

# I THE GOAL OF KNOWLEDGE

## Journal

**What is this chapter about?** *Principles of individualistic life and truth.*  
**What is its value?** *These principles are for those who strive to be free individuals, rather than conform to norms. They have value when they are understood and applied to life.*

The pursuit of individualistic life is driving dramatic cultural changes around the world. The leaders of traditional institutions struggle to maintain their authority with the increasing recognition that each individual has value and something worthy to offer.

Truth, also, is now a matter for the individual. We no longer seek the wise one who will bestow wisdom upon us. Conviction and empowerment only comes with the truth that appears within each one.

The pursuit of individualistic life and truth is the last stage of human development. Nature develops the automatic behavior of natural urges and instincts; society develops law-abiding obedient behavior; but these transitory stages can be overcome by a free individual.

Rudolf Steiner, while having been born a clairvoyant, was not born a free individualist. He had to strive toward freedom like everybody else. The pious exercises and ascetic practices of past cultures are no longer suitable for today in the age of science. Steiner's training was in mathematics, science, and philosophy leading to a doctorate in philosophy. Trained as a scientist and philosopher with a love of truth he found a new path to freedom suited to our age and then described his inner experiences in *The Philosophy Of Freedom*. Steiner's path is clarity of mind, not vague mysticism, through the practice of pure thinking and living according to the principles of freedom.

The study of mathematics and philosophy are examples of the practice of thinking that requires entering the realm of pure thought. Immersing yourself in the study of *The Philosophy Of Freedom* is a training in pure thinking, so expect the mental challenge faced by a university science or philosophy student. While studying you can decide to read attentively and struggle to understand, judge, and apply the material, or you can let your attention wander. You may half get some points, awaken again with effort, then lapse into partial focus. At each moment you are deciding whether to think or not.

*The Philosophy Of Freedom* is not a guide to imitate Rudolf Steiner, but rather a guide to find your own self. Part I of the book is about the KNOWER, beginning with the principles of individuality and freedom, then examining the processes of cognition with chapter discussions on: knowledge, thinking, perception, conception, mental picturing and cognition. Part II opens out into the expression of freedom as the KNOWING DOER, living life as an ethical individualist.

## Study Topics principles of individualism

### Principles Of Individualistic Truth

#### 1.0 Culture Of Individuality

Today, all human interests tend to center in the culture of human individuality.

##### Principles Of Individualistic Life

###### 1. Free Oneself From Authority

An energetic effort is being made to shake off every kind of authority.

###### 2. Individual Validation

Nothing is accepted as valid, unless it springs from the roots of individuality. Everything which hinders the individual in the full development of his powers is thrust aside.

###### 3. Leaderless Striving

The saying "Each one of us must choose his hero in whose footsteps he toils up to Olympus" no longer holds for us.

###### 4. Individual Selection Of Ideals

We allow no ideals to be forced upon us.

###### 5. Individual Worthiness

We are convinced that in each of us, if only we probe deep enough into the very heart of our being, there dwells something noble, something worthy of development.

###### 6. Rejection Of Conformity

We no longer believe that there is a norm of human life to which we must all strive to conform.

###### 7. Perfection Of Each Individual

We regard the perfection of the whole as depending on the unique perfection of each single individual.

###### 8. Unique Contribution

We do not want to do what anyone else can do equally well. No, our contribution to the development of the world, however trifling, must be something which, by reason of the uniqueness of our nature, we alone can offer.

###### 9. Creative Expression

Never have artists been less concerned about rules and norms in art than today. Each of them asserts his right to express, in the creations of his art, what is unique in him.

###### 10. Dynamic Language

There are dramatists who write in dialect rather than conform to the standard diction which grammar demands.

###### 11. Striving Towards Freedom

[2] No better expression for these phenomena can be found than this, that they result from the individual's striving towards freedom, developed to its highest pitch.

###### 12. Independence

We do not want to be dependent in any respect, and where dependence must be, we tolerate it only on condition that it coincides with a vital interest of our individuality.

#### 1.1 Conviction Of Inner Truth

Truth will be sought in our age only in the depths of human nature. Conviction attaches only to what appears as truth to each of us in our own hearts.

#### 1.2 Truth Empowers

Truth alone can give us confidence in developing our powers. He who is tortured by doubts finds his powers lamed.

#### 1.3 Comprehensible Truth

We no longer want to believe; we want to know. Belief demands the acceptance of truths which we do not wholly comprehend.

#### 1.4 Knowledge Starting From Individual Experience

Starting from the facts nearest at hand, our own immediate experiences, we ascend to a knowledge of the whole universe.

#### 1.5 Individual Drive To Know

Nowadays there is no attempt to compel anyone to understand. We claim no agreement with anyone whom a distinct individual need does not drive to a certain view.

#### 1.6 Strive To Live According To Individualistic Principles

Many of my contemporaries strive to order their lives in the direction of the principles I have indicated. To them I would dedicate this book.

#### 1.7 Exercise Pure Thinking

The Western world no longer demands pious exercises and ascetic practices as a preparation for science, but it does require a sincere willingness to withdraw oneself awhile from the immediate impressions of life, and to betake oneself into the realm of pure thought.

#### 1.8 Knowledge Is A Self-Governing Organism

Abstract thinking attains concrete, individual life. Ideas become powers of life. We no longer have merely a knowledge about things, but have made knowledge into a real, self-governing organism. Our consciousness, alive and active, has risen beyond a mere passive reception of truths.

#### 1.9 The Most Pressing Question Is Freedom

How philosophy, as an art, is related to freedom; what freedom is; and whether we do, or can, participate in it —these are the principle problems of my book. These questions, in my opinion, are humanity most immediate concern.

#### 1.10 The Value Of Knowledge Is Human Development

The true value of the sciences is seen only when we have shown the importance of their results for humanity. Knowledge has value only in so far as it contributes to the all-round unfolding of the whole nature of the human being.

#### 1.11 Ideas To Serve Individual Goals

We each take possession of the world of ideas in order to use them for our own human aims, which transcend those of mere science.

#### 1.12 Master Over Ideas

We must confront ideas as master; or become their slave.

#### 1.0 Culture Of Individuality

[1] I BELIEVE I am indicating correctly one of the fundamental characteristics of our age when I say that, at the present day, all human interests tend to centre in the culture of human individuality.

##### Principles Of Individualistic Life

###### 1. Free Oneself From Authority

An energetic effort is being made to shake off every kind of authority.

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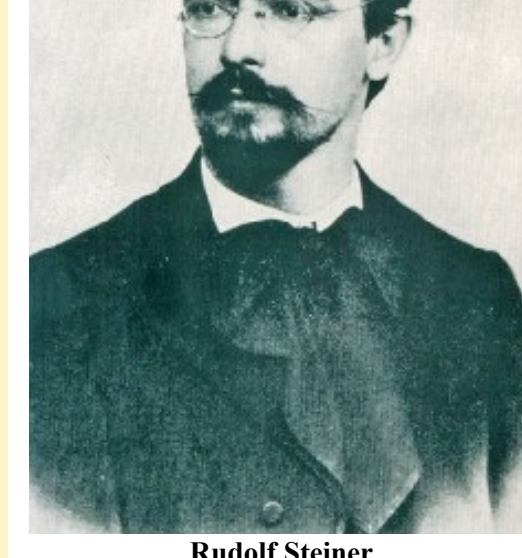
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Rudolf Steiner  
1861-1925

#### 1.1 Inner Truth Alone Gives Conviction

[3] Truth, too, will be sought in an age such as ours only in the depths of human nature. Of the following two well-known paths described by Schiller, it is the second which will today be found most useful:



Wahrheit suchen wir beide, du aussen im Leben, ich innen  
In dem Herzen, und so findet sie jeder gewiss.  
Ist das Auge gesund, so begegnet es aussen dem Schöpfer;  
Ist es das Herz, dann gewiss spiegelt es innen die Welt.

Truth seek we both — Thou in the life without thee and around;  
I in the heart within. By both can Truth alike be found.

The healthy eye can through the world the great creator track;  
The healthy heart is but the glass which gives creation back.

Friedrich Schiller  
1759-1805

A truth which comes to us from without bears ever the stamp of uncertainty. Conviction attaches only to what appears as truth to each of us in our own hearts.

#### 1.2 Truth Empowers

[4] Truth alone can give us confidence in developing our powers. He who is tortured by doubts finds his powers lamed. In a world of riddle of which baffles him, he can find no aim for his activity.

#### 1.3 Comprehensible Truth

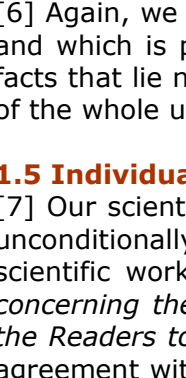
[5] We no longer want to believe; we want to know. Belief demands the acceptance of truths which we do not wholly comprehend. But the individuality which seeks to experience everything in the depths of its own being, is repelled by what it cannot understand. Only that knowledge will satisfy us which springs from the inner life of the personality, and submits itself to no external norm.

#### 1.4 Knowledge Starting From Individual Experience

[6] Again, we do not want any knowledge that has encased itself once and for all in hide bound formulas, and which is preserved in Encyclopedias valid for all time. Each of us claims the right to start from the facts that lie nearest to hand, from his own immediate experiences, and thence to ascend to a knowledge of the whole universe. We strive after certainty in knowledge, but each in his own way.

#### 1.5 Individual Need To Know

[7] Our scientific doctrines, too, are no longer to be formulated as if we were unconditionally compelled to accept them. None of us would wish to give a scientific work a title like Fichte's *A Pellucid Account for the General Public concerning the Real Nature of the Newest Philosophy. An Attempt to Compel the Readers to Understand*. Nowadays there is no attempt to compel anyone to understand. We claim no agreement with anyone whom a distinct individual need does not drive to a certain view. We do not seek nowadays to cram facts of knowledge even into the immature human being, the child. We seek rather to develop his faculties in such a way that his understanding may depend no longer on our compulsion, but on his will.



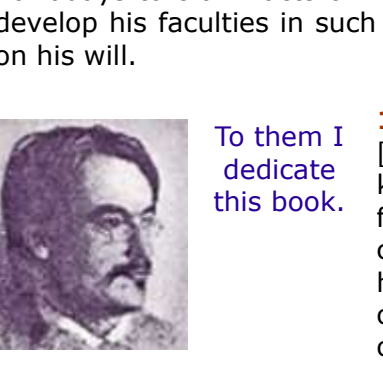
To them I  
dedicate  
this book.

#### 1.6 Strive To Live According To Individualistic Principles

[8] I am under no illusion concerning the characteristic principles of the present age. I know how many flaunt a manner of life which lacks all individuality and follows only the prevailing fashion. But I know also that many of my contemporaries strive to order their lives in the direction of the principles I have indicated. To them I would dedicate this book. It does not pretend to offer the "only possible" way to Truth, it only describes the path chosen by one whose heart is set upon Truth.

#### 1.7 Thought Training In Pure Thinking

[9] The reader will be led at first into somewhat abstract regions, where thought must draw sharp outlines if it is to reach secure conclusions. But he will also be led out of these arid concepts into concrete life. I am fully convinced that one cannot do without soaring into the ethereal realm of abstraction, if one's experience is to penetrate life in all directions. He who is limited to the pleasures of the senses misses the sweetest enjoyments of life.

