

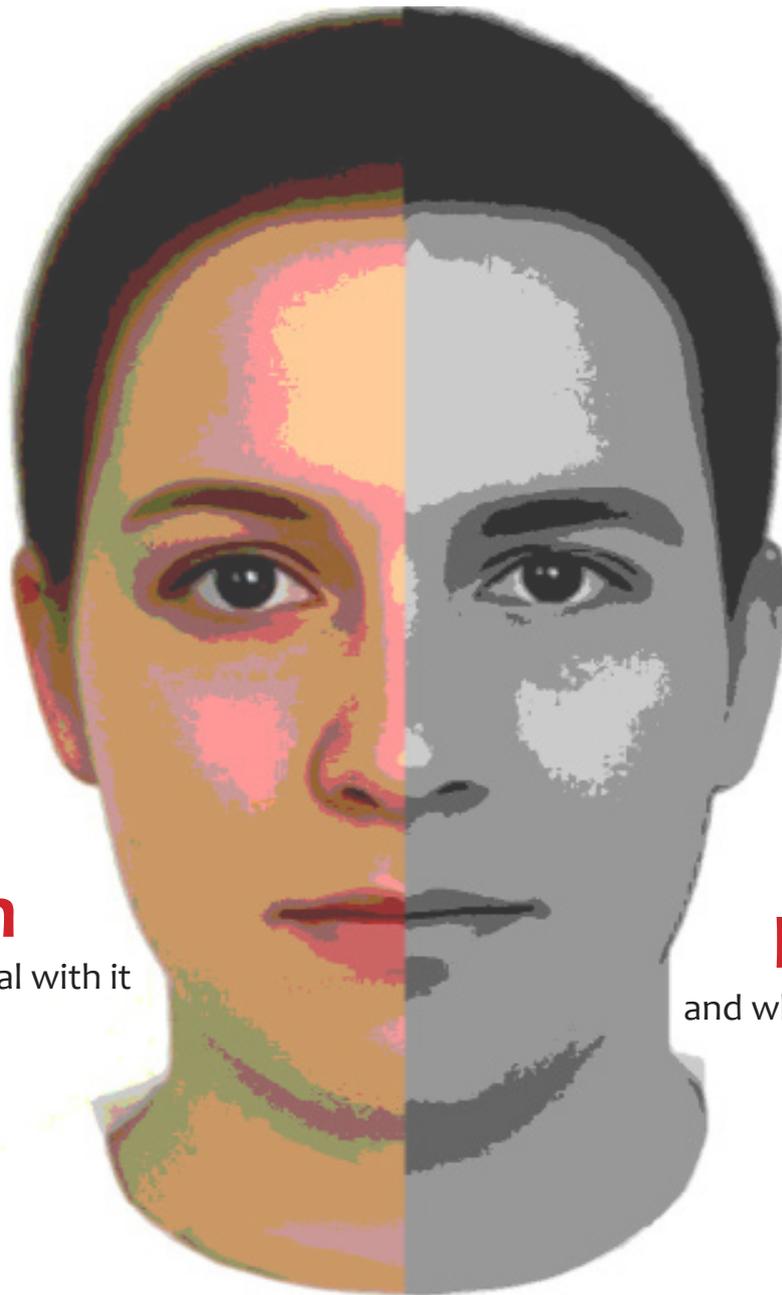
Summer 2020: Issue 2

NASCENT STATE

The Journal of Intuition

Magazine

In this issue...



Illusion

and how to deal with it

**Logic &
Intuition**

and when to apply them

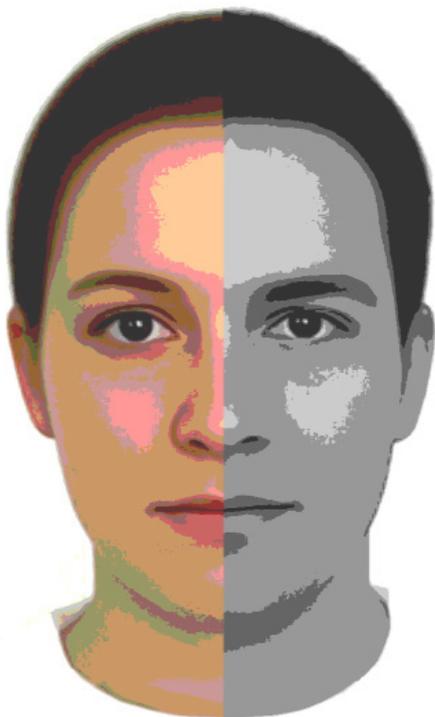
Stoicism

and the art of living

Summer 2020

NASCENT STATE

Magazine



From the Editor

The second issue of *Nascent State* is directed at the nature of thinking itself, and particularly at perception in thinking.

How we see the world affects how we act and how we feel. And how we see the world is affected by what we think. So we can change the way we see the world by changing our thinking.

To this end there are articles on Logic and Intuition, and when to use them. There is an article on Illusion and the part it plays in life, and there is an article on the Greek philosophy of Stoicism, as an outlook on life.

