

AUTHOR'S INTRO:

If you like this type of thing, you might look up a book entitled *The Practical Cogitator*, which was designed for soldiers to read before going on guard duty, so that they'd have something to think about while standing in place for eight or more hours.

Tinkertoy Thoughts

As life enhances itself through developed relationality, it becomes more intricate in its objective relations, and thus more sensitive. Relations intensify and accelerate. Eventually, "mind" can develop into the most sensitive and intricate of natural corporate bodies. However, as the reign of the dinosaurs proved, a tiny mind can be locked inside a giant body, massive extinctions visit, and life must take an alternate direction to effectuate itself.

Since life is part of nature, but not all of nature enhances life, distinctions must be made by intelligence. Value refers to objects and object-systems which are consistent with life-ends, e.g. food is "valuable" because it aids health and vigor. Further, food is not of value simply because it helps life to continue, but because a healthy life-form can likely achieve its capacity for creative effort.

Life can come into relation with a multitude of things--poison, radiation, violence, stupidity. The process of growth refers to the extension of life-relations to objects of value. In this light, growth might be considered valued relations, or active value.

Action assumes a form of knowledge, even if it is of the least complex and most spontaneous sort, as seen in single-celled life. As the complexity of life enlarges through the principle of order, so do the forms of action and knowledge grow more complex. As mind appears and grows, life gains the capacity for abstraction, which is an incalculable boon to its ability to grasp and effect order through previsioning action. The imagination with its significant weight of knowledge infers what may be from what is.

Action seeks to enhance existence through ordered quality. Endless process (re-action, impulse) can aim at no more than continuance. Aristotle referred to the human as the "political animal" because of its capacity to act and plan, rather than simply surviving.

Life as self-assertive is active because of the spontaneous relation of objects, not because it reproduces itself.

The relational assertion must have an implication to life-ends to warrant consideration as creative. However, an assertion can fail and still be creative. The assertion of life through order is creativity.

Existence is not made of atoms but of atoms in relation. Atoms, in turn, are composed of subatomic particles in relation. No matter how far one chases the "simple"--the most elemental of material elements--it is relation that proves itself as the basis of all facts. If one wonders where relation originates without mass, then it might be asked from where mass appears without relation.

Culture refers to man-made objects, i.e. what is not produced by nature, and includes both physical objects and ideas, which are objects of the imagination. Civilization, with a heavy emphasis on cities as work centers that develop man-made objects, might be defined as a system of man-made objects.

Nature is the fact in and through which humanity acts and encompasses both life-forms and nonliving objects. There is no escaping nature, nor, it

seems, its dangerous and short-sighted destruction. The Earth cannot abide if it is dead.

Nature embodies both action and reaction, spontaneity and chance, and thus is contradictory in its basic structure. To the extent that life is dependent on chance, the inference can be drawn that life also is contradictory. However, intelligent life can reshape itself to reduce the structural conflict.

Growth reaches for value; beauty is value. Beauty is an emphasis in the whole, a synthesis or culmination of life's values into a particular end. Beauty is universal because it is unique, and because in that uniqueness, it expresses the universal values of life. An object is not beautiful when it excludes all but one quality, but when it integrates all qualities into a background for one idea of life-value. Teachers, actors, physicians, linguists, athletes, scientists, etc., do not stop being people when they become specialists but, rather, bring the force of their full humanity into focus to shape raw existence into animate beauty. Whether a painting, novel, rose garden or living person, the corporate "object" of beauty is an identity of life-values.

Life is a vast object-system that asserts itself through creativity. As the massed body of distinctions in quality-relations, knowledge serves as life's objective medium of thought. Using the imagination to play with the collected distinctions of knowledge, intelligence creates object-systems called ideas. (Because of the manner of, and end to, its function, intelligence can be defined as creative knowledge, or thought.) The more intricate a life-form becomes, the more knowledge it can absorb, consequently the greater its capacity for intensifying and enlarging its

relations with objective value becomes. Thus, life functions as and through creativity and, in turn, enhances that creativity through knowledge.

Intelligence: planning what will be from what is.

Intelligence is corporate, both in its individual manifestation and in its cultural fact, for it is grounded in life's objective nature. In short, geniuses such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo were not merely born with great capacity, they were trained in a world of rich objects. It is sobering--and more than a bit horrifying--to think that the opportunity for the "average" person to become a genius mostly lies in the chance of birth and circumstance.

Intelligence has the ability to refine knowledge into wisdom. Life collects knowledge through feeling and, in the more advanced life-forms, thought. Both feeling and thought are grounded in distinctions. Intelligence by virtue of its greater sensitivity and the synthesizing aspect of play can collect complex ideas. When these ideas are objectified in the world, they become the part of culture called wisdom. Qualities in right relation to one another for life-ends are wisdom, and become both end and instrument of life-capacity. The objects and object-systems held as wise are the ones that reflect a civilization. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the values that guide the knowledge-distinctions of intelligence are not skewed or contradictory. While many would see a Rembrandt masterwork or the field of medicine as wisdom, there have been others who prefer gas chambers and final solutions.