelligence. As evidence of the development, perhaps still in progress, of mind in terrestrial insects, and of the possibility that on earth they may eventually replace man as its highest example, he refers to von Fritsch's

¹ *Life On Other Worlds*, ch. X.

² *The Nature of the Universe*, American ed., pp. 101-102.

³ Spencer Jones, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

⁴ *El Universo*, Mexico, 1947, p. 274.

experiments with the ability of bees to compute, remember, communicate, and understand by arithmetical and geometrical devices the distance and direction from the hive of a new source of honey and the obstacles to be flown over and around on the way.⁵

Hoyle, to be sure, mentions certain survival values of an anthropoid structure,⁶ partially substantiated by the report, if true, of three crashed flying saucers with dead crews of "little men," found somewhere in the southwestern United States.⁷ Let us hope, however, that in other anthropoid saucerian species the prehensile tail has been preserved, for the loss of which in his evolution man is less handy. But Spencer Jones points out that on other planets, even minor differences in physical environment may have produced intelligent life in forms at which man cannot even guess. The substitution of silicon for carbon in organic components would enable it to exist at higher temperatures,⁸ associated in the mind of God, the idealists might suggest, with the *percipi* constituting the body of a salamander.

Within the range of the human imagination, however, are H. G. Wells' Martians who reproduce a-sexually by budding off their offspring, feed themselves without digestive apparatus by blood transfusion, and communicate by telepathy; and his Selenites, oversized carnivorous insects inhabiting the interior of the moon, socially organized like ants, but with far greater specialization of physical and mental functions initiated at the larva stage.⁹ Within that of sober, scientific speculation founded on observation, is Haldane's discussion of the scientific, theological, and philosophical inferences reflective dogs, bees, and molluscs might draw from their experiences, and of the "personality problem" of a severed self-conscious worm whose halves went their separate ways remembering when they were one and the same person, and that person neither one of them.¹⁰ Possibly, too, nature has somewhere outdone the cybernetic researchers by skipping the organic stage and producing self-conscious computing machines. These, though intelligent, would not be *alive*. But neither can disembodied spirits be said to *live*, unless we eviscerate the word of its ordinary meaning and embalm it with that of existence in general. However, to speculate about the state and content of a consciousness devoid of organic support would lead us too far afield or astray.

⁵ *Is Another World Watching?*

⁶ Hoyle, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

⁷ Scully, *Behind the Flying Saucers*.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

⁹ *The War of the Worlds. The First Men in the Moon.*

¹⁰ Essay entitled "Other Possible Worlds" in volume of the same name.

It is an interesting question whether the higher, self-conscious, personal degree of intelligent life on other planets has been gradually evolved, or has suddenly emerged, or is due, as some think it is in man, to the intervention, at a certain stage of mental evolution, of specially created souls or spirits. The last can scarcely be the case with species of the severed worm type, which propagate by physiological and psychological fragmentation, and, instead of dying, divide into segments endowed with a new lease of life and with selves in which the parent self survives. They would seem to offer neither landing nor take-off for a soul from above.

Personally, I hope the saucers are space-ships from other worlds, manned by beings far differently constituted physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually from ourselves. I should enjoy the flutter they would then cause in earthly, theological and philosophical dove-cotes. Moreover, anthropomorphic and anthropocentric concepts of the universe give me claustrophobia. Despite their cosy interiors and creature spiritual comforts, I find them stuffy and too redolent of *homo sapiens*, and I would like to see their closed doors and curtained windows blown open by winds of doctrine from other worlds. But, alas for my wishful thinking, I think that what I saw, not so long ago, at high noon was the planet Venus.

I feel free, however, to compensate in fancy for this disappointment in fact by exercising the will to believe and remaining steadfast in the faith, as well attested as any other in things hoped for but unseen, that intelligent life exists in forms, quite different from ours, dispersed throughout the universe. As to the flying saucers, I shall adopt, pending further investigation, the prudent reserve of the Church towards reported apparitions from on high. In any case it seems to me that human philosophy, unless it is to be parochial and confined to editorial comment on what goes on in the home town, should give some thought to what may be taking place beyond the city limits. Waiving, then, the spatio-temporal difficulties of convoking, convening, and establishing communication between the members of an Interplanetary Philosophical Congress, I propose, just to see at least something of what might happen, to assemble somewhere in Wonderland one composed of the most eminent scientists, theologians, and philosophers selected from a variety of forms of saucerian life by no means exhaustive of its possibilities but sufficient to point a moral and adorn a tale.

