

Isabella Palin

October 2008

Solomon's Dream, or the Question of Trust in the Efficacy of Fine Action

In a paper soon to be published in a Special Focus section of *Process Studies* on Isabelle Stengers's 2002 book *Penser avec Whitehead*, I endeavoured to show that there is a specific style to Whitehead's thought. It consists of the specific constraint he lays upon the development of his philosophy, a constraint that can be felt to be at work throughout his books. The constraint expresses itself as a demand, variously formulated in various contexts, but everywhere the same, to make coherent - in a fruitful way susceptible of advancing philosophy - terms that are, as they stand, incompatible. That the demand for coherence includes the notion of advancement, or of "progress", means that whatever issue of incoherence is at stake is felt as having a certain importance, and seeks a transformation of thought. Notably, these imperative issues of importance are not "simply philosophical" - professional matters susceptible of interesting only philosophers, - although their treatment by philosophical means may be. The question this paper aims to address is whether there are any new issues of coherence making themselves felt in those works of Whitehead's published after *Process and Reality*.

In the paper just referred to, I described the imperative of coherence presiding over Whitehead's conceptual development as having the function of counteracting the petrification of regimes of order, or the solidification of mechanisms, including the conceptual mechanisms of Whitehead's own philosophy, by indicating points where they can be experimented with, "ever confronting intellectual system with the importance of its omissions" and discouraging its congealment into a set of -isms (AI 47). It is a test of the adequacy of concepts to wider experience. And indeed, judging from the insistent restatement of the demand for coherence in both *Adventures of Ideas* and *Modes of Thought*, but also in *The Function of Reason* and in the later of Whitehead's papers collected in *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, there is at least a suggestion that Whitehead may be turning his attention to something important omitted from his *Process and Reality* cosmology.

1. The Social Function of Reason

"The social history of mankind exhibits great organizations in their alternating functions of conditions for progress, and of contrivances for stunting humanity. [...] The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order. Life refuses to be embalmed

alive.” (PR 339)

The fifth and final part of *Process and Reality*, because of its sketchiness, contains indications of where Whitehead's thoughts are being carried as a result of his cosmological theory. After this book the question of social progress gains centre-stage, to begin with in *The Function of Reason*, where Whitehead describes how “methodologies”, or regimes of order in general, tend to rise and decay (FR 18-19). After appearing as a coordination of effort to facilitate the accomplishment of some urge in life, as a society enabling the expression (or “canalisation” and “intensification”, PR 107) of an important ideal, and after the general cultivation of this mode of life so as to afford its members “major satisfaction” within this their culture (which second stage corresponds to an “urge to live well” according to the norms thus established), a living society may enter a stage of lassitude and fatigue, where it finds it is no longer able to promote the live issues fostered in its interstices. It may then stabilise itself as merely normative, its members losing the ability to achieve major satisfaction and living a repetitive life; on the other hand, the dissatisfaction experienced in regard of frustrated ideals may provoke the development of a new adventure of society in response to an “urge to live better”. This development constitutes a pragmatic, experimental adventure, and cannot be secured out of principle. But it is a fact of life, which can be seen to occur on occasion. It is this progress, or “creative advance”, of societies, that Whitehead is drawing attention to in *The Function of Reason*.

Process and Reality is a cosmological treatise. The “ultimate generality” to which its concepts are bound – if we may summarise in very few words – is the intuition that actualisation, as productive of a value-decision in the world, answers to a problem seeking resolution. That is to say, there is no mere decision for decision's sake, without there being a live issue at stake, an urge for something better, an urge to “overcome evil”. From this point of view, it allows for there being a cosmos, that is to say, for order and various types of order arising in the world for the “canalisation” and “intensification” of originality (without making it metaphysically necessary). And this problem of cosmology, to which the concepts of the scheme are designed to provide a solution, is circumscribed by the notion of Creativity as ultimate, unanalysed principle. That is to say, any actuality is an instance of Creativity, an act of creation in response to a “lure for feeling”, or initial problematic situation. In virtue of its existing under the sign of Creativity, the creative act is a process of value that cannot, philosophically, be measured against alternatives. There is no principle or God to judge it against any standard. Any judgment as to what might perhaps have been a better decision is simply a further creative act, absolute in its turn. Isabelle Stengers provides, in *Penser avec Whitehead*, a compelling interpretation of the way in which an actual occasion's initial aim, derived from God's conceptual feeling in relevance to the actual world, and which is what constitutes the “lure” of the problematic issue presented to the occasion, functions as an activation

of “correlations” among the data to be felt.¹ In short, any actualisation is a creative act of determination of value in relation to some live issue thrown up by the actual world through past occasions' inducement of God's conceptual experience, where neither data nor God are able to define, or even suggest, “ways of feeling”.

