

# **The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object**

A Discussion of the Nature of Transcendental Consciousness

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Part 23 of 25

## **PART III**

### **Introceptualism**

#### **CHAPTER 6**

##### **Idealism**

(continued)

When introception is carried to the stage where the self appears as small and enveloped in a vast Divine Otherness, we do not find a basis for absolute Idealism, as has already been noted. At this point one could not say with Fichte, "I become the sole source of my own being and its phenomena, and, henceforth, unconditioned by anything without me, I have life within [in] myself." The mystical stage of introception places the source of life and being in the Divine Otherness, and this is not in accord with Fichte's insight as implied above. So we must return to consider the further development of the introceptive process.

The self, stripped of all extraneous elements, of everything that can possibly be an object for consciousness, is very small indeed. It is a bare point of Light, the mathematical zero which forms the origin of the basis of reference. It is that upon which further possibility rests but is itself no true content of consciousness. But if at this point the introceptive process continues, as it will if the autonomy of the self is maintained as against the surrender to the Divine Otherness, then there follows a simply tremendous enantiodromedal transformation. The self as a bare point becomes an unlimited Space whose nature is Light or Consciousness. Divinity fuses with the self thereby becoming the SELF which is at once both God and I. Again, this is not a speculation, it actually happens. This changes the whole view of the nature of being and does supply, as we shall find, the true basis of absolute Idealism.

Where the Divinity becomes coextensive with the SELF, Light spreads everywhere. This means that the Unconscious is absorbed by Consciousness. We may conceive of this Consciousness as Thought, though that is simply to select one from among other possibilities. Consciousness is Thought, and more besides. But Consciousness as Thought gives the World that peculiar coloring so that It may be, for philosophy. The Divine Thought which is MY Thought forms the only world there is. Thus the World is Thought, before it becomes experience.

For the man born into the empiric world, experience comes first in time, thought afterward. To see thought in this sequence, and only in this sequence, leads naturally to

the view that thought was evolved to serve experience, and that alone. Hence we have the philosophies in which thought is only the little one, the servant in the house who has no business sitting upon the royal throne. Truly, in time, experience and perception are the Mother of thought. But where there is a mother there must be a father. Mythology and the psychology of the unconscious tell us that earliest natural man worshipped only feminine divinities, for the child knows first and only the mother as an immediate fact. The father is accepted later on the basis of a more or less uncertain inference. The actuality of fatherhood is an immediate realization only for mature consciousness. Much of our modern philosophy is in the state of primitive man in its acknowledgment of mother-perception and its doubt or denial of the father. Indeed, Pragmatism doubts that the father is even a valid inference, much less an immediate realization. Thus Pragmatism is the doctrine that parthenogenesis or the virgin birth is the universal and final truth! [What a power the peculiar Christian doctrine has over its subjects.]

Now, once it is realized that thought has a hidden father as well as a revealed mother, it becomes evident that the concept embodies a dual character. As derived from the mother it leads to the objects whose essence is experience. But as derived from the father it leads inward toward an unseen substantiality. From this there follows two quite opposed logical theories, each of which is capable of validating itself from the ground which each assumes. A lifetime devoted to the elaboration of one of these logics will never succeed in dethroning the other. The comprehensive view which finds a place for each is found only by consciousness moving within its own roots. Mere experience can never supply the final answer.

The search for the roots of thought leads us indeed [veritably] into deep waters. It is easy to say that conceptual thought is generated out of perceptual life by a process of abstraction and then, having assumed such a genesis, to proceed to the development of a logic wherein the conceptual order acquires significance only in relationship to experience. But how is it possible that a living perceptual flux or manifold—view it whichever way one will—should lead to the abstracting process? How, indeed, does it become possible to rise out of the perceptual stream or manifold to a super-perceptual order? This is by no means a simple matter, and it is no more answered by invoking the name of life, as is done by the Vitalists, than it is by invoking the name of God. Both answers are mystical in that negative sense whereby there is meant a breakdown of the intelligent will to carry through to the end. In the answers to these questions we shall [will] find just precisely the essential differentia between the animal and human kingdoms. Is the difference between the animal and the human but one of degree in an evolutionary scale without a qualitative break and addition, or does it form an incommensurable division between two orders? Is man merely a more advanced animal, or is the total human being to be conceived as an animal nature to which something transcendent has been added, a somewhat which is more lordly and divine than anything which is possible to the merely animal however highly evolved? These questions are implied, for perception in the broad sense includes the three functions of sensation, feeling, and intuition taken together in contrast to conception, and all three of these functions can be found, well or poorly developed, in the animal soul, but conception is alien. The beasts are dumb just because they do not have the power bestowed by the concept. Is man merely the child of the animal or is he something added to the animal from beyond? If he is only the child then he can hardly claim the royal status in the