We will leave to the imagination their diversity of life-expectancy and of methods of reproduction, nutrition, locomotion, manipulation, communication, sense-perception, and the like. Their sensible worlds will be conditioned by the number, nature, and arrangement of their sense-organs (species with a circle of ten

eyes like a black-widow spider must have a visual field unlike the human), of the stimuli to which they are sensitive, and of the spatio-temporal dimensions in which the particular content is laid out. Some species may be Flatlanders; others may be perceptive and mobile in at least a fourth spatial dimension. Their time-streams, too, may be dissimilar. A thousand years in the sight of one may be as yesterday in that of another. Indeed, in that of a man transferred to a galaxy moving at approximately the speed of light, a hundred thousand would be but as two, physiologically, psychologically, and in the number of times he had to wind his watch. Some races may have dominant senses, like canine smell and human sight, in terms of which they do the greater part, not only of their perceiving, but of their thinking and evaluating. A mystical dog, for example, would be rapt away in a beatific odor. Of observed differences in the performance of organic functions and in the possession of extra senses, like the "homing" in dogs and pigeons, we have abundant hints in terrestrial animals.

Again, Haldane has considered the possibility and implications of non-spatial purely temporal, intricate and diversified streams of self-consciousness. But could such persons without awareness of anything *outside*, be aware of anything *beside*, themselves? Must not discarnate spirits, who presumably have shed space along with their bodies, be solipsists?

Also, Spinoza's theory of Infinite Attributes suggests other than spatio-temporal modes of sense-perception. Still, Saucerians unaware of their extension would figure as modifications of it, i.e., as bodies, in the experience of those conscious of it. And the latter would appear as modifications of such of their other attributes as, unperceived by themselves, the others perceived. In any case, we will assume that all the Saucerians are present in some guise in one another's perceptual fields, which we will regard for our purposes as spatio-temporal. We will further assume that the content of these fields is sufficiently intersubjective and communicable to form a continuum and to permit a common objective reference to one and the same world. These and the other assumptions we shall make are arbitrary and may cover only a fraction of the possibilities of intelligent life, just as our observation of the space-time continuum, forever restricted by the finite speed of light and by the reduction of its frequency to zero and of its wave-lengths to infinity after traversing a thousand seven hundred and fifty million light-years, covers but a fraction of a whole, which may conceal beyond our horizons we know not what. Our Interplanetary Congress is, then, at the most no more than divisional, or perhaps no more than the meeting of a local philosophy club.

As the fruit of having probably to deal, as man does, with a universe in part friendly, in part hostile to his interests, and with a conflict of individual wills and acts within the species itself, we shall endow all the Saucerians with pleasure and pain and with a knowledge of good and evil, awakened, however, in different ways and by different circumstances in each race. Possibly some species, like souls in Paradise, are self-determined to the good only and, freed from virtue along with vice, find morality meaningless. Aristotle noted the immunity of the gods to the exigencies of ethics. But with such we shall not reckon.

But may not some species transcend a moral order, because of the absence rather than the perfection of social organization? The answer depends upon whether or not *all* self-consciousness, like human, is essentially social and dependent from the beginning upon the recognition of a plurality of selves. If there can be no *ego* without an *alter*, non-social species are ruled out, and furthermore, support is given to a polytheistic rather than a monotheistic type of personal theism. When a student at Oxford, I noted this support in a paper entitled, I think, "The Social God," read before an undergraduate philosophical club. But I was at once accused by my Anglican friends, including a future archbishop, of trying to americanize the Godhead.

To be sure, some human philosophers and theologians maintain that a personal God can exist without other persons from whom to distinguish and with whom to identify himself. But this smacks of the fallacy of honorifics, that is, of supposing that modification by eulogistic terms and prefixes, especially if surcharged with mystery, can somehow alter without changing the meaning of a word and sanction and even sanctify its equivocal use. Of this semantic schizophrenia we may regard the concept of non-social but nevertheless self-conscious and personal Saucerians an example without benefit of clergy.