“The concrescence, absorbing the derived data into immediate privacy, consists in mating the data with ways of feeling provocative of the private synthesis. These subjective ways of feeling are not merely receptive of the data as alien facts; they clothe the dry bones with the flesh of a real being, emotional, purposive, appreciative. The miracle of creation is described in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel: “So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”” (PR 85)²

Now if Ezekiel's prophecy of the miracle of creation corresponds to the “ultimate generality” at issue in *Process and Reality*, to the basic intuition Whitehead's concepts are bound not to betray, there is another prophecy making itself heard in *The Function of Reason*.

“An abstract scheme which is merely developed by the abstract methodology of logic, and which fails to achieve contact with fact by means of a correlate practical methodology of experiment, may yet be of the utmost importance. The history of modern civilization shows that such schemes fulfil the promise of the dream of Solomon. [...] The ultimate moral claim that civilization lays upon its possessors is that they transmit, and add to, this reserve of potential development by which it has profited.” (FR 72)

In Solomon's dream - “the greatest prophecy ever made”, according to Whitehead in *The Function of Reason* (FR 74) - God grants Solomon “a listening heart” so that he may judge between good and bad (1 Kings 3).³ In other words, whereas in *Process and Reality* the metaphysical conditions for the canalisation of originality, for there being a cosmos instead of a chaos of decisional non-sequiturs, are elaborated under the constraints of Creativity as ultimate principle (the process of concrescence, in the privacy of its “ways of feeling”, answering to a problematic issue in a way that bears no judgment, or that cannot be measured against any transcendent ideal, but which embodies an urge for something “better”), in *The Function of Reason* the cosmological process itself is at issue. The problem has passed from being a problem of cosmo-theology that can accommodate the

1 Isabelle Stengers, *Penser avec Whitehead*, Paris: Vrin, 2002, pp. 428-431. See also pp. 497-528 on the bipolarity of God. This paper is indebted in many ways to Stengers's book.

2 The biblical reference is to Ezekiel 37:10.

3 The usual translation (1 Kings 3:9) is “an understanding heart”; a more literal translation from the Hebrew gives “a hearing/listening heart”, I am told.

fact of the emergence of order and of different types of order, to being a problem of socio-cosmology that treats the rise, development and decay of types of order as a question for investigation and asks what is required in order to do justice to the intuition that the canalisation of originality is conditional upon (if not secured by) a trust in the *persuasiveness* of ideals for a “better life”. In society, or rather in the interstices of society, there is a trust in the communicative efficacy of expressions of ideals, beyond the power of established institutions, or of established symbolic regimes. An ideal may succeed in “infecting” society and transform it. And this possible success is somehow not merely up to chance. (There is an “art” to expression, to “ways of feeling”, to engaging an articulated set of eternal objects in the concrete adventures of the world.)

In other words, the problem is no longer to account for the “thirst for actuality” in the process of reality, for the forward-urging thirst for something “better”, but for the “persuasiveness” exhibited by the canalisation of values in processes of society. For the expression of some particular “mode of togetherness” is not merely dependent on there being an environment tolerant of it; the event of the canalisation of the ideal, its gradual spreading and *transformation* of the social environment, involves, if I may anticipate, some kind of art (the art of “prudence”, or what is termed “foresight” in *Adventures of Ideas*). - Now, that which is a “black box” in *Process and Reality*, the individual process of integration of feelings, or the actual occasion's particular “ways of feeling” its data, is not, to be sure, to be provided with a principle to “explain” it (the concepts of *Process and Reality* are not provided with exceptions, as far as I can discern), but is made to communicate with the question “how should I decide?” Not “what should I decide”, but “how”; this question does not refer to moral standards or to any functional definition of the good, but to the way in which the concrete “presentation”, or particular expression, of the ideal may make all the difference to its fate in society (and to the fate of society). While the process of determination of value remains *causa sui*, the new problem makes it communicate with the “diplomatic” question “how should I decide?” put by the trust that a wise decision will promote the canalisation and intensification of values answering to the matter of importance that is at issue, and not inhibit it.⁴

Conceptually the problem presents itself, as is the wont of Whitehead's problems, as an issue of coherence.

