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The one sure and central achievement of modern psychology, especially as opposed to the eighteenth century type, is the recognition of the great extension of the sphere of unconsciousness, and the relatively very small scope of that of consciousness. Whatever be the opinion held concerning the freedom of the will, no psychologist to-day denies that the immense majority of psychic facts belongs causally to a sphere of mind outside the consciousness of that origin (???)

If we bear in mind that society is an organism of minds, that social activities are essentially psychic ones, we shall find that what is true of the one must be true of the other, that, consequently, the greater part of social activities are outside originating in any individual or collective consciousness. We see thus that the State, which is the organ of social consciousness (since its functions are those which are the province of conscious mental activity) is the least important social element, society, as opposed to the state, and quâ something ruled by obscure laws, being the chief and the important element.

This fact once grasped, we begin to conceive the function of the state as something quite different from the German theory of it.

The province of consciousness in the individual is a triple one: it is inhibitory, the first province of consciousness being the controlling of impulses held by the individual to be prejudicial to what he considers his interests or his pleasures; it is representative, the second function of consciousness being to give the individual a clear and an intellectual notion of the undercurrents of his mind, to supply him with motives for his actions (whatever their real motives may be) and to interpret him to himself, to speak in the widest possible phrase; finally, it is coordinative, and by this I mean that it organises and interdisposes the various products of unconscious activity so as to give them the greatest force in acting upon the external environment.

If the state be, as it is, the social consciousness, its social functions must be analogous — not to say identical — to those of consciousness in the individual.

Of the inhibitory function little need be said, for it is universally admitted that the maintenance of law and order are a function of the state.

Of the representative tendency, it may be said that the State, in that role, merely acts in the direction in which the obscure aspirations of the nation impel it. Of the coordinative tendency, little also need be mentioned, save that it involves the administrative part of state activity, and the organisation-part of (...)

s. d.

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«O Templo de Jano».