Thinking is what makes us most human.

The second edition of *Nascent State Magazine* will explore perception in thinking. Perception is how we see the world. Whether we regard a problem as an opportunity or an irritant depends on how we see it. Perception affects how we see others and how we see ourselves; it can affect whether we see the world as it is or mistake our own view of the world for reality. The articles in this edition of *Nascent State Magazine* reflect this.

The article on Logic & Intuition outlines the differences between them and when to use them. The article on Illusion points to the part it plays in life, and how it affects our expectations, hopes and fears. And the article on Stoicism provides a perception-based philosophy of life. If we want to be happy, we have to think about what makes us happy. As Shakespeare's Hamlet put it: 'there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'

Nascent State Magazine is presented in a PDF, free-to-download format; download it and read it at your leisure. For enquiries, contributions and comments:

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Logic & Intuition

We need both logic and intuition to make sense of life, and yet we learn nothing about intuition at school. Time to remedy this.

Illusion & its Nature

Illusion informs everything from appearance, to reputation and propaganda. We live with illusion, and the best course is to see it.

Stoicism and the art of living

'Some things are in our control and others not.'
Epictetus (1st century AD)

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Logic & Intuition

a question of balance



Plato & Aristotle
(from The School of Athens by Raphael)

A sunny day in the barnyard. A chicken sees the farmer heading towards him in his brown corduroys and red check shirt. The farmer reaches down and opens his hand and offers the chicken some feed. Next day in the barnyard, the chicken sees the farmer heading towards him in his brown corduroys and his red check shirt. The farmer reaches down and opens his hand and offers the chicken some feed. The next day in the barnyard, the chicken sees the farmer heading towards him in his brown corduroys and his red check shirt, and once again the chicken reaches up for the feed. This time the farmer reaches down, opens his hand and wrings the chicken's neck.

Logic is based on the assumption of adequate information. Provide we have adequate information, our assumptions about the future will be accurate. The problem with logic is that it can only deal with what we know, not what we do not know or cannot see. For those wedded to logic, any shortcomings of logic are purely down to a lack of reason, not limited perception. Sir Alfred J. Ayer, who taught logic at Oxford

University, and went on to become the president of the Aristotelian Society in London, had the following to say about the use of logic in his book *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936):

'The power of logic and mathematics to surprise us depends, like their usefulness, on the limitations of our reason. A being whose intellect was infinitely powerful would take no interest in logic and mathematics. For he would be able to see at a glance everything that his definitions implied, and, accordingly, could never learn anything from logical inference which he was not fully conscious of already.' [1]

Logic deals with the world we know. We can define, label and categorize what we know and see, but we cannot define, label and categorize what we do not know or cannot see directly. For this we need intuition. The reason why this is not more widely recognized is that logic is the dominant form of thinking in Western culture, and intuition is regarded at best as inferior to logic and at least as unprocessed information.

We are taught to think logically at school. In a multiple-choice exam, we are presented with a question and four possible answers; we work through the answers and find fault with each of them until we arrive at the answer which is without fault and then tick the box next to it. This is logic. There are no points for novel answers.

Logic in its current form was taught by Aristotle in the fourth century BC. His teachings include *The Organon*, a collection of six books which include his work on the logical method, *The Prior Analytics*. The method taught by Aristotle begins with defining the subject of enquiry, and then:

'We must next define a premiss, a term, and a syllogism, and the nature of a perfect and of an imperfect syllogism...' [2]

A term is a word representing the subject of enquiry, for example 'a man'. A premise is a sentence which either includes the term or does not, for example 'Socrates was a man'. And a syllogism is the way in which one premise is

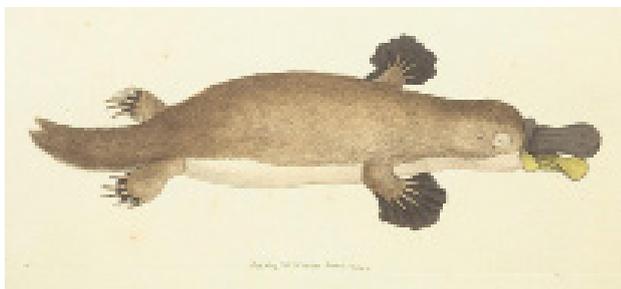
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put together with another premise to form an argument, for example 'Socrates was a man, men are mortal; therefore Socrates was mortal'.

The precision of logic means that it is possible to state clearly what is true or untrue by following these clearly laid down rules. Provided the rules of logic are obeyed, we can always state what is true or untrue with certainty. As A. J. Ayer put it:

'The principles of logic and mathematics are true universally simply because we never allow them to be anything else. And the reason for this is that we cannot abandon them without contradicting ourselves, without sinning against the rules which govern the use of language, and so making our utterances self-stultifying.' [3]

In order to apply a term or a word to an experience we have to define that experience by means of language alone. Anything not included in that definition is therefore excluded from it. So 'a man' cannot be 'a hermaphrodite' because of course that would be illogical. While logic is useful for clear and precise definitions, it is less useful for complex situations which cannot be defined in simple and clear terms.



