

regard it. There is certainly no occurrence in the whole of our remembered or unremembered existence which is like that of our gradual awakening to a consciousness of not-self and self, nor is it possible even to describe the different stages of the process by which this entry into conscious life occurred. It remains a fact which is shrouded in darkness and vanishes in the *chiaroscuro* of our earliest remembrances. If it were not for the fact that we see around us numberless other instances which we by an analogy with ourselves interpret as similar to what has happened to us, the beginning of our conscious life would remain a unique event to which there is no parallel. In fact it is, as stated above, truly a revelation, a lifting of the veil.

Now we have seen in the course of our reflections that the development of consciousness depends on our relation not only with one or two other persons but in its further stages with a society of human beings which surrounds us. Not only have we received from another or from others the first impressions of conscious existence, but it is only owing to our appropriating the accumulated experience of others present and past that our mind has grown and developed into full life.

The most of that which we call Ourselves is a collection of thoughts, aspirations, and desires, which we have in various degrees assimilated from and in common with human beings who surround us or preceded us, most of whom are not even known to us. The collective life thus becomes the true life of every one of us, even if we live a secluded existence and fancy that we can live alone.

The life of mankind or Humanity thus becomes in