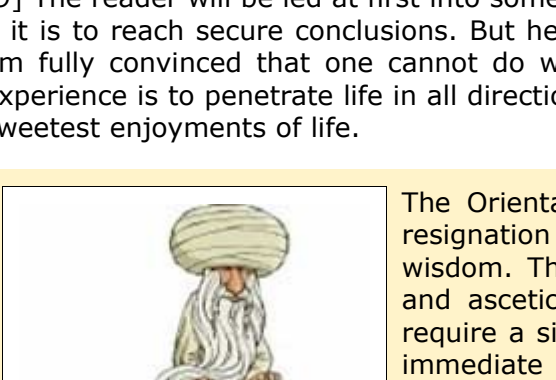


The Western world no longer demands pious exercises and ascetic practices.

The Oriental sages make their disciples live for years a life of resignation and asceticism before they impart to them their own wisdom. The Western world no longer demands pious exercises and ascetic practices as a preparation for science, but it does require a sincere willingness to withdraw oneself awhile from the immediate impressions of life, and to betake oneself into the realm of pure thought.

#### 1.8 Holistic Science Leading To Fullness Of Life

[10] The spheres of life are many and for each there develop a special science. But life itself is one, and the more the sciences strive to penetrate deeply into their separate spheres, the more they withdraw themselves from the vision of the whole as a living whole. The elements for leading men back once more to the fullness of life. The scientific specialist seeks in his studies to gain a knowledge of the world and its workings. This book has a philosophical aim: science itself is to be infused with the life of an organic whole. The special sciences are stages on the way to this all-inclusive science. A similar relationship is found in the arts.



All genuine philosophers have been artists in concepts.

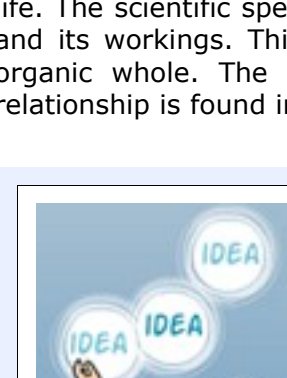
The composer in his work employs the rules of the theory of composition. This latter is an accumulation of principles, knowledge of which is a necessary presupposition for composing. In the act of composing, the rules of theory become the servants of life, of reality. In exactly the same sense philosophy is an art. All genuine philosophers have been artists in concepts. Human ideas have been the medium of their art, and scientific method their artistic technique. Abstract thinking thus gains concrete individual life. Ideas turn into life forces. We have no longer merely a knowledge about things, but we have now made knowledge a real, self-determining organism. Our consciousness, alive and active, has risen beyond a mere passive reception of truths.

#### 1.9 The Principle Question Is Freedom

[11] How philosophy, as an art, is related to freedom; what freedom is; and whether we do, or can, participate in it —these are the principle problems of my book. All other scientific discussions are put in only because they ultimately throw light on these questions which are, in my opinion, the most intimate that concern mankind. These pages offer a "Philosophy of Freedom".

#### 1.10 Value Of Science Is Human Development

[12] All science would be nothing but the satisfaction of idle curiosity did it not strive to enhance the existential value of human personality. The true value of the sciences is seen only when we have shown the importance of their results for humanity.



The final aim of the individuality can never be the cultivation of any single faculty, but only the development of all capacities which slumber within us.

Knowledge has value only in so far as it contributes to the all-round unfolding of the whole nature of man.

#### 1.11 Ideas To Serve Human Goals

[13] This book, therefore, does not conceive the relation between science and life in such a way that man must bow down before the world of ideas and devote his powers to its service. On the contrary, it shows that he takes possession of the world of ideas in order to use them for his human aims, which transcend those of mere science.

#### 1.12 Master Over Ideas

[14] Man must confront ideas as master; lest he become their slave.



## III WHY THE DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE IS FUNDAMENTAL

### Journal

**What is this chapter about?** *The Principles of Knowledge. Our fundamental urge to know occurs as the result of our need to reconcile our thought-world with our perceived-world. To unite these two elements, the inner and the outer, is the function of knowledge. We each naturally desire a certain type of knowledge, such as materialistic or spiritualistic explanations. We are not satisfied and lack conviction unless it is explained according to our own world-view.*

**What is its value?** *By understanding that our desire for knowledge is individualistic, we are in a better position to cultivate intellectual curiosity and discover knowledge that satisfies our desire to know. Our striving for knowledge can be narrowly directed to one realm of reality, but the pursuit of truth requires broadmindedness. Each view of the world is the key to open a related domain, such as Materialism the material world and Idealism the world of ideas, but a one-sided pursuit of knowledge is narrow minded. Speculation is better replaced by factual thinking.*

Why do I strive for knowledge? In childhood we perceive the world and feel ourselves to be at one with Nature. Children feel in their hearts the inner harmony of the universe. This changes when we grow up enough to have thoughts and develop an inner world of thought. The mental process splits our world into two halves: the outer perceived-world contrasts with our inner thought-world. Now the universe appears to us as two opposing sides: Self and World.

We confront the world as separate individuals, and lose our childhood feeling of unity to the feeling of separation. It is the conflict between the sense of unity that we do belong to the world yet are separate from it that makes us strive for a bridge to reunite us with the world.

This striving is found in religion through the acceptance of revelation, in art by molding the external world in a way that expresses the ideas of the artist, and in science with the thinking penetration of world phenomena to discover the laws of nature. Historically, this striving appears in two opposing world-views: Dualism and Monism.

All attempts to find unity will be ineffective if the word "science" is reserved for the exploration and mastery of the physical world with the only real sciences being the hard sciences. This widespread assumption is wrong because it is the method, not the subject matter that determines whether any given investigation is scientific.

My separation from the world is fundamentally a polarity of consciousness that can only be reconciled in a specific way for myself. How do I find my way back? What corresponds to the world within me will be my guide. While I am seeing nature outside of me, I feel something more within me that is itself pressing toward manifestation. This can only indicate an element within me that is true, for it belongs not only to myself, but also corresponds to the world. If I find this element, I will have found the bridge to unite myself with the world. This element is experienced as thought. Only when the outer perceived-world corresponds to my inner-thought world is my urge for knowledge satisfied and I arrive at knowledge that is individualistic and yet true.

### Study Topics principles of knowledge

#### 3.0 The Drive To Know

We seek something more in things that exceeds what is immediately given to us. This addition we seek splits our whole being into two parts; our objective outer perception and our subjective inner thought-world. We become conscious of contrasting with the world. The universe appears to us as two contrasting sides: *Self and World*.

#### 3.1 Materialism

Materialism begins with the thought of Matter or material processes. But, in doing so, it is confronted by two different sets of facts, the material world and the thoughts about it. Thoughts are understood as purely physical processes.

#### 3.2 Spiritualism

The *Spiritualist* denies Matter (the World) and regards it as merely a product of Mind (the Self).

#### 3.3 Realism

If one would really know the external world, one must look outwards and draw on the fund of experience.

#### 3.4 Idealism

What Fichte has actually accomplished is a magnificent *thought-picture* of the world, but one without any empirical content.

#### 3.5 Materialistic Idealism

Materialism explains all world phenomena, including our thoughts, to be the product of purely material processes, but, conversely, Matter and its processes are themselves a product of our thinking.

#### 3.6 Indivisible Unity

The third form of Monism sees the indivisible unity of Matter and Mind in even the simplest physical polarity.

#### 3.7 Polarity Of Consciousness

We first encounter the basic and original polarity in our own consciousness. We are the ones who detach ourselves from the mother soil of Nature and contrast ourselves with the World as Self.

#### 3.8 Feeling Impulse

It is true that we have estranged ourselves from Nature; but it is equally true that we feel we are within Nature and belong to her. This can only be due to Nature's influence on us, which also lives in us.

#### 3.9 Knowing Nature Within

We can only find Nature outside us after we first know it *within* us. What corresponds to Nature within us will be our guide.

#### 3.10 Something More Than "I"

We must come to a point where we can say: Here we are no longer merely 'I', here is something more than 'I'.

#### 3.11 Description Of Consciousness

I have not been concerned with scientific results, but rather with a simple description of what we all experience in our own consciousness. Even those sentences about the attempts to reconcile Mind with the World have only been included to clarify the actual facts.

#### 3.12 Facts Without Interpretation

My concern is not how science has interpreted consciousness, but rather how we experience it moment by moment.



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
1749–1832

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,  
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;  
Die eine hält, in derber Liebeslust,  
Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen;  
Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust  
Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen.

FAUST, I, 1112—1117.

Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,  
And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.  
One with tenacious organs holds in love  
And clinging lust the world in its embraces;  
The other strongly sweeps, this dust above,  
Into the high ancestral spaces.  
*Faust*, Part I, Scene 2.  
(Bayard Taylor's translation)

#### 3.0 Urge To Know

[1] IN these words Goethe expresses a trait which is deeply ingrained in human nature. Man is not a self-contained unity. He demands ever more than the world, of itself, offers him. Nature has endowed us with needs, but left their satisfaction to our own activity. However abundant the gifts which we have received, still more abundant are our desires. We seem born to dissatisfaction. And our desire for knowledge is but a special instance of this unsatisfied striving.

Suppose we look twice at a tree. The first time we see its branches at rest, the second time in motion. We are not satisfied with this observation. Why, we ask, does the tree appear to us now at rest, then in motion? Every glance at nature evokes in us a multitude of questions. Every phenomenon we meet presents a new problem to be solved. Every experience is to us a riddle. We observe that from the egg there emerges a creature like the mother animal, and we ask for the reason of the likeness. We observe a living being grow and develop to a determinate degree of perfection, and we seek the conditions of this experience. Nowhere are we satisfied with the facts which nature spreads out before our senses. Everywhere we seek what we call the explanation of these facts.

*everywhere we seek what we call the explanation of these facts...*

[2] The something more which we seek in things, over and above what is immediately given to us in them, splits our whole being into two parts. We become conscious of our opposition to the world. We oppose ourselves to the world as independent beings. The universe has for us two opposite poles: Self and World.

[3] We erect this barrier between ourselves and the world as soon as consciousness is first kindled in us. But we never cease to feel that, in spite of all, we belong to the world, that there is a connecting link between it and us, and that we are beings within, and not without, the universe.

[4] This feeling makes us strive to bridge over this opposition, and ultimately the whole spiritual striving of mankind is nothing but the bridging of this opposition. The history of our spiritual life is a continuous seeking after union between ourselves and the world. Religion, Art, and Science follow, one and all, this goal. The religious man seeks in the revelation, which God grants him, the solution of the world problem, which his Self, dissatisfied with the world of mere phenomena, sets him as a task. The artist seeks to embody in his material the ideas which are his Self, that he may thus reconcile the spirit which lives within him and the outer world. He too, feels dissatisfied with the world of mere appearances, and seeks to mould into it that something more which his Self supplies and which transcends appearances. The thinker searches for the laws of phenomena. He strives to master by thought what he experiences by observation.

*only when we have transformed the world-content into our thought-content do we recapture the connection which we had ourselves broken off.*

Only when we have transformed the world-content into our thought-content do we recapture the connection which we had ourselves broken off.

