

The Scientific Production of Love

JOHN F. WHARTON



—Halsman.

John F. Wharton stubbornly refused to do), he set out to find a way to make people healthy and happy enough so that love of their neighbors followed automatically. If the meager evidence we have is true, he succeeded well enough to permit one to say that there exists in the world today the basic theory, data, and techniques for the scientific production of health, happiness, and love.

This may seem a startling statement, but is it really so startling? During the 1930's we witnessed, particularly in Germany, an extraordinary development of techniques for the scientific inculcation of hate on a mass production basis. Why, then, should we believe it to be impossible to learn techniques for inculcating love? Especially when, despite all the trial and tribulation of human history, the vague but unshaken belief persists that people *ought* to be happy and love each other.

The man in question was named Dr. Roger Vittoz. He practised medicine in Switzerland from 1886 to 1925. The only statement of his theories written in English is one unfinished book.* It is from this material that I shall try to sketch his psychology and his therapy.

The key to Vittoz's psychology was his conception of the Superconscious; the key to his therapy was his discovery of the rhythm of the brain.

The Three "I's"

To understand the Superconscious it is necessary to understand what

SOME sixty years ago, a remarkable man in Central Europe posed for himself an extraordinary quest. Instead of exhorting people to love and serve their neighbors in order to be happy (which they somehow

Vittoz conceived to be the meanings of the pronoun "I." He had observed, as most of us have, that when people used that pronoun they sometimes meant their physical body, sometimes their mental processes, sometimes their emotional feelings,—occasionally a fusion of all three. Take the following statement:

I tell myself that I'm a fool to think I get relaxation from drinking, but I can't stop.

In effect this says that my mental self is telling my physical self that my emotional self is a fool, but that I—meaning at that point a fusion of all three—can't stop.

Let us look briefly at these three selves.

We know more about our physical self than any other, although even that knowledge is absurdly small. What causes sleep, for example? We know there is a dualism; we have voluntary and involuntary processes. We know such things as that when we cut our body, it bleeds. We generally accept the fact that when we have great physical pain we should go to a doctor, and not try to handle the situation ourselves.

We know even less about our mental self, although it has been the fashion for two thousand years to ascribe an overwhelming importance to it. We have no idea where it begins or ends or just what it might consist of. We associate it principally with thinking and knowledge (a collection of facts). We know some facts are fresh

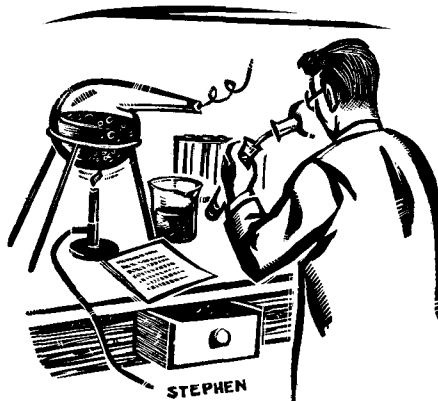
in our minds and some deeply buried in the unconscious or subconscious. There is a dualism in this self too; we have thoughts we utter and thoughts we do not utter. We are frequently surprised by the tricks our mental self seems to play on us in matters of motive and memory, but we usually try to manage it without professional aid, and a sorry job most of us do.

In the Vittoz psychology, the emotional self is the body with which we *feel*. It is the body in which we live the most, and the one we know the very least about. Stupendously stupid, isn't it? Ask anyone what he wants most and he'll tell you he wants to *feel* well; yet we know almost nothing about what makes us feel at all. And when this emotional self is in trouble, many people are still ashamed to seek professional aid.