“A satisfactory cosmology must explain the interweaving of efficient and of final causation. Such a cosmology will obviously remain an explanatory arbitrariness if our doctrine of the two modes of causation takes the form of a mere limitation of the scope of one mode by the intervention of the other mode. [...] The two spheres of operation should be interwoven and required, each by the other.

⁴ The figure of the diplomat is developed by Stengers in *Cosmopolitiques, volume 7, pour en finir avec la tolérance*, Paris: La Découverte, 1997 and in *Penser avec Whitehead*.

But neither sphere should arbitrarily limit the scope of the alternative mode.” (FR 28)

The concept that Whitehead provides to elucidate this mutual requirement of, as he also terms it, “repetition” and “appetition”, is the concept of “Reason”, which functions as the “measure”, or principle of criticism, of the two modes of causation by each other. If Solomon's dream constitutes a great prophecy, it is as an announcement of this critical function that is at work wherever the issue of canalisation arises, that is to say, wherever the question of the *adjustment of the relevance* of abstractions to the process of concrescence, or of finding the “way of feeling” appropriate to the promotion of the ideal in the future, becomes a live question. The “listening heart” subjects the two modes of causation, the mode of repetition (efficient) and the mode of appetite (final), to a strange test, to the measurement of the one against the other as regards their consequences for the yet unrealised future. It is a strange test, for, as we have noted, any decision is an act of Creativity, repulsive of any “rule” of criticism, and anyway no decision is able to suggest the “way of feeling”, in turn, of future occasions; and yet there is a trust that the success or failure to persuade, to produce a canalisation and intensification of original mentality, is not up to chance, or up to God. There is an art to the pragmatic adventure of society. The actual occasion's appeal to the future, heard by God in the way in which it induces his conceptual experience as regards the variability of possible relationships between eternal objects,⁵ answers to a “reliance that fine action is treasured in the nature of things” (AI 274). The pragmatic question of producing a fine action, which presupposes such a reliance (or what Whitehead also terms “Peace”, or “trust in the efficacy of Beauty”, AI 285, in *Adventures of Ideas*), is what is at issue for the occasion as engaged in the course of history. Here follows a rough interpretation of Solomon's prophecy (and we may remember that “shalom”, Solomon, means “peace”).

The “potential development” of the future is symbolised by the child in the story. The principle of repetition is the sword, which apportions the future to the expression of ideals according to their persuasive success; and the principle of appetite, or appeal to the future, is embodied in each of the two mothers' claims on the child. The actual occasion in its moral-pragmatic hesitation is king Solomon's listening heart. Now, the initial subjective aim is only a *lure* for feeling, for there is no hint of a solution yet; that is to say, there is an urgency embodied in the metaphysical situation of unrealised eternal objects as divinely ordered in their relevance to the actual world as physically prehended, by the occasion, in its diversity of conflicting values: the problem is presented to king Solomon in its intense cruelty. And thus, the ruthless principle of “mere” repetition is applied: the mothers' claims - conflicting appetitions - are put to the test of the sword. “And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the

⁵ See note 1.

other” (1 Kings 3:25). Follows the measurement of appetite in regard of this ruthless principle. “Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it” (1 Kings 3:26).

As it turns out, in the end the sword is *not* applied. “Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof” (1 Kings 3:27) (and “she” must be the mother whose “bowels yearned”). That is to say, the principle of “mere” repetition is not applied, for Solomon's test is not only a test of appetite in regard of repetition, but also the test of repetition in regard of mere, unadjusted intensity of appetite; the issue occupying the listening heart is how to feel the conflicting data, or how to repeat. And so Solomon does not rest content with choosing between giving the whole child to the mother who desired its division and dividing it. He does neither of these, for he makes repetition undergo its measurement against appetite, and thus entrusts the baby to the mother who would otherwise have lost her claim to it. In this way the modified repetition exhibits decision-making under the sign of criticism as a process of adjustment and “radical alteration” of appetite.