We shall see later that this goal can be reached only if we penetrate much more deeply than is often done into the nature of the scientist's problem.

The whole situation, as I have here stated it, meets us, on the stage of history, in the conflict between the one-world theory, or Monism, and the two-world theory or Dualism. Dualism pays attention only to the separation between the Self and the World, which the consciousness of man has brought about. All its efforts consist in a vain struggle to reconcile these opposites, which it calls now Mind and Matter, now Subject and Object, now Thought and Appearance. The Dualist feels that there must be a bridge between the two worlds, but is not able to find it. Monism pays attention only to the unity and tries either to deny or to slur over the opposites, present though they are. Neither of these two points of view call satisfy us, for they do not do justice to the facts.

The Dualist sees in Mind (Self) and Matter (World) two essentially different entities, and cannot therefore understand how they can interact with one another. How should Mind be aware of what goes on in Matter, seeing that the essential nature of Matter is quite alien to Mind? Or how in these circumstances should Mind act upon Matter, so as to translate its intentions into actions? The most absurd hypotheses have been propounded to answer these questions.

However, up to the present the Monists are not in a much better position. They have tried three different ways of meeting the difficulty. Either they deny Mind and become Materialists; or they deny Matter in order to seek their salvation as Spiritualists; or they assert that, even in the simplest entities in the world, Mind and Matter are indissolubly bound together, so that there is no need to marvel at the appearance in man of these two modes of existence, seeing that they are never found apart.



#### 3.1 Materialism



How does Matter come to reflect upon its own nature?

[5] Materialism can never offer a satisfactory explanation of the world. For every attempt at an explanation must begin with the formation of thoughts about the phenomena of the world. Materialism, thus, begins with the thought of Matter or material processes. But, in doing so, it is *ipso facto* confronted, by two different sets of facts, viz., the material world and the thoughts about it.

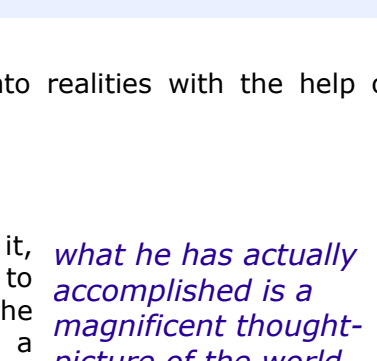
**materialism: tries to explain the world in terms of matter and material processes.**

The Materialist seeks to make these latter intelligible by regarding them as purely material processes. He believes that thinking takes place in the brain, much in the same way that digestion takes place in the animal organs. Just as he ascribes mechanical, chemical, and organic processes to Nature, so he credits her in certain circumstances with the capacity to think.

He overlooks that, in doing so, he is merely shifting the problem from one place to another. Instead of to himself he ascribes the power of thought to Matter. And thus he is back again at his starting-point. How does Matter come to think of its own nature? Why is it not simply satisfied with itself and content to accept its own existence? The Materialist has turned his attention away from the definite subject, his own self, and occupies himself with an indefinite somewhat. And here the old problem meets him again. The materialistic theory cannot solve the problem, it can only shift it to another place.

#### 3.2 Spiritualism

[6] What of the Spiritualistic theory? The Spiritualist denies Matter (the World) and regards it merely as a product of Mind (the Self). He supposes the whole phenomenal world to be nothing more than a fabric woven by Mind out of itself.



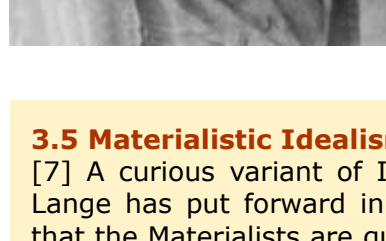
**spiritualism: tries to explain the world in spiritual terms as being a product of mind/spirit.**

This conception of the world finds itself in difficulties as soon as it attempts to deduce from Mind any single concrete phenomenon. It cannot do so either in knowledge or in action. If one would really know the external world, one must turn one's eye outwards and draw on the fund of experience. Without experience Mind can have no content.

#### 3.3 Realism

Similarly, when it comes to acting, we have to translate our purposes into material things and forces. We are, therefore, dependent on the outer world.

#### 3.4 Idealism



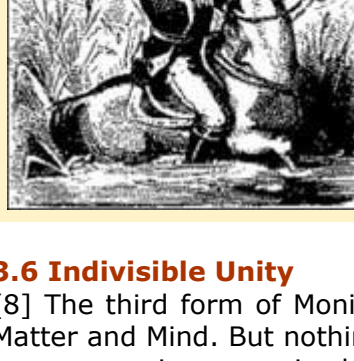
The most extreme Spiritualist or, if you prefer it, Idealist, is Johann Gottlieb Fichte. He attempts to deduce the whole edifice of the world from the "Ego." What he has actually accomplished is a magnificent thought-picture of the world, without any empirical content. As little as it is possible for the Materialist to do without the Mind away, just as little is it possible for the Idealist to do without the outer world of Matter.

*what he has accomplished is a magnificent thought-picture of the world...*

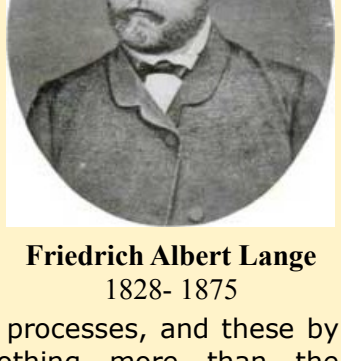
Johann Gottlieb Fichte  
1762–1814

#### 3.5 Materialistic Idealism

[7] A curious variant of Idealism is to be found in the theory which F. A. Lange has put forward in his widely read *History of Materialism*. He holds that the Materialists are quite right in declaring all phenomena, including our thought, to be the product of purely material processes, but, in turn, Matter and its processes are for him themselves the product of our thinking.



"The senses give us only the effects of things, not true copies, much less the things themselves. But among these mere effects we must include the senses themselves together with the brain and the molecular vibrations which we assume to go on there."



Friedrich Albert Lange  
1828- 1875

That is, our thinking is produced by the material processes, and these by our thinking. Lange's philosophy is thus nothing more than the philosophical analogon of the story of honest Baron Munchausen, who holds himself up in the air by his own pigtail.

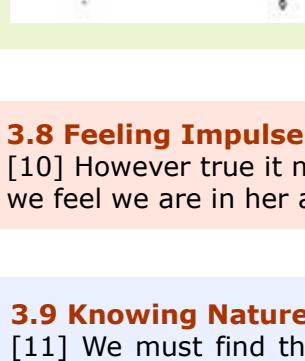
#### 3.6 Indivisible Unity

[8] The third form of Monism is that which finds even in the simplest real (the atom) the union of both Matter and Mind. But nothing is gained by this either, except that the question, the origin of which is really in our consciousness, is shifted to another place. How comes it that the simple real manifests itself in a twofold manner, if it is an indivisible unity?

#### 3.7 Polarity Of Consciousness

[9] Against all these theories we must urge the fact that we meet with the basal and fundamental opposition first in our own consciousness. It is we ourselves who break away from the bosom of Nature and contrast ourselves as Self with the World. Goethe has given classic expression to this in his essay *Nature*.

*fundamental polarity results from separation of consciousness...*



"Living in the midst of her (Nature) we are strangers to her. Ceaselessly she speaks to us, yet betrays none of her secrets."

But Goethe knows the reverse side too:

"Mankind is all in her, and she in all mankind."

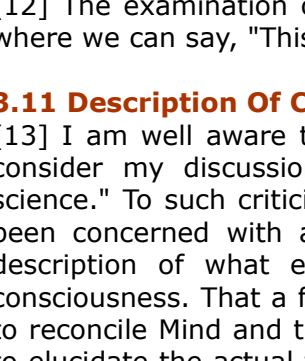
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
1749-1832

#### 3.8 Feeling Impulse

[10] However true it may be that we have estranged ourselves from Nature, it is none the less true that we feel we are in her and belong to her. It can be only her own life which pulses also in us.

#### 3.9 Knowing Nature Within

[11] We must find the way back to her again. A better reflection may point this way out to us. We have, it is true, torn ourselves away from Nature, but we must none the less have carried away something of her in our own selves. This quality of Nature in us we must seek out, and then we shall discover our connection with her once more.



A spiritual entity utterly alien to Nature.

Dualism neglects to do this. It considers the human mind as a spiritual entity utterly alien to Nature and attempts somehow to hitch it on to Nature. No wonder that it cannot find the coupling link.

We can find Nature outside of us only if we have first learnt to know her within us. The Naturalist must be our guide to her. This marks out our path of inquiry. We shall attempt no speculations concerning the interaction of Mind and Matter. We shall rather probe into the depths of our own being, to find there those elements which we saved in our flight from Nature.

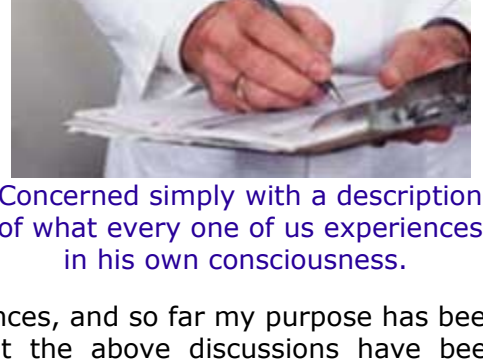
*we can find Nature outside of us only if we have first learnt to know her within us...*

#### 3.10 Something More Than "I"

[12] The examination of our own being must bring the solution of the problem. We must reach a point where we can say, "This is no longer merely 'I,' this is something which is more than 'I.'"

#### 3.11 Description Of Consciousness

[13] I am well aware that many who have read thus far will not consider my discussion in keeping with that of the philosopher. To such criticism I can reply only that I have so far not been concerned with any scientific results, but simply with the description of what every one of us experiences in his own consciousness. That a few phrases have slipped in about attempts to reconcile Mind and the World has been due solely to the desire to elucidate the actual facts. I have therefore made no attempt to give to the expressions "Self," "Mind," "World," "Nature," the precise meaning which they usually bear in Psychology and Philosophy.



Concerned simply with a description of what every one of us experiences in his own consciousness.

#### 3.12 Facts Without Interpretation

The ordinary consciousness ignores the sharp distinctions of the sciences, and so far my purpose has been solely to record the facts of everyday experience. To object that the above discussions have been unscientific would be like quarrelling with the reciter of a poem for failing to accompany every line at once with aesthetic criticism. I am concerned, not with the way in which science, so far, has interpreted consciousness, but with the way in which we experience it every moment of our lives.

# IV THOUGHT AS THE INSTRUMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

## Journal

**What is this chapter about? It is a study of the principles of thinking leading to a description of pure thinking.**

**What is its value? The ability to enter into the realm of pure thinking is necessary to rise above bias and experience pure reason, the necessary ability of this freedom philosophy. The moral intuition described in Part II of this book is attained through pure reason. Moral intuition is the impulse to act that is the origin of free action.**

In the search for thought that corresponds to the world, let's examine the striving for knowledge. All knowledge comes from observation and thought, that is, from thinking about what is observed. For example, a billiard player uses observation and thought to make a shot. The purpose of reflection is to form concepts of the event and add a corresponding process that takes place in the conceptual realm. The scientific method requires the ability to "betake oneself into the realm of pure thought" as was mentioned in chapter one. I connect the concepts ball, elasticity, motion, impact, velocity, etc., so that they apply to my billiard shot. If I am successful in discovering the corresponding concepts I should be able to predict what will happen. This conceptual process requires effort on my part. Spectators can passively watch with no effort, and not think at all. They will have to wait to see what happens.

