

## LEFT AND RIGHT

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When one's imagination turns to this city of Florence it is the picture of Bruenelleschi's Cupola which first arises in one's mind, and with it the whole glory of this city. It was the thought of this great Dome which stirred up in me the questions which I wish to raise and set me wondering on the two great domes within our own bodies.

Under the rounded vault of our cranium lies the almost symmetrical form of our brain, whereas under the diaphragm we find the whole asymmetric world of the abdomen—spleen, stomach, and pancreas to the left, liver and gall bladder to the right. When we turn to the middle cavity of our body, our thorax, we meet within the rib vaulting a balance of symmetry and asymmetry. There are two lungs, but on the right three lobes, and on the left two lobes. The heart is four-chambered, but displaced slightly to the left and the four chambers are not quite equally balanced.

If all human inventions and creations are produced from same sources as have built our organisms and the world of nature, we can perhaps look upon these three cavities as archetypes which can be seen again, for instance, in the Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque styles. The Romanesque style for me seems to be based on the cave and skull. Life and culture are developed by retiring within the protection of monastery and castle, and all order is gradually established by the feudal and clerical hierarchy which reminds one of the hierarchical organization of the nervous system. When the dome is attained it is the cavity of the skull, and such a building as the wonderful Baptistery here in Florence this can, I believe, be intuitively experienced. In the Pantheon in Rome the fontanelle is still open.

With the Gothic, it is the forest grove and thorax which we experience, and the aspiring, rising world of the emotions enters. The closed-in life begins to open out as the congrega-

tion take their place through their feelings in the new culture. In a Gothic Cathedral such as Chartres, we can feel the heart's desires and the wings of the lungs carry us aloft. Nor can the close association of this period with the adoration of the Virgin and in secular life with the courts of love, the troubadours, the discovery of woman as an ideal, be chance. It corresponds to the awakening of man to the life of the heart.

With the transition to the Renaissance and to the Baroque, we see the waking up of the metabolic world of the abdomen. The merchants, the burghers, come into their own. Personality is born with the full incarnation into the life of this world. Not only must thought and feeling be redeemed, but this world and its economics, and the passionate life of will and action must be redeemed. The heavenly world is seen now as the vast projection on the dome of the diaphragm of all the dynamic movements of the will. The earlier art and sculpture was static, almost symmetrical, now it is all movement and asymmetry.

Today a new task faces us, the realization of the whole, in its harmony, and the achievement of idiom in its uniqueness, a task for which in its own sphere Homœopathy is basically well founded.

I am approaching the problem of left and right from this side in order to establish a human relationship to it. We ourselves achieve a synthesis of Symmetry and Asymmetry. From our heads and intellects we are constantly trying to introduce symmetry, scheme, and order, and to freeze the universe in fixity of perfect form, to crystallize everything. From our bellies and wills we constantly upset the apple-cart. We introduce a twist into it, we dissolve its set forms, and enliven, literally, the dead frozen world with movement. Something comes in which is a-rational, more actual than the world of abstract ideas.

It was also in the Baroque period that mathematics reached the epoch-making advance to the Infinitesimal Calculus. Newton, but especially Leibniz discovered how to grapple mathematically with the actual world. What was the secret? It lies simply in this: to the Greek it would have been a crime

to have said that two things which were different, even infinitely little different, were the same. Leibniz, by establishing that one can take it that things infinitely little different, are identical and that things identical can be treated as infinitely little different, made possible the modern world conquest. Motion could now be handled mathematically. To our ordinary intellectual thinking, motion is a paradox, classically stated in the paradoxes of Zeno.

Let us look for a moment at the forms of symmetry and asymmetry in nature. The cube and the sphere represent the perfect symmetry. In the mineral kingdom, a crystal of salt, a cube, shows that perfection of form which something in our mind craves, it is right, rational, not enigmatic; its structure one can penetrate with understanding. In the vegetable kingdom one approaches perfect symmetry in the spherical fruit and seed. In the animals, a perfection of symmetry is discoverable amongst some of the unicellular organisms, and in the Echinoderms it is approximately attained in the seurchins, where the spherical imposes itself on top of the radial symmetry of the starfish. The attempt at this perfect symmetry is again visible in the spherical tendency evidenced in the head which superimposes its gestalt on the almost bilateral symmetry of the face and brain.