Quite recently we have learned that the inevitable dualism is present in the emotional self. There are conscious desires and subconscious ones. We have also learned that uncovering subconscious desires and bringing them into the realm of conscious knowledge may be of enormous benefit to a bewildered man or woman. The Freudians at one time seemed to believe that this technique was the sure way to deal with all emotional upsets. Later evidence indicates that many cases do not yield to it. Vittoz, while not denying the enormous importance of subconscious exploration, sought to go directly to the Superconscious.*

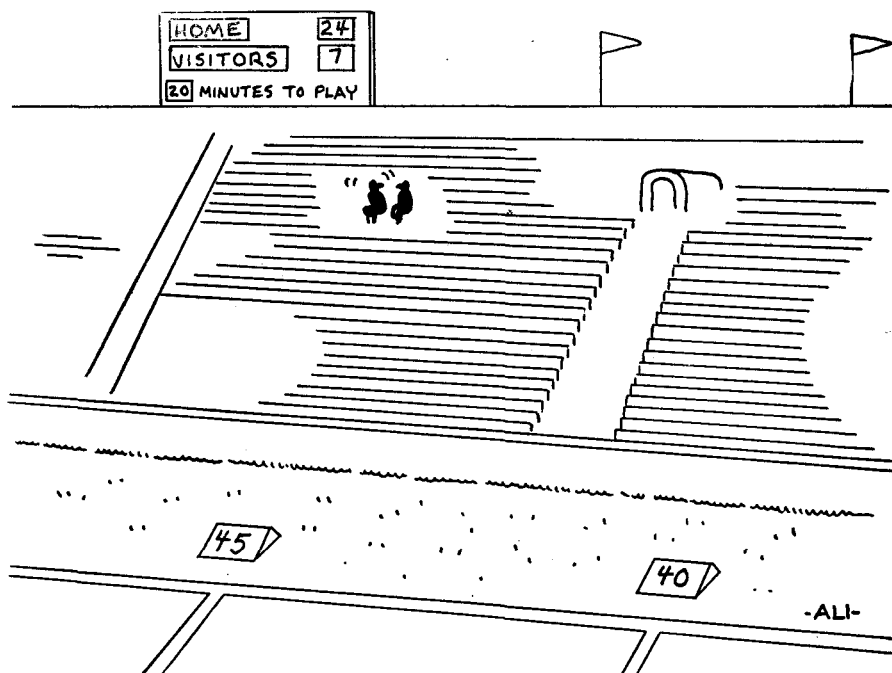
Superconscious Energy

Let us now consider what we mean by the use of "I" in the sense of a fusion of the dualistic physical, mental, and emotional "I." This is a difficult concept. We know that no single one of the three "I's" explains our individuality; even when added together something is missing. Consider for a moment your state at the moment of



*Vittoz used both the term *Superconscious* and the term *Will*. Neither word is entirely satisfactory. I have used the former word because it serves to emphasize the fact that Vittoz did not believe the Subconscious played the all-dominating role accorded by some modern psychologies.

*AN UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPT: NOTES FOR A BOOK ON THE VITTOZ METHOD. By Josephine Van Slyck Thörn. 1937. Lancaster, Pa.: The Lancaster Press, Inc.



"Why can't we have a television set like everybody else?"

your conception—when you were a single cell brought to life by the union of a sperm and ovum. What made that cell divide and subdivide, form a brain to think with and legs to move with? Whence came the sensations we call emotions? One is tempted to postulate a fourth "I."

Obviously, an answer to the foregoing questions would be an answer to the mystery of life, and Vittoz made no claims to a solution of that problem. He assumed that the fusion of the three "I's" resulted in something greater than the sum of the parts, and that this something was what patients referred to when they said, "I am sick; I am depressed; I am on the verge of a nervous breakdown." Conversely, it was this same something that people referred to when they declared they felt fine, well, gay, or happy.

We cannot, as I said, learn what this something is, but we can observe its manifestations and develop a working theory. This is what Vittoz did. He observed first that the fused "I" was constantly (at least in waking hours) assembling data on which it made a decision for action. Our whole waking day is a series of such procedures.

Vittoz further observed that in the making of most of our decisions, there is more or less conflict between our physical, mental, and emotional selves. We would like to do a kindly action, but we are physically tired. We would like to be fair to someone, but we find he irritates us too much. Most of these conflicts we can handle reasonably well (although perhaps not

well enough to make us proud of the human race). However, sometimes they reach a point where we cannot handle them at all. Then we have a state of unreleasable tension; then we are really ill. I will discuss this further later on in this essay.