Normally, I observe whatever is in reach, but I am unaware of my own activity of thinking. To observe thought I must purposely take an exceptional position and look back upon an act of thinking already performed. Normally, my observation and thinking are wholly absorbed in the study of other things. Thinking is ordinarily the one unobserved factor in the world. It is important that we no longer leave it unobserved; to learn how to observe thinking see [Observation Of Thinking Exercises](#).)

The observation of thinking is the most important observation I can make. Because I create it, I am able to know it more intimately than anything else in the world. I know the characteristic features of its course and the details of how the process takes place. What can be discovered only indirectly in all other fields of observation, --the relevant content and the relationships between the individual objects-- is known to me directly in the case of thought.

It is different than the observation of anything else. Entering the realm of thought to study thought consists of two steps:  
1. Create thought  
2. Observe thought

To create thought the full attention is on the object I am thinking about; not on the thinking personality. To observe thought the full attention is shifted to the thought I have created, which is now a past thought.

Concepts and ideas are given to us in a form called intellectual intuition, a kind of intellectual 'seeing' of the conceptual content. With pure concepts and ideas the content is contained within the thought itself. For example, cause and effect are sought in the world, but before I can discover it in the world I first produce "causality" as a thought-form that does not refer to a particular instance of causality. The concepts discovered combine to form an ordered and systematic whole. The concept "organism" combines with those of "development according to law," "growth," and others.

Mathematics is based entirely upon rules of reason that are universal. Mathematical thinking is conceptual thinking. Pure thinking that does not contain pure concepts knows to correspond to real things is conceptual speculation. Pure thinking is grounded when the concepts that one is thinking about correspond with an event, as in the billiard game example, then pure thinking cannot be considered abstract.

The content of pure thinking is pure concepts and ideas. The thought connections, intuitively seen, are guided by the content of the thoughts alone. Pure thinking is self-supporting, not dependent on anything else.

- Pure thinking is:
1. Detached from anything sense-perceptible.
  2. Guided by the content of thoughts.

Philosophical thinking deals with pure concepts; its knowledge is guided by reasoning. The philosophical method wants to abstract away from specific examples and use universalized concepts, as the details of a specific situation can distract objectively.

### Concrete Observation --> Reflect; Upon Specific Case -->> Universal Conceptualization of Event

Thought fulfills the requirement of Archimedes for a point that would support his lever to lift the world. He needed a point that is self-supporting, not dependent on anything else. In thought I have the principle of self-subsistence. Starting with thought as my basis I can attempt to understand the world. Thought can be grasped by thought itself. The only question is whether we can understand anything else by means of thought.

I can know thought; Things have been built up according to thoughts, so it makes sense that I can know the world if I can experience the thought that corresponds to the world. Because thought can be grasped by thought, this chapter establishes self-supporting and self-subsisting thought as the firm basis for understanding the world. The only question is whether my thinking gives me thought that applies to the world or misleads me by giving me something not true to the observed object.

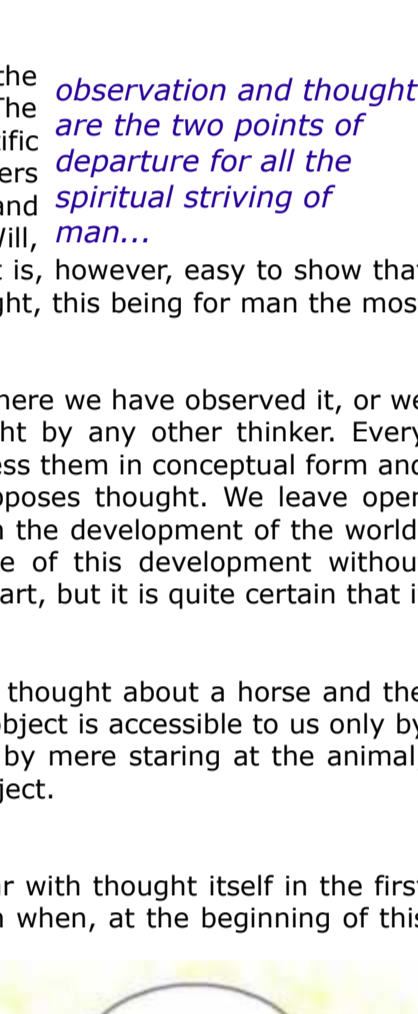
Free thinking is not ordinary thinking. It exists on the level of pure concepts, liberated from biological and characterological control. Freedom occurs most purely at this level, when freely forming ideas out of ego activity. A free deed has its origin in pure thinking.

## Study Topics principles of thinking

- 4.0 Reflective Thought**  
The purpose of my reflection is to form concepts of the event. I try to add to the occurrence that runs its course without my participation a second process which takes place in the conceptual sphere. This conceptual process depends on me.
- 4.1 Observation of Thought**  
Thought, as an object of observation, differs essentially from all other objects. I observe the table, and I carry on my thinking about the table, but I do not at the same moment observe this thought. While the observation of things and events, and thinking about them, are everyday occurrences filling my ongoing life, observation of the thought itself is a kind of exceptional state.
- 4.2 Formation Of Concept**  
I am definitely aware that the concept of a thing is formed by my activity, while the feeling of pleasure is produced in me by an object in the same way as, for example, a change is caused in an object by a stone that falls on it.
- 4.3 Thinking Contemplation Of Objects**  
While I am reflecting on the object, I am absorbed in it; my attention is turned to it. To become absorbed in the object is to contemplate by thought.
- 4.4 Thinking Contemplation Of Thought**  
I can never observe the present thought in which I am actually engaged; only afterward can I make the past experience of my thought process into the object of my present thinking.
- 4.5 Know Content Of Concept**  
It is possible to know thought more immediately and more intimately than any other process in the world. Because we produce ourselves we know the characteristic features of its course and the details of how the process takes place.
- 4.6 Guided By Content Of Thought**  
What I observe in studying a thought process is not which process in my brain connects the concept lightning with the concept thunder, but my reason for bringing these two concepts into a specific relationship. Introspection shows that in linking thought with thought I am guided by the content of my thoughts; I am not guided by any physical processes in my brain. Many people today find it difficult to grasp the concept of pure thinking.
- 4.7 I Produce My Content Of Thought**  
In thought I observe something that I produce. I give to my existence the definite, self-determined content of my thought activity. From here I can go on to ask whether other things exist in the same or in some other way.
- 4.8 Remain Within Realm Of Thought**  
When I observe my own thought which hovers in the background is nothing but thought. I can remain within the realm of thought.
- 4.9 Create Before Knowing**  
What is impossible with Nature ---creation before knowing--- we achieve with thinking. If we refrain from thinking until we have first gained knowledge of it, then we would never think at all. We must first think straight ahead and only afterward begin to reflect upon the knowledge of the world we have done. We ourselves first create the object that we are to observe.
- 4.10 Self-Supporting Thought**  
Thought is self-supporting, not dependent on anything else. In thought we have the principle of self-subsistence. Thought can be grasped by thought itself.
- 4.11 Impartial Consideration Of Thinking**  
We must first consider thinking in an impartial way, without reference to either a thinking subject or conceived object. Before anything else can be understood, thought must be understood.
- 4.12 Application Of Thought**  
Thought, as a fact, and it is meaningless to speak of the correctness or falsehood of a fact. At most I can have doubts about whether thought is correctly applied.

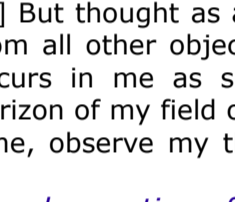
- 4.0 Reflective Thinking**  
[1] WHEN I observe how a billiard ball, when struck, communicates its motion to another, I remain entirely without influence on the process before me. The direction and velocity of the motion of the second ball is determined by the direction and velocity of the first. As long as I remain a mere spectator, I can say nothing about the motion of the second ball until after it has happened. It is quite different when I begin to reflect on the content of my observations.

The purpose of my reflection is to construct concepts of the process. I connect the concept of an elastic ball with certain other concepts of mechanics, and consider the special circumstances which obtain in the instance in question. I try, in other words, to add to the process which takes *construct concepts* place without any interference, a second process of the process... which takes place in the conceptual sphere.



This latter process is dependent on me. This is shown by the fact that I can rest content with the observation, and renounce all search for concepts if I have no need of them. If, therefore, this need is present, then I am not content until I have established a definite connection among the concepts, ball, elasticity, motion, impact, velocity, etc., so that they apply to the observed process in a definite way. As surely as the occurrence of the observed process is independent of me, so surely is the occurrence of the conceptual process dependent on me.

[2] We shall have to consider later whether this activity of mine really proceeds independently of anything that exists, or whether those modern physiologists are right who say that we cannot think except by the aid of the brain. The thought and thought-concepts determine, which happen to be in our minds at any given moment. (Cp. Ziehen, *Leitfaden der Physiologischen Psychologie*, Jena, 1893, p. 171.)



Theodor Ziehen  
1862-1950

For the present we wish merely to establish the fact that we constantly feel obliged to seek for concepts and connections of concepts, which stand in definite relation to the objects and processes which are given independently of us. Whether this activity is really ours, or whether we are determined to it by an unalterable necessity, is a question which we need not decide at present. What is unquestionable is that the activity appears, in the first instance, to be ours. We know for certain that concepts are not given together with the objects to which they correspond. My being the agent in the conceptual process may be an illusion; but there is no doubt that to immedately observe I appear to be active. One reason why it is the chief factor in the development of the world we gain by supplementing a process with a conceptual counterpart?

- [3] There is a far-reaching difference between the ways in which, for me, the parts of a process are related to one another before, and after, the discovery of the corresponding concepts. Mere observation can trace the parts of a given process as they occur, but their connection remains obscure without the help of concepts. I observe the first billiard ball being struck, but I do not know its direction and with a certain velocity. What will happen after the impact I cannot tell in advance. I can once more only watch it happen with my eyes.

Suppose some one obstructs my view of the field where the process is happening, at the moment when the impact occurs, then, as mere spectator, I remain ignorant of what goes on. The situation is very different, if prior to the obstructing of my view I have discovered the concepts corresponding to the nexus of events. In that case I can say what occurs, even when I am no longer able to observe. There is nothing in a merely observed process or object to show its relation to other processes or objects. This relation becomes manifest only when observation is combined with thought.

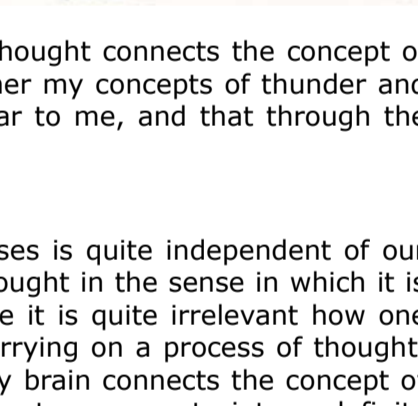
- [4] Observation and thought are the two points of departure for all the *observation and thought* workings of striving man, in so far as he is conscious of such striving. They *are the two points of departure for all the* researches, rest on these two fundamental pillars of our minds. Philosophers *spiritual striving of the* have started from various ultimate antitheses, Idea and Reality, Subject and *man...* Object, Appearance and Thing-in-itself, Ego and Non-Ego, Idea and Will, Matter and Mind, Matter and Force, the Conscious and the Unconscious. It is, however, easy to show that all these antitheses are subsequent to that between observation and thought, this being for man the most important.

