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ARISTOTELIAN SOCIETY.  
NEW SERIES. - VOL. XI**

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**VARIOUS**

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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
ARISTOTELIAN SOCIETY.

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NEW SERIES.—VOL. XI.

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*Containing the Papers read before the Society during the  
Thirty-Second Session, 1910-1911.*

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## PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY,

1910-1911.

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### I.—SELF AS SUBJECT AND AS PERSON.

*By* S. ALEXANDER.

1. *Introductory.*—I propose in the following paper to distinguish from one another two, or properly three, senses of the self, first as the subject which thinks, feels and wills, second as the body or the bodily self, and third as the combination of the other two. This combination of subject and body I propose to call the person; and to show how and in what way the subject and the body are combined. I propose to show that the subject which knows, feels, and wills is an empirical thing like the body, and that in the person, the subject is seen to be an activity of the body or of a part of the body.

There is much diversity in the present methods of treating the self and self-consciousness. In the first place, the self being treated throughout as a presentation, the subject-self may be regarded as the final development in the history of that presentation. It is consequently an object which can be attended to. Self-consciousness is then explained as a particular case of what is called inner reflection. When I not only know an ordinary object but am conscious that I know it, I am aware of the relation of that object to the self. The object is then said to be *mine*. Substitute for the indifferent object the self itself and we have self-consciousness. I am aware of the self in some modified condition as related to my self. My consciousness that I am a villain is thus the consciousness that my self,

*i.e.*, my subject self, possesses my self as qualified by villainy. This, as I understand it, is the doctrine of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In the second place we may have the simple doctrine that subject and object are two distinguishable groups within the one experience. And the fact that the line of demarcation keeps shifting, so that what at one time belongs to the object group may slip into the subject group and that what belongs to the subject group may become an object, this fact (for in the terms of this description it is an undoubted fact) is used to show that the self as subject cannot be regarded as ultimately real, since it is ever fluctuating and exchanging places with its correlative. This is the doctrine of Mr. Bradley. It is by no means an easy doctrine. The self, as I understand it, is upon this doctrine one group within the experience, and so far it is on the same level as the object group. In other words there is nothing else *to* which the self is a presentation. On the other hand it is admitted that there is a residue of experience which does not become included in this subject presentation or subject experience, and also there is correspondingly a residue on the object side which does not get included in the object group. And the position of these two residual elements is hardly made plain in their relation to the two respective groups of which they are the flying limits.

A third method is to distinguish from the empirical self or me a pure ego. The empirical self is, of course, an object. The pure ego is a subject in a sense in which the term subject is not used on either of the two doctrines just mentioned. It is in fact the essence of the doctrine that the pure ego is not experienced as an object. This is the Kantian view. A later doctrine, according to which the thinker is the present thought, is still more difficult to describe shortly. But at any rate it seems to mean that each thought as it passes out of the present becomes an object to the succeeding thought.

Instead of taking these various doctrines and submitting them to criticism I prefer to adopt the course which is more



congenial to myself of beginning afresh and considering the self in its different forms. This inquiry will then make it plain whether the subject can ever be a presentation or whether there is a residue behind the self, and will suggest answers to the other questions raised by these classical authorities. I shall try to show that the subject never is a presentation (or object), that the body of course is, and that the person is partly presentation and partly not, and in what sense. Accordingly there is for me no pure ego to which objects are presented; the only ego is a certain experience or thing, though it is not on my view an object. Nor when the subject which thinks and wills reflects on itself, remembers itself, or forecasts itself, does it ever become an object to itself. It follows that when I say an object is known by me, is my object, the "me" is not a presentation, and still less is the self divided against itself so that in one condition it is object to itself in another condition.

2. *Description of the Three Selves.*—Three common phrases will illustrate the successive stages in the growth of personality which are a chapter and a most illuminating chapter in all psychologies. "I have a cold and do not feel myself"; "I dislike reading examination papers and do not feel myself or do not feel at home when I am doing it"; "I was not myself when I told that lie." In the first the self is the embodied self. In the second it is what is commonly called the inner self, the subject of desires, or impulses, or imaginations. In the third it is the "personality," the persistent, stable, organised set of habits of action and thought and feeling by which I am to be judged, by which I stand or fall. Now all these are various forms of what I call the person. The person is in the first mainly a body, in the next it is mainly something psychical, in the third it is something spiritual. But in all three forms there are two elements present. The one is what Locke called the man, the body. The other is the element of consciousness itself.

The bodily self is that which I am aware of through

organic sensations, kinæsthetic sensations, and the sensations and perceptions by which I know my body as a tangible and visible external thing. Like other external things it is a percept, and in this percept may be distinguished various *sensa* or sensed elements—organic, kinæsthetic, visible, and other special *sensa*. This body so apprehended is the nucleus of the later forms of the person. For motor sensations in a high degree, and organic sensations also, are present in all the life of cognition, emotion, and volition. Disturbances in these sensations, whether occurring normally at the critical periods of life, or abnormally through breakdown in the functions, or through disorganisation of them, alter as is well known the tone and even the build of the personality. This body is capable of indefinite extension. It may include things which are in contact with our bodies, like our dress, injury or offence against which we resent as we resent offences to our bodies. All this has been described by Lotze. But the bodily self may include things not in contact with our bodies which we are occupied about or take an interest in. My friends, my personal property, the things I care about, like psychology or Plato's works, become an extension of my bodily self, in the sense that they are external things which stand in the same or the like intimacy of connection as my body. The self, to quote a phrase of Mr. Henry James, overflows into these objects. Damage to my property or loss to psychology is like a blow on the face. I may in certain moods feel myself at one with the whole universe. The universe has become a part of my bodily self. When the self and the not-self are said to exchange their contents so that the not-self becomes the self, what happens is not that this object becomes part of the subject, but that what is outside the body becomes organically related to the body. It is a shifting of borders within the world of external objects so as to extend the area of intimacy.

No account is taken at present of any differences between

the organic and kinæsthetic *sensa* and the tangible and visible ones. It is enough to say that into our persons there enters an objective experience, our body. In the beginning this thing is the predominant feature of our persons. But the man or body, though it is sometimes spoken of as the self, is only one constituent in what is commonly known as the self. The other constituent is the psychical one, consciousness. The *person* even at this early stage is never the body alone, but the body as entering into a larger whole; it is not the body as experienced merely, but it is the experienced body with the consciousness or experiencing of it. It is only the bodily *person* which can develop into the so-called inner self. There the bodily presentation drops into relative abeyance; it is the acts of consciousness which are prominent. And some minuteness of analysis is necessary to convince us that in this inner self the body is present as a second and all-important constituent, that which sustains the life of the psychical element. When I say I do not feel myself in the company of a certain person whom I dislike, I mean that my instincts or wishes are hindered by his presence, that my thoughts will not work freely. But I may soon discover that all these impediments to my spiritual activity mean also a restriction of my motor and other bodily freedom. I recognise here that I am both spirit and body, and also that the one cannot work freely when the other cannot.

This second constituent in the person is present, as has been said, even in the lowest stage of personal life. The difference between this stage of our personal life and the next, that of the inner self, is simply that as we become more aware of our inner selves we are making use of higher powers of our consciousness. We are at the beginning absorbed in the interests of our body, and the subject self does not stand out in our experience. It is distincter in ideation than in perception; it is most distinct of all in desiring and volition. But now, while the body or bodily self is an external thing