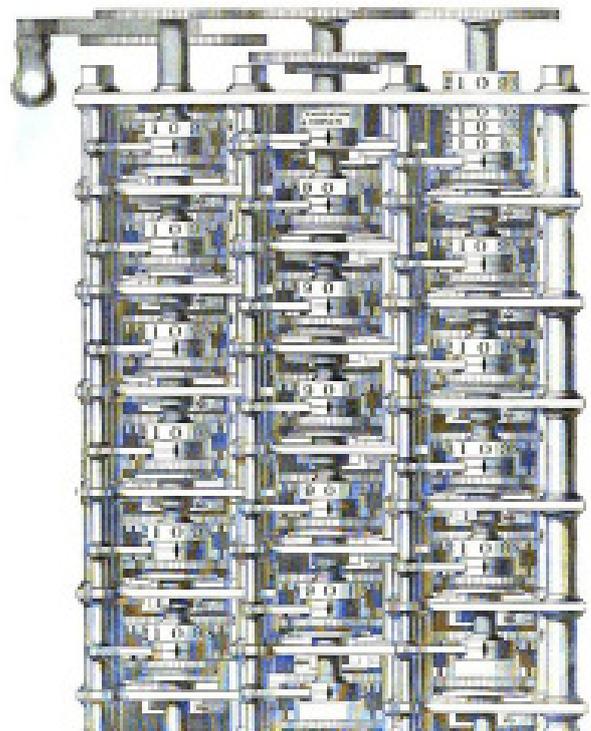
The first scientists to examine a preserved duck-billed Platypus thought it was fake.

This would not be an issue if we could apply broad-brush definitions to deal with complex situations. But logic is bound up with our definition of truth, and anything that allows for contradictions is regarded as imperfect logic and therefore untrue.

Aristotle studied under Plato, who gave us our definition of truth. For Plato, there could be only one truth, and he regarded any contradictory truths as untruths waiting to be exposed. His mouthpiece was Socrates, who was abrupt and combative, and who engaged in debate with the other leading philosophers of the age. Socrates' method - the dialectic method - consisted in an argument between two people of opposing

views, with each trying to find fault with the other; the view which survived critical analysis was then deemed to be true.

Logic serves the dialectical method very well, and has provided the basis for our present day politics, science, religion, philosophy, economics and law. Indeed, it could be said that it underlies the whole of Western culture, from the public debate to the private argument. The importance of logic has in no way been diminished with the advancement of technology. Computing science is founded on logic, with computer code relying on 'true' or 'false' statements to make it work.



The Babbage Difference Engine 1822 (an early computer)

The problem is that, outside of academia, there are very few right and wrong answers in life. Our more important judgments in life rarely involve clear-cut decisions about right and wrong. Matters such as where we will live, what career we will pursue, whom we should marry and what we believe are all complex, relative and highly personal decisions. Such judgments often involve the future, or the consequences of the decision, which are of course unseen at the time. So when we make judgments about whether we should trust someone or not, where we should live and what career we will pursue, we are dealing with an unknown; and for that we have to employ intuition.

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Intuition does not speak to us with the precision of logic. It begins with gut-feeling, which is vague and ephemeral. We may feel a decision is right or wrong without being able to say why exactly. Those who are enamoured to logic regard this as simply confused thinking, while in fact the vagueness of intuition is the natural response to the complexity of the decision. We will all have met a friend we like but do not trust, or an enemy we do not like but respect. Life does not always fit into neat boxes.

We do not understand intuition as well as logic, in part owing to the dominance of logic and in part owing to its nature. Intuition does not provide us with the certainty of being able to say we are right, merely what we believe to be true.



Echo and Narcissus (1903)
by John William Waterhouse

Intuition is the watching mind. The word has the same root as 'tuition', and it watches over us as we think and feel and act. The intuitive mind observes as we think and feel and act, rather like Echo watching Narcissus. And like Echo, it does not speak in clear terms but rather whispers to us. When we have an insightful idea, or when we realize we have become too excited or too bored, or when we are about to make a decision and then have second thoughts, it is the intuitive mind watching over us. Carl Jung, the psychologist, outlined the problem of observing the intuitive mind in his *Psychological Types* (1921):

'Because, in the main, intuition is an unconscious process, the conscious apprehension of its nature is a very difficult matter.' [4]

The clarity of logic comes from its sharp precision, but intuition is holistic; it takes in the whole picture rather than analysing it into its component parts. Henri Bergson, the French

philosopher, defined intuition as a kind of refined instinct. By that he meant it operates unconsciously in the way instinct does, but in a more developed and self-conscious way. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903), we wrote:

'By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.' [5]

It is this inexpressible element, that makes up much of our experience of life, which fails to submit to logic.