kingdoms of living forms which would rightly be his if his fundamental nature as man is something bestowed from above. If he is only the child then, indeed, a thoroughgoing democracy might well be the last word in social relations, but it would have to be a democracy in which the animals, the dogs, horses, tigers, lions, and hyenas, would have to be accepted as the equals of men with the same right of political representation. If, on the other hand, the quintessential meaning of the words 'human' and 'man' is something transcendental added to the animal-order, then the true relationship of man to the animal is royal or hierarchical, and this would be true in a progressive series from the most animalistic man up to the most human man. So, indeed, what we find with respect to the roots of thought has manifold bearings, not alone upon the form of philosophy, but even reaching down into the determination of the true social order.

How is it possible that man can receive the stream or manifold of ever-changing experience and yet not feel completely alien? To be merely presented is not enough to supply the presented with recognition by human consciousness. Something is supplied by the human subject so that the presentation can be recognized as a perception, otherwise the human consciousness would have no means of rendering an alien other into something familiar, understandable, and even friendly. If one studies the psychology of the more introverted phase of human consciousness he does find, as Dr. Jung has shown, that in the depths of man there is a perceptual matrix of a profoundly archaic nature. This appears, at times, as a projected image, which is called primordial for the reason that it is not reducible to a construct from the objectively presented situation. This is something truly *a priori*, something of the nature of the Platonic Ideas which lie at the roots of the mind and which render possible, first of all, the integration of perception. As Jung conceives it, the Idea proper is derived from the primordial image by a process of abstraction by the reason, and thus the Idea is not merely a construct from objective perception, but, in relation to the latter, has something of an innate or *a priori* character. But still the Idea is derivative from the primordial image whose nature is primarily perceptive. This view drives the problem to a deeper level, but still does not answer how the abstracting process of the reason is possible.

There is an impressive parallelism between the views of Dr. Jung and those of Schopenhauer. The latter philosopher, it will be remembered, maintained the thesis that the primary root of being is not noetic but voluntaristic. The Will is primary while the Idea, which composes the whole objective universe, is merely secondary, being essentially an objectification of the Will. But the Idea exists in two aspects, a more objective and a more subjective. The objective Idea is subject to the principle of sufficient reason, is multiform, and is the source of all science. The subjective Idea is the primary object, existing behind and prior to the principle of sufficient reason, has a unified character, and is revealed most directly, not in science, but in art, in other words the deed. The subjective Idea is fundamentally identical with the primary Ideas of Plato, and performs a function analogous to that of the primordial image of Jung. Since the subjective Idea exists prior to the principle of sufficient reason, it is useless to hope to find a reason for it in the sense that its form or actuality could be deduced from something prior to it. It, thus, exists for reason as something immediately given.

I think that Jung is quite right in finding in Schopenhauer's more subjective Idea a similarity to the perceptive *quale* of the primordial image. The Idea of Schopenhauer is

very different from the Idea of Hegel, for whom the Idea has a more original and self-existent character. Here we have the conflict between voluntaristic and noetic Idealism sharply drawn—a conflict which even helped to embitter the life of Schopenhauer. The more subjectivistic Idea is like a transcendental object which is derived from a Will antecedent to the subject-object relationship. The Hegelian Idea is self-existent and primary. My own view is that there is a part truth in both standpoints, but that both are relative to a still more profound actuality which occupies a neutral position with respect to the Will and the Reason. This view I shall develop later.

The thought of Schopenhauer is in fundamental sympathy with the perspective of all those who find a primary orientation in teleology or purpose, and it seem to be quite generally true that for those who take this orientation there is something more fundamental in generic perception than in conception. Perception is the root source and mother of the concept and of the idea conceived as conceptual. Jung has recognized something like a dependence upon a feminine source as instanced in the following quotation: “The primordial image is the preliminary stage of the *idea* (*q.v.*), its maternal soil.”<sup>1</sup> But the notion of the mother always implies the notion of the father, and so, the account of the genesis of the Idea or concept is not complete until we find the father and isolate his function also. I would suggest that one significant way of viewing the difference between Schopenhauer and Hegel consists in interpreting the former’s orientation as being more to the feminine factor while that of Hegel was more toward the masculine factor. The whole Pragmatic-Vitalistic school is closer to Schopenhauer than it is to Hegel.<sup>2</sup>

