

# THOUGHT, LIFE AND THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE

A lecture given on  
20 November 1950

*This chapter has been assembled from notes taken during the lecture in 1950 and prepared for publication by the Hubbard Research Unit, an organization formed by Ron to help him in expanding Dianetics through new publications and research. Permission was granted by Ron in 1950 to publish these notes, which were later made into the first chapter of Notes on the Lectures of L. Ron Hubbard, where they appear in more condensed form. We have unfortunately been unable to locate any actual recording or full transcript of this lecture.*

## Two Universes

If we could handle the basic laws of thought we could make man fairly sane, but we are too apt to overshoot the mark. We make things too difficult. Throughout the history of man, in all his various cultures, man has been searching for truth. The ancient Greeks, Babylonians and Hindus, as well as other cultures, each discovered some truths. Put these things together with more recent discoveries about the mind of man and you have Dianetics.

The ancient Greeks even had shock therapy. They used hellebore, an herb which caused convulsions. It changed their patterns but did not break their spines.

To get truth, one must not have emotional attachments to pet theories, nor even to philosophical truths. We sometimes have to change our most cherished philosophies.

In the recent past, investigators have been trying to explain thought in terms of the organism which thinks, and to explain the organism of life in terms of the material universe. They have not succeeded in explaining life in these terms. We are complete foreigners to this material universe. Darwin gave the most workable theory, yet it is only relatively true.

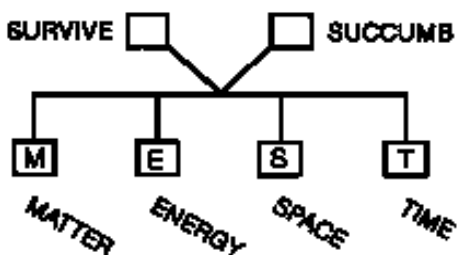
The creation of life is evidently the impingement of the universe of thought upon the material universe. Thought has as one of its purposes the conquest of the material universe, and this conquest produces life.

When we examine the ruling principle of the universe, we find that it is a duality that, like the angels, has two faces—survive and succumb.

A constant error has been made in man's reasoning through the ages, in seeking to find a Prime Mover Unmoved. One datum by itself is meaningless. It can only be evaluated by comparing it to another datum of comparable magnitude. The minute you agree that God exists, it becomes necessary to invent the devil.

The basic unit of the universe is two; you can't go to a basic unity of one. So Dianetics does not have only one dynamic principle, it has two: survive and succumb.

The four manifestations of the material universe, or big theta, may be said to be matter, energy, space and time, or as we abbreviate it, MEST. The apparent material universe is highly speculative in its reality. There are two basic dynamic principles of the universe, and these are survive and succumb.

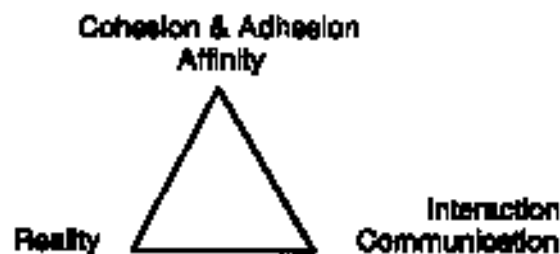


We don't know much about space. We know that it has three dimensions, although it has been said that there is a fourth dimension. The fact that we postulate the fourth dimension shows that we really don't know much about space.

Then there is time. What is it? It is here and it changes. It can be measured by the tick of the clock or the disintegration of the uranium atom. Shakespeare had a lot to say about time. Time is not an absolute; there are no absolutes. There isn't a single absolute truth in science, only relative truth.

Energy in the material universe follows certain laws, such as the law of conservation of energy. Flowing energy has a magnetic field.