And yet for all this it is quite possible to become more familiar with the intuitive mind. Just as we can be born with a natural ability for music or mathematics, we are born with a natural ability for intuitive judgement. And in the same way a natural ability in music or mathematics can be greatly improved with attention and practice, the same can be said for our natural intuitive ability. We can learn to hear it and to trust that it will speak to us at moments of importance and decision.



Hotei, also known as the Laughing Buddha;
his large belly represents gut-feeling

Our most common experience of intuition is through gut-feeling, when we become aware of something, either in the inner life or the outer world, which is present but difficult to define. We may be about to make an important decision in life - to begin a new relationship, to change a job

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or to move to a new town – and our gut-feeling will alert us to what is present in the decision but not easy to define. If we ignore this feeling we may find that later, after making the decision, the hidden element then becomes obvious and apparent, only to find it is too late to reverse the decision. The term ‘hindsight wisdom’ indicates that we often see after the event what was hidden at the time of the decision but not taken fully into account.

Intuition also plays a part in our observation of life. We may observe a person, a child, a flower or a change in the seasons and have a sudden and unexpected thought about its nature. We do not see the world in its entirety, and if we did, we could never learn or discover anything new, either about ourselves or the world around.

The third element of intuitive thinking can be found in the phenomenon known as ‘insight’. Insight is when a thought suddenly emerges as though out of nowhere, and instantly reveals what was previously unknown to us. Insight has been responsible for some of the most important advances in science and technology, from Euclid’s ‘eureka moment’, to Isaac Newton’s apple, to William Rowan Hamilton’s quaternion equations. In each example, the thought arrived suddenly and without prior warning. While each person had developed an interest in their field of enquiry, the sudden insight caused them to alter all that they previously thought about the subject. The physicist Fritjof Capra’s own insight led him to write the book *The Tao of Physics* (1975). He described the experience in the following way:

‘We are all familiar with the situation where we have forgotten the name of a person or place,

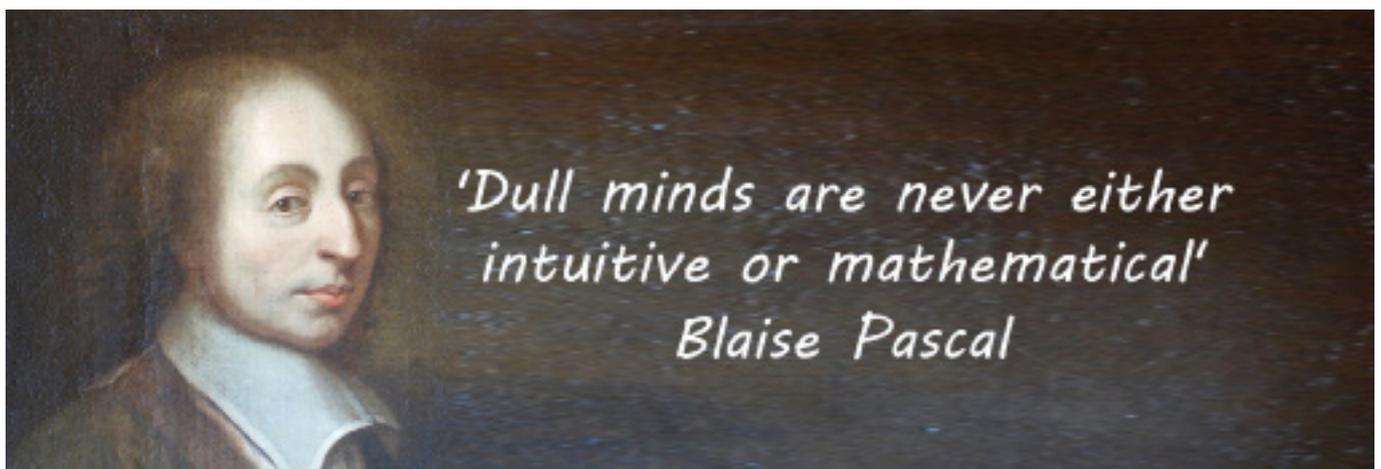
or some other word, and cannot produce it in spite of the utmost concentration. We have it ‘on the tip of our tongue’ but it just will not come out, until we give up and shift our attention to something else when suddenly, in a flash, we remember the forgotten name. No thinking is involved in this process. It is a sudden, immediate insight.’ [6]

As the above paragraph makes clear, insight is not only the province of the scientist and the inventor, but common to all people, not least because it is born of the intuitive mind.

The more we study intuition and the more we take an interest in it, the more we will become familiar with its nature and the more certainly we will hear its voice when it speaks. We use intuition to make some of our most important decisions and judgments in life, and for that reason alone we cannot afford to ignore it. The possibility of developing our intuitive ability is available to anyone who takes such an interest, provided we are willing to do so.

