

# Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy

## Part 16 of 16

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

April 28, 1974

This will be an extemporaneous, impromptu discussion this morning. I had originally planned to have a rerun of the tape on Gopi Krishna, but something arose that started me thinking, and this is related to a communication we received from the office of Roger Vogelson, Automation Engineering, West Brookner Road, Grand Haven, Michigan. Neither the forwarding letter nor the essay forwarded with it is clear to any of us, and it apparently requires an understanding of electronics, computer technology, nuclear physics, certain departments of psychology, references to philosophic figures such as Hegel and Bergson, and, in addition, a personal acquaintance with the states of consciousness produced by psychedelic drugs. The composition seems to have the form which I have known as holistic and may be somewhat similar to what Aurobindo means by the Overmind form of cognition, which is called mass cognition, which I would describe as involving a mass of concepts all at once seemingly moving in several dimensions at the same time, whereas our ordinary communication is by means of a one-dimensional linear statement; and therein lies the difficulty of understanding what is here seeking to emerge. I get the feeling that there is something important here, but that it is not completely assimilated or understood by the one who is formulating it. It is worth serious attention in my estimation.

But the thing that struck my eye was the heading on one of the pages in the communication called "The Derivation of Consciousness," and this presents the problem with which we have been working in trying to produce a philosophy such as that which is in the volume *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*. What is implied in the very heading here is the assumption of a base of reference or approach to a problem which is the diametric opposite of the approach that's involved in *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*. I've tried repeatedly to make clear the importance of the principle of base of reference. Every statement that we make implies at least an unconscious base of reference. Our statements are made relative to that assumed base. Only with the more epistemologically conscious thinkers is there a realization of the fact that we speak from bases of reference and that our statements are true only with respect to that base. In fact, I say they're true or false only with respect to that base, and that with respect to another base, they are meaningless. This I am trying to establish as a fundamental principle in all our discourse and in all of our search for truth.

Now, it is known in the history of our science, and particularly of the mathematical sciences, that the assumption of one given base of reference may not be very productive and problems that arise are difficult to resolve and may even be impossible to resolve from that base of reference; whereas, if we approach the problems from a different base of reference, properly selected, these problems may be easily resolved. And the outstanding case of this, as I've pointed out over and over again, was

the shift from the Ptolemaic base in astronomy to the Copernican base. Then I pointed out in a later tape that the same sort of a principle was applied when Immanuel Kant found the way to reestablish the possibility of a science and of mathematics after the destructive analysis of David Hume, which showed that if we start with the assumption of absolute empiricism, which was introduced by John Locke along with the conception of the *tabula rasa*, or blank tablet of the mind, that that led to a state of radical non-cognition, that we could not from that basis be sure of any law in nature, could have no assurance of mathematical truth, and preeminently could have no metaphysical assurance whatever. I showed how the significance of Immanuel Kant's contribution lay in the fact that by shifting the base of reference from the notion that law lay in nature as something objective, it, in effect, was legislated by the cognizing subject, that indeed we could not know anything about the thing-in-itself or the *ding an sich*, but the world in which we actually function was governed by a law which unconsciously was superimposed upon the world of our cognition. That world, thus, was in a sense created by man. The thing-in-itself could be regarded as representing reality as it is apart from our specific cognitions. Elsewhere, I suggested that this *ding an sich* might well be the Clear Light of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and that this Clear Light is indeed the Ultimate Reality apart from the forms of our cognition, and that the world of our experience is the resultant of the combination of this Clear Light and those forms.<sup>1</sup> Kant, thus, reestablished the possibility of law and thus showed the way out of the absolute skepticism and agnosticism with which David Hume left us.

Now, what I have been seeking to suggest in my own work is a second Copernican shift away from the determination by the subjective component, the self, the cognizer, to the Consciousness itself. The Consciousness thus being taken as given, as the base from which we approach all problems. The position presented by this communication, or implied by the heading of one page in that communication, takes the usual point of view that the universe is essentially a non-conscious *thing* and that somehow consciousness arose in it, and even some thinkers have said the arising of consciousness is an accident that need not have happened. And there is a tendency to this day, in spite of the fact that we live after Kant, to view all problems as inherent in an objective *thing*. But in doing this the scientist forgets that he is a thinker, a cognizer, and that the laws governing the principle of cognition predetermine in their degree the subject matter with which he deals. I'm not saying it's wholly determined by those cognitive laws, but that they are largely determinant, and that which is in some sense truly objective to our cognitions as such remains indeterminate for the ordinary consciousness restricted to a subject-object relationship and restricted to two forms of sense perception and conceptual cognition. And so long as we approach problems from this point of view we lack the facility for their ultimate resolution, with the resultant that we never in our known history achieve a position of real balance. We're at war almost continually with a few interludes of non-war, in a national sense; and in a personal sense, we're in the competitive state which is another form of war. There is not balance. We chase disease out of one corner and it comes back in another. We do not become wholly well. We're out of harmony. And what I submit is an incompleteness of the cognitive capacity with which we are working, and so long as we work only with that incomplete cognitive

---

<sup>1</sup> See the audio recording "Three Fundamentals of the Introceptive Philosophy," part 7.

capacity—which bear in mind consists on one side of a subject-object consciousness functioning through the two organs of sense perception and conceptual cognition and no more—that we never get ultimate answers, that we chase the problem of life out of one corner to have it arise again in another corner, and so on indefinitely.

