

11 POUL BJERRE

11.1 Poul Bjerre

¹Poul Bjerre (1876–1964) had the knowledge latently. He was a typical example of those people who throughout their education are desperate seekers, are unsatisfied with the fictitiousness of theology, philosophy, and science, see through that fictitiousness, but who finally get stuck in some new ideology, in Bjerre's case psychology, psychosynthesis to be specific. They cannot stand living in uncertainty but must have something firm to hold on. The true seeker goes on seeking until he finds that knowledge which explains the meaning of life and solves the fundamental problems of world view and of life view.

²Poul Bjerre realized early that theology and philosophy are fictitious. Subsequently he believed he had found in science the firm foundation of knowledge he must have. As he studied medicine he lost that illusion, a loss that almost turned into a disaster. His salvation was the new discipline of psychology, psychoanalysis in particular. There he found what he needed, since he could not see how unsure that ground was, more unsure than medicine and physiology. The field was open to the play of the imagination. He could himself build up a theory in which he could believe. He was ever more confirmed in this belief of his not least because he was dazzled by his own construction (psychosynthesis), a phenomenon often seen. All his acuity and profundity notwithstanding he remained something of a fantast throughout his life.

³Psychosynthesist Poul Bjerre was, like all psychoanalysts, much occupied with dreams, and he summed up his experience of the interpretation of dreams in a book, *The Natural System of Dreams*. His constructive imagination won triumphs. When studying dreams you will find analogies in everything, but it is very risky to believe you will find laws in this. A skilled interpreter of dreams who treats a patient for some time, influences unconsciously the latter to yield experiences that correspond to the system of the interpreter. Psychologists and psychiatrists are still too ignorant of individual participation in collective consciousness and of interactions in the subconscious. At least 46-consciousness is required to understand the pertaining phenomena.

⁴Bjerre quotes approvingly Keyserling's view, "whenever a child is born a new soul enters the world. And if there is reincarnation, then the Buddha's teaching is certainly correct, as it does not emphasize the recurrence of some earlier being but the appearance of something that did not previously exist."

⁵The two gentlemen are equally ignorant. They do not know what the soul is. They do not know whether reincarnation exists. They do not know what the Buddha taught. They do not know that Buddhism is a distortion of what the Buddha taught. But they believe that they understand what all these things are about, and they make statements on them without knowing the facts. And they are good at speculating. When will the learned realize that imagination is no interpreter of reality, that subjectivism cannot make reliable statements on objective reality? At his present stage of development, man cannot reach the knowledge of reality. He has a long way to go before he becomes a perfect first self who has objective consciousness in the worlds of man.

⁶The fact that mutually similar "conflicts of the soul" can arise in widely different conditions makes Bjerre speak of the "unimaginativeness of the powers", a strange fiction. Somewhat more rational is another assumption: that conflicts are caused by "maladjustments in mass consciousness" (prejudice of all kinds). If Bjerre had known about the stages of development of human consciousness, he could have got on a better track. Then he would not have needed to wonder that "the world as a whole has not reached its common anchoring in eternity" and been spared leading himself and others astray with the inevitable guesswork and assumptions of ignorance. There are many ever higher kinds of consciousness to be acquired

by the individual before he attains to the omniscience and omnipotence of a Christos. It would certainly be quicker work, if he were not hampered at each step by the resistance that ignorance puts up to any kind of change in a fiction system it has learnt. The collective obeys the law of inertia when it is not the victim of a general mass psychosis or the promises held out by demagogues that unquenchable egoism's craze for possessions will be satisfied

⁷Bjerre was a mystic. It is characteristic of the mystic that he does not need exact mental concepts but deals with fictions that are emotionally conditioned. He speaks of the "soul" without making it clear what he means by it. The reader of his works never arrives at any clarity as to what he means by his many constant expressions: "the birth, death and renewal of the soul", "living intuitively", "what man does and what happens to him", etc. He often experienced emotions of having been "crushed", "smashed to pieces", etc. To remedy this chaos he made a fiction system which had nothing to do with reality and which contributed to his being branded a fantast. In contrast, his statements on physical realities (political, social, medical, etc.) evince an understanding that is rarely seen. As is usually the case with mystics, he did not realize where his real strength was, in his case in the matter aspect

⁸A proof of Bjerre's clear-sightedness was his early realization that science is fictitious, that "there is no scientific certainty". When he found about ten different theories of the structure of the cell, it was clear to him that "the more research advances, the more everything dissolves into different opinions that are in conflict with each other". Every new scientific discovery gives rise to new theories. He arrived at the realization, self-evident to the esoterician, that "science can never in itself become a firm ground" for a world view.