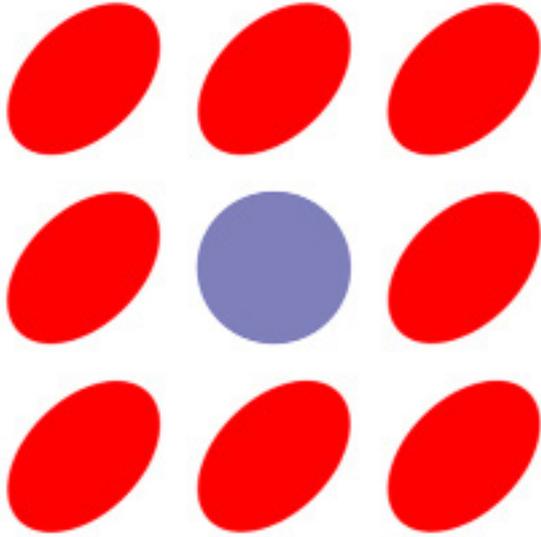
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Illusion

and the intuitive mind



The blue dot does not slope to the left

A Buddhist temple was popular with Western tourists. Each day a coach pulled up and the tourists got off and walked round the temple, and each day they dropped their coach tickets all over the temple grounds. The Abbot put up a bin next to the gate for the tourists to put their tickets in, but the tourists walked past it and continued to drop their tickets all over the temple grounds.

So the Abbot put up a notice next to the bin; 'Unwanted Coach Tickets Here Please'. The tourists continued to walk past the notice and to drop their tickets all over the temple grounds. Finally, the Abbot took away the bin and the notice and put up a new notice saying 'Free Admission with Every Coach Ticket.' The tourists kept their tickets.

We associate illusion with clever graphics or special effects, or believe that it is the product of mental illness or hallucinations. We assume that if we are of sound-mind then we would never mistake illusion for reality. And yet illusion plays a much more important part in life than is generally imagined. Illusion plays a part in everything from make-up to fashion to reputation to advertising.

Illusion is a product of how we see the world rather than of the world itself. We do not just see the world as it is, but interpret what we see, and we do this unconsciously. William James,

regarded as one of the founders of modern psychology, provided a succinct definition of illusion in his *Psychology, the Briefer Course* (1892):

'Note that in every illusion what is false is what is inferred, not what is immediately given.

'The so-called 'fallacy of the senses,' of which the ancient sceptics made so much account, is not fallacy of the senses proper, but rather of the intellect, which interprets wrongly what the senses give.' [1]

In many respects, illusion is the product of a naive view of the world. It could be said that deception is deliberate and illusion is naive. A man who cheats on his wife deceives, while the wife lives with the illusion of a happy marriage. A stage magician deceives to create the effect of magic, while the audience enjoys the illusion of the show. So to fall for illusion is to take what is presented at face value, without questioning what we see.



The Treachery of Images by René Magritte (1929)

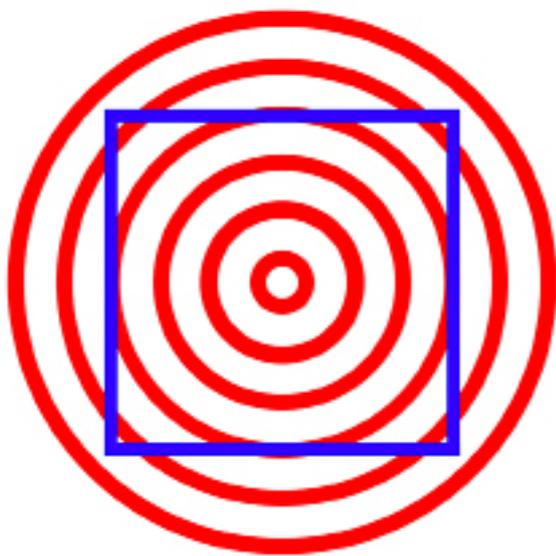
We might assume that if our view of the world was illusory, we would soon see it and correct what was wrong. And yet we can live well enough with illusions. For millennia people believed the earth was flat, and yet they still produced bread and books and children. In times of economic prosperity we might assume that the value of our homes was as real as the bricks and mortar that constitute them, only to discover with recession, that it isn't. We may believe in our ability to weather a storm, emotional or social, based on

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past experience, and then when a storm hits, we discover that we were much more vulnerable than we imagined.

In order to see an illusion, we have to question not just what we see, but how we see it. This can happen naturally, such as when a relationship comes to an end, but this can be very painful, particularly when we find ourselves in a difficult situation of our own making. Illusion is as much a property of the mind as optimism, hope and fear. What we hope or fear is not what we see, but what we imagine will happen.

If we want to study how illusion works, much can be gained by the study of optical illusions.



The blue square does not bend

An optical illusion works by providing the mind with two conflicting images. Each image makes sense in itself, but they cannot be reconciled into a single whole. If we try to make sense of the image, the special nature of the graphic prevents us from doing so. An optical illusion does not cause us to see an illusion, but rather allows us to see that what is presented is illusory.