- [5] Whatever principle we choose to lay down, we must prove that somewhere we have observed it, or we must enunciate it in the form of a clear concept which can be rethought by any other thinker. Every philosopher who sets out to discuss his fundamental principles, must express them in conceptual form and thus use thought. He therefore indirectly admits that his activity presupposes thought. We leave open the question whether thought is the chief factor in the development of the world. But it is at any rate clear that the philosopher can gain no knowledge of this development without thought. In the occurrence of phenomena thought may play a secondary part, but it is quite certain that it plays a chief part in the construction of a theory about them.

- [6] As regards observation, our need of it is due to our organization. Our thought about a horse and the object "horse" are two things which for us have separate existences. The object is accessible to us only by means of observation. As little as we can construct a concept of a horse by mere staring at the animal, just as little are we able by mere thought to produce the corresponding object.

- 4.1 Observation Of Thought**  
[7] In the observation actually precedes thought. For we become familiar with thought itself in the first instance by observation. It was essentially a description of an observation when, at the beginning of this chapter, we gave an account of how thought is kindled by an objective process and transcends the merely given. Whether enters the circle of our experiences becomes an object of apprehension to us first through observation. All contents of sensations, all perceptions, intuitions, feelings, acts of will, dreams and fancies, images, concepts, ideas, all illusions and hallucinations, are given to us through observation.

- [8] But thought as an object of observation differs essentially from all other objects. The observation of a table, or a tree, occurs in me as soon as those objects appear within the horizon of my field of consciousness. Yet I do not, at the same time, observe my thought as taking place. I observe the table, but I carry on a process of thought about the table without, at the same moment, observing this thought-process. I must first take up a standpoint outside of my own activity, if I want to observe my thought about the table, as well as the table.



Whereas the observation of things and processes, and the thinking about them, are everyday occurrences making up the continuous content of my life, the observation of the thought-process itself is an exceptional attitude to adopt. This fact must be taken into account, when we come to determine the relations of thought as an object of observation to all other objects. We must be quite clear about the fact that, in observing the thought-processes, we are applying to them a method, which is our normal attitude in the study of all other objects in the world, but which in the ordinary course of that study is usually not applied to thought itself.

- 4.2 Formation Of Concept**  
[9] Some one might object that what I have said about thinking applies equally to feeling and to all other mental activities. Thus it is said that when, e.g., I have a feeling of pleasure, the feeling is kindled by the object, but it is this object I observe, not the feeling of pleasure. This objection however is based on an error. Pleasure does not stand at all in the same relation to its objective as the concept constructed by thought. I am conscious, in the most positive way, that the concept of a thing is formed through my *formed through my* activity; whereas a feeling of pleasure is *activity...* produced in me by an object in a way similar to that in which, e.g., a change is caused in me that I perceive "this is a rose," I say absolutely nothing about myself, but I observe a pleasure in giving exactly the same way as the event which causes it.

The same is not true of concepts. I can not ask why an event arouses in me a feeling of pleasure. But I certainly cannot ask why an occurrence causes in me a certain number of concepts. The question would be simply meaningless. In thinking about an occurrence, I am not concerned with its effect on a feeling of pleasure, or with the fact that when, e.g., I have a feeling of pleasure, the feeling is kindled by the object which corresponds to the observed change caused to a pane of glass by a stone thrown against it. But I do learn something about myself when I know the feeling which a certain occurrence brings in me. When I say of an object that I perceive "this is a rose," I say absolutely nothing about myself, but when I say of "this same thing that it causes a feeling of pleasure in me," I characterize not only the rose, but also myself in my relation to the rose.

- [10] There can, therefore, be no question of putting thought and feeling on a level as objects of observation. And the same could easily be shown of other activities of the human mind. Unlike thought, they must be classed with any other observed objects or events.

The peculiar nature of thought lies just in this, that it is an activity which is directed solely on the observed object and not on the thinking subject. This is apparent even from the way in which we express our thoughts about an object, as distinct from our feelings *thinking is an activity which is* or acts of will. When I see *an object and recognize it as* directed solely on the observed *table, I do not as a rule* subject... *"I am thinking of a table," but this is a table*

On the other hand, I do say "I am pleased with the table." In the former case, I am not at all interested in stating that I have entered into a relation with the matter; whereas, in the second case, it is just this relation which matters. In saying "I am thinking of a table," I adopt the exceptional point of view characterized above, in which something is made the object of observation which is always present in our mental activity, without being itself normally an observed object.

- [11] The peculiar nature of thought consists just in this, that the thinker forgets his thinking while actually engaged in it. It is not thinking which occupies his attention, but rather the object of thought which he observes.

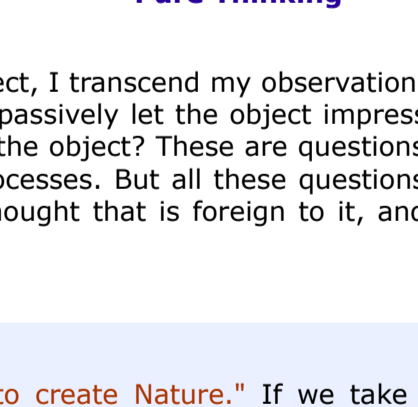
- [12] The first point, then, to notice about thought is that it is the unobserved element in our ordinary mental life.

- [13] The reason why it do not notice the thinking which goes on in our ordinary mental life is no other than this, that it is our own activity. Whatever I do not in myself produce appears in my field of consciousness as an object; I contrast it with myself as something the existence of which is independent of me. It forces itself upon me. I must accept it as the presupposition of my thinking. As long as I think about the object, I am absorbed in it, my attention is turned on it. To be thus absorbed in the object is just to contemplate it by thought. I attend not to my activity, but to its object. In other words whilst I am thinking, I pay no heed to my thinking which is of my own making, but only to the object of my thinking which is not of my making.

- 4.4 Thinking Contemplation Of Thought**  
[14] I am, moreover, in the exact same position when I adopt the observable my *I can never observe* point of view and think of my thought-processes. I can never observe *my past thought,* myself. I can only make a past experience of thought-processes *thought...* subsequently the objects of fresh thoughts. If I wanted to watch my present *only my past* thought, I should have to split myself into two persons, one to think, the other *thought...* to observe this thinking. But this is impossible. I can only accomplish it in two separate acts. The observed thought-processes are never those in which I am actually engaged but others. Whether, for this purpose, I make observations on my own former thoughts, or follow the thought-processes of another person, or finally, as in the example of the motions of the billiard balls, assume an imaginary thought-process, is immaterial.

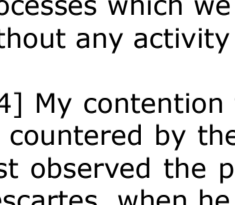
- [15] There are two things which are incompatible with one another: productive activity and the theoretical contemplation of that activity. This is recognized even in the First Book of Moses. It represents God as creating the world in the first six days, and only after its completion is any contemplation of the world possible: "And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good." The same applies to our thinking. It must be there first, if we would observe it.

- 4.5 Know Content Of Concept**  
[16] The reason why it is impossible to observe the thought-process in its actual occurrence at any given moment, is the same as that which makes it possible for us to know it more immediately and more intimately than any other process in the world. Just because it is our own creation do we know the characteristic features of its course, the manner in which it proceeds, in detail, takes place. What in the other *know thinking more* spheres of observation we can discover only *immediately and more* indirectly, viz., the relevant objective nexuss *other process...* and the relations of the individual objects, that is known to us immediately in the case of thought.



I do not know off-hand why, for perception, thunder follows lightning, but I know immediately, from the content of the two concepts, why my thought connects the concept of thunder with that of lightning. It does not matter for my argument whether my concepts of thunder and lightning are correct. The connection between the concepts I have is clear to me, and that through the very concepts themselves.

- 4.7 Guided By Content Of Thought**  
[17] This transparent clearness in the observation of our thought-processes is quite independent of our knowledge of the physiological facts. I am speaking here of a doubt that I have, in which the object of our observation of our own mental activity. For this purpose it is quite irrelevant how one material process in my brain causes or influences another, whilst I am carrying on a process of thought. What I observe, in studying a thought-process, is not which process in my brain connects the concept of thunder with that of lightning, but what is my reason for bringing these two concepts into a definite relation. Introspection shows that, in linking thought with thought, I am guided by their content not by the material processes in the brain. This remark would be quite superfluous in a less materialistic age than ours. Today, however, when there are people who believe that, when we know what matter is, we shall know also how it thinks, it is necessary to affirm the possibility of speaking of thought without trespassing on the domain of brain physiology.



Jean Cabanis  
1757-1808

Many people today find it difficult to grasp the concept of thought in its purity. Anyone who challenges the account of thought which I have given here, by quoting Cabanis' statement that "the brain secretes thoughts as the liver does gall or the spleen glands spittle, etc." simply does not know of what I am talking. He attempts to discover thought by the same method of mere observation which we apply to the other objects that make up the world. But he cannot find it in this way, because, as I have shown, it eludes just this ordinary observation.

Whoever cannot transcend Materialism lacks the ability to throw himself into the exceptional attitude I have described, in which he becomes conscious of what in all other mental activity remains unconscious. It is as useless to discuss thought with one who is not willing to adopt this attitude, as it would be to discuss colour with a blind man. Let him not imagine, however, that it requires philosophical processes as thought. He fails to explain thought, because he is not even aware that it is there.

- 4.7 I Produce My Content Of Thought**  
[18] For every one it is impossible to observe thought, and with god will every normal man himself produces. He is not confronted by what is to begin with a strange object, but by his own activity. He knows that which he observes has come to be. He perceives clearly its connections and relations. He gains a firm point from which he can go, with well-founded hopes, seek an explanation of the other phenomena of the world.



Rene Descartes  
1596-1650

Whatever other origin it may have in addition, whether it come from God or from elsewhere, if one thing I am sure, that it exists in the sense that I myself produce it. Descartes had, to begin with, no justification for reading any other meaning into his principle. All he had a right to assert was that, in apprehending myself as thinking, I apprehend myself, within the world-system, in that activity which is most uniquely characteristic of me.

- [19] The feeling that he had found such a firm foundation, induced the father of modern philosophy, Descartes, to base the whole of human knowledge on the principle "I think, therefore I am." All other things, all other processes, are independent of me. Whether they be truth, or illusion, or dream, I know not. There is only one thing of which I am absolutely certain, for I myself am the author of its indubitable existence; and that is my thought.

Therefore I am, in a sense, the author of my thought. I myself produce it. Descartes had, to begin with, no justification for reading any other meaning into his principle. All he had a right to assert was that, in apprehending myself as thinking, I apprehend myself, within the world-system, in that activity which is most uniquely characteristic of me.