There is a certain reality to this material universe. We agree it is there; we perceive it through our various senses. The fact that we agree or perceive that something is there indicates affinity. Affinity at the level of MEST is cohesion and adhesion—the affinity of the material universe for itself. Matter has a certain perceptic quality about it: Light, for instance, perceives something is there and bends around it. The material universe is in communication with itself and with us; the ability to perceive the material universe via its various channels of perception, such as sight, sound and smell, is communication.



The universe of thought appears to follow laws similar to, but not the same as, those of MEST. It may be said that there is thought matter (ideas), thought energy, thought space and thought time.

We create thought time and thought space. Thought time, unlike MEST time, changes with the amount that is accomplished. Thought energy also follows different laws—it can even penetrate a lead screen. This universe of thought we shall refer to as little theta.

The unaberrated and creative person is close to the top echelon of little theta, in the highest realm of ideas. But one could be creative in terms of MEST, also. For example, a bricklayer uses energy and matter.

Thought energy and thought matter do not follow the MEST laws. Thought is a kind of energy but it can do things that MEST can't. What is thought doing? Thought doesn't necessarily occupy the same universe as MEST, but a new, unexplored universe. One mission of thought is controlling the universe of MEST, though that may not be all that thought is doing.

When thought controls MEST, thought is surviving. But when MEST controls thought, MEST is surviving. There is a contest between the two. For example, if you get swept to sea by the undertow, energy is in control. If you lose your car keys, space has eaten up the car keys. If you are late to an appointment, time has defeated you. In each case MEST has won.

Thought plus MEST equals life. Death equals life minus thought equals MEST. Thought in its most sentient form is man.

A man depends for his survival on his recognition of his brotherhood with the universe of little theta.

Life is valuable to life because matter has already been converted to usable forms. MEST is conquered by lower life forms for the survival of higher life forms.

Thought takes a little piece of MEST and produces a cell, then it takes that cell to conquer more MEST, producing perhaps a lichen, and so on, through higher and higher forms of life, such as plants and animals, up to man. And each of these forms may use some of those below it in the conquest of MEST. Man has the power of life or death over lower life forms.

It was written in the Middle Ages that angels have two faces, white and black, creation and destruction. One cannot create anything in MEST without destroying something. Some people object to this, and we get such things as super-preserved cockroaches, sacred cows, and so on. How crazy can you get? They have gotten thought confused with big theta. We would starve to death if we couldn't destroy lower life. But you don't destroy men—it doesn't work; it is bad computation.

Mankind is now technologically up to the point where it can think of mankind as a whole—his fourth dynamic. Up to this time the races of man each considered any other race as MEST. Man is again becoming a reasonable being. History unfortunately tells us mostly about turbulence and violence, about group engrams.

Reason cannot be created or controlled by force. Society exists by reason of persuading reason, or agreement between reasonable beings. Force belongs in MEST, not in little theta. Any state which uses force is doomed to failure. All nations which have used force have decayed and died—for example, Greece and Rome.

What is an engram? It is MEST kicking back, or turbulence, turmoil, confusion—thought has momentarily failed. Thought doesn't like to be confused with matter.

How does aberration begin? Aberration results from a collision of big theta and little theta, which is an engram, an area of turbulence. In Dianetics we try to straighten out areas of turbulence in thought.

In the areas of turbulence, the two kinds of time get mixed up. Little theta time is only now, but some of it gets left back in big theta time by an engram. Keep peeling off pieces of now-time, thought time, and leaving them back in the past and the final result is death. As we become more attached to little theta, freeing it up from MEST, we live.

We have to attack big theta on its own terms. We use thought to attain the use of big theta for our own purposes—that is survival.

As soon as you postulate the triangle of affinity, reality and communication on little theta, on thought, you can predict data in the social sciences.

Little theta creates for itself its own future reality. Thought is valued because it gives us the next reality. Reality is man's "blueprint" of what he will do with MEST. When we agree on this blueprint, it becomes reality. When we have disagreement, reality is lowered and destroyed. We can conquer MEST as long as we have agreement.

Communication with all mankind has never been attained. Therefore agreement among all mankind has never before been possible.