

1.4 | *Self-Knowledge and Self-Love*

The fact that man is a self-conscious or self-regarding animal underlies the two main themes treated in this section. One is the injunction first uttered by one of the seven wise men of ancient Greece—"Know thyself!" That commandment gets repeated in one form or another century after century, as a counsel of perfection or as the key to wisdom. Clearly, the task to be performed is not an easy one, since by implication it is one that few men discharge adequately.

Illusion and self-deception stand in the way of an honest, penetrating, and fearless self-appraisal. Though it would appear that we have access to the innermost core of our individual being, and that there is nothing in the world with which we are on more intimate terms than our own self, the self remains an elusive object of knowledge and understanding. Different reasons for this are given or suggested by different writers; and they also recommend different ways to overcome obstacles. For all these differences, the basic insights about the desirability and the difficulty of self-knowledge remain very much the same from Socrates and the Roman Stoics to Thoreau and Emerson, and to the psychoanalysts and existentialists in our own day.

According to many of the passages quoted

in Chapter 3 on Love, the proper objects of love are God, other human beings, one's country, and such ideals as truth, beauty, and goodness. Yet one of the most famous of all statements about love—the Christian precepts of charity—commands us, first, to love God, and second, to love our neighbor as our self. And the same injunction is implied in Aristotle's conception of the ideal friend, the proper beloved, as an *alter ego*—another self. Self-love is in a sense the basis of true love of another.

Self-love, then, far from being castigated as a misdirection of the benevolent impulse, is conceived as inseparable from benevolence toward others. There are other terms for what is being discussed here—"self-esteem," "self-respect," "*amour propre*," and even "pride," when that term is used to signify a well-founded and well-deserved approval of one's self. Yet the fact that pride is also condemned as an overestimation of one's worth suggests that self-love can become so excessive or perverted that it excludes or subordinates all other loves. Whereas the passages dealing with the first theme in this section—self-knowledge—tend to be of the same tenor, the passages dealing with the second—self-love—are often ambivalent.

- 1 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.
Proverbs 27:2
- 2 The gods help him who helps himself.
Euripides, Fragment
- 3 *Critias*. Self-knowledge would certainly be maintained by me to be the very essence of knowledge, and in this I agree with him who dedicated the inscription, "Know thyself!" at Delphi.
Plato, Charmides, 164B
- 4 *Socrates*. The wise or temperate man, and he only, will know himself.
Plato, Charmides, 167A
- 5 *Athenian Stranger*. The excessive love of self is in reality the source to each man of all offences. . . . Wherefore let every man avoid excess of self-love, and condescend to follow a better man than himself, not allowing any false shame to stand in the way.
Plato, Laws, V, 731B
- 6 Everyone has the obligation to ponder well his own specific traits of character. He must also regulate them adequately and not wonder whether someone else's traits might suit him better. The more definitely his own a man's character is, the better it fits him.
Cicero, De Officiis, I, 31
- 7 Every animal is attached to nothing so much as to its own interest. Whatever then appears to it an impediment to this interest, whether this be a brother, or a father, or a child, or beloved, or lover, it hates, spurns, curses: for its nature is to love nothing so much as its own interest; this is father, and brother and kinsman, and country, and God. . . .
If a man put in the same place his interest, sanctity, goodness, and country, and parents, and friends, all these are secured: but if he puts in one place his interest, in another his friends, and his country and his kinsmen and justice itself, all these give way being borne down by the weight of interest.
Epicetetus, Discourses, II, 22
- 8 How much trouble he avoids who does not look to see what his neighbour says or does or thinks, but only to what he does himself, that it may be just and pure.
Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, IV, 18
- 9 Look within. Within is the fountain of good, and it will ever bubble up, if thou wilt ever dig.
Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, VII, 59
- 10 I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men, but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others.
Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, XII, 4
- 11 Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.
Plotinus, First Ennead, VI, 9
- 12 Man is a great deep, Lord. You number his very hairs and they are not lost in Your sight: but the hairs of his head are easier to number than his affections and the movements of his heart.
Augustine, Confessions, IV, 14
- 13 If I am deceived, I am. For he who is not, cannot be deceived; and if I am deceived, by this same token I am.
Augustine, City of God, XI, 26
- 14 For the most part, the human mind cannot attain to self-knowledge otherwise than by making trial of its powers through temptation, by some kind of experimental and not merely verbal self-interrogation.
Augustine, City of God, XVI, 32
- 15 It is a very ordinary and common thing amongst men to conceive, foresee, know, and presage the misfortune, bad luck, or disaster of another; but to have the understanding, providence, knowledge, and prediction of a man's own mishap, is very scarce, and rare to be found any where.
Rabelais, Gargantua and Pantagruel, III, 15
- 16 If, as we who study ourselves have learned to do, each man who hears a true statement immediately considered how it properly pertains to him, each man would find that it is not so much a good saying as a good whiplash to the ordinary stupidity of his judgment.
Montaigne, Essays, I, 23, Of Custom
- 17 This capacity for sifting truth, whatever it may amount to in me, and this free will not to enslave my belief easily, I owe principally to myself. For the firmest and most general ideas I have are those which, in a manner of speaking, were born with me. They are natural and all mine. I produced them crude and simple, with a conception