The occasions of pleasure and pain and of natural and moral good and evil, the emotional and behavioristic responses to them, and the ways of life personal, moral, social, political, economic, and cultural on the different planets may be very diverse. Species feeding by blood transfusion or procreating a-sexually, can scarcely have the same general set-up as those reproducing sexually and endowed—or encumbered—with viscera. And among the latter, different methods of sexual propagation and of nutrition will produce different emotional evaluations and social and moral systems. Haldane has noted the effects that even periodicity rather than the uninterrupted persistence of sexual desire in man would have on human relations, institutions, and ideals.

Although aesthetic sensitivity is, as Aristotle remarked of pleasure, a work of supererogation on nature's part, we shall attribute it to all the Saucerians, subject to variations in degree, sources, and expression in works of art. Nor should we deny them a sense of humor and an eye for the comic value in their own conduct and that of the universe. Religious experience, also, to which Plato and Plotinus considered aesthetic the immediate prelude, may be possessed by them all in its varieties and subvarieties, mystical, impersonal, and personal; constant, however, in revealing something in the real man calls God. Like aesthetic sensitivity, it may differ in degree and kind in different races and individuals. And like aesthetic it may be disparaged on moral grounds by those deficient in it, as an escape from reality that leads only to illusions not only superfluous but opposed to welfare and progress on the planet in question. But like aesthetic, it will be to those who possess it an access to reality that makes all the difference in their lives. To them it will be their deepest and highest attachment to the real—of all experiences the one most worth living and, if necessary, dying for.

Irreducible to other values yet supervening upon them all, it will probably have enlisted them everywhere as auxiliaries. On every planet there may be revelations, incarnations, redemptions, eschatologies, rites, ceremonies, and sacraments fortified by theological beliefs (which are often mistaken for religious experience and substituted for it), all designed to relate the rest of the real to the divine, and especially to overcome the estrangement of the finite individual from God. These doctrines and measures, the fruit perhaps of a long evolution of religious experience and beliefs from primitive beginnings, will be suitable to the nature and needs of each species.

We shall also credit all the Saucerians with a desire for knowledge for its own sake, disinterested in the practical results and the moral and religious implications of its findings. For, an unbiased search for truth is of the essence of higher intelligence, and without the theoretic, there can be no more than hand to mouth practical sciences. We may suppose this curiosity also to have given rise to philosophical as well as scientific hypotheses. But in them it will have been more harassed by the lobbying of moral, religious, and economic pressure groups, and will have produced systems more expressive of these interests than of a desire to know things as they are. Incidentally, such systems invert the relation between the pure and the applied sciences. In science the findings of a disinterested search for truth censor wishful thinking and restrain its enactment in practice. In "interested" philosophies wishful think-

ing censors the search for truth and limits what may be entertained in theory. Since the total perspectives of all kinds of Saucerians may have suggested the same variety of theological and philosophical interpretations of their contents, we may expect all the space-ships to have landed their planetary quotas of all the "isms" and "ists" man has so far produced on earth.

Having examined the birth-certificates, passports, academic degrees, contributions to the sum of saucerian knowledge, and other credentials of the delegates, we will now call the Congress to order, or rather disorder. For, if the most violent and even murderous antipathies of *homo sapiens* are typically saucerian, the first reaction of the members will be one of horror at one another's physical looks, preferences, and habits. We can imagine the scene—a hall full of a variety of anthropoid and other mammalian types, as well as those of apparently insect, arthropod, reptilian, saurian, cephalopod, avian, and piscene origin, not to speak of still others defying terrestrial biological classification; all recoiling from one another with the gestures of aversion characteristic of their kinds. However, by straining the imagination, we may imagine these animal prejudices in part overcome, thanks to the comparative biologists, physiologists, and psychologists.

But there will be another outburst when the delegates compare their religious, moral, social, political, and economic ways of life. Each planet will have regarded its as not only relatively but absolutely best, and will be outraged when confronted with others quite different in many or all respects, but equally well founded naturally and recommended supernaturally. There will also be a subsidiary tempest in a teapot excited by divergent opinions as to what in both nature and art should give aesthetic pleasure—the human form divine, for instance, appearing ludicrous, misshapen, and disgusting to other Saucerians.