The present stage of our discussion leads us to the necessity of considering the relation of “idea” to “concept.” In a great deal of usage the notions are used interchangeably, but we are forced to differentiate a real difference in the meaning. The more subjective Idea of Schopenhauer, and likewise the Idea of Hegel, have a creative power, though the creativeness is understood differently. Thus Schopenhauer’s Idea is creative in a more artistic sense, while that of Hegel implies a creative reason operating through the dialectic process. Now the concept is often, and perhaps more correctly, understood as meaning rigorously just what it is defined to mean. Such a concept would not lead to possibilities which could not be rationally inferred. A group of defined concepts will lead to implications thereby rendering something explicit, but would give no more than was implicitly present in the beginning. But an Idea with creative potential grows more like something that is alive. It has possibilities which cannot be known by pure inference alone. As I am acquainted with both kinds of mental contents I am thoroughly convinced of the justice of the distinction. It would follow, for one thing, that Bergson’s criticism of Intellectualism has a great deal of validity with respect to the concept as outlined above, but it would not be valid for the Idea, since the latter has the power of growing beyond itself. But it would be a serious misapprehension to regard Hegel’s philosophy as Conceptualism or Intellectualism in this sense, even though he

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<sup>1</sup> See *Psychological Types*, p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> This would even throw a light upon the feministic element that has been noted in the psychology of Adolph Hitler, with his strong development of intuition relative to reason.

gives that impression to a merely surface view. There is a creative potency in the Hegelian Idea.

Concepts which are taken as they are defined to mean, and only that, stand in a position of disassociation from the whole perceptual field. They are equally to be differentiated from introceptive content. They stand in a zone neither of the earth nor of spirit and lack that which is necessary to predicate actuality in either sense. They define forms of the possible for human consciousness in its peculiar quality as human, taken in differentiation from both that which is animal and that which is spiritual. But we are not justified in regarding this as a limiting definition imposed upon the possibilities of consciousness in its concrete totality without specific reference to a human way of knowing. We may know a necessity for man as man, but do not thereby have certainty relative to the nature of other than human kinds of consciousness, whether of a superior or inferior nature. To know the latter, the consciousness principle in man would have to be shifted to the basis of other kinds of beings. But the definition of what is possible for the distinctively human kind of consciousness is, no doubt, of great importance for a human being. The study of the nature and logic of a pure conceptual order, taken in abstraction from both perceptual reference and to introceptive content, is, unquestionably, a valuable work. I would be among the last to depreciate the value of logical investigations such as that of Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*. But it would be a mistake to conceive this kind of logic as the final word in logic.

Idealism in the noetic form has been conceived far too often as the necessary implication of Reason. Beginning with the primary thesis that Reality, whatever it may be, is not self-contradictory, an examination of the specific contents of relative consciousness apparently leads to a number of contradictions or antinomies. In other words, relative consciousness is self-contradictory and, therefore, unreal. Consequently, Reality must be found by transcending the whole relative world, including all finite thought. The total process by which this conclusion is reached is very elaborate and involves an extensive literature which, at times, becomes highly recondite. We shall not here retrace steps which are well known to philosophical students, but merely note the outcome. Now, since the days of the great Idealists we have come into a far better understanding of logical possibilities through the logical analysis of mathematics, and it appears that many of the supposed contradictions of the relative field can be resolved, with the result that the above argument loses its force. To be sure, the relative world may, indeed, be unreal but, if so, that fact is not established by the formal argument from essential contradictoriness of all relative consciousness. Further, the assumption that Reality is not self-contradictory may be challenged, not by affirming that it may be self-contradictory, but on the ground that contradictoriness is a conceptual category which is not relevant in an ontological sense. This form of challenge is typical of the anti-intellectualists. So, in the light of these criticisms, the case for rational, absolute Idealism falls in so far as its case rests only on a logical thesis.

I am prepared to grant the force of the above arguments, but deny that they touch the real ground of monistic Idealism. When one reads the great Idealists, such as Fichte, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, he finds that there is a good deal more present than a logical necessitarianism. Particularly is this clear in the case of Schopenhauer who is explicitly a Voluntarist, but it is also true of the other two. To be sure, they attached great importance

to the logical or rational factor and with a large degree of justification. But, beyond this, there is the unmistakable evidence of insight, the “temper akin to genius,” to quote a phrase from Schopenhauer. These philosophers spoke of something they knew, but not from perceptual experience nor as a logical inference alone. And it is from this something known immediately that Idealism of the grand style derives its authority. Beyond perception and conception lies introception which is the path to a transcendental immediacy, and when introception is united with conception then we have the basis of the Reason which leads to Idealism.

In support of my present thesis I would call attention to the profound affinity between the Idealism of men like Fichte, Hegel, and Schopenhauer and an orientation characteristic of the *Upanishads*. Particularly is this affinity notable in the case of the philosophy of the great Indian monist Shankara. Here also, Reality is supersensible and radically monistic. But one who studies the philosophy and life of Shankara finds very clearly that the logical presentation of his system is incidental to a primary insight. In other words, the ontology is not exclusively nor primarily a logical deduction. Shankara went first to his Guru who did not teach him as a modern professor of philosophy teaches his students, but rather facilitated the *awakening of a latent function of consciousness*. The successful awakening of the function led to immediate realizations of a nature which is non-perceptual and non-conceptual in their essential nature. From this the philosophic system followed. I have employed the term ‘introcept’ for this kind of immediacy, and ‘introception’ for the process.