bold and strong, but a little confused and imperfect. Since then I have established and fortified them by the authority of others and the sound arguments of the ancients, with whom I found my judgment in agreement. These men have given me a firmer grip on my ideas and a more complete enjoyment and possession of them.

Montaigne, *Essays*, II, 17,
Of Presumption

- 18 It is a rare life that remains well ordered even in private. Any man can play his part in the side show and represent a worthy man on the boards; but to be disciplined within, in his own bosom, where all is permissible, where all is concealed—that's the point.

Montaigne, *Essays*, III, 2,
Of Repentance

- 19 It was a paradoxical command that was given us of old by that god at Delphi: "Look into yourself, know yourself, keep to yourself; bring back your mind and your will, which are spending themselves elsewhere, into themselves; you are running out, you are scattering yourself; concentrate yourself, resist yourself; you are being betrayed, dispersed, and stolen away from yourself. Do you not see that this world keeps its sight all concentrated inward and its eyes open to contemplate itself? It is always vanity for you, within and without; but it is less vanity when it is less extensive. Except for you, O man," said that god, "each thing studies itself first, and, according to its needs, has limits to its labors and desires. There is not a single thing as empty and needy as you, who embrace the universe: you are the investigator without knowledge, the magistrate without jurisdiction, and all in all, the fool of the farce."

Montaigne, *Essays*, III, 9,
Of Vanity

- 20 It is an absolute perfection and virtually divine to know how to enjoy our being rightfully. We seek other conditions because we do not understand the use of our own, and go outside of ourselves because we do not know what it is like inside. Yet there is no use our mounting on stilts, for on stilts we must still walk on our own legs. And on the loftiest throne in the world we are still sitting only on our own rump.

Montaigne, *Essays*, III, 13,
Of Experience

- 21 *Polonius*. This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I, iii, 78

- 22 *Iago*. O villainous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years; and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never

found a man that knew how to love himself.

Shakespeare, *Othello*, I, iii, 312

- 23 It hath been well said that the arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self.

Bacon, *Of Love*

- 24 For a long time I had remarked that it is sometimes requisite in common life to follow opinions which one knows to be most uncertain, exactly as though they were indisputable, as has been said above. But because in this case I wished to give myself entirely to the search after Truth, I thought that it was necessary for me to take an apparently opposite course, and to reject as absolutely false everything as to which I could imagine the least ground of doubt, in order to see if afterwards there remained anything in my belief that was entirely certain. Thus, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I wished to suppose that nothing is just as they cause us to imagine it to be; and because there are men who deceive themselves in their reasoning and fall into paralogisms, even concerning the simplest matters of geometry, and judging that I was as subject to error as was any other, I rejected as false all the reasons formerly accepted by me as demonstrations. And since all the same thoughts and conceptions which we have while awake may also come to us in sleep, without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to assume that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I noticed that whilst I thus wished to think all things false, it was absolutely essential that the "I" who thought this should be somewhat, and remarking that this truth "*I think, therefore I am*" was so certain and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions brought forward by the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I came to the conclusion that I could receive it without scruple as the first principle of the Philosophy.

Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, IV

- 25 Whosoever looketh into himself and considereth what he doth when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts and passions of all other men upon the like occasions. I say the similitude of passions, which are the same in all men,—desire, fear, hope, etc.; not the similitude of the objects of the passions, which are the things desired, feared, hoped, etc.: for these the constitution individual, and particular education, do so vary, and they are so easy to be kept from our knowledge, that the characters of man's heart, blotted and confounded as they are with dissembling, lying, counterfeiting, and erroneous doctrines, are legible only to him that searcheth hearts. And though by men's actions we do discover their design sometimes; yet to do it without

comparing them with our own, and distinguishing all circumstances by which the case may come to be altered, is to decipher without a key, and be for the most part deceived, by too much trust or by too much diffidence, as he that reads is himself a good or evil man.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Intro.

- 26 One must know oneself. If this does not serve to discover truth, it at least serves as a rule of life, and there is nothing better.

Pascal, *Pensées*, II, 66

- 27 Man is to himself the most wonderful object in nature; for he cannot conceive what the body is, still less what the mind is, and least of all how a body should be united to a mind. This is the consummation of his difficulties, and yet it is his very being.

Pascal, *Pensées*, II, 72

- 28 The nature of self-love and of this human Ego is to love self only and consider self only. But what will man do? He cannot prevent this object that he loves from being full of faults and wants. He wants to be great, and he sees himself small. He wants to be happy, and he sees himself miserable. He wants to be perfect, and he sees himself full of imperfections. He wants to be the object of love and esteem among men, and he sees that his faults merit only their hatred and contempt. This embarrassment in which he finds himself produces in him the most unrighteous and criminal passion that can be imagined; for he conceives a mortal enmity against that truth which reproves him and which convinces him of his faults. He would annihilate it, but, unable to destroy it in its essence, he destroys it as far as possible in his own knowledge and in that of others; that is to say, he devotes all his attention to hiding his faults both from others and from himself, and he cannot endure either that others should point them out to him, or that they should see them.

Truly it is an evil to be full of faults; but it is a still greater evil to be full of them and to be unwilling to recognise them, since that is to add the further fault of a voluntary illusion.

Pascal, *Pensées*, II, 100

- 29 If we do not know ourselves to be full of pride, ambition, lust, weakness, misery, and injustice, we are indeed blind. And if, knowing this, we do not desire deliverance, what can we say of a man . . . ?

Pascal, *Pensées*, VII, 450

- 30 Since reason demands nothing which is opposed to nature, it demands, therefore, that every person should love himself, should seek his own profit,—what is truly profitable to him,—should desire everything that really leads man to greater perfec-

tion, and absolutely that every one should endeavour, as far as in him lies, to preserve his own being. This is all true as necessarily as that the whole is greater than its part.

Spinoza, *Ethics*, IV, Prop. 18, Schol.

- 31 We must consider what *person* stands for;—which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for any one to perceive without *perceiving* that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this every one is to himself that which he calls *self*.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. II, XXVII, 9

- 32 Suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same person that did those actions, had those thoughts that I once was conscious of, though I have now forgot them? To which I answer, that we must here take notice what the word *I* is applied to; which, in this case, is the *man* only. And the same man being presumed to be the same person, I is easily here supposed to stand also for the same person. But if it be possible for the same man to have distinct incommunicable consciousness at different times, it is past doubt the same man would at different times make different persons; which, we see, is the sense of mankind in the solemnest declaration of their opinions, human laws not punishing the mad man for the sober man's actions, nor the sober man for what the mad man did,—thereby making them two persons: which is somewhat explained by our way of speaking in English when we say such an one is "not himself," or is "beside himself"; in which phrases it is insinuated, as if those who now, or at least first used them, thought that self was changed; the self-same person was no longer in that man.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. II, XXVII, 20

- 33 Self-esteem is the instrument of our conservation; it resembles the instrument of the perpetuity of the species: it is necessary, it is dear to us, it gives us pleasure, and it has to be hidden.

Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*: Self-Esteem

- 34 Our first duties are to ourselves; our first feelings are centred on self; all our instincts are at first directed to our own preservation and our own welfare. Thus the first notion of justice springs not

from what we owe to others, but from what is due to us.

Rousseau, *Emile*, II

- 35 *Johnson*. A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion.

Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Mar. 14, 1776)

- 36 *Johnson*. All censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to shew how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood.

Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Apr. 25, 1778)

- 37 Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, I, 2

- 38 It is absolutely impossible to make out by experience with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action, however right in itself, rested simply on moral grounds and on the conception of duty. Sometimes it happens that with the sharpest self-examination we can find nothing beside the moral principle of duty which could have been powerful enough to move us to this or that action and to so great a sacrifice; yet we cannot from this infer with certainty that it was not really some secret impulse of self-love, under the false appearance of duty, that was the actual determining cause of the will. We like them to flatter ourselves by falsely taking credit for a more noble motive; whereas in fact we can never, even by the strictest examination, get completely behind the secret springs of action.

Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, II

- 39 Men often oppose a thing, merely because they have had no agency in planning it, or because it may have been planned by those whom they dis-

like. But if they have been consulted, and have happened to disapprove, opposition then becomes, in their estimation, an indispensable duty of self-love. They seem to think themselves bound in honour, and by all the motives of personal infallibility, to defeat the success of what has been resolved upon contrary to their sentiments. Men of upright, benevolent tempers have too many opportunities of remarking, with horror, to what desperate lengths this disposition is sometimes carried, and how often the great interests of society are sacrificed to the vanity, to the conceit, and to the obstinacy of individuals who have credit enough to make their passions and their caprices interesting to mankind.

Hamilton, *Federalist* 70

- 40 *Countess Tersky*. Every individual character is in the right that is in strict consistence with itself. Self-contradiction is the only wrong.

Schiller, *Wallenstein's Death*, I

- 41 Why is it that, in spite of all the mirrors in the world, no one really knows what he looks like?

Schopenhauer, *Further Psychological Observations*

- 42 Our Works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that impossible Precept, *Know thyself*; till it be translated into this partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work at*.

Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, II, 7

- 43 What I really lack is to be clear in my mind *what I am to do*, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes *me* to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true *for me*, to find *the idea for which I can live and die*. What would be the use of discovering so-called objective truth, of working through all the systems of philosophy and of being able, if required, to review them all and show up the inconsistencies within each system;—what good would it do me to be able to develop a theory of the state and combine all the details into a single whole, and so construct a world in which I did not live, but only held up to the view of others;—what good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had *no deeper significance for me and for my life*;—what good would it do me if truth stood before me, cold and naked, not caring whether I recognised her or not, and producing in me a shudder of fear rather than a trusting devotion? I certainly do not deny that I still recognise an *imperative of understanding* and that through it one can work upon men, *but it must be taken up into my life*, and that is what I now recognise as the most important thing. That is what my soul longs after, as the African desert

thirsts for water.

Kierkegaard, *Journals* (Aug. 1, 1835)

- 44 When a man has gone astray to the point of perdition and is about to sink, his last speech, the sign is: 'and yet something better in me is being lost'. It is like the bubbles rising to the surface from a drowning man; that is the sign—then he sinks. Just as self-isolation can be a man's downfall, because he will not reveal what is hidden, in the same way to pronounce those words spells destruction. For that declaration expresses the fact that he has become so objective to himself that he can talk of his own destruction as of something settled, which can now be of psychological interest to a third person. The hope that there was something better in him, which should have been used in silence to work for his salvation, that hope is made public and used as an ingredient in the funeral oration he pronounces upon himself.

Kierkegaard, *Journals* (1846)

- 45 To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 46 Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 47 What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live

after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 48 The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then?

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 49 Among those points of self-education which take up the form of mental discipline, there is one of great importance, and, moreover, difficult to deal with, because it involves an internal conflict, and equally touches our vanity and our ease. It consists in the tendency to deceive ourselves regarding all we wish for, and the necessity of resistance to these desires. It is impossible for any one who has not been constrained, by the course of his occupation and thoughts, to a habit of continual self-correction to be aware of the amount of error in relation to judgment arising from this tendency. The force of the temptation which urges us to seek for such evidence and appearances as are in favour of our desires, and to disregard those which oppose them, is wonderfully great. In this respect we are all, more or less, active promoters of error. In place of practising wholesome self-abnegation, we ever make the wish the father to the thought: we receive as friendly that which agrees with, we resist with dislike that which opposes us; whereas the very reverse is required by every dictate of common sense.