“This novel system is such as radically to alter the distribution of intensities throughout the two given systems, and to change the importance of both in the final intensive experience of the occasion. This way is in fact the introduction of Appearance, and its use is to preserve the massive qualitative variety of Reality from simplification by negative prehensions.” (AI 260-261)

In short, Solomon is persuaded to abandon his sword.

The final verse of the story of Solomon's dream is the following. “And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment” (1 Kings 3:28). In this last passage, all Israel (literally, “he that wrestles/struggles with God”)⁶ recognise God's wisdom in Solomon, through his practical judgment. This can be read as the symbolic representation of a successful canalisation and intensification of originality, with its process of adjustment of appetitions by a principle of critical Reason. But in its reference to God and to the people that contend with God there lies a point of significance in relation to the issue we are discussing, which is the issue of the pragmatic adjustment of intensities. If in the context of the problem of the “thirst for actuality” it is required of the concept of God to “save” the world - to rescue the actual decision's appetite for the future from insignificance - through his conceptual experience, which will provide the lure for future occasions, being induced by the objectification of the world in his consequent nature (cosmo-

6 Genesis 32.

theology), we might say that in the context of the problem of “persuasion” there exists a principle designed to “save” God through its criticism of appetitions, whereby the actual occasion hopes not merely to be taken into account in the future but to “transmit, and add to,” the reserve of potential development (socio-cosmology). For in the former case an actual occasion's appeal to the future must be rescued from insignificance, whereas in the latter case the variability of the relationships between eternal objects, or God's conceptual experience, transmitted as a lure to the future, must be rescued from impoverishment. That is to say, without Solomon's prophecy, God's seeking of intensity, and the ability of societies to canalise and intensify values, does not afford the moral-pragmatic question exhibited in the creative advance and decay of societies, which is the question “how do I decide?” for this question lies outside the scope of any problem that posits Creativity as its utmost bound. In other words, with the promise of “Peace” significance can be given to situations where the “thirst for actuality” fails as ultimate generality, where the “lure for feeling” reveals its detachment from the question of the desirability of “fine”, instead of destructive, action - in short, where “God” has been lost. That is, the significance of the complaint that “life is miserable, everything is meaningless, why did God bring me into the world?” can be acknowledged in the thought, “What makes you think God put you here? Are you not here to bring God into the world?” - Here ends this brief interpretation of Solomon's prophecy.

“[Appearance] makes possible the height of Beauty and the height of Evil; because it saves both from a tame elimination or a tame scaling down.” (AI 261)

The critical function of Reason introduces “Appearance” in its radical alteration of the distribution of appetitive intensities. It “presents” an ideal in a certain way designed to promote its canalisation and enrich the sphere of potentiality. But it does not guarantee the results. The question of persuasion, or of the adjustment of intensive “ways of feeling”, is the resounding question of the pragmatic difference between good and evil. It is not Whitehead's purpose in *The Function of Reason*, nor will it ever be, to provide a principle for securing good over evil in the process of reality, for the question of persuasion is a pragmatic question, and all he is doing is constructing the metaphysical conditions for the asking of the question. He provides a principle of Reason that exhibits, via the notion of the measurement of appetite by repetition and vice versa, how this question can become relevant to process in the face of the problem of how to respond to the initial lure. Since the initial aim provided by God does not indicate the mode of its reception,⁷ the entire question of the criticism and adjustment of aims and appetitions lies with the actual occasion. It is

⁷ A proposition with its emotional lure is not to be equated with a verbal sentence with incitement for producing a particular subjective form for the feeling of the proposition (AI 243).

the purpose of Whitehead's "socio-cosmology" to address this question of persuasion embodied in Solomon's prophecy.

"Apart from [*Peace*], the pursuit of 'Truth, Beauty, Adventure, Art' can be ruthless, hard, cruel [...]." (AI 284)

The Function of Reason provides a first approach, but the issue is returned to in *Adventures of Ideas*.