⁹Bjerre had good opportunities of resuscitating the qualities of emotional attraction he had once acquired and, with them, also the mystic's faith in his own imaginations about existence. The following quotations are typical of mysticism: "The world is a creature that seeks to realize itself." "A human soul is not just the sum of psychic mechanisms. There is something that is alive and moves and creates and tries to make out of those mechanisms a vehicle of a personal life."

¹⁰How close to understanding life a mystic can get and still be unable to explain reality logically is clear from Bjerre's formulation, "The world is a creature". According to hylozoics, the cosmos in its consciousness aspect is a living being because of the cosmic total consciousness in which every monad has a share it cannot lose.

¹¹Bjerre was at the verge of the stage of humanity (the mental stage), manifested distinct traits of incipient perspective consciousness. He remained the "eternal seeker after the lost word of the master". His demand for scientific clarity as to the phenomena of spiritism, the frequently pseudo-scientific explanations by occultists, his belief that his own theories were tenable, prevented his devoting the requisite time to examining esoterics.

¹²It is characteristic of the stage of development that Bjerre has attained that he has instinctive understanding of the unity of life. What is essential in love is the overcoming of absolute egoism, a first effect of that urge to togetherness which can be strengthened to comprise more and more people and finally grow into the aspiration to unity with all life. Without knowing of the cosmic total consciousness in which every individual has a share he cannot lose and which enables individual consciousness development, he of course could not give the right explanation.

¹³His own experience as a psychoanalyst confirmed, however, that – to state it in esoteric terms – the consciousness aspect is as absolute as the matter aspect and that consciousness expressions are by no means material phenomena only. Step by step he was forced to acknowledge that the mystics were right in their assertion of the existence of a "spiritual" reality active in material reality, the existence of constructive forces in the psyche, forces acting with finality.

¹⁴Bjerre has written much on what he calls the "birth of the soul". This is a vague term that

has different meanings in different contexts. First of all, you must know what the “soul” (essential consciousness, 46 consciousness) is. That is a problem which no physicalist can solve. In the following, an attempt is made at illustrating the “birth of the soul” esoterically and from more than one angle.

¹⁵What Bjerre calls the “birth of the soul” consists in man’s finding of a system that he can accept and that affords him “faith in life”. Where most people are concerned, this is an emotional system or the revival of a system which in the past afforded him the same certainty and security. No two systems are quite similar. Certainty in life may be subjective (even if collectively subjective), as is clear from the fact that the different religions can afford requisite certainty. The believers take that certainty as proof that their creeds are right.

¹⁶You would think that the “birth of the soul” means a once-for-all process. But according to Bjerre, the “soul is born” every time the self succeeds in liberating itself from some inhibitory, compulsive conception. Esoterics explains this saying that this is in fact glimpses from understanding that is latent in the subconscious, a sudden emergence into waking consciousness of understanding of some relations that was acquired in a previous life.

¹⁷If Bjerre had known something about man’s different envelopes (the emotional and mental ones in particular) and about their innate (subconscious) tendencies, then he could have explained the origin of most neuroses in a completely different way. He realized clearly that there is a struggle (“process of renewal”) constantly going on between waking consciousness and subconsciousness. He could not know anything, however, about the duel being fought in the subconscious between the tendencies of the emotional and mental envelopes, tendencies acquired in previous incarnations and in those who have reached such a development that the “tendencies” of the causal envelope can assert themselves, nor about the conflict between the causal “tendencies” and those of the lower envelopes.

¹⁸Esoterically, the “birth of the soul” can mean the acquisition of essential (46) consciousness, consciousness of unity, consciousness of community. The final goal of the individual is “merging with the all”, an expression that the yoga philosophers and the pantheists have never been able to interpret correctly. The individual has merged with the all when, in the highest divine kingdom, he has acquired the cosmic total consciousness. The first step is to join a group and then step by step ever larger groups until he has “become one” with the atomic total consciousness of the essential world (46:1). Thereupon follows the conquest of ever more comprehensive world consciousnesses, ever higher cosmic worlds, until the whole cosmos is his.

¹⁹Poul Bjerre speaks of man’s “share in a living world order.” But he does not inform us as to what this world order looks like. Our world view is in the air unless it is based on knowledge of reality, the esoteric knowledge.

²⁰“What happens to man” does not exist in the subconscious but in the waking consciousness and in the superconscious, the consciousness of our higher envelopes and then from causal consciousness via mental or emotional consciousness.