Faraday, *Observations on Mental Education*

- 50 I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart, with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way.

Thoreau, *Walden: Economy*

- 51 I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself.

Thoreau, *Walden: Economy*

- 52 I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of

the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you.

Thoreau, *Walden: Solitude*

53 I celebrate myself, and sing myself.

Whitman, *Song of Myself*, I

54 Do I contradict myself?

Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

Whitman, *Song of Myself*, LI

55 It is not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual in themselves, but by cultivating it, and calling it forth, within the limits imposed by the rights and interests of others, that human beings become a noble and beautiful object of contemplation; and as the works partake the character of those who do them, by the same process human life also becomes rich, diversified, and animating, furnishing more abundant aliment to high thoughts and elevating feelings, and strengthening the tie which binds every individual to the race, by making the race infinitely better worth belonging to.

Mill, *On Liberty*, III

56 Because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigour, and moral courage it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time.

Mill, *On Liberty*, III

57 We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling—an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects—that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, II, 21

58 An eminent philosopher among my friends, who can dignify even your ugly furniture by lifting it into the serene light of science, has shown me this pregnant little fact. Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously

scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially, and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, III, 27

59 She [Mary Garth] sat to-night revolving, as she was wont, the scenes of the day, her lips often curling with amusement at the oddities to which her fancy added fresh drollery: people were so ridiculous with their illusions, carrying their fool's caps unawares, thinking their own lies opaque while everybody else's were transparent, making themselves exceptions to everything, as if when all the world looked yellow under a lamp they alone were rosy.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, III, 33

60 Consciousness is a source of self-cognition quite apart from and independent of reason. Through his reason man observes himself, but only through consciousness does he know himself.

Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, II Epilogue, VIII

61 We are unknown, we knowers, ourselves to ourselves: this has its own good reason. We have never searched for ourselves—how should it then come to pass, that we should ever *find* ourselves?

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, 1

62 The most spiritual human beings, as the *strongest*, find their happiness where others would find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in severity towards themselves and others, in attempting; their joy lies in self-constraint: with them asceticism becomes nature, need, instinct.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, LVII

63 I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a *bon-vivant*, and a lady-killer, as well as a philosopher; a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer, as well as a "tone-poet" and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the *bon-vivant* and the philanthropist would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay. Such different characters may conceivably at the outset of life be alike *possible* to a man. But to make any one of them actual, the rest

must more or less be suppressed. So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully, and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation. All other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs, carrying shame and gladness with them. . . . Our thought, incessantly deciding, among many things of a kind, which ones for it shall be realities, here chooses one of many possible selves or characters, and forthwith reckons it no shame to fail in any of those not adopted expressly as its own.

William James, *Psychology*, X

64 The consciousness of Self involves a stream of thought, each part of which as "I" can 1) remember those which went before, and know the things they knew; and 2) emphasize and care paramountly for certain ones among them as "me," and *appropriate to these* the rest. The nucleus of the "me" is always the bodily existence felt to be present at the time. Whatever remembered-past-feelings resemble this present feeling are deemed to belong to the same *me* with it. Whatever other things are perceived to be *associated* with this feeling are deemed to form part of that *me's* experience, and of them certain ones (which fluctuate more or less) are reckoned to be themselves *constituents* of the *me* in a larger sense,—such are the clothes, the material possessions, the friends, the honors and esteem which the person receives or may receive. This *me* is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known. The *I* which knows them cannot itself be an aggregate; neither for psychological purposes need it be considered to be an unchanging metaphysical entity like the Soul, or a principle like the pure Ego, viewed as "out of time." It is a *Thought*, at each moment different from that of the last moment, but *appropriative* of the latter, together with all that the latter called its own. All the experiential facts find their place in this description, unencumbered with any hypothesis save that of the existence of passing thoughts or states of mind. The same brain may subserve many conscious selves, either alternate or coexisting; but by what modifications in its action, or whether ultracerebral conditions may intervene, are questions which cannot now be answered.

William James, *Psychology*, X

65 The blindness in human beings . . . is the blindness with which we all are afflicted in regard to the feelings of creatures and people different from ourselves.