2. The Dramatisation of Ideas

The principle of Reason all but disappears in *Adventures of Ideas*, but the question of criticism, of the process of transition in society from merely repetitive habit to novel habit, novel types of order, expressing progress, remains the question at issue. And Whitehead reiterates the demand for coherence emphasised in *The Function of Reason*. There is a demand, he says, to understand the relationship between moral intuitions and "the rest of things", a demand for "ultimate cosmological principles" (AI 37-38). He formulates in concept-seeking terms the "ultimate question" he is dealing with as "the relation of reality as permanent with reality as fluent: the mediator must be an element in common" (AI 130).

Why does the principle of Reason all but disappear? We may hazard the guess that the principle of Reason is not sufficiently "coherent", restricted as its components are to the process of concrescence. For a start, it does not functionally, as a part of its conceptual working, engage the concept of God; indeed, in the fragment just quoted Whitehead demands that the "mediator" must also relate to "reality as permanent". Elsewhere, Whitehead emphasises that it is the divine element in the world that is "persuasive", and that the problem is to provide a coherent metaphysical interpretation of the relationship of God to the World and of the World to the Ideas contemplated by God (AI 166-168). It is, as we have suggested, precisely this question of persuasion that does not touch the God of *Process and Reality*. For whereas it is the function of that concept of God to provide an initial aim to the occasion, the question of the criticism and modification of this aim, which is the question of how to canalise the possibilities rendered vibrant in the lure for feeling, is beyond the scope of the problem to which that function corresponds. We may therefore expect some recasting of concepts. However, this paper will have to stop short of examining whether, and how, Whitehead modifies his concepts, and remain content with indications.

First Indication: The Dramatics of Pragmatics – A first clue consists in the world being described as

a “theatre for the temporal realization of ideas” (AI 147), as a stage for a drama, the tragic drama of ideals “partly attained and partly missed” (AI 148) in the adventures of societies as they are born and decay and rise again, transformed by the canalisation of ideals. The question of how to canalise, of how to express an ideal in order for it to be, in effect, expressive *to others* – in the future, thereby fulfilling the “moral claim that civilisation lays upon its possessors”, is a question of pragmatics, of “art”.

With art, there is no test that can determine its success or failure, and there is hardly a methodology. Each performance, each creative act, raises anew the question of how to repeat. It is in art, therefore, that the line between success and failure in the expression of “beauty” is the most tenuous, where attention to details in their precise pattern of composition is the most crucial - seeing that the process of adjustment of intensities “makes possible the height of beauty and the height of evil”. Whitehead turns to Plato, and interprets Plato's “Receptacle”, with its “special exemplifications” in “Harmony” and “Mathematical Relations”, as corresponding to the questions of dramatisation. The Receptacle is the concept of “the general interconnectedness of things, which transforms the manifoldness of the many into the unity of the one” (AI 150). It is this unity, this particular “way of feeling”, that is the expression regarding which such care has to be taken.

“We can never get away from the questions: -How much, -In what proportions, -and In what pattern of arrangement with other things. [...] there is hardly a question to be asked which should not be fenced round with the qualifications as to how much, and as to what pattern of circumstances.” (AI 153)

Such questions make all the difference for the fulfilment of Solomon's prophecy. They are the questions pertaining to the alteration of the distribution of appetitive intensities, to the problem of how ideals can be made persuasive. The issue at hand, exhibited in *The Function of Reason* in Solomon's prophecy, gains precise formulation in *Adventures of Ideas* as a “trust in the efficacy of Beauty” (AI 285), or, again, as a “reliance that fine action is treasured in the nature of things” (AI 274). That is to say, the way in which the occasion decides will have to affect God's nature in such a way as to exhibit a difference between the enrichment of the relational variability between eternal objects and its impoverishment. Perhaps it is only in the context of the problem of expressive canalisation that God's “seeking intensity” (PR 105) can avoid becoming an external principle for the occasion. Or, *God's purpose can now perhaps become the world's problem.*

Second Indication: Life as Ultimate Principle – If, with respect to *Process and Reality*, the problem Whitehead is attending to has changed as we have suggested in the course of this paper, the ultimate

generality expressed in the “trust in the efficacy of Beauty” implies “fusing life with nature” (MT 166).

