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Greetings from uphill----

I wonder if my phone was out of whack yesterday--no calls whatsoever, whereas it was ringing all day Saturday. And I had a horrible time trying to get my fuzzbox back from the boy upstairs because he wasn't here until about 9 PM last night.

I will end up building new fuzzboxes, I guess. This is the opposite of a tone-control, and not too different from a pulse-generator (which is fed a sine-wave signal).

Anyway, I spent hours yesterday playing old tapes and copying tapes and deciding whether I should or shouldn't copy such-and-such for Lou Harrison--I was quite disappointed when I recorded the 19-tone metal-bar instrument, because my present microphones didn't pick it up well, and because some of the bars rusted in their years-long storage in what must have been a damp cellar, so that several of the important notes beat with themselves. That overhauling and rebuilding job is going to be twice as big as I thought! That is, because of the noticeable beats, all the 77 bars will have to be "pickled" to remove the rust, and then all their frequencies checked. I am reasonably sure the beats will disappear in most cases when the rust is removed.

One of my copy-tapes that was a good copy, came back recently from its second loan-out, so I am sending that tape to him so that he will have a representative sample. I decided also to include specimens of 17 and 22 as well as 19.

I sent you a copy of the Neutral Monism pamphlet. I hope now to rewrite and expand it some times this year. Nobody seems to have heard of neutral monism.

By the way: Have you seen the biography of Bertrand Russell issued several years ago, called PASSIONATE SKEPTIC? It is of considerable interest because it shows how he got that way. There is also a volume of letters to him, and a recently published Autobiography, and "Why I am Not a Christian". (In this last, he lays it on too thick about the hell-&-brimstone bit, whereas evidently he was not too familiar with the dissident idealists, many of whom are in the numerous New Thought groups.)

Here is the pitfall: passionate skepticism. Getting emotionally involved over philosophical questions, and one's blood-pressure hitting the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ ceiling, and worse yet, flogging dead horses. At the moment, I mean the 19th century materialists, before Einstein's and others' revision of physics, were scoffing at Fundamentalists and antievolutionists, and BOTH sides of the argument are now obsolete. But these arguments still rage on, blithely assuming that the contentions on both sides have not changed one whit.

Why thrash this over just now? Because of several recent encounters. I know an analytical chemist who had to contend with Mormons in his ex-wife's family, and with various other established organized religions at work and among his other relatives, including Christian Science and Catholicism and one or another of the Bible-thumping-Wasp deals.

Result, he is extremely emotional every time something points idealism-wards, and goes on a raving streak to which I have to listen. He can't be calm and collected about it, nor just agnostic and suspend judgement. And there are others far worse with the emotional outbursts than he is.

I also know several other people besides him, who have also been through serious illnesses or operations or both, and who resent those who tried to make out that these illnesses or the causes of the surgery weren't real. Just as I too ~~resent~~ resent those who deny that I was beaten up in 1956, or that the years-long aftermath of having all my teeth out was purely psychological or imaginary (when it was the very very slow recovery from chronic blood-poisoning by 25 decayed teeth), or again those who thought my hay-fever of years ago was merely the result of psychological aberrations, rather than from pollens. There must be several million people who bitterly resent either or both, the Christian-Science denials of pains and illnesses, and the Freudian-new-orthodoxy's belittling of infections, ulcers, tumors, allergies, and other physical conditions. Anyway I meet these victims all the time.

But many of these skeptics and objectors do not realize that it was precisely because of the dogmatism of Mrs. Eddy and of the orthodox hell-&-brimstone sellers of stock in the Kingdom of Heaven, that such groups of idealists as the New Thought Alliance sprang up. And that within the (idealist) New Thought movement there is fragmentation into tiny sects, and many people who refuse to join any kind of church, lest by their presence there they lend power to what would later become another orthodoxy with narrowminded uptight dogmas all over again. As did happen in a number of cases.

Which gets me off the other main subject: At that meeting a week ago, the leader of the subgroup was contending as I told you when you called, that every elementary particle had "will" and "consciousness" associated with it. It took me some 20 minutes to get a word in edgewise, and it was too late, since the chemical engineer next to me had already gotten angry from that extreme statement, but I tried to point out to the group that several centuries ago, there was a theory generally called Panpsychism (although that is a very vague term with still other meanings) which assumed that all matter could also function as mind given the correct circumstances--a sort of disguised neutral monism if you approach the idea from a certain attitude.

Before attacking this theory, I went on, realize that it was propounded centuries ago, before the idea of molecules and atoms was even clear, and long before electronics and nuclear physics put in any appearance. It would have to be drastically rewritten before propounding it today, but there is something that could still be salvaged from it, IF it were updated.