On the other hand, Vittoz observed that there are stages in everyone's life where the fused "I" is in complete command; then we can make decisions freely, efficiently, and without fear. Still more important, in some of these stages, there arises a mysterious ability to create what we have dreamed of and to solve almost any problem, no matter how difficult. This is what may be called the Superconscious.

Superconscious Energy is something we have all experienced. If you have ever played any sport, ready examples will come to mind. There are days (alas, too rare for most of us) when all your shots come off, always with an ease that amazes you. We have similar experiences in the world of business; there are times when your problems almost seem to solve themselves for you.* The same thing is true of the creative arts. Bernard Shaw once told a friend that in writing some of the passages of *St. Joan*, he almost felt that something was guiding his hand. Examples could be multiplied very easily.

Vittoz developed some extraordinary implications from his observations of this force, which apparently

*Chester I. Barnard in *"The Functions of the Executive"* (Harvard University Press, 1938) comes close to the flat position that success in business is due more to this mysterious, intuitive ability than it is to the capacity to reason logically from a vast store of knowledge.

anticipated much of the psychology of the past twenty years.

Practical Implications

To begin with, he observed something which we can readily check with our own experience: When Superconscious Energy is flowing, one cannot hold a morbid thought. Hence he asserted that the persistent belief that happiness was our normal prerogative had a basis in fact. When the fused "I" is in command, when the emotional, mental, and physical selves are in harmony, when there are no unreleasable tensions, we *cannot* be unhappy.

Then he observed something still more remarkable: When you achieve that state, you must love someone other than yourself; you *must* co-operate with someone else.

This sounds astonishing, but consider the proposition for a moment. Let us try an analogy: The only time when a normal person gives any real thought to his physical body is when it is out of order. If you have a sprained ankle, you can't help thinking about it. The surest sign that it is cured is when you no longer think about it.

The same thing is true of our mental and emotional selves. When they are out of order, subject to unbearable conflicts, we *will* think and feel about them, and not even "service to others" can make us stop. But when they are in harmony, you do not think of them, any more than you think of that once-sprained ankle. *Then*, you stop thinking of you.

Now, much modern psychology holds that the fundamental urge which distinguishes man from other forms of life is the urge to grow and develop, both individually and as part of the race. This means that the highest happiness comes from cooperation in an act with another or others, for whom one feels great loyalty. Sexual intercourse of people who are really in love is an example virtually anyone can experience. Working for a cause—religious, political, or economic—does the same thing for some.

On the basis of these psychological principles, it seemed clear to Vittoz that his major problem was to find a technique which would bring the fused "I" into command. This is what he set about to discover.

Tension

Vittoz believed that the commonest cause of illness, physical, or psychical, was internal tension caused by insoluble conflicts between the mental, emotional, and physical selves. Much of his theory is commonly accepted today. We all know that if we live

(Continued on page 28)

Mirror of the German Soul

Thomas Mann Closes an Account

CLAUDE HILL

THOMAS MANN'S new novel "Doctor Faustus,"* like most really great works of literature, can be interpreted on different levels. Loaded with a spiritual cargo that ever seems to outweigh the penetrating mental struggles of "The Magic Mountain," the book floats like a gigantic intellect-laden vessel in the shallow waters of current world literature; its readers can be compared to watchmen on guard who, according to their position on the shore or the strength of their telescopes, may get varying glimpses of the slowly drifting craft. A full view, however, will be afforded only to the faithful who have forgone impatience and have learned to focus accurately.

The subtitle of the novel: "The life of the German composer Adrian Leverkuehn," suggests a book about music. The title itself calls Goethe to mind. "Doctor Faustus" is a modern prose version of the old German folk-book and of Goethe's dramatic poem. The word "German" implies German background. And, indeed, the novel is about Germany. Knowing Mann's symbolism as evidenced by the life-transforming magic of his mountain sanatorium or by the myth-pregnant world of Joseph, one may expect a symbolic treatment of music, art, and intellect in our time. The book is just that. As a matter of fact, "Doctor Faustus" is all that and yet more. In a world that has long ceased to be simple and easily intelligible, the novel as the most modern and integrated form of literature must, of necessity, reflect the highly complex and technical aspect of our time; the traditional plot structure of nineteenth-century fiction has become obsolete—unless it be degraded to mere "entertainment" à la Hollywood.