A little common sense, however, administered by the comparative ethnologists and sociologists, will suggest that there can be no question of better and worse between the ways of life of the different species. Each will be pursuing the good proper to its kind, and none can be blamed for not pursuing that of another, or be judged with reference to other than the perfection indicated by its particular nature. These perfections are incommensurable, since what one race finds deficient in another may be compensated by something itself lacks. Thus the seeming absence in the life of Wells' Martians of the romance and conviviality that so enrich human existence may be offset by spiritual riches unknown to man. Moreover, judging from human experience, no species wishes to be other than itself or to realize other than the possibilities of its own

nature. Plato remarked that no sensible man wants to be an oyster in spite of advantages enjoyed by the latter. But he failed to remark, and here some ostracean Plato might have given him tit-for-tat, that no intelligent oyster wants to be a man.

Once the arrogant myth of a superior race—a *Herrenvolk*—of Saucerians with a superior way of life and a privileged place in the universe, the measure of all things, even of God, has been exploded and all have confessed their equality in the sight of the real, constants may appear in their various ways of life and points of view. These will perhaps be perceived first by the scientists, who may find their planetary hypotheses in all fields supplementary and reciprocally corrective. Also, in many cases representatives of the same schools and subdivisions of philosophy may discover that their planetary differences of opinion are superficial and can be easily reconciled. Even the moralists may be brought to confess that the same ethical principles are ubiquitous and enduring, in spite of the different and changing patterns of right and wrong behavior with which they are interwoven on the various planets. The Golden Rule, for example, and the virtues that implement it, supplemented by a recognition that one person's meat may be another's poison, may prove a counsel of perfection for all Saucerians. At the same time the Congress will perhaps agree with Aristotle that ethics is an inexact science.

The behavior of values in general, because of its eccentricity, should interest interplanetary axiology. If values are absolute and exist apart from saucerian evaluations, we might expect truth, beauty, and goodness to coincide in a kind of Platonic Form of the Good displayed, even if through a glass darkly in finite perspectives, nevertheless as a unit whose components imply one another and always appear together to the same degree. But if the human perspective is typically saucerian, this is not the case. There values not only are blurred, but exist independently of, and even in antagonism to, one another. Both more and less of the real may look intelligible than looks good and beautiful, beautiful than looks intelligible and good, and good than looks intelligible and beautiful. Furthermore, truth may outrage moral and aesthetic sensibility, art morality, morality art, and morality, at least, may seek to suppress truths of which it disapproves. Again, though the personal variety of the religious value is combinable with the others, the impersonal transcends both natural and moral good and evil, and the mystical, if pure, transcends them all. What does all this mean? Would the same eccentricity obtain in transfinite evaluations of the real? Almost certainly, if the real is tychistic and infected with obstructions, material or spiritual, that limit, it may be

unevenly, foreknowledge, predestination, and the accomplishment of purpose. If the real is not, then saucerian vision is, perhaps, to different degrees among the different species, nearsighted and astigmatic.

We pass now to the interplanetary theologians and metaphysicians. They also will be able to compose to a larger extent the planetary disputes within their respective schools and present united fronts at the Congress. For example, the monistic idealists can agree, thanks to the ability of the Absolute to dispose of contradictions. But among the pluralists there will be dissension between the severed worm types and the adherents of Berkeley. The former, being segments of the soul and personality as well as of the body of the parent, will disagree with the latter, whose method of propagation involving no psychological continuity between successive generations permits the opinion that spirits have no forebears but are specially created entities. Not only will this view contradict their personal experience, but they can point out the discrepancy in it between the way spirits originate and the concatenation in the divine mind of the ideas constituting their bodies. Perhaps a compromise can be found in the doctrine of traducianism modified to allow both conscious continuity and discontinuity with the spirit of the parent. This would correct the inconsistency in the Berkeleian theory and interrelate the spirits of successive generations of the same family as the ideas constituting their bodies are related.