²¹Bjerre was assuredly no philosopher. That instinct of reality which he had acquired in certain respects and which he believed to be intuition made him consider himself to be “in the situation, enviable for a person interested in philosophy, of not needing to stuff mountains of stupidizing books into my brain”. He also spoke of the embarrassing alienation he felt in the company of academic philosophers. That feeling is probably shared by the majority of those who have acquired an instinct of reality.

²²Finally a few weighty sayings of Bjerre:

²³“Loneliness is the sense of being cut off from the connection with existence in its wholeness.”

²⁴“Bliss is the sense of having a living connection with the all.”

²⁵“The individual in his striving cannot avoid sensing the masses as a force opposing him.”

²⁶“Psychic health indicates freedom from inhibitions that hinder thirst for activity and zest for life.”

²⁷“Adaptation does not suffice to overcome loneliness.”

²⁸“The restructured self, who from being lonely has gained the sense of togetherness, is a communal self striving to become a universal self.”

11.2 Räfte och rättarting [Inquest] by Poul Bjerre

¹The following is not a review of Bjerre’s book, but the book describes many noteworthy experiences which should be carefully considered. They also afford the interested reader opportunities of orientation among the fictions that are currently ruling in many spheres of life. Bjerre’s book gives important information about incorrigible attitudes in the social organization, be it educational methods at school, medical science, or politics. It presents a touching picture of the difficulties encountered by an idealist who tries to find his bearings in a cynical world, a human being who fights for togetherness and ends up being isolated. We are given a terrifying picture a dogmatism, intolerance in all fields the author has known, the dependence of public opinion on authority, and the ridicule and scorn heaped on all pioneers in unexplored spheres of life.

²Also Bjerre must experience, not only the indifference, but also the direct opposition to everything that tends to change or modify the views ruling in some particular sphere of life. He found that a “collective unity” never creates anything new but is a hindrance to progress, that those individuals who serve evolution are opposed by all means, that ingrained views are good enough, and that the power of habit in the majority is so strong that it has destroyed their ability to perceive anything new.

³What Bjerre tells us about the “victims of bureaucracy”, about government institutions that “like Gestapo intrude everywhere in family life” is of particular weight as coming from a physician with psychological understanding.

⁴History shows us that “every movement that sets out carrying the salvation of the world on its banner ends up in inquisition and concentration camps”, shows that party leaders are impotent when faced with the struggle for power despite all measures of security, shows that the cult of machines transforms human beings into machines and cogs.

⁵During the First World War Bjerre did his best for the cause of peace and tells us many interesting things about this aspect of his work. Bjerre rejects the very popular talk of the aggressive urge as explaining the inevitability of war by pointing out that the aggressive urge is by no means an elementary urge but an inevitable reaction in anyone who has been thwarted in his normal life expressions. The superficial talk of sublimation is not accepted by him. “Every urge can be released on its own course only.” (The esoterician knows that the sacral energies can be transferred into the throat centre, if the individual becomes completely absorbed in creative work, but that requires devotion of a very rare kind.)

⁶What Bjerre tells us of his schooling through primary and secondary school is just a new variation on the martyrdom to be suffered by those who have attained the stage of humanity. General understanding of such exceptional people is of course out of the question. Forcing them to attend ordinary school is a new expression of that dictatorship which comes creeping everywhere. The only possibility to avoid this, however, is to establish esoteric secondary schools and universities. The future esoteric astrology will give information about children’s latent stage of development and the methods of upbringing and education best suited to them.

⁷From Bjerre’s description of his schooling it may be noted that his divinity teacher succeeded in instilling in his pupils “contempt of all that narrowness, dishonesty, and cruelty piled up under the hallmark of Christianity during centuries”.

⁸Even at school Bjerre was affected by the opposition between the individual and the “masses” (organizations, tradition, the inflexibility of dogmatism in all spheres of life, all of

which want to make the individual a soulless cog in the social organization, or machine). “The stronger the forces of the personality and the more inexorably the growing self demands its particular form,” the stronger the resistance. Regrettably, most people surrender and give up their individuality, and in so doing abort the meaning of their incarnation.

⁹To Bjerre, the universities demonstrated all the oddities of the school on an enlarged scale, an even more brutal overloading with meaningless masses of knowledge and an even more abderitic examination system. In vain he sought a scientific leader, a personality in whom the sense of what is essential had been roused and who had not let himself be buried under the confusing masses of technical details, but had lived his way up to the state of freedom afforded by overview and unity.

¹⁰Like all those who have reached the stage of humanity he sought after a firm basis for his life view. He clearly realized that religion was impotent in that respect. He sought it in science. He received the big shock of his life when he found it totally unable to afford certainty. The entire history of science is studded with absurdities. Everything said rests on provisional assumptions. The mutually conflicting views, the scientific differences, grow without limit and on an increasing scale as science advances.

