

Abstract of the Philosophy

Part 9 of 14

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This tape will be a continuation of the series called the “Abstract of the Philosophy,” and we shall here continue the discussion that occupied the last tape, namely, the discussion of the three fundamentals of this philosophy. These three fundamentals I shall recall to your memory by restating them. They are: first, consciousness is original, self-existent, and constitutive of all that is; second, the subject to consciousness transcends the object of consciousness; and third, there are three and not only two organs, faculties, or functions of cognition. We shall here continue with the discussion of the implications of the first fundamental and also with its derivation.

There are at least two approaches to the derivation of the first fundamental as to the “all-in-allness” of consciousness. One of these approaches may be called that by means of *speculative* thought, the second is by *transcriptive* thought; and here I shall again elucidate the distinction between these two. Transcriptive thought is that which is a derivation from something outside the conceptual order. Thus, in a certain sense, anything that belongs to sensuous experience, the ordinary world of phenomena around us, when reduced to a subject matter for a conceptual scientific formulation is a kind of transcription from one order of cognition to another; but this is a familiar application of the principle here involved. What I have in mind, however, is another transcription from a transcendental order which I have called the *introceptual*, and, uh, then a statement of a value or meaning in the introceptual order reduced down to conceptual terms.

When one employs speculative thought, he attempts to ascend from a lower level, an empiric level as it were, or a level oriented to the particular, to that which is more comprehensive. This is the familiar method of empiric science, or, in other words, the method of inductive logic; and I might say a word about this method before going further. It has the advantage that we proceed with material that is familiar to everybody in the first place, namely, a sensuous datum. This datum may be very highly subtized and observed in very special ways in the case of a highly sophisticated science, but nonetheless it is beginning with—a beginning with particulars that are generally familiar, and the attempt is to find certain universals in the form of a law which unites the particulars as facts or events.

There is an inherent weakness in this method which grows out of the fact that any given group of particular sensible observations do not of themselves define a formulation which is the expression of a law uniquely. In point of fact, there is a theoretical possibility of there being an infinite number of such formulations which would satisfy those particular facts of sensible observation; and the outstanding experience in the scientific world which led to the emphasis of this fact was the failure of the Newtonian integrations around about the turn of the century—an event that was in a way an almost traumatic shock for the scientific world, for it had been supposed before that, that here

was the formulation of a definitive knowledge that was permanent. The formulations of Newton had to be restated to take care of further information that the scientific community had attained since the time of Newton, and the formulation—the reformulation which served this end was the relativity theory of Einstein. But the consequence of this was not simply that Einstein had replaced a former formulation and now had an absolute truth. He did not himself view his own formulation in that spirit. He viewed it rather as a second term in a series involving approach—an approach to truth of which further terms could be found in the future. This means then that the method of empiric science gives only tentative and pragmatic results. They are justified because for the present moment, at least, the consequences seem to work, but refinement of insight and refinement of observation may lead to other determinations in the future. The result is we cannot achieve by this method anything like a certain determinant and necessary view of the world order or of all things whatsoever, but we have a pragmatic approach that is justified by its working practically and have to remain satisfied with that.

Now, in contrast to this approach to problems, which we may call the *speculative* approach, there is that which I have called the *transcriptive* approach, from the perception or cognitive Realization by means of another function of consciousness which taps, we maintain, that which is transcendent with respect to the sensible order. We maintain further that the introceptive cognition taken in its purity is certain because it is based upon knowledge through identity, but that just as soon as this knowledge through identity is transcribed into a conceptual form an element of error enters into the picture. Nonetheless, the transcriptive statement is a pointer to a cognition transcending itself.

Now, we can deal with the results in the conceptual field that come from speculative thinking on the one hand and transcriptive thinking on the other. I shall so approach this subject matter of Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject. But before undertaking the approach from the speculative side, I wish to state certain facts concerning the transcriptive function that may help to justify its use. We do not need to justify the knowledge which comes from the senses because it is a commonplace of all human experience and evidently of all animal experience as well. No one questions the fact that there is information which comes from these sources, nor is there any serious question as to the reality of conceptual knowledge. This is all the knowledge that makes up the material that is possible for speech either spoken or written. It is the basis of all of our literature and of all our social intercourse, and specifically is highly developed in the form of the sciences, in philosophy, and especially in mathematics. These two fields of cognition have long been recognized in both Western and Eastern philosophy, but there has been a tendency to view them as the only possible sources of knowledge both in the Orient and in the West. The Logical Buddhists affirmed that these were the only two sources, and it was so assumed in Kant's epistemology.