“The doctrine that I am maintaining is that neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of “really real” things whose interconnections and individual characters constitute the universe.” (MT 150)

That is to say, whereas in *Process and Reality* life qualifies only occasions that betray initiative in conceptual prehension (i.e., in appetition) (PR 102),⁸ in *Modes of Thought* life “implies the absolute, individual self-enjoyment arising out of [the process of appropriating into a unity of existence the many data presented as relevant by the physical processes of nature]” (MT 150), which is to say that it qualifies *every* occasion as a process implying the dramatic problem of how to canalise its ideals. That is to say, there is no “mere” repetition in nature, or, “we should reject the notion of idle wheels in the process of nature. Every factor which emerges makes a difference, and that difference can only be expressed in terms of the individual character of that factor” (MT 156). This difference, which cannot be reduced to a difference “between” factors, corresponds to the intensive drama proper to the occasion, to the way in which it “saves God” in its bid to “transmit, and add to, this reserve of potential development by which it has profited”.

There is thus, corresponding to the “ultimate generality” of trust in the efficacy of fine action, a notion of life as ultimate circumscription of the cosmological problem of persuasion. The ultimate notion is no longer the notion of Creativity, as in *Process and Reality*; the notion of Creativity is absent from *Modes of Thought*, where, instead, the notions of “importance” and “expression”, which in mutual requirement make up the idea of “creative impulse”, become subject to the variability of the pragmatic process of concrescence in regard of the problem of canalisation.

Third Indication: Forms of Process - *“The discovery of mathematics, like all discoveries, both advanced human understanding, and also produced novel modes of error. Its error was the introduction of the doctrine of form, devoid of life and motion./ [...] All mathematical notions have reference to process of intermingling. The very notion of number belongs to no one of the units; it characterizes the way in which the group unity has been attained. Thus even the statement “six equals six” need not be construed as a mere tautology. It can be taken to mean that six as dominating a special form of combination issues in six as a character of a datum for further process. There is no such entity as a mere static number.” (MT 93)*

⁸ And this is still the case in *Adventures of Ideas* (AI 194).

In the context of the dramatic question of the process of adjustment of intensities, and of the generalisation of the notion of life to apply to all occasions of actuality, the way in which forms have relevance to actuality not only in the context of a cosmologically neutral Creativity, as in *Process and Reality*, but in the context of the dramatisation of values, has to be made explicit.

“Sound doctrine [...] requires an understanding how the Ideals in God's nature, by reason of their status in his nature, are thereby persuasive elements in the creative advance.” (AI 168)

In *Modes of Thought* the forms are, as in *Process and Reality*, forms for the determination of a specific way of feeling, but as such they have to be given a status in regard of the issue of persuasion. Thus, they do not have reference merely to actuality as a process of *determination*, as in *Process and Reality*, but to the process of intensive “*difference*” for the future implied now in the constitution of any occasion. They are pure differentials for the moral-pragmatic criticism of appetite, *incapable of being “merely” repeated*. Thus the stagnation of society is never its maintenance, but its decline. For forms as such “have reference to processes of intermingling”, where these actual processes affect the future not only as mutely exemplifying a particular static articulation of eternal objects, but as *expressive* works of art, as exemplifications of an art of persuasion.

Conclusion

I have tried to show how there is a new problem making itself felt in Whitehead's late work. It revolves around the question of our trust in the “efficacy of fine action”. How Whitehead modifies his concepts in relation to this problem remains an open avenue of investigation, but it seems that what is required is some way of making the elements of the scheme – facts, deity and ideals – predicated of the ultimate notion of intensive, critical, *life*, or “drama”. Let me end with a quote that may support this hypothesis.

“Philosophic thought has to start from some limited section of our experience – from epistemology, or from natural science, or from theology, or from mathematics. [...] My own belief is that at present the most fruitful, because the most neglected, starting point is that section of value-theory which we term aesthetics. Our enjoyment of the values of human art, or of natural beauty, our horror at the obvious vulgarities and defacements which force themselves upon us – all these modes of experience are sufficiently abstracted to be relatively obvious. And yet evidently they disclose the very meaning of things.” (ESP 129)