We are practical beings, each of us with limited functions and duties to perform. Each is bound to feel intensely the importance of his own duties and the significance of the situations that call these forth. But this feeling is in each of us a vital secret, for sympathy with which we vainly look to

others. The others are too much absorbed in their own vital secrets to take an interest in ours. Hence the stupidity and injustice of our opinions, so far as they deal with the significance of alien lives. Hence the falsity of our judgments, so far as they presume to decide in an absolute way on the value of other persons' conditions or ideals.

William James, *On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings*

66 A return from the over-estimation of the property of consciousness is the indispensable preliminary to any genuine insight into the course of psychic events . . . The unconscious must be accepted as the general basis of the psychic life. The unconscious is the larger circle which includes the smaller circle of the conscious; everything conscious has a preliminary unconscious stage, whereas the unconscious can stop at this stage, and yet claim to be considered a full psychic function. The unconscious is the true psychic reality; *in its inner nature it is just as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is just as imperfectly communicated to us by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the reports of our sense-organs.*

Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, VII, F

67 We must say that all the acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else and are to be explained by the mental life ascribed to that person. Further, experience shows that we understand very well how to interpret in others (i.e., how to fit into their mental context) those same acts which we refuse to acknowledge as mentally conditioned in ourselves. Some special hindrance evidently deflects our investigations from ourselves and interferes with our obtaining true knowledge of ourselves.

Freud, *The Unconscious*, I

68 Many good words get spoiled when the word self is prefixed to them: Words like pity, confidence, sacrifice, control, love. The reason is not far to seek. The word self infects them with a fixed introversion and isolation. It implies that the act of love or trust or control is turned back upon a self which already is in full existence and in whose behalf the act operates. Pity fulfils and creates a self when it is directed outward, opening the mind to new contacts and receptions. Pity for self withdraws the mind back into itself, rendering its subject unable to learn from the buffetings of fortune. Sacrifice may enlarge a self by bringing about surrender of acquired possessions to requirements of new growth. Self-sacrifice means a self-maiming which asks for compensatory pay in some later possession or indulgence. Confidence as an outgoing act is directness and courage in meeting the facts of life, trusting them to bring instruction and

support to a developing self. Confidence which terminates in the self means a smug complacency that renders a person obtuse to instruction by events. Control means a command of resources that enlarges the self; self-control denotes a self which is contracting, concentrating itself upon its own achievements, hugging them tight, and thereby estopping the growth that comes when the self is generously released; a self-conscious moral athleticism that ends in a disproportionate enlargement of some organ.

Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, II, 5

69 "Never shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-colored
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

"But I can get a hair-dye
And set such color there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair."

"I heard an old religious man

But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

Yeats, *For Anne Gregory*

70 The philosophies of Descartes and Kant to the contrary, through the *I think* we reach our own self in the presence of others, and the others are just as real to us as our own self. Thus, the man who becomes aware of himself through the *cogito* also perceives all others, and he perceives them as the condition of his own existence. He realizes that he can not be anything (in the sense that we say that someone is witty or nasty or jealous) unless others recognize it as such. In order to get any truth about myself, I must have contact with another person. The other is indispensable to my own existence, as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so, in discovering my inner being I discover the other person at the same time, like a freedom placed in front of me which thinks and wills only for or against me. Hence, let us at once announce the discovery of a world which we shall call inter-subjectivity; this is the world in which man decides what he is and what others are.

Sartre, *Existentialism*

1.5 | Honor, Reputation, and Fame or Glory

That the individual man should seek to know himself for what he really is and should esteem himself for his true worth make inevitable his desire to be known and esteemed by others according to his merits. Honor is the name that the ancients gave to the good that satisfies this natural desire; and they prized it highly among the goods that a virtuous man should seek—higher than wealth or sensual pleasure. The Greek and Roman writers quoted here stress the relation of honor to virtue or merit. They are, therefore, concerned with justice in the distribution or award of honors and with the

distinction between true honor and its counterfeits, the latter being undeserved.

Modern writers, in contrast, tend to substitute reputation for honor; though when they distinguish between a well-deserved reputation and one that is meretricious, they, too, are drawing a line that parallels the one that the ancients drew between honor and its counterfeits. Whether the term used is "honor" or "reputation," both ancient and modern writers also tend to agree that being well regarded or praised by others has little worth when those others are foolish or vicious, and so are not worthy