Now, the thing that emerged from Kant's epistemology was the consequent that on the basis of these two sources of knowledge alone, it was impossible to determine anything concerning a knowledge of the transcendent; and, thus, the metaphysical questions could not be handled definitively by speculative thought. The answer to this in my philosophy is that there is at least a third organ, function, or faculty of cognition and this I have designated as "introception." My justification for affirming this is the personal Realization of such a function. It is thus not simply a speculative construct. This point is

very important. But a justification for it is necessary since it is not a function of cognition active generally in the experience of all men; but, in fact, appears to be active only in the experience of a few—those who have had a certain breakthrough which has been variously designated. In the case of Dr. Maurice Bucke, it was called Cosmic Consciousness, and I would like to refer you to his very interesting and illuminating discussion of this function, but it has also been called Realization and Enlightenment. So it is not without representation in the literature, but it is not a commonly active function in all persons. It may possibly be reflected in certain of the intuitive experiences of mankind, but in its fully Awakened sense it transcends intuition.

Now, in as much as I am speaking of a function of cognition that is not a commonplace, it is necessary to present a certain explanation of its action. I'm well aware that I cannot prove to the skeptical mind that such a function exists. I've explored this problem at length and am forced to recognize that fact. The best I can do is to build a presumption for it. It is a certainty so far as I am concerned, and I understand essentially those who speak from this level, but I can no more prove its actuality to the ordinary unilluminated mind anymore than one could prove the reality of colors to a man born blind. The best one could do would be to build a presumption for such a man born blind that there is something that he has not yet the power to cognize.

Now, I have been able to observe something of the functioning of this organ of cognition since it has abided with me ever since it broke out on the 7th of August, 1936. As I've said before, it has a character of flowage and a character that suggests fire—both present at the same time. It suggests liquidity and could be viewed as though it were a kind of mystic water, but also as a fire—at the same time. This does not fit our ordinary experiential forms, and it simply has to be accepted as a report by the person who has no acquaintance with this. Now, it is a function which in my experience is not apparently operative at all times, but is readily operative when one orients himself to a more or less transcendental subject matter. It breaks out spontaneously and does appear through invocation of it. I have described its affective *qualé* and so forth heretofore, but it brings with it a quality of assurance transcending anything which comes from sensuous experience and even transcending the assurance produced by mathematical proof, which is the most assured knowledge that we ordinarily have. This transcendent kind of knowledge is *immediate*, just as sensuous knowledge is immediate, whereas conceptual knowledge is *mediate*. This is an important point. Now, the real ground, the fundamental ground on which I affirm the primacy of Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject is by precipitation from the introceptual level, but by analysis we can approach this subject matter from below, as it were, and thus use speculative thought for it.

A partial verification of the actuality of the introceptive function is provided by certain experiences which have been reported by several individuals since 1936. There has been a frequent experience of a sort of heat which is not physical in its origin and which we therefore call the *psycho-physical heat*. Discourse on the platform or in the form of written material which has been produced through the action of this transcendental function very often produces in the hearer or reader an experience of heat which sometimes can be so considerable as to cause perspiration, the reddening of the face, and leading the individual often to remove his coat. It thus is almost as tangible as physical heat. But more significant than that is an experience which we have called

induction, and it would appear to be what is meant by the Tibetan Buddhists when they speak of the guru placing the *sadhaka* face to face. In other words, an induction of a glimpse, of greater or lesser extent, of another way of consciousness which has not yet been developed in the recipient's capacity to produce at will. It involves psychologically a minor degree of trance and usually the report is of a delightful state of experience and of cognitive patterns that follow mystical forms that are found in the literature. This is something that never results from purely speculative discourse. It is thus an additional evidence of a somewhat which does not exist in the common repertoire of cognition.