Now, what I proposed here is another shift of base of reference to Consciousness itself, and how this was suggested I will review. It came out of a Fundamental Realization which developed during the night between the 8th and 9th of September 1936. At the culminating point in an ascending depth, or height, in this Realization, I saw in a non-sensuous sense both the object of consciousness and the subject to consciousness vanish or become introjected into the Pure Consciousness itself, teaching the lesson that these two were derivative and that the existence of the object depended upon the cognition of it and that apart from cognition it had no existence corresponding to the forms of our cognitions. Beyond that point in that imperience there was a descent into Darkness in which there was a deepening of Darkness as this descent advanced. I do not know how far the descent was; there was no basis of measurement. The lesson out of this was a cognition of a non-conscious state, but with this important point not to be forgotten, the cognition of the non-conscious state was as acute as the cognition of a state with content in it. So, there was not there absence of consciousness; there was absence of content, not of consciousness. And the lesson learned was there is no possibility of taking, really, a position of non-consciousness, for when the scientist or the philosopher says let us assume a world of non-consciousness and then face the problem of how consciousness arises in it, he's overlooking the fact that that assumption was a conscious act and that he never had any possibility of knowing a state in which there was no such thing as consciousness because his knowing of it would itself be an act of consciousness. The point becomes inescapable that the most primary fact of all is there's no escaping from consciousness in such a way that you can make any judgment about a non-conscious condition. When, therefore, we predicate a non-conscious world, a *thing* outside of consciousness, it's only an act of imagination. But imagination is an act in consciousness, so what we are producing is something like an invention of an Alice in Wonderland, and forgetting the fact that we're inventing. No problem exists, no cognition exists where there is not consciousness. Where there is not consciousness, there is no world, there are no problems, there is no escaping, and there is no bondage from which to escape. All problems as such imply the existence of consciousness in order that the problem should be. And what the scientist has done in predicating a non-conscious order is to forget the epistemological basis of his thinking and become involved only in the details of his thinking. He is epistemologically conditioned, and none of his conclusions are free from the relativity of that conditioning. This is the crucial point in all this. I have a pamphlet on unusual states of awareness. I notice they approach it typically by tying it in with the brain, they seem to think that you're going to learn something of consciousness by the notion of brain relations. But here again the notion of brain relations, the notion of brain itself, is a concept in consciousness which in some way is tied into a form of consciousness which they're studying. But it's consciousness dealing with consciousness, one form with respect another, not a dealing with something outside of consciousness from which consciousness comes.

Now, taking the base of Root Consciousness, or Transcendental Consciousness, or that which is indicated by the term *Rig-pa*, as the base of reference instead of having to

deal with the problem of how is it possible that consciousness should arise, we have a counter problem, how is it possible that a universe should arise? How from a Pure Consciousness can a cosmos become? And by cosmos I mean everything from the vast to the small including our zone of human relationships and the relationships of all creatures whatsoever. How does this particularization arise?

Now, this was the problem with which I was wrestling in the four tapes 11, 12, 14, and 15; 15 you had last Sunday. I was working with the problem of trying to suggest some thinkable means by which the particularization of specific experience could arise out of an original Pure Consciousness. That problem is difficult. But it so happens that you start with certain basic assurances that are easy to grasp, and your difficulty deals with the detail of the mundane order. You start with a base of metaphysical assurance and have difficulties with your empiric determinations in the world of minor affairs, such as here; whereas, approaching the problems from the reverse point of view, the things here seem relatively simple and can be broken down by scientific method, and your metaphysical problems become apparently impossible and you can have no assurance whatever. We start with the assurance that transcends death and then deal merely with the details of how is it possible for that table to exist, for example; and there's nothing very tragic about that problem. We have plenty of time to work on it. But the assurance on the metaphysical questions is established. The game of life we may treat as a sort of sideshow, but the fundamental necessities are sure. That's some of the advantages of starting from this base of reference. It very easily makes clear how *tapasya*, for instance, is possible.<sup>2</sup> By *tapasya* I mean the use of extraordinary powers like feeding 5000 people with five loaves and three fishes, and so forth. An art or a science of that sort becomes obviously clear. We have more difficulty in determining how a physical science is possible, and that question has to be resolved too. But I submit that those questions are such as we can handle at our leisure.

I wound up last Sunday with a suggestion that the building block from which the whole universe is constructed is the simple one sense hallucination; by rendering it sensuously complete so that it became existent for all relevant senses, and became, in addition, stable so that it existed with reasonable persistence in certain relationships with environment, and, third, became collective; and that from that we construct our universe—unknowingly. You may remember that that conception with which I wound up the tape produced quite a shock here, and one chap began talking who had never talked before.

This, I think, may be enough to introduce the idea. Now, I think, uh, you might be interested in becoming acquainted with this communication, for this communication is responsible for this tape. You might do some reading in it. All right, now I'm going to . . .

---

<sup>2</sup> Wolff probably meant to say "*siddhis*."