Moreover, dividing instead of dying when they break up, and passing on intact their spiritual as well as their material substance to their segments, the severed worm types will complicate interplanetary eschatology. They will be subject to destruction by "acts of God," and familiar, it may be, with natural death in their lower animals, but they will associate immortality only with segmentation. Hence they may be surprised at finding higher forms of intelligent life also subject to death, and may be sceptical of the belief that the latter survive it whereas the lower animals do not. Reincarnation they will regard more favorably, as a hop-skip-and-jump version of their own views. On the other hand, perishable species may be shocked by the evidence of a passing on but not away unprovided for by their beliefs. Also they may disagree as to the desirability and the most probable form of survival. A questionnaire on the subject once circulated by Schiller elicited a variety of answers from human beings alone. Then, too, some may bear out Metchnikoff's idea that a wish for non-survival may occur in those who, instead of being cut off in the flower of their old age, live out the life-span allotted to their species and find towards the

end death natural and desirable. Hoyle, for example, thinks that at the end of 300 years or so he would get tired of being himself. Possibly on some planets a more advanced parapsychology and understanding of the relation between mind and body may have provided more information on the subject to bring before the Congress.

The mystical and impersonal theists will have little to dispute about, but the personal ones will have much. The latter will believe, each that his planetary god in whose image his species is created, and who shares and protects its special interests, is the God of the entire universe. Confrontation with other, differently constituted gods backed by equally authoritative vouchers will create an awkward situation. For all such gods will be tribal and equally fitted or unfitted to monopolize a cosmic role. Nevertheless these planetary variables may reveal a personal constant endowed with attributes valued throughout all worlds as divine. An interplanetary personal *theology* may then be constructed. But it will have to be so abstract that its constant will scarcely work pragmatically as one and the same *experienced* personal God for all Saucerians alike, commanding their religious sympathy and devotion as well as their theological assent.

This difficulty is illustrated by the impossibility of representing satisfactorily such a God in an interplanetary religious art. True, the dull and distasteful in the subject matter of human religious art may be so "distanced" by previous religious associations as to be convertible into a source not only of aesthetic pleasure but of further religious inspiration. But the sensible representation of an interplanetary deity will have to combine the fundamental differences in structure and to appeal to the different dominant senses of the various saucerian races without accenting the distinctive features of one more than those of another. The result will be a graven or painted image either so surrealist and complex or so composite and unspecific as neither to express nor to reinforce the religious experience of any planet, despite the aesthetic satisfaction it may give as a work of art.

This experience will continue to be communion with a person unmistakably akin to the species in question; each star having, as Plato suggested, its own god. And religious art on every planet will bear out the observations of Xenophanes. Interplanetary monotheism may, then, seem an interpretation of planetary religious experience of the personal variety dictated by other than religious purposes—as, for example, the principle of economy. Still, both Hume and William James did not consider polytheism a multipli-

cation of principles of explanation beyond what is necessary in the human perspective alone.

The presumably teleological direction of the world-process by an interplanetary personal deity will also run into trouble. In addition to the planetary puzzles of distinguishing, *prima facie*, teleological from non-teleological natural processes (to the Epicurean gods the partly mechanical, partly tychistic movement of the atoms in space must have seemed an exhibition of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power) and of inferring from the behavior of the universe its purpose, there will be that of relativity to different frames of reference. What appears beneficent relatively to one may appear malefic relatively to another, and indifferent relatively to a third. So, too, with wisdom and power. Moreover, a plus in the exhibition of one divine attribute may suggest a minus in that of the others—unlimited power a deficiency in wisdom or goodness or both, and vice versa. And the possible combinations of plus and minus in the relation of these attributes to one another, may be rung over and over again in millions or billions of different perspectives.

This difficulty can be dealt with by invoking the Leibnizian principle of compossibility. The interplanetary purpose of the world-process, it may be said, is to obtain the greatest possible variety of Saucerians consistent with the greatest possible moral order; that is, with the greatest possible impartial distribution of happiness among the inhabited planets at the least possible sacrifice of the interests of one species to those of another. Hence the dysteleology that infects all the island-universes is a proof that all things are ordered for the best, and the more widely distributed evil is, the surer all Saucerians can be that nothing could be better for all concerned.

Compossibility, however, also supports the hypothesis of a plurality of equally beneficent and powerful purposes either pulling against one another or pooling their particular interests and resources in order to get the best all round results. Aristotle, we may remember, was uncertain whether the behavior of the universe could be explained by the attraction of a single "beloved" or required that of fifty-five unmoved movers compounding their cross-purposes.