An approach to consciousness which has a considerable currency is somewhat as follows, namely, that we start with a material universe about us, that this is the primary fact, that, uh, well, we may imagine or speculate that there was an original containing of all of this universe in one vast atom which exploded—this is the big bang theory—and sent out a primordial form of matter-energy at vast velocities in either a preexistent space or in a currently created space; that this primordial matter-energy went through a process of evolution out of which were produced a vast number of galaxies, and within the galaxies a vast number of concentrated bodies known as stars or suns, and associated with these minor bodies known as planets, and so forth; that in the course of time this material which starts at a great energetic level represented by heat gradually cools down and leads to concentrations of what are now known as chemical elements; that among these were certain ones that were favorable to producing what was known as living form; that living form developed upon the surface of certain of these bodies when they reached the correct temperature range and had the proper material environment; that these in turn evolved up to a point where out of them somehow consciousness was born, and that then the development went on in a new form, but it is also been maintained that the development of that consciousness was quite irrelevant, that one could view all of this process apart from the concept of consciousness. When consciousness thus arose, it appeared as a relationship between an entity, which we will call the knower, and the known. In other words, consciousness was a somewhat which was dependent upon the isolation of these two poles. And then when this consciousness has developed sufficiently, it looks upon the process and ultimately develops scientific and philosophic views with respect to it; but, that the process is essentially independent of the presence or the absence of any consciousness. The view is quite different from that of Sri Aurobindo in which the idea of an evolution is accepted, but that it is based upon a prior *involution* of a primary consciousness which was self-obscured and then re-emerged, so that in the last analysis the consciousness was fundamental and not simply an emergent effect; although, this emergency was an appearance of the root fact in a final culminating form.

Now, the implication here is that consciousness is the weak sister. What we have is a postulation of a non-conscious *thing* out there, as it were. I mean by out there as out beyond the field of our consciousnesses as we know them here, that the consciousness was an effect of a process which in the fundamental sense is an unconscious process. And even some have maintained that the emergence of consciousness was quite unnecessary and that all approaches to understanding should be upon the basis of the assumption that consciousness is unnecessary. Now, this is a really, rather a silly game because we posit some things which we never can verify, namely, a non-conscious somewhat defined as energy-momentum, and that out of this everything which we know as consciousness today ultimately evolved. But, what are we dealing with? Just a conceptual construct. We

are not dealing with a non-conscious *thing* at all, but a construct in which our energy-momentum is merely an idea, that the notion of a *thing* out there consisting of such and such kinds of matter is only a conceptual construct. The assumption in all of this thinking, that underlies but which is neglected, is there could be no such construction unless there was consciousness in the first place. We may postulate a non-conscious somewhat, to be sure, but we can never verify that non-conscious somewhat because the act of verification would imply consciousness. Here is the thing overlooked in all of this kind of speculative thinking. We never have gotten out to the universe as a non-conscious somewhat; we have never gotten away from a conceptual system which exists in our consciousness and could not exist without that consciousness. What we know and know immediately is the consciousness. Only derivatively do we know a content in that consciousness. The notion of consciousness as a derived relationship is merely a predication of a previously subsumed consciousness which has been neglected and overlooked in the discourse.

No doubt some of these constructions of the scientific mind are highly fascinating. I derive a great deal of enjoyment from the reading of the *Scientific American*. In fact, I get real entertainment in treating these discourses as a sort of sophisticated, adult adventures in a wonderland. There are very interesting possibilities here, but one thing that's overlooked is that the scientific mind is not making discoveries, the scientific mind is making a projection, and the projection is a kind of *Alice in Wonderland* designed for the adult individual. It's amusing, very much so; and I do get a lot of entertainment from viewing these various ideas. But, the big fact is that not for one moment have we succeeded in going out of a sphere of consciousness to something that lies beyond consciousness. Yes, we may move from one kind of consciousness, one state to another state, but in every case we are dealing only with many species of the total genus *consciousness* itself. I would say, therefore, that it's far more sound as a speculative construct to assume in the beginning something which we know rather than something which we do not know and can never know, namely, the something that we call consciousness. Consciousness is that with which we begin and from which we never can escape. There is no knowing beyond consciousness.

Now, here I am not forgetting a statement made by Ralph Barton Perry in one of his books to the effect that by the proof of the quadratic theorem in algebra we can know the solutions of an infinite number of specific equations even though we have never had any one of them specifically before our consciousness. The thesis of the primacy of consciousness to all knowing does not imply necessarily a specific knowing of a particular entity. If it is known in a general sense, in the sense of a universal, like the binomial—like the quadratic theorem or general proof, then by implication every specific case is known and can be made visible before the relative consciousness at will. There has been no knowing of something outside of consciousness by means of this proof.

If the listener is having some difficulty following the argument here, that is not to be wondered at, since what we are doing is in a conceptual sense attempting the equivalent of turning the head around, speaking in a sensuous sense, and looking at the back of the head. I cannot argue you into understanding of this. You'll have to meditate upon what is meant in this process. It is impossible for the sensuous human being to see the back of his head. For the conceptual being, this achievement is difficult, though it is

possible. But for the introceptual being it is a matter of extreme ease, for the introceptual power has been defined as the power whereby the light of consciousness turns upon itself towards its source.