¹¹He was shocked once again when, as a bachelor of medicine, he came to know of the attitude that professors took to the sick people they were treating and considered to be interesting “scientific cases”.

¹²A paper written for the bachelor’s degree was rejected with the words, “Gentlemen, you must not think that you are studying here in order to learn how to treat the sick. Any nurse can do that. You are studying here to acquire medicine as a science.”

¹³Bjerre’s examples of the cynical contempt of human lives and the unstoppable hospital regimen should be studied in his book. Of course it proved impossible to have such incongruities corrected. He was tormented by his “supersensitivity to all those false, ugly, misdirected, outrageous features of social life which made all intercourse with people a torture.”

¹⁴What many people have long suspected, namely that psychiatry is pretentious nonsense masquerading as science, is confirmed by Bjerre. He relates that an honest psychiatrist celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the start of his career with the confession that he never succeeded in discovering the difference between the two dominant forms of disease, manic-depressive psychosis and schizophrenia. The corresponding terms served to camouflage the sad fact that psychiatry had not succeeded in arriving at any diagnostics whatsoever. An esoterician knows that this is out of the question.

¹⁵Medical science does not recognize psychology as a science, which is clear from Bjerre’s account of the official attitude to the treatment of neuroses. The Swedish Medical Association’s section of psychiatry and neurology excluded the existing special branch of “psychological treatment”. Any doctor could treat neurotic patients. That required only valerian and soporifics.

¹⁶Bjerre is a physicalist, and rejects all “theories” of superphysical reality. But he starts from the assumption that such phenomena as parapsychology, telepathy, mediumship, etc. and also certain religious problems (for example the complexes we call feeling of guilt, grace, etc.) belong to the unconscious and that these consciousness phenomena in the field of organic life have not yet been explored.

¹⁷By his “psychoanalysis” Freud had called attention to significance of the unconscious, to the fact that processes are going on in that unconscious. These were conceived as exclusively mechanical processes. Against this mechanistic view “psychosynthesists” assert that constructive and liberating forces are at work in the unconscious. Just as the organism does, the “soul”, too, draws new strength in sleep. The exploration of dreams seeks to discover these processes of renewal in the unconscious and starts from the assumption that the symbols

occurring in dreams are expressions of the activity of creative forces, that dreaming is the soul's path to wellness.

¹⁸Bjerre rejects the mechanical way in which psychoanalysis interprets man's state of being conditioned by elementary urges. Besides, Freud's cynical view of human beings as milch cows and guinea pigs was incomprehensible to him. Freud said to Bjerre: "I understand that you are particularly interested in psychoanalysis as an art of treatment. Well, it happens that patients recover during an analysis. But they may do so when treated with valerian and cold water as well. ... No, treatment is bad business. It is nothing you should waste your time on. Science is everything, that is what you should go in for."

¹⁹Psychosynthesis seeks "those liberating forces of the personality" which afford certainty to those who suffer from confusion and uncertainty. The psychosynthesist distinguishes between "what man does and what happens to him" when the forces of the unconscious may assert themselves.

²⁰Bjerre's principal problem was the question of the "awakening of the soul", how the "soul is born", how to find those forces that resist and prevent the birth of the soul, "how mankind as a whole, which hitherto was nothing but a chaos of mutually opposing forces, can overcome those mountains of antagonisms which block the way to a living, ensouled togetherness." The art of psychological healing is the "obstetrics of the soul". He calls everything disease that "stands in the way of the liberation of the soul", everything that hinders, binds, hampers, blocks. It may be seemingly harmless prejudice, values that we have naïvely accepted as essential, etc. These problems include the problem of resistance in mass psychology, the origin of neuroses, the contribution of moral and religious fictions to the conflicts of conscience of "diseased souls", the unexplained innate sense of being burdened with guilt, all those conflicts which are due to "psychic paralysis".

²¹Bjerre's book shows what has been realized by all who possess power of observation and reflection at all, namely that those ways of looking at things which have been impressed during upbringing and education remain largely ineradicable in most people and that human beings are both unwilling and unable to change their acquired habits. Anyone who tries to effect a change of this must expect to meet with resistance everywhere and be considered a "fool in the eyes of the world".

The above text constitutes the essay *Poul Bjerre* by Henry T. Laurency.

The essay is part of the book *Knowledge of Life Five* by Henry T. Laurency, published in Swedish in 1995. Translation by Lars Adelskog.

Copyright © 2015 by the Henry T. Laurency Publishing Foundation.