In the vegetable kingdom, a certain properness is felt about the radiant forms like sunflowers, radially symmetrical, differentiated in the up and down dimensions only. We find such forms again amongst certain crystals, and in the animals amongst the polyps and medusae. These latter, as Jaworski has pointed out, depict in their form and movement and in their origin from the tubular vascular polyps the same theme as the heart which strives towards a radial symmetry. The starfish show a radial symmetry superimposing itself on an embryonic form which is bilaterally symmetrical. When we look at the eye it is basically as a radially symmetrical form that it presents, whereas the ear is an asymmetrical mollusc, a snail form.

The typical animal form is, however, in the bilateral symmetry which is established in the worms and perpetuated in

arthropods and vertebrates. They have subjected themselves to a polarity of up and down as well as forwards and backwards, left and right remaining undifferentiated as mirror images. Such forms occur also amongst minerals and many plants, such as Aconite, show flowers which are reminiscent of animal forms, and assume instead of radial forms the bilateral symmetry of animals.

Full development of differentiation in space is reached, however, in those forms in which left and right are as distinct from each other as are up and down, and forwards and backwards. This shows itself in the spiral twist of the gastropod molluscs and from there on is present interiorized in the Visceral Asymmetry of the higher animals. In man, it shows itself apart from the visceral asymmetry in the phenomena of left and right handedness. In the minerals, the optically active isomers show this differentiation in all three dimensions of space, and there is no plane which divide these crystals into two mirror images. Only a totally separate crystal can be the mirror image. The spiral movement in plants also determines a fundamental asymmetry in them.

In the human organism, in which all polar differentiations are comprehended, all these layers of symmetry and asymmetry are mutually penetrating and impose themselves on each other.

One of the singular facts known to us all in respect of these problems is the reversal of the body image in the brain; the representation of the right side of the body in the left brain and vice versa. We cannot omit this subject, even if we cannot solve it, and it seems to be bound up with the fascinating problems of mirrors. What does a mirror do? First of all it separates for us the sense of sight from the sense of touch. Normally we reach our sense of reality by corroborating our sight by our touch; we pinch ourselves to see if we are awake. The mirror gives us the visual image without the substantiality, the matter, the touchability. Now it is particularly through the sense of touch, through the resistance, the inertia which it mediates, that our will enters into the sensory experience. The mirror therefore removes the element of touch

and the determination of the will, and leaves us free to contemplate the image. It also reverses the object, producing that twin which we call the mirror image, and in a way frees us from the fate of never seeing our own face. No wonder from Narcissus down we are all fascinated by these riddles. But within ourselves also we have the power of reflection, of thinking. When we reflect, when we think, what do we produce? We experience ideas, and are those ideas not mirror images of spiritual realities? Thanks to the reflection, the ideas are abstracted from the living reality and we can contemplate them freely, without danger of being hypnotized. The myth of Perseus and the Gorgon's head depicts this beautifully. Could it not be that this same thinking was able in the embryo to produce the brain as the mirror image of the body, as a tangible thought of the microcosm, which our body is? We know little enough of the relation of the brain to consciousness and it would be in agreement with the principle of function preceding and creating the organ if we took it that thinking created the brain.

One further fact could then begin to have its meaning. In the birds, the aorta passes to the right, not to the left as in man and the mammals. The avian circulation is a mirror image of the mammalian. We could take this as indicating that the organization of the whole bird corresponds to the organization of our head, as Steiner pointed out. Because it is a head, the bird flies; literally on the wings of thought. Its bones are hollowed into air sacs as indeed in the nasal sinuses are the bones of our own skulls.

However this may all be, the qualitative meaning of left and right must now be clarified as far as possible. I have suggested that the origin of the asymmetry of left and right must be sought in the abdomen, the twist develops here in the embryo. From this we get the liver to the right and the spleen to the left. In the molluscs, in the gastropods, this twist attains a remarkable degree, in some forms the organs of one side actually vanishing. In *Sepia* this is not so, the cuttlefish is not twisted, but left-sidedness predominates in the symptomatology. Of *Murex*, too little is known to speak of its

... *Calcareo carb.*, prepared from the almost symmetrical bivalve oyster, is rightsided in its symptomatology.