Another way of viewing the speculative approach to consciousness without content is by assuming a base of reference, even rather arbitrarily. In other words, I assume consciousness as the base from which I view everything whatsoever. This method has a long history, and has been applied in science, and is a familiar method in the development of pure mathematics. One starts with sheer postulation without justifying the postulates and then considers the consequences which follow. Base of reference is fundamental to all of our cognition, although very commonly the base of reference is not explicitly recognized. And I've used here the illustration of the step from the point of view of the Ptolemaic astronomy to the astronomy of Copernicus. Ptolemy took a base of reference fixed with respect to the earth, and from that base of reference it appears as though the sun and all of the stars go around the earth once in every twenty-four hours; and from this base of reference that statement is correct. But Copernicus took a counter point of view in which the sun and the ecliptic was taken as the base of reference, and from that base the earth appears as going around the sun, and also all of the planets. This led to a great simplification and many problems were solved in a theoretical and practical way with relative ease that were very difficult if not impossible by taking the base of reference of Ptolemy. This has become a pattern known as the Copernican change.

Immanuel Kant used the expression Copernican shift or change in connection with his own philosophy. Prior to him, the orientation of philosophy had been to the objective content of consciousness—all of the various things that lie before us, including all of the planetary systems, the galactic systems, and all of the minor objects of ordinary experience—and the thought was oriented to this. Ultimately in the story of thought this path led to a state of complete skepticism and even agnosticism in the thought of David Hume, who carried out the consequences with very great logical acuity. Kant opened the door to possible positive knowledge by shifting the center of orientation to the subject to consciousness, away from the object of consciousness, and represented the subject as bearing certain forms of cognition which enabled us to build a dependable knowledge upon a new basis, and led to positive results in the philosophic development since his time. But the shift here was from the object of consciousness to that which is conscious or the subject, or, in other words, that which has variously been called the ego, the Self, or the *Atman*. In my own presentation, I have again shifted from the subject to consciousness, to the Pure Consciousness itself, and taken as the base for dealing with all knowledge problems from the basis of that consciousness rather than from the basis of either the subject to consciousness or the object of consciousness. This has been called by someone else as a third Copernican shift.

Now, the principle involved here is one that is very much developed by Albert Einstein in his cosmic theories. He speaks continually of systems of coordinates, of moving from one system of coordinates to another—from a body that is stationary, say, relative to the earth, to a body like a moving train which is in a state of translation with respect to the earth—and from the standpoint of these different systems of coordinates, different pictures of relationships are derived. From the appropriate base of reference, a door may be opened which was closed when the approach was by a different base of

reference. In general abstract theory, it is in principle possible to take any base of reference whatsoever and approach the problems that surround us from that base. I have taken the base of reference of Pure Consciousness conceived of as separated from content and from a center that cognizes.

Now, a certain misinterpretation of my conception has apparently been made in the failure to recognize that my Consciousness-without-an-object is also a Consciousness-without-a-subject. It is possible to discuss and consider otherwise the state of a self observing a domain which is consciousness separate from its contents, as has been done in Dr. Jung's commentary to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Here we do not imply the absorption of the subject to consciousness, but that is fundamental in my philosophy and has a different effect from the mere consideration of consciousness from a center of consciousness but without content. This distinction is very important. Once one realizes that the meaning is that the subject to consciousness is itself dependent upon the Pure Consciousness, as well as the object of consciousness, then we have certain consequences that are revolutionary. Among other things, it implies that there is no such thing as an entity which is the source of all that is—an entity being one who has a centered consciousness, one who could say *I*. It implies that all selves whatsoever are derivative, as well as all contents of consciousness as objects. And thus we stand at the root base from which everything subjective as well as objective is derivative.

What I have given so far in this discourse may be called a brief sketch of the speculative approach. Actually this is not the foundation upon which I place the philosophy. It is placed rather upon a transcription from an actual Realization, a Realization in which I saw, as it were by an inner eye, the dissolution of the objective order into Consciousness and the equal dissolution of the subjective order, or the Self, into that Consciousness. This then was the authority, the real authority, for the whole philosophy. But the speculative approach is possible and is no doubt more easily followed by one who has not had the breakthrough of the introceptual Door of cognition. I think you will begin to appreciate how revolutionary this whole point of view is from the standpoint of Western thought, and from a great deal of Eastern thought. But there is much in the *sutras* of the Buddhists which tends to indicate that this also is the standpoint from which they are speaking, although their conceptuality is many times so strange to us that the meaning is often obscure. This, however, I think is a statement of the same point of view in terms of a modern Western conceptuality.

And this I think will do for this occasion; and I shall close therefore.