It has already been stated that when introception is carried far enough, the self and the Divine Other coalesce in a [great] SELF having a highly transcendent character. This is a radically unitary SELF of so complete an aloofness that personality simply does not exist for It. It is equally aloof from the empiric world. It is the union of the subject to consciousness and its content. It is not contained by space, time, and the world of sensible objects, but is like a Space which contains and comprehends all these. From this state of introceptive realization certain consequences follow:

1. The SELF supports the universe, yet is not conditioned by the presence or absence of the universe.
2. The transcendent Thought of the SELF is the substratum of the universe which, later, is *experienced* by the empiric self, with possibilities of distortion.
3. This Thought defines necessity, whereby the freedom of the empiric self is conditioned, so that for the empiric self the inner sense for freedom attains no more than a partial realization.
4. This Thought is the noumena of the laws of nature which receive a statement from physical science of only a pragmatic validity.
5. The world of the empiric self, being only derivative, is no more than an illusion when it is conceived as an independent self-existence.
6. Truth is a relation of congruency between empiric thought or conception and the transcendental Thought.

7. The laws of empiric thought are part of the necessity imposed by the transcendent Thought.
8. The Thought, which is both of and identical with the SELF, serves the purpose of attaining complete SELF-consciousness. (This implies that the SELF has something to attain and therefore is not to be regarded as identical with Absoluteness.)
9. The Thought of the SELF is pregnant with creative potentiality so that It elaborates from within itself possibilities which are more than may be formally deduced.
10. This Thought is concrete in that it is totally comprehensive, but appears as abstract when contrasted to empiric thought derived from perceptual experience.
11. The development of this Thought, in so far as reflected to objective thought, is enantiomedal, namely, follows the form of the triadic dialectic.

The above statements are not merely invented postulates from which one might proceed to build a hypothetical system, nor are they to be viewed as the necessary consequences of either empiric or pure objective thought. This is a very fundamental part of my whole thesis, and criticism which does not bear this point in mind misses the essence of the whole argument. *They are ideas in objective form derived from the Thought of the [great] SELF.* They are not themselves the immediate form of that Thought which, in its own nature, is independent of the concepts and word-signs of objective thought. That Thought in its own essence is forever incommunicable in the forms of relative consciousness. Thus the primary postulates are rather precipitates within a relative thought of a Meaning prior to the latter and which are subject to unavoidable distortion through processes whereby content identical with the SELF is made to appear as an object of consciousness for the empiric thought. The Thought of the [great] SELF is not an objective or empiric thought at all, and it must be conceived as such, that if realized by a non-thinking being it would not appear as Thought at all. IT is a potential of many facets, of which Thought stands out as the most significant to a predominantly *thinking being*. Doubtless, through another appropriate facet It could appear as primarily Willing. There is, therefore, a certain relativity here which prevents us from reaching an objective decision as to the primacy of Reason and Will. We may simply say that to a predominantly thinking being It appears as primarily Thought, and from that perspective a characteristic philosophy follows. The above postulates are, therefore, affirmed as true but not as so exclusively true as to prevent precipitation in other patterns.

But whether one realizes the SELF as inherently Will or Thought, the common implication of this stage of introception is the identification of being with conscious existence. That is, in the generic sense, the introceptive realization confirms the cardinal principle of Idealism, but does not necessarily develop in the form of Rational Idealism. However, it may take the form of Rational Idealism, and the above postulates imply that form.

Even a brief examination of the postulates will show that they confirm the major part of the Hegelian thesis, though stripping from that thesis certain features, including its privative character. To a degree, the most primary thesis of Hegel is confirmed, but not wholly. Thus there is a sense in which Being is identical with Thought, yet not identical with objective or empiric thought. The Thought of the SELF is the noumenal

Reality underlying the sensible world, and the necessity inherent in that Thought is projected as the constraint which surrounds the empiric subject. But that constraint is only partly identical with the laws of empiric or objective thought. We are dealing here with the Father of the concept, but as the Father implies the Mother, so the total character of the concept is no more given completely by knowledge of the Father than it is given completely by knowledge of the Mother. We have, in fact, a dual determination, the one introceptive and the other perceptive, with the result that neither perspective alone can give a privative view. Thus the fundamental criticism of the privatism of Pragmatism applies equally, though in the reverse sense, to the privatism of Hegelian Idealism. The comprehensively synthetic philosophy requires a perspective so far neglected, at least in the Occident.