The molluscs are roughly differentiated into the cephalopods, gastropods, and bivalves. It is in the gastropods that the spiral twist develops. Botticelli's Birth of Venus, as well as many other works of art have indicated the connection between Woman and the molluscs. Jaworski has shown the biological correspondence between the female genital functions and organs and the molluscs, the cephalopods representing the uterus and vagina in particular. Some of the notes of the female functions are displaced to the head end. To these the oyster corresponds with its calcareous skull and sedentary habit. We suggest then that the reversal of sides in *Sepia* and *Calcareo carb.* echoes the reversal of sides in the representation of the body in the brain.

Some years ago, in a stimulating paper, Dr. Bernard indicated the strong relationship of right-sided remedies to the venous circulation and liver. A very basic relationship is here involved. The polarity of outward flowing and inward flowing, of exteriorization and interiorization, is fundamental to life, and would seem to dominate pathology also in the polarity of tumour formation and inflammation. Nevertheless, *Sepia* is certainly connected with pelvic and portal venous congestion, and yet is left-sided. *Lachesis* also is closely connected with the veins, although it is the most left-sided of remedies, and it is doubtful whether *Crotalus* is with any justification regarded as right-sided.

Now it has become clear through psycho-analytical research that left and right are of symbolic importance. The right is indeed right, straight, good, the hand of authority, it signifies straight and also narrow, whereas the left is what is left out, is sinister, is the side of love and the heart. The left is related to the Unconscious, the right to the Conscious, and from this it follows that the left is related to woman, the right to man. In Spanish and Portuguese, the word for right is of Latin, and the word for left of Moorish origin.

Is it chance that *Lachesis*, *Sepia* and *Lilium tigrinum*, all definitely left-sided remedies, are so powerfully female reme-

dies, or is this a true connection? *Argentum*, also left-sided is traditionally associated with the moon, and hence with woman. The right-sided remedies *Lycopodium* and *Nux vomica* are typical male remedies, and the word Arsenic is derived from the Greek for male, and therefore ancient intuition divined its gender as masculine. The right-sidedness of *Calcarea* may be the cephalic reversal of the left-sidedness of *Sepia*. Now *Pulsatilla* certainly acts on the veins and liver. It equally certainly is a feminine type of remedy. Is it in fact characterized by a definite laterality in symptoms? I cannot find any definite evidence for attributing to it a predominance of left- or right-sidedness. Changeableness seems a more definite characteristic, a tendency for symptoms to wander from side to side, and place to place.

Left and right—how are they related to up and down and front and back? The elevation of man to the erect posture has transformed these polarities and the head is no longer what we put forward. The head is aloft, aloof, and detached; no longer is it earth-bound. To go ahead for mankind should not signify to push ahead like an animal, but to rise up and see further and more impartially. With what do we advance to meet the world? With our left side and shield, and with our soft front bellies. From the days of Adam down, Man has pushed Woman forward and hidden behind her. The continuous and evolutionary affairs of the human race are in the hands of Woman, the sporadic affairs of historic endeavour and of intermittent conscious activity are in the hands of Man; the sword and right hand, the male function, consciousness, are used only occasionally. The unconscious never sleeps. "The Eternal Feminine leads ever onwards." With our heads we know the past, what is dead and mere fact; with our bellies we go to the future.

The axis of the human organism is displayed in the heart's axis. It is from above, behind, and the right to below, in front, to the left. Above, behind, and right is the conscious pole. Below, in front, and to the left is unconscious, and in the archetypal sense woman.

Since we are dealing in human beings with the sphere of

Conscious and Unconscious, and since we have learnt much in this century of the a-logical non-causal ways of the unconscious, I have risked presenting these themes to you in a certain wild associative way, hoping to catch with luck something of worth on the path.

There are a pair of pictures in the Uffizi of Adam and Eve by Cranach. Adam contemplating Eve appears utterly at a loss and perplexed. No wonder.

—*The Brit. Homœ. Journl., Jan. '60.*

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#### EXPERIMENT SOLITARY, TOUCHING THE RIGHT SIDE AND THE LEFT

The Senses are alike strong, both on the right side, and on the left; but the Limbs on the right side are stronger. The cause may be, for that the Brain, which is the Instrument of Sense, is alike on both sides; but Motion, and abilities of moving, are somewhat holpen from the Liver, which lieth on the right side. It may be also, for that the Senses are put in exercise, indifferently on both sides from the time of our Birth; but the Limbs are used most on the right side, whereby custom helpeth: For we see, that some are left-handed, which are such as have used the left-hand most.

FRANCIS BACON.  
1561-1626

—*The Brit. Homœo. Journl., Jan. '60.*