Without attempting to do justice to "Doctor Faustus" on all of its many levels, this writer believes that the key to the novel is to be found in the word "German" of the subtitle. It is the German author Thomas Mann who tells the life of the German composer Leverkuehn, setting it against a German background, and borrowing the hero of a German legend for his title. And who does not immediately think

of music when he speaks of German achievements? It would thus appear that the man whom destiny has burdened with the thankless position of *praeceptor Germaniae* in our time has finally written his long-awaited discussion of the German problem. The author, who shied at the physical homecoming after the war—for reasons only too justified—has spiritually returned to the country of his origin once more. Not to stay, to be sure, but to close an account that was long overdue, and to fulfil a mission that only he could fulfil: to hold up a symbolic mirror to the Germans in which they might recognize themselves.

Even before Oswald Spengler coined the adjective "faustian," which became almost synonymous with the peculiarly German quality of boundless striving, Faust had generally been accepted as a valid symbol for the

German character. When Goethe hit upon the old legend of the magician and charlatan Faustus, who made a pact with the devil in order to receive all knowledge and worldly treasures in exchange for his soul, he was fully aware of the symbolic possibilities inherent in the folk tale and puppet play. It is surely not accidental that Germany's greatest man of letters worked on his tremendous Faust poem all his life; and the unique popularity of the completed work is ample evidence that the Germans have identified themselves with the fate and aspirations of the never-satisfied doctor who wished to know and to see and to accomplish everything under the sun.

ACCEPTING the thesis that Faust is a German symbol to a high degree, Thomas Mann has undertaken the rather pretentious task of increasing the symbolic validity. He has added where Goethe seemed to fall short: his Leverkuehn is not a medical doctor or a philosopher or a magician; ~~he is a musician, a composer.~~ Music, according to Mann, is demonic territory; modern anthropologists and psychologists, from Nietzsche to Freud, would seem to bear him out, considering the musical origin of dance and



THE AUTHOR: Sizing up the world today from his pale yellow, modern house in Pacific Palisades, California, Thomas Mann paints a broad, dark canvas. "We are living at an end time in the midst of a process that is about to dissolve bourgeois culture and society. War could only hasten that dissolving and revolutionizing process in a most catastrophic manner, and everybody ought to understand that the American way of life, in defense of which that war would allegedly

be waged, would certainly perish in it without leaving as much as a trace." Until 1933, when he went to Switzerland to finish the first volume of the "Joseph" tetralogy, his life was happy—compounded of wealth, social position, fame, and a large, devoted family. With the success of his first novelette, "Gefallen," in 1894, written surreptitiously in an insurance office to which he was apprenticed, he gladly quit business for study and a carefree year in Rome. There he began "Buddenbrooks," whose inspiration was his big childhood home in Lübeck. It sold more than 1,000,000 copies, was widely translated, and finally burned by Hitler. A Davos sanatorium, where he stayed briefly with his amanuensis-wife in 1912, inspired "The Magic Mountain," completed in 1924. Meanwhile "Death in Venice" appeared—like "Tonio Kroeger," in 1903, and the current "Doctor Faustus," an analysis of genius. World War I provoked "Reflections of a Non-Political Man," a role he held to until 1936 over protests of his clamorously anti-Nazi brother Heinrich and eldest children, Erica and Klaus. His denunciation of the Third Reich that year cost him his German citizenship and an honorary doctorate. He responded with fire in "An Exchange of Letters." Migrating here in 1938, he spoke earnestly for democracy. "For reasons of power politics," he now says sadly "official America has ceased to consider Fascism an enemy but, rather, a potential ally against Communism . . . a most unfortunate constellation, which must be held largely responsible for the overall failure of our occupation policy."

—R. G.

*DOCTOR FAUSTUS: *The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkuehn as Told by a Friend.* By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by H. T. Lowe-Porter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948. 500 pp. \$3.50.