This new interplanetary contribution to the defense of teleology will be welcomed by the saucerian pluralistic idealists as additional compensation for their lack of realistic explanations, like intractable matter, of the prevalence of dysteleology throughout the galaxies. Indeed, some of them, suspicious of the adequacy of the stock idealistic excuses for evil, like honorifics or the misuse of free-

will in contravention of divine law, may throw dispersed teleology into reverse and invoke malevolent spiritual activity as an explanation. And they may wonder whether it indicates a single evil purpose distracted by a number of equally attractive ways of thwarting the divine, or several evil spirits conspiring to that end. For this wonder they will have precedent. Whereas Aristotle was undecided as to whether it took one or fifty-five gods to make the world go round, Plato was uncertain as to the number of evil world-souls it took to make it wobble.

The persistent haunting of the saucerian personal theists by polytheism is noteworthy. It appears first in the seemingly plural and social nature of *all* self-consciousness and personality. It cannot be exorcised by theological and metaphysical incantations from the personal variety of religious experience, and it materializes for better or worse in attempted teleological explanations of the behavior of the real relatively to different frames of reference. Also, perhaps the seeming independence of values on one another and their lack of co-operation may be its rappings.

The idealists will be the worse haunted by polytheism, as its apparition will have raised for them the ghost of a difficulty supposedly effectually smothered by honorifics. Saucerian experience seems to be of something other than, and existing independently of, itself, which guarantees participation by the experiencers in the *same* seemingly objective world. For the idealists this something can only be more experience (since nothing exists but *percipere* and *percipi*), which they locate in a divine mind. But what is the divine experience of? The answer can only be "of itself," since there is no further experience for it to perceive, and it is the experience in which all others terminate. But this depriving the divine experience of its objective "of-ness" and turning it from an extrovert into an introvert makes the term equivocal, with one meaning for God, another for the Saucerians.

Equivocation, however, since honorifics between equals confer no privileges, is impossible between divine minds, and the *percipi* of one has as much claim as that of another to be the common object of the others' *percipere*. If we try to preserve their co-equality by saying that the *percipi* of no one of them is the object experienced by the others, all will be solipsists, Leibnitzian windowless monads, but worse off for the want of pre-established harmony (for who is to pre-establish it?) to guarantee even the similarity, let alone the sameness, of what they are perceiving. Shall we then play no favorites and say that all equally perceive one another's perceptions? But in that case they will be no better off. They will be playing a celestial game of "thimble, thimble, who's got the

thimble." For there will be as many thimble-ideas as there are divine minds, and whose idea is the "real" objective thimble to which all other thimble-ideas refer will be an everlasting question. Again, whose divine thimble is the common object of saucerian perception? If Berkeley had not disqualified the divine mind by honorifics it would have had to play the game with human and other saucerian spirits with no one winning. It may be argued, therefore, that for an object to be *common to* and the *same for* a number of minds it cannot be located in any one of them and must exist independently of being experienced.

Interesting, too, is the little light religious experience, for all its importance, sheds upon the nature of the real. God is at least a value common to a variable conscious content. But this, being at variance with itself, lends itself to conflicting theological and philosophical interpretations and inferences therefrom as to the character of reality. What is it that on every planet reveals itself to some as a person or persons, the image of themselves made perfect, in whose presence they are at rest; to others as the peace given by the impersonal grandeur of the vision of all things under the aspect of eternity or by the evening silence in the forests and the calm above the mountain tops; and to still others as the ineffable bliss of self-obliteration in Nirvana, nothingness relatively to all else but in itself so positive it turns all else to nothing? Nevertheless the co-equal majesty and the co-eternal glory with which the varieties of religious experience invest the real are no superficial and fictitious splendor. In the innumerable worlds in which the innumerable forms of intelligent life emerge, they consummate in their several ways and appropriately to each species the union existing between mind and the rest of nature.

The partial estrangement of these worlds and forms from one another by barriers of incommunicable experience may have suggested to the Saucerians a question once raised, if I remember rightly, in a conversation with Santayana. May there not be other reals than ours in no relation whatsoever to it or to one another,—isolated totalities of existence hermetically sealed, like ours, within themselves? And may they not be differently constituted and exemplify the variety of metaphysical construction attributed to ours by different philosophical systems? However that may be, though the proper study of mankind or of any other kind can no longer be itself, sufficient unto that study is the nature of the real to which man and the other Saucerians happen to belong.

