

We can even imagine a god, who can see into a man's heart, and who would *still* be incapable of grasping the 'whole man'. For man is capable of evolution; he seems to contain some principle that is capable of re-arranging all his basic elements. The job of transformation may be unbelievably arduous; yet it is always possible.

Priestley is undoubtedly right when he says that our everyday experience can be described in terms of the first three Selves ('the seeing I', 'the willing I' and 'the comprehending I'). And it is certainly true that these three 'I's' seem to experience time in a different manner. When I am staring blankly out of a window, time goes slowly. When I exert my will, it accelerates. If, as I get older, I identify more and more with my 'detached self'—the Jamesian observer of life—the days go faster still. But none of these three Selves is capable of seeing into the future. Which suggests that the Self who is responsible for precognition is higher still—a Self No. 4, perhaps.

Dunne is convinced that Time No. 1 flows inevitably to its appointed end, carrying Self No. 1 along with it to his death. (Dunne calls Time No. 1 'pseudo-time'.) But there is a higher 'you', to which you refer when you speak of 'myself'. And there is no evidence that *this* self dies. We may call it Self No. 2, or perhaps Self No. 3 or 4; at all events, it seems to be the Self that is capable of precognition.

And what happens if you pursue the 'Selves' far enough? In Chapter 26 of *An Experiment With Time*, Dunne asserts that you would eventually reach a 'superlative general observer, the fount of all self-consciousness', a Universal Mind, a tree-trunk of which individual observers are branches. He concludes that life is a play in which the actor is also, in some strange sense, the dramatist. Hence precognition.

Lethbridge's own view of the problem differs precisely where you might expect it to differ from Dunne's. For him, Self No. 1 is our living body and personality—in other words, what Dunne means by the first three Selves. Self No. 2 exists on the second whorl of the spiral, the next level. He writes: 'There appears to be a series of observers (if you can so describe a succession of degrees of mental awareness) but they are not counterparts of the original observer. The time succession is quite unlike his, for the second observer finds himself on a mental plane where there is succession but no movement of time. On the third plane, time begins to move once more. . . . And, if the pendulum is correct, then there is no death on this plane.'

Like Dunne, Lethbridge believes that the meaning of the whole drama lies in some kind of evolutionism. Our purpose is creative thinking, the development of the mind; he even suggests that 'those who cannot be bothered to develop their minds will have to return to earth again after death and do the whole business again'. Man is provided with a series of 'clues' (Dunne's 'intrusions'?) and it is his business to make the best of them. 'When looking back over the past sequences of my life, I have observed that whatever one undertook invariably had a relationship to something one was going to do, perhaps many years afterwards. Something in some archaeological investigation would explain what was found in a completely different bit of work decades later.' This, he feels, 'must surely imply the existence of some kind of plan for each individual'.

Yet this, like Dunne's evolutionism, leaves many questions unanswered. The most basic is the problem of time and free will. The common-sense view of time tells us that the future has not yet happened, and that therefore there is no possible way of foreseeing it in any detail. Which means that we must dismiss all the 'prophets', from Nostradamus to Dunne, Edgar Cayce and Jean Dixon, as self-deceivers or liars. But if we are willing to admit even the slightest doubt—if we are willing to admit that *perhaps*, on one single occasion, Dunne or Lethbridge actually dreamed of something that had not yet taken place—then we have admitted the possibility that the common-sense view of time is as crude and simplistic as the flat-earth theory. And we have also committed ourselves to the view that in some sense, the future is already predetermined. To say 'it has already taken place' is a logical contradiction—and there is no sense whatever in abandoning logic—but we are certainly admitting the suggestion that history may be somehow sketched out in advance, like the rough draft of a play script. Dunne occasionally used the analogy of a film in which some kind of 'loop' occurs; but that is altogether too deterministic. The characters in a film have no freedom; they are mere shadows. On the other hand, the characters in a play are only roughly determined by the script; they are free to improvise 'business' as much as they like. In an experimental play, they may even be free to alter the lines and the course of the action.

Another kind of analogy may clarify the issue. If I drive from London to Brighton, or Lausanne to Geneva, the scenery along my route is fundamentally predictable, and if I make the journey more