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What the added words "therefore I am" are intended to mean has been much debated. They can have a meaning on one condition only. The simplest assertion I can make of a thing is, that it, that it exists. What kind of existence, in detail, it has, can in no case be determined on the spot, as too as that the thing enters within the horizon of my experience. Each object must be studied in its relations to others, before we can determine the sense in which we can speak of its existence. An experienced process may be a complex of perceptions, or it may be a mere hallucination, etc. In short, I cannot say in what sense it exists. I can never read off the kind of existence from the process itself, for I can discover it only if I consider the process in its relation to other things. But this, again, yields me no knowledge beyond just its relation to other things.

My inquiry touches firm ground only when I find an object, the reason of the existence of which I can grasp from itself. Such an object I am myself in so far as I think, for I qualify my existence by the determinate and self-contained content of my thought-activity. From here I can go on to ask whether other things exist in the same or in some other sense.

- 4.8 Remain Within Thought**  
[20] When thought is made an object of observation, something which usually escapes our attention is added to the other observed contents of the world. But the usual manner of observation, such as is employed also for other objects, is in no way altered. We add to the number of objects of observation, but not to the number of methods. When we are observing other things, there enters among the world-processes --among which I now include observation -- one process which is different from those of the production. There are simply given to me every other kind of process, something which is not taken into account. But when I make an object of my own thinking, there is no such neglected element present. The object of observation is qualitatively identical with the activity directed upon it. This is another characteristic feature of thought-processes.

When we make them objects of observation, we are not compelled to do so with the help of something qualitatively different, but can remain within the realm of thought.

- [21] When I weave a tissue of thoughts round an independently given object, I transcend my observation, and the question then arises, what right have I to do this? Why do I not passively let the object impress itself on me? How is it possible for my thought to be relevantly related to the object? These are questions which every one must put to himself who reflects on his own thought-processes. But all these questions lapse when we think about thought itself. We then add nothing to our thought that is foreign to it, and therefore have no need to justify any such addition.

- 4.9 Create Before Knowing**  
[22] Schelling says: "To know Nature means to create Nature." If we take these words of the daring philosopher of Nature literally, we shall have to exist, and if we have to create it over again, we must know the principles according to which it has originated in the first instance. We should have to borrow from Nature as it exists the conditions of existence for the Nature which we are about to create. But this borrowing, which would have to precede the creating, would be a knowing of Nature, and that even if after the borrowing no creation at all were attempted. The only kind of Nature which it would be possible to create without previous knowledge, would be a Nature different from the existing one.

- [23] What is impossible with Nature, viz., creation prior to knowledge, that we accomplish in the act of thought. Were we to refrain from thinking until we had first gained knowledge of it, we should never think straight ahead and only afterward begin to reflect upon the knowledge of the world we have done. We ourselves first create the thought-processes which we then make objects of observation. The existence of all other objects is provided for us without any activity on our part.

- [24] My contention that we must be able to make thought an object of knowledge, might easily be countered by the apparently equally valid contention that we cannot wait with digesting until we have first observed the process of digestion. This objection would be similar to the objection by Pascal against Descartes, when he asserted we might as well say "I walk, therefore I am." Certainly I must digest resolutely and not wait until I have studied the physiological process of digestion. But I could only compare this with the analysis of thought if, after digestion, I set myself, not to analyse it by thought, but to eat and digest it. It is not without reason that, while digestion cannot become the object of digestion, thought can very well become the object of thought.

- [25] This then is indisputable, that in thinking we have got hold of one bit of the world-process which requires our presence if anything is to happen. And that is the very point that matters. The very reason why things seem so puzzling is just that I am not present in the production. There are simply given to me, whereas I know how thought is produced. Hence there can be no more fundamental starting-point than thought from which to regard all world-processes.

- 4.10 Self-Supporting Thought**  
[26] I should like still to mention a widely current error which prevails with regard to thought. It is often said that thought, in its real nature, is never experienced. The thought-processes which connect our perceptions with one another, and weave about them a network of concepts, are not at all the same as the thoughts with which we are to be acquainted. The objects of perception, in order to make the object of study. What we have unconsciously woven into things is, so we are told, something widely different from what subsequent analysis recovers out of them.

- [27] Those who hold this view do not see that it is impossible to escape from thought. I cannot get outside thought when I want to observe it. We should never forget that the distinction between thought which goes on unconsciously and thought which is consciously analysed, is a purely external one and irrelevant to our discussion. I do not in any way alter a thing by making it an object of thought.

I can well imagine that a being with quite different sense-organs, and with a differently constructed intelligence, would have a very different idea of a horse from mine, but I cannot think that my own thought becomes different because I make it an object of knowledge. I myself observe my own processes. We are not talking here of how my thought-processes appear to an intelligence different from mine, but how they appear to me. In any case, the idea which another mind forms of my thought cannot be truer than the one which I form myself. Only if my thought-processes were not my own, but the activity of a being quite independent of me, could I mind a different idea of my thought, notwithstanding my forming a definite idea of these thought-processes, their real nature was beyond my comprehension.

- [28] So far, there is not the slightest reason why I should regard my thought from any other point of view than my own. I contemplate the rest of the world by means of thought. How should I make of my thought an exception?

[29] I think I have given sufficient reasons for making thought the starting-point for my theory of the world. When Archimedes had discovered the lever, he thought he could lift the whole cosmos out of his hinges, if only he could find a point of support for his instrument. He needed a point which was self-supporting. In thought we have a principle which is self-subsisting. Let us try, therefore, to understand the world starting with thought as our basis. Thought can be grasped by thought. The question is whether by thought we can also grasp something other than thought.

- 4.11 Impartial Consideration Of Thinking**  
[30] I have so far spoken of thought without taking any account of its vehicle, the human consciousness. Most present-day philosophers would object that, before there can be thought, there must be consciousness. Hence we ought to start, not from thought, but from consciousness. There is no thought, they say without consciousness. In reply I would urge that, in order to clear up the relation between thought and consciousness, I must think about it. Hence I presuppose thought. One might, it is true, retort that, though a philosopher who wishes to understand thought, naturally makes use of thought, and so far presupposes it, in the ordinary course of life thought arises within consciousness and therefore presupposes it. Were this answer given to the world-creator, when he was about to create thought, it would be right to ask: "Why do you not create consciousness first? I am here, and you are not!" The philosopher, however, is not concerned with the creation of the world, but with the understanding of it. Hence he is in search of the starting-point, not for creation, but with the understanding of the world.

- [31] We must first consider thought quite impartially without relation to a thinking subject or to an object of thought. For subject and object are both concepts constructed by thought. There is no denying that thought must be understood before anything else can be understood. Whoever denies this, fails to understand that man is not the first link in the chain of creation but the last.

It results to the very strange that philosophers are approached for troubling themselves, above all, about the correctness of their principles, instead of turning straight to the objects which they seek to understand. The world-creator had above all to know how to find a vehicle for thought, the philosopher must seek a firm basis for the understanding of what is given. What does it help us to start with consciousness and make it an object of thought, if we have not first inquired how far it is possible at all to gain any knowledge of things by thought?

Hence, in order to explain the world by means of concepts, we cannot start from the elements of existence which came first in time, but we must begin with those which are nearest and most intimately connected with us. We cannot, with a leap, transport ourselves to the beginning of the world, in order to begin our analysis there, but we must start from the present and see whether we cannot advance from the later to the earlier. As long as Geology fabled fantastic revolutions to account for the present state of the earth, it groped in darkness. It was only when it began to study the processes at present at work on the earth, and from these to argue back to the past, that it gained a firm foundation.

As long as Philosophy assumes all sorts of principles, such as atom, motion, matter, will, the unconscious, it will hang in the air. The philosopher can reach his goal only if he adopts that which is last in time as first in his theory. This absolutely last in the world-process is thought.

- 4.12 Application Of Thought**  
[32] There are people who say it is impossible to ascertain with certainty whether it is right or wrong to raise doubts as to whether a tree is in itself right or wrong. Thought is a fact, and it is meaningless to speak of the truth or falsity of a fact. I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly employed, just as I can doubt whether a certain tree supplies wood adapted to the making of this or that useful object. It is just the purpose of this book to show how far the application of thought to the world is right or wrong. I can understand anyone doubting whether, by means of thought, we can gain any knowledge of the world, but it is unintelligible to me how anyone can doubt that thought in itself is right.

- [33] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [34] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [35] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [36] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [37] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [38] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [39] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [40] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly applied.

- [41] I can, at most, be in doubt as to whether thought is rightly



# OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

## Journal

**What is this chapter about?** *The principles of conception or finding the concept that corresponds to the world. A pure concept that relates to something by encompassing the inherent lawfulness or directing principle of that thing is a "corresponding" concept.*

**What is its value?** *Our first impressions should be critically examined. To live in a world of streaming experience without critical thinking is to walk blind and to sleep state. To awaken to the extent that intuition gives us the concept that corresponds to our observation. The depth of the knowledge given to us by the corresponding concept depends on the power of intuition that is expressed in thinking. In the living experience which develops within thinking, this intuition may give down to greater or to lesser depths of reality.*

To escape from being imprinted with a world of mental pictures it is important to notice the difference between an objective and subjective percept. Anything external to the perceiving subject is objective, so a table that is present in the field of vision is an "objective percept." After the table disappears from my field of observation I preserve a memory-picture that remains in me. It is the only thing that has any right to be called a mental picture. This memory-picture/mental-picture is a "subjective percept" because whatever is experienced as belonging to the subject is subjective. Conceiving the subjective percept with the objective percept leads to the misunderstanding that the world is my mental picture.

What follows is a description of external sense percepts and internal mental percepts streaming through consciousness during a brief moment in the un-thinking life. First impressions quickly flicker past before I have decided anything about them. A sequence of pictures pass before consciousness in an unconnected way. I feel its without reflection, and therefore, is simply non-critical.

**I am conscious of the mental picture of having worked hard today; suddenly joining itself to this is a mental picture of being able, with good conscience, to take a walk; but suddenly there appears the perceptual picture of the door opening and of the mailman entering. The mailman appears, now sticking out his hand holding a letter, now opening his mouth, now pulling back his hand. At the same time the window opens, I have an intuition; "it is starting to rain outside."**

**The mailman disappears from my consciousness, and a sequence of pictures occurs: picking up scissors, opening the letter, criticism of illegible writing, visible images of diverse written characters, diverse imaginations and thoughts associated with them; then the mental picture appears again of having worked hard today and the perception, accompanied by ill humor, of the rain continuing.**

**This dream is "born in consciousness" and from that picture appears to a problem at work that I freedom was resolved. ... It was not actually resolved; following quickly are the mental pictures: "freedom of will, empirical necessity, responsibility, value of virtue, absolute chance, incomprehensibility, etc. These all join together with each other in the most varied and complicated way; and so it continues.**

If the perceived world is merely a flow of "mental pictures," then my everyday life would be like a dream, and the discovery of the true facts would be like waking. I can not remain in this dream state unless I intentionally close my mind to my desire for knowledge. For myself as a thinker, the above description of pure experience becomes the starting point. First, I need to learn how to refute myself with respect to these first impressions; otherwise my thinking will just extract the concepts I have already added. I then decide which experience is important and which isn't, and how it relates to the other things really. The activity of thinking will prevent mental pictures from inserting themselves between me and the world. I exist outside in the world by repressing the activity of my established organization.