We might imagine that when we look away from an optical illusion, the same mechanics no longer apply, and we see the world as it is. And yet we look at the world with the same mind, and it affects how we interpret what we see. The American thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882) once said ‘There is an optical illusion about every person we meet’. [2]

We may regard someone as a friend until they betray us. We may regard someone as aggressive, only to discover they acted that way because

they were afraid of us. We may fall for outward beauty, only to discover that behind the beautiful appearance is an unkind soul.

Other experiences of life confirm this. We may think we can control a vice until such time as we have to give it up. We may believe in justice until such time as an injustice is served on us. A crisis will cause us to question what we took for granted and to realize that we didn’t really see the situation for what it was, but only as we assumed it was. We live with many illusions.

Outside the domain of stage magic and special effects, the art of creating illusions can be seen most clearly in the practice of advertising. Modern advertising does not sell the product so much as the image associated with owning the product. Edward Bernays, regarded as one of the founders of modern advertising, had the following to say about what motivates people to buy goods in his seminal book *Propaganda* (1928):

‘Men are rarely aware of the real reasons which motivate their actions. A man may believe that he buys a motor car because, after careful study of the technical features of all makes on the market, he has concluded that this is the best. He is almost certainly fooling himself.’ [3]

Bernays was the nephew of Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939). Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis, which was itself founded on the predication that what motivates people is the unconscious mind. Bernays’ association with Freud was more than that of a nephew; he openly advocated the use of the unconscious mind in his approach to advertising. He introduced suggestive selling, product endorsement and engineered consent as the means to sell goods. He said that if a manufacturer wanted to sell pianos, they should not advertise the quality of the piano, but rather the image associated with owning one.

We might assume that our illusions are harmless, and provided we can continue to pay the rent and eat well, then we needn’t bother ourselves with the possibility that we do not see the world as it is. And yet the word ‘disillusioned’ means being divested of our illusions, and with that can come depression, cynicism and bitterness.

In life, our first indication that we are harbouring an illusion comes from intuition. We may have a gut-feeling that we are missing something. If

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this feeling persists, we may begin to question what we know and see. We may suspect that what is being presented, whether it is from an individual, a newspaper, a government official or a commissioned salesman, is not quite as it seems. It is only once our suspicions have been aroused that we begin to look for evidence.



Is there a number in the final box?

For a while we may feel uncertain as to whether our suspicions are right or not until such time as enough evidence is collected to confirm them. At that point we may begin to apply logic, and explain to ourselves why what is presented does not add up. This second part of the process is much longer and more time-consuming than the initial insight, which was immediate. This is why many people believe that illusion can be discovered by means of reason; they forget that reason came second and intuition first.

The best way to protect ourselves from illusion is to become familiar with the intuitive mind. Our intuition speaks to us always - intuition is the

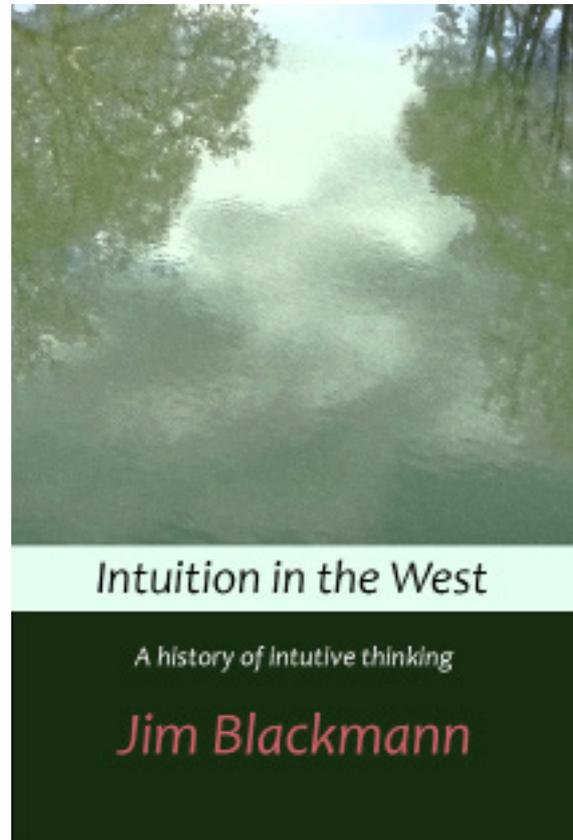
watching mind - but we do not always hear it. The more familiar we are with the intuitive mind the sooner we will hear it when it speaks. To lose our illusions is not to become disillusioned with life, but simply to see life as it is. It is quite possible to be realistic about our position in life, and yet still hope and dream.