The results may seem disappointing. In spite of the increase in scientific knowledge, fundamental metaphysical problems will remain unchanged and as far from solution as ever. The real will

continue its untidy habit of slopping over, as a colleague of mine once expressed it, any philosophical or theological system into which one tries to pour it. And to tidy up things, especially in systems designed to provide a hypothetical real satisfactory in all respects to all Saucerians, superfluous and negative instances will continue, as in the past, to be explained as flaws incidental to finite perspectives rather than as signs of anything amiss or awry in the rest of reality. But are not the perspectives themselves parts of the real, and their flaws its? And does not the mere *having to show* that "all's right with the world" show that something is wrong with it, and involve justifying the necessity of justification *ad infinitum*? The interplanetary will doubtless echo the old planetary answer—that negative instances can be immediately and once and for all justified and removed by sufficient faith in their non-existence. This popular and convenient method of disposing of them can, however, be used with equal reason by the adherents of all systems as a counter-move against criticism, and can thus end all discussion in a philosophical or theological stalemate.

We may expect, therefore, the delegates to disband still convinced of the superior probability and the absolute truth of their respective hypotheses. But from now on they will have to wear their beliefs with a difference. For the Congress will have effected one spiritual revolution from which none can escape. It will have redressed the lop-sidedness of the universe by making the base of the Attribute of Thought, to put it in Spinozistic terms, co-extensive with the Attribute of Extension.

The history of the human perspective in this respect is instructive and probably typical of many saucerian frames of reference. For a long time the restricted amount of supposed saucerian mind in the universe—that of the human species alone—was in proportion to the restricted amount of space-time the universe was supposed to contain. Then all restrictions were suddenly removed from the amount of space-time and from the number of probably inhabited worlds, but with no counterbalancing increase in the amount of supposed saucerian mind, which remained restricted to the planet Earth. To be sure, the possible spatio-temporal scope of human thought was indefinitely enlarged. But the spiritual significance of its amplification was minimized, and the implication that intelligent life might exist in other forms in other worlds was ignored as not only fantastic but prejudicial to faith and morals. Hence the Attribute of Thought remained geo-centric and Ptolemaic in its idea of the extent of its base, after its idea of Extension had become post-Copernican.

Interplanetary travel, to be sure, may have already acquainted many species with the dispersion of thought in various forms throughout the universe, and thus brought the two Attributes into balance in their perspectives. Others regarding it as probable may have modified their thinking accordingly. But to the rest, including man, who so far has only toyed with the idea in flights of the imagination, the certainty that intelligent and moral life has developed in other worlds in all sorts of ways other than theirs, will be more upsetting than the post-Copernican astronomy, the Darwinian and Freudian discoveries, and Einstein's theory of relativity have been on earth. Henceforth there can be no reducing the real to a little theatre for the strutting of a single species declaiming lines composed with a view to featuring itself as the star of the cosmic drama. From now on every inhabited world will have to live enlightened by the knowledge that it is but one of many going their several ways of self-fulfilment; and all planetary thinking will now have to be interplanetary in scope and scale, viewing and evaluating the real through a thousand eyes instead of one, and accepting humbly the implications for itself of the wider vision.

The universe thus revealed will not only acquire more majesty and more mystery, it will be friendlier. The starry heavens will inspire in each species an added awe for knowing that it is no lonely watcher of a wasteland of all space and time lifeless except for itself, and that where light is there also is life akin to its own. And could that light speak, it might whisper that more than a thousand million years ago, when the creation of man was just beginning in the warm shallows of a pre-Cambrian sea, the same questions and answers as agitate the human mind today were being asked and answered in some galaxy from which all life has long since departed. And aeons hence the astronomers of some race of Saucerians whose evolution has not yet begun, detecting the faint glow of a galaxy incredibly distant at the very edge of the forever invisible, may decipher its message—that once upon a time on a lesser planet of a minor solar system in that galaxy an extinct form of intelligent life, perhaps mediocre compared with theirs, was also wondering what it is all about.

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