What, then, is a percept? A percept always appears as an entirely specific concrete content. The content of a percept is immediately given and is completely contained in what is given. The only question concerns the given content, is, what is apart from perception, that is, what is it apart from thought? The question concerning the "what" of a percept can only refer to the "conceptual intuition" given by means of thinking that corresponds to my percept.

A concept with perceptible content is a representation or mental picture. A concept without perceptible content is a pure abstract concept. A pure concept that relates to something by encompassing the inherent lawfulness or directing principle of that thing is a "corresponding" concept that cannot be construed abstract.

The perceptible content is given by observation, while the abstract content is given by intuition. Intuition and observation are the sources of our knowledge. An observed object of the world remains unintelligible to us until we have within ourselves the "corresponding" intuition which adds that part of reality that is lacking in the perception. The objects that, in observation, appear to us as separate become combined, bit by bit, through the coherent, unified system of our intuitions.

Concepts that correspond to things are given by intuition. The depth of the knowledge given to us by the corresponding concept depends on the power of intuition that is expressed in thinking. This intuition may give down to greater or lesser depths of reality.

Besides being an objective discovery, knowledge is also, paradoxically, a free creation. The task of knowledge is not merely repeating in mental pictures events that take place, but rather to create a completely new conceptual realm, that when combined with the world given to our senses constitutes complete reality. Knowledge is created by a free activity. This product would not exist if we did not create it ourselves.

## Study Topics

### principles of conception

#### 6.0 Finding The Concept That Corresponds To The World

For anyone with the view that the whole perceived world is only a picture called up in my mind and is actually the effect of unknown things acting on my soul, of course the real question of knowledge will not be concerned with the representations that only exist in my mind, but with the things that are independent of a subject and exist outside of our consciousness. He asks: How much can we learn about things indirectly, seen that we cannot observe directly?

#### 6.1 The Awakened State Of Thinking

If the things of our experience were "mental pictures", then our everyday life would be like a dream, and the discovery of the true state of affairs would be like waking.

#### 6.2 Thought That Applies To The World

If we want to make an assertion about anything it requires the help of thought. If my thought does not apply to the world, then this assertion is false.

#### 6.3 World Connects With Corresponding Concept

The world produces thinking in the heads of people with the same necessity as it produces the blossom on a plant? Set the plant before yourself. It connects itself, in your mind, with a definite concept. Why should this concept belong any less to the whole plant than leaf and blossom?

#### 6.4 Process Of Growth

The picture which presents itself to me at any one moment is only a chance cross-section of an object which is in a continual process of growth.

#### 6.5 Indivisible Existence of Concept With Percept

It is possible for a mind to receive the concept at the same time as, and united with, the percept. It would never occur to such a mind that the concept did not belong to the thing. It would have to ascribe to the concept an existence indivisibly bound up with the thing.

#### 6.6 Isolate And Grasp Single Concepts

The human being is a limited being. Only a limited part of the total universe that can be given to us at any one time. It is necessary to isolate certain sections of the world and to consider them by themselves. Our understanding can grasp only single concepts out of a connected conceptual system.

#### 6.7 Self Definition Through Thinking

Self-perception must be distinguished from self-determination by means of thought. My self-perception comes me with certain limits, but my thinking is not concerned with these limits. I am the bearer of an activity which, from a higher sphere, determines my limited existence.

#### 6.8 In Thinking We Are All One Being

In thinking, the concept unites our particular individualities with the whole of the cosmos. In so far as we sense and feel (and also perceive), we are single beings; in so far as we think, we are the all-one being that pervades everything.

#### 6.9 Will Is Objectified In Action And Known By Thinking

The actions of our body become known to us only through observation, and that, as such, they are in no way superior to other percepts. If we want to know their real nature, we can do so only by means of thought, by fitting them into the ideal system of our concepts and ideas.

#### 6.10 Corresponding Intuition

An external object which we observe remains unintelligible until the corresponding intuition arises within us which adds to the reality what is lacking in the percept. What appears to us in observation as separate parts becomes combined, bit by bit, through the coherent, unified world of our intuitions. By thinking we fit together again into one piece all that we have taken apart through perceiving.

#### 6.11 Conceptual Connections Of Percepts

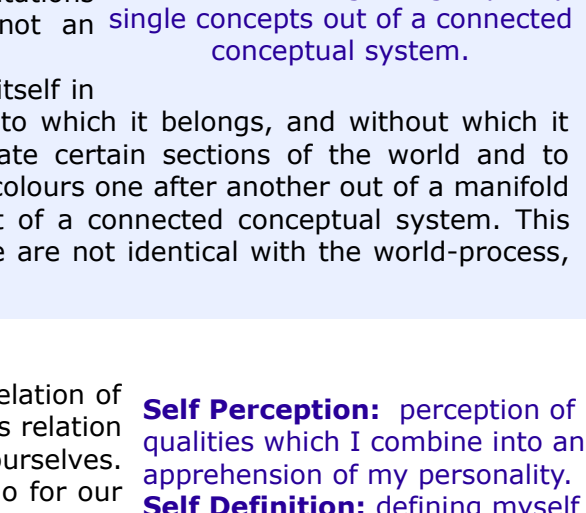
Concepts links all our percepts to each another and shows them to us in their mutual relationship.

#### 6.12 Conceptual Intuition Corresponds To Objective Percept

The content of a percept is immediately given and is completely contained in what is given. The question concerning the "what" of a percept can only refer to the conceptual intuition that corresponds to the percept.

#### 6.0 Finding The Concept That Corresponds To The World

[1] The foregoing considerations it follows that it is impossible to prove, by analysis of the content of our perceptions, that our percepts are mental pictures. This is supposed to be proved by showing that, if the process of perceiving takes place, then the thing perceived is in accordance with the naive-realistic assumptions concerning the psychological and physiological constitution of human individuals, then we have to do, not with things themselves, but merely with our mental pictures of things.



Now, if Naive Realism, when consistently thought-out, leads to the conclusion that the content of our perceptions is in accordance with the naive-realistic assumptions concerning the psychological and physiological constitution of human individuals, then we have to do, not with things themselves, but merely with our mental pictures of things. Now, if Naive Realism, when consistently thought-out, leads to the conclusion that the content of our perceptions is in accordance with the naive-realistic assumptions concerning the psychological and physiological constitution of human individuals, then we have to do, not with things themselves, but merely with our mental pictures of things. Now, if Naive Realism, when consistently thought-out, leads to the conclusion that the content of our perceptions is in accordance with the naive-realistic assumptions concerning the psychological and physiological constitution of human individuals, then we have to do, not with things themselves, but merely with our mental pictures of things.

[2] The truth of Critical Idealism is one thing, the persuasiveness of its proofs another. How it stands with the former, will appear later in the course of our argument, but the persuasiveness of its proofs is nil. If one builds a house, and the ground floor collapses whilst the first floor is being built, then the first floor collapses too. Naive Realism and Critical Idealism are related to one another like the ground floor to the first floor in this simile.

[3] For one who holds that the whole perceived world is only a mental picture, and, moreover, the effect of things unknown to him acting on his soul, the real problem of knowledge is naturally concerned, not with the mental pictures present only in the soul, but with the things which lie outside his consciousness and which are independent of him. He asks: How much can we learn about them indirectly, seen that we cannot observe them directly?

From this point of view, he is concerned, not with the connection of his conscious percepts with one another, but with their causes which transcend his consciousness and which exist independently of him, whereas the percepts, on the other hand, disappear as soon as he turns his sense-organs away from the things themselves. Our consciousness, on this view, works like a mirror from which the pictures of definite things disappear the very moment its reflecting surface is not turned towards them. If, now, we do not see the things themselves, but only their reflections, we must obtain knowledge of the nature of the former indirectly by drawing conclusions from the character of the latter.

The whole of modern science adopts this point of view, when it uses percepts only as a means of obtaining information about the motions of matter which lie behind them, and which alone really "are." If the real existence indirectly by means of his mental pictures. His interest ignores the subjective world of mental pictures, and pursues instead the causes of these mental pictures.

[4] The Critical Idealist can, however, go even further and say, I am confined to the world of my own mental pictures, even if I am not. I have no right to think that I am confined to my mental pictures, this concept, once more, is nothing but my mental picture.

An Idealist of this type will either deny the thing-in-itself entirely or, at any rate, assert that it has no significance for human minds, i.e., that it is as good as nonexistent since we can know nothing of it.

[5] To this kind of Critical Idealist the whole world seems a chaotic dream; in the face of which all striving for knowledge is simply meaningless. For him there can be only two sorts of men: (1) victims of the illusion that the dreamings they have woven themselves are real things, and (2) wise men who see through the thinnings of this woven world, and who gradually lose all interest in trying to trouble themselves further.

From this point of view, even one's own personality may become a mere dream phantom. Just as during sleep there appears among my dream-pictures a picture of myself, so in waking consciousness the mental picture of my own Self is added to the mental picture of the outer world. I have then given to me in consciousness, not my real Self, but only my mental picture of my Self. Whoever denies that things exist or, at least, that we can know anything of them, must also deny the existence, respectively the knowledge of one's own personality.

[6] Whether he who believes that he recognizes immediate experience to be a dream, postulates nothing but this dream, or whether he professes that his present mental picture is the actual thing is immaterial. In both cases, if it were really so, the subject would have to be a dream, and without a mind which has the dream; into a dream which is nothing but a dream of itself." (Cp. Fichte, Die Bestimmung des Menschen.)

[7] Whether he who believes that he recognizes immediate experience to be a dream, postulates nothing but this dream, or whether he professes that his present mental picture is the actual thing is immaterial. In both cases, if it were really so, the subject would have to be a dream, and without a mind which has the dream; into a dream which is nothing but a dream of itself." (Cp. Fichte, Die Bestimmung des Menschen.)

#### 6.1 The Awakened State Of Thinking

[8] One of the most important questions for an adherent of Transcendental Idealism would have to be, how the Ego constructs the world of mental pictures independent of it. The world of mental pictures which we perceive in waking consciousness disappears as soon as we shut our senses to the external world, might provoke an earnest desire for knowledge, in so far as it was a means for investigating indirectly the world of the self-existing Self. If the things of our experience were "mental pictures," then our everyday life would be like a dream, and the discovery of the true facts would be like waking. Even our dream-pictures interest us as "we dream," and consequently we are not interested in the dream for thought? The question concerning the "what" of a percept can only refer to the "conceptual intuition" given by means of thinking that corresponds to my percept.

[9] If the things of our experience were "mental pictures," then our everyday life would be like a dream, and the discovery of the true facts would be like waking. Even our dream-pictures interest us as "we dream," and consequently we are not interested in the dream for thought? The question concerning the "what" of a percept can only refer to the "conceptual intuition" given by means of thinking that corresponds to my percept.

[10] The reason why, in our discussion about things, we generally overlook the part played by thought, has already been given above (p. 46). It lies in the fact that our attention is concentrated only on the object about which we think, but not at the same time on the thinking itself. The naive mind, therefore, treats thought as something which has nothing to do with things, but stands altogether aloof from them and regards its role as that of a mere bystander.