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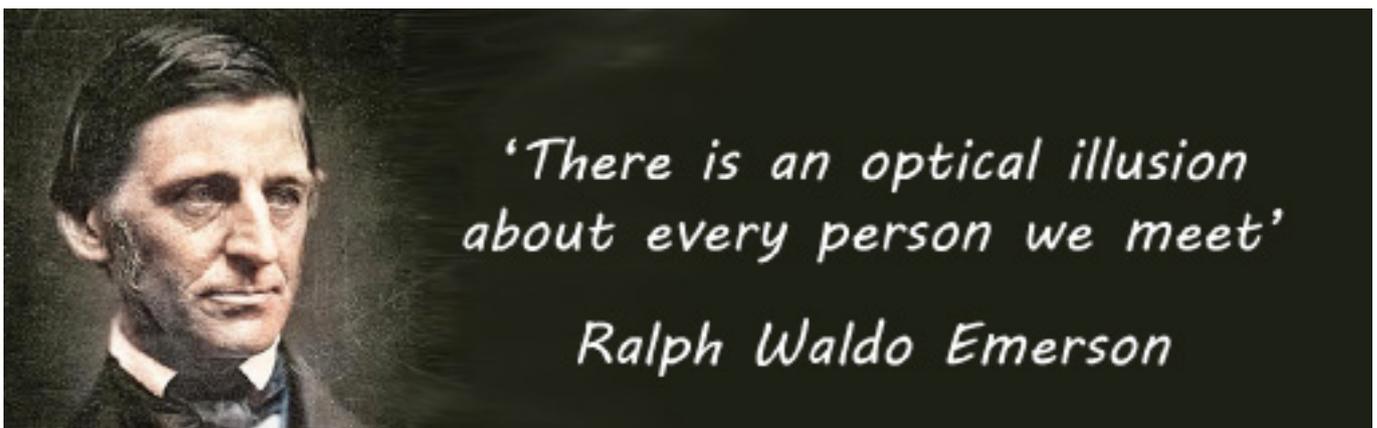
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Stoicism

and the art of living



The Three Fates - artist unknown, 16th Century

James B. Stockdale, a pilot and commander in the American Air Force, was shot down over Vietnam and held prisoner in Hanoi for over seven years. He was beaten and tortured, as were other prisoners, and yet he survived the ordeal. When he returned home, he was asked who didn't make it out: he said 'the optimists'.

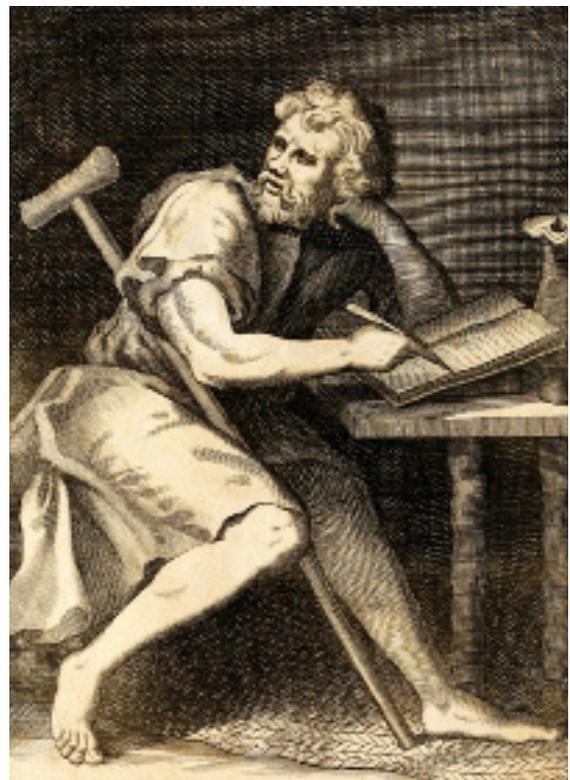
'They were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.' And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they'd say, 'We're going to be out by Easter.' And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart.' [1]

What made the difference for Stockdale is that he had read the *Enchiridion*, a collection of sayings by the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, many times over. He knew that we have little control over what happens outwardly, and that the only way to live in any dignified sense is to control and govern the inner life. He wrote:

'Make sure in your heart of hearts, in your inner self, that you treat your station in life with indifference. Not with contempt, only with indifference.' [2]

Stoicism is the art of separating the outer world from the inner life, and focusing on the inner. This is not the same as withdrawing from the world as a monk might do, but of living in the world as any other person might do, but with a Stoic view of life. A Stoic is someone who understands that the outer world is governed by forces quite beyond our control, and - no matter how much we might try to exert control - the only real freedom we have is to control how we respond to events, not the events themselves.

There were other Stoic philosophers; Cato the Younger, who was admired by the American president George Washington, and Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, who was similarly admired by the American president Bill Clinton. But it was Epictetus who defined Stoicism as we know it.



Epictetus, from Edward Ivie's *Enchiridion*, 1715

Epictetus wrote nothing himself, and the defining books we have, the *Discourses* and the *Enchiridion*, were drawn from the verbatim notes

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taken down by his follower, the Greek historian, Arrian (c. 2nd Century AD). Epictetus defined the Stoic outlook in the following manner:

‘There are things which are within our power, and there are things which are beyond our power. Within our power are opinion, aim, desire, aversion, and, in one word, whatever affairs are our own. Beyond our power are body, property, reputation, office, and, in one word, whatever are not properly our own affairs.’ [3]

The hallmark of the modern era, indeed the whole of Western civilization, is based on the notion of progress; we believe that we are making the world better. From the idea of progress comes advancement through technology, the pursuit of wealth, the building of great cities, economic growth, and the notions of success and personal reputation. We would not pursue such things if they were not tangible, and yet - as many who have achieved fame and fortune will attest - the results can be short-lived and their benefits can often seem hollow.



Krishna instructing Arjuna, glass painting, Java, Indonesia

It could be said that Stoicism is the Western equivalent to the Karma Yoga of Hinduism. Karma Yoga is the means to deal with the unpleasant events of life, known as bad Karma, in a way that allows us to gain inwardly from what would otherwise seem an unnecessary and traumatic experience. In his brief summary on the subject, P. D. Ouspensky described the principles of Karma Yoga in his book *A New Model of the Universe* (1931):

‘A man who understands the ideas of Karma Yoga feels all the time that he is but a tiny screw or a tiny wheel in the big machine, and that the success or failure of what he thinks he is doing depends very little on his own actions.’ [4]

Such is the pervasiveness of the notion of

progress in the West that we have little time for the fatalism implied in the Stoic outlook. Fatalism, where it is expressed, is associated with religion and the submission to a higher power. This can be seen in the phrase ‘Deo Volente’ of Christianity, in ‘Im Yirtzeh Hashem’ of Judaism, and in ‘Inshallah’ of Islam, all of which mean ‘As God wills’.



Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749 - 1827)

And yet the same fatalism can also be found in Atheism. For example, the French mathematician and philosopher Pierre Simon Laplace, expressed a mechanistic view of fatalism in his book *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities* (1814):

‘We ought then to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its anterior state and as the cause of the one which is to follow. Given for one instant an intelligence which could comprehend all the forces by which nature is animated and the respective situation of the beings who compose it — an intelligence sufficiently vast to submit these data to analysis — it would embrace in the same formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the lightest atom; for it, nothing would be uncertain and the future, as the past, would be present to its eyes.’ [5]

We find the notion of absolute fatalism difficult to accept; freedom is as important to us as bread. While any debate about free-will and fatalism might appear theoretical, what cannot be

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denied is that the greater events in the world are beyond the control and governance of any single individual. We are just as subject to events as we are to the weather. Although we may ignore such matters when times are good, when times are not - whether it is recession, disease, hunger or personal misfortune - we are forced to consider over how we will respond to such events.

While the Karma Yoga of Hinduism is born out of a belief in reincarnation, Stoicism makes no such demands in the individual; Stoicism is rooted in life itself. James Stockdale made a point of emphasizing this, particularly when he addressed soldiers - largely indifferent to philosophical matters - on the subject:

‘On the question of afterlife, Marcus Aurelius took up and emphasized the teaching of Epictetus. They alone, among Stoics, were very careful in what they said about death. There was no proof of afterlife, and rather than possibly mislead people, they refrained from the more ample language of their predecessors.’ [6]

To be a Stoic is to live in the world, and to live practically. Attending to the inner life by no means requires us to turn away from life itself, to fail to attend to our given position in life, or to neglect our relationships with other people. It is to hold the view that the world runs its own course and that our only freedom is one where we choose inwardly how we respond to what life presents us with. Epictetus put it this way:

‘Whoever, then, would be free, let him wish nothing, let him decline nothing, which depends

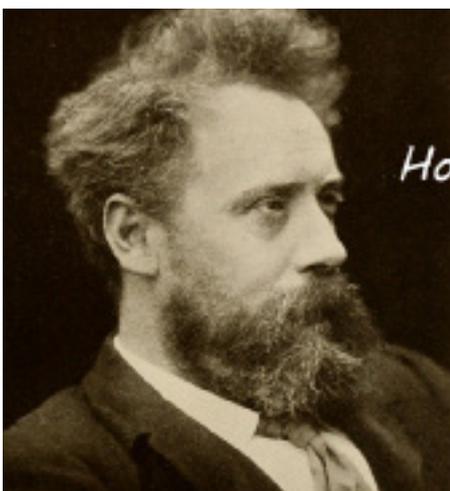
on others else he must necessarily be a slave.’ [7]

Freedom, if there can be such a thing in a world governed by forces which are beyond our control, is to be found in the development of the governing mind, known as the ‘hegemonikon’ in Stoic literature. If others choose to hurt us, or if life takes an unpleasant turn of events, or if wider events seem to be heading in a direction not to our liking, we can still choose to be free. We do not have to submit to the will of others, at least inwardly. Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 AD), who was both a Roman emperor and a Stoic, wrote:

‘Remove the thought ‘I am hurt’, and the hurt itself is removed.’ [8]

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- [4] P. D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 3rd edn. 1938) p. 260.
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- [6] James B. Stockdale, *The Stoic Warrior’s Triad* (U.S. Naval Academy, Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics, 2001) p.11.
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*It matters not how strait the gate
How charged with punishments the scroll
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul*

William Ernest Henley