Whoever thinks thus need only be asked one question: What right have you to declare the world to be complete without thought? Does not the world cause thoughts in the minds of men with the same necessity as it causes the blossoms on plants? Plant a seed in the earth. It will grow, and its root and stem, its leaves and unives and blossoms. Set the plant before yourself. It connects itself, in your mind, with a definite concept. Why should this concept belong any less to the whole plant than leaf and blossom?

You say the leaves and blossoms exist quite apart from an experiencing subject. The concept appears only when a human being makes an object of perception in the living world. But even if the blossoms also belong to the plant only if there is a soul in which the seed can be planted, and light and air in which the blossoms and leaves can unfold. Just so the concept of a plant arises itself, in your mind, when a thinking being comes into contact with the plant.

#### 6.4 Process Of Growth

[11] It is quite arbitrary to regard the sum of what we experience of a thing to be rough bare perception, as a totality, a whole, while that which thought reveals in it is regarded as a mere accretion which has nothing to do with the thing itself. If I am given a rosebud today, the percept that would lead to the idea of a rose, is merely the bare perception of the rose, as water, I shall tomorrow get a very different picture of my object. If I watch the rosebud without interruption, I shall see today's state gradually change into tomorrow's through an infinite number of intermediate stages. The picture which presents itself to me at any one moment is only a chance section out of the continuous process of growth in which the object is engaged. If I do not put the rose into water, a whole series of states, the possibility of which lies in the mere picture to myself after the table which now stands before me, prevented tomorrow from watching the blossom further, and thus carry away an incomplete picture of it.

[12] It would be a quite unscientific and arbitrary judgment which declared of any haphazard appearance of a thing, this is the thing.

#### 6.5 Indivisible Existence of Concept With Percept

[13] To regard the sum of perceptual appearances as the thing is no more legitimate. It might be quite possible for a mind to receive the concept at the same time as, and together with, the percept. To such a mind it would never occur that the concept did not belong to the thing. It would have to ascribe to the concept an existence indivisibly bound up with the thing.



[14] Let me make myself clearer by another example. If I throw a stone horizontally through the air, I perceive it in different places at different times. I connect these places so as to form a line. Mathematics teaches me to distinguish various kinds of lines, one of which is the parabola. I know a parabola to be a line which is produced by a point moving according to a certain well-defined law. If I analyze the conditions under which the stone thrown by me moves, I find that the line of its flight is identical with the parabola. The stone moves exactly in the parabola in which it moves as a result of the given conditions and follows necessarily from them. The form of the parabola belongs to the whole phenomenon as much as any other feature of it. The hypothetical mind described above which has no need of the roundabout way of thought, would find myself presented, not only with a sequence of visual percepts at different points, but, as part and parcel of these percepts, also with the parabolic form of the line of flight, which we can add to the phenomenon only by this act of thought.

[15] It is not due to the real objects that they appear to us at first without their conceptual sides, but to our mental organization. Our whole organization functions in such a way that in the apprehension of every real thing the relevant elements come to us from two sources, viz., from perception and from thought.

[16] The nature of things is independent to the way I am organized for apprehending them. The breach between perception and thought exists from the moment that I confront objects as spectator. But which elements do, and which do not, belong to the objects, cannot depend on the manner in which I obtain my knowledge of them.

#### 6.6 Isolate And Grasp Single Concepts

[17] Man is a being with many limitations. First of all, he is a thing among other things. His existence is in space and time. Hence but a limited portion of the total universe can ever be given to him. This limited portion, however, is not merely a part of the whole, but it is a part both in time and in space. If our existence were so linked with things that every process in the object world were also a process in us, there would be no difference between us and things. Neither would there be any individual objects for us. All processes and events would then pass continuously one into the other. The cosmos would be a unitary whole which I perceive in myself. The separation of events would nowhere be interrupted. But owing to our limitations we perceive as an individual object what, in truth, is not an single concepts out of a connected individual object at all.

Nowhere, e.g., is the particular quality "red" to be found by itself in abstraction. It is surrounded on all sides by other qualities to which it belongs, and without which it cannot exist. For to isolate that quality to whatever it may be besides this, would be to consider them by themselves. Our eye can seize only single colours one after another out of a manifold colour-complex, our understanding only single concepts out of a connected conceptual system. This isolation is a subjective act, which is due to the fact that we are not identical with the world-process, but are only things among other things.

#### 6.7 Self Definition Through Thinking

[18] It is of the greatest importance for us to determine the relation of ourselves, as things, to all other things. The determining of this relation must be distinguished from self-perception in so far as we are ourselves aware of any other thing. The perception of myself resembles to me a number of qualities which I combine into an apprehension of my personality. I perceive as an individual object what, in truth, is not an single concepts out of a connected individual object at all.

Nowhere, e.g., is the particular quality "red" to be found by itself in abstraction. It is surrounded on all sides by other qualities to which it belongs, and without which it cannot exist. For to isolate that quality to whatever it may be besides this, would be to consider them by themselves. Our eye can seize only single colours one after another out of a manifold colour-complex, our understanding only single concepts out of a connected conceptual system. This isolation is a subjective act, which is due to the fact that we are not identical with the world-process, but are only things among other things.

#### 6.8 In Thinking We Are All One Being

[19] This thought conflicts with a common prejudice which is very hard to overcome. The victims of this prejudice are unable to see that the concept of a triangle which my mind grasps is the same as the concept which my neighbour's mind grasps. The naive man is unable to understand the possibility of identical concepts. Hence he believes that each person has his private concepts. One of the first things which philoiphic thought requires of us is to overcome this prejudice. The one single concept of "triangle" does not split up into many concepts because it is thought by many minds. For the thought of the many is itself a unity.

[20] In thought we have the element which welds each man's special individuality into one whole with the cosmos. In so far as we sense and feel (perceive), we are isolated individuals; in so far as we think, we are all-one beings, and therefore we are the All-One Being which pervades everything. This is the deeper meaning of our two-sided nature. We are conscious of an absolute principle revealing itself in us, a principle which is universal. But we experience it, not as it issues from the centre of the world, but rather at a point on the periphery. Where the concept, which we should know, as soon as ever we became conscious, the solution of the whole world problem. But since we stand at a point on the periphery, and find that our own being is confined within definite limits, we must explore the region which lies beyond our own being with the help of thought, which is the universal cosmic principle manifesting itself in our minds.

[21] The fact that thought, in us, reaches out beyond our separate knowledge and relates itself to the universal world-order, gives rise to the question of the two elements, the inner and the outer. When they come in contact with one another, no questions arise for them. These other things remain external to such being. But in thinking beings the concept confronts the external thing. It is that part of the thing which we receive not from without, but from within. To assimilate, to unite, the two elements, the inner and the outer, that is the function of knowledge.

[22] The percept, thus, is not something finished and self-contained, but one side only of the total reality. The other side is the concept. The act of cognition is the synthesis of percepts and concept. And it is only the unity of percept and concept that constitutes the whole thing.

#### 6.9 Will Is Objectified In Action And Known By Thinking

[23] The preceding discussion shows clearly that it is futile to seek for any other common element in the separate things of the world, than the ideal content which thinking supplies. All attempts to discover any other principle of unity in the world than this internally coherent ideal content, which we gain for ourselves by the conceptual analysis of our percepts, are bound to fail.

Neither a personal God, nor force, nor matter, nor the blind will (of Schopenhauer and Hartmann), can be accepted by us as the universal principle of unity of all things. The will has its sphere of its own work, but it is a sphere of our experience. Personality we experience only as ourselves, force and matter only in external things. The will, again, can be regarded only as the expression of the activity of our finite personalities. Schopenhauer wants to avoid making "abstract" thought the principle of unity in the world, and seeks instead something which presents itself to him immediately as real. This philosopher holds that we can never solve the riddle of the world so long as we regard it as an "external" world.

"In fact, the meaning for which we seek of that world which is present to us only as our mental picture, or the transition from the world as mere mental picture to the living world, is not to be found in any other. The philosopher were nothing more than the pure knowing subject (a winged cherub without a body). But he himself is rooted in that world; he finds himself in it as an individual, that is to say, his knowledge, which is the necessary supporter of the whole world as mental picture, is yet always given through the medium of a body, whose affections are also subject to perceptible modification of any other. The fact that the body are not two different things objectively known, which the body of causality neither do not stand in the relation of cause and effect; they are one and the same, but they are given in entirely different ways — immediately, and again in perception for the understanding." (The World as Will and Idea, Book 2, & 18.)

Schopenhauer considers himself entitled by these arguments to hold that the will becomes objectified in the human body. He believes that in the activities of the body he has an immediate experience of reality, of the thing-in-itself in the concrete. Against these arguments we must argue that the activities of our body become known to us only through self-observation, and that, as such, they are in no way superior to other percepts. If we want to know their real nature, we can do so only by means of thought, i.e., by fitting them into the ideal system of our concepts and ideas.

#### 6.10 Corresponding Intuition

[24] One of the most deeply rooted prejudices of the naive mind is the opinion that thinking is abstract and empty of any concrete content. At best, we are told it supplies but an "ideal" counterpart of the unity of the world, but never that unity itself. Whoever holds this view has never made clear to himself what a percept apart from concepts really is. Let us see what this world of bare percepts is. A mere juxtaposition in space, a mere succession in time, a chaos of disconnected particulars—that is what it is. None of these things which come and go on the stage of perception has any connection with the thing perceived. The naive man is unable to understand the possibility of identical concepts without distinctions of value. None plays any greater part in the nexus of the world than any other. In order to realize that this or that fact has a greater importance than another we must go to thought. As long as we do not think, the rudimentary organ of an animal which has no significance for our activity, appears equal in importance to whatever it may be besides this.

The particular facts reveal their meaning, in themselves and in their relations with other parts of the world, only when thought spins its threads from thing to thing. This activity of thinking has always a content. For it is only through a perfectly definite concrete content that I can know why the small belongs to a lower type of organization than the lion. The mere appearance, the percept, gives me no content which could inform me as to the degree of perfection of the organization.



[25] Thought contrIBUTES this content to the percept from the world of concepts and ideas. In contrast with the content of perception which is given to us from without, the content of thought appears within our minds and is formed by thought. We know that the content of thought will appear in consciousness we will call intuition. Intuition is to thoughts what observation is to percepts. Intuition and observation are the sources of our knowledge. An external object which we observe remains unintelligible to us, until the corresponding intuition arises within us which adds to the reality those sides of it which are lacking in the percept. To anyone who is incapable of supplying the relevant intuitions, the full nature of the real remains a sealed book, so that the colour-blind person perceives only differences in brightness without any colour qualities, so the mind which lacks intuition sees only disconnected fragments of percepts.

[26] To explain a thing, to make it intelligible means nothing more than to place it in its connection with other things. Hence all isolation of objects has only subjective validity for minds organized like ours. For us the universe is split up into above and below, before and after, cause and effect, object and idea, matter and force, object and subject, etc. The objects which, in observation, appear to us as separate, become combined, bit by bit, through the coherent, unified system of our intuitions. By thought we fuse again into one whole all that perception has separated.

[27] An object presents riddles to our understanding so long as it exists in isolation. But this an abstraction of our own making and can be unmade again in the world of concepts. The objects which, in observation, appear to us as separate, become combined, bit by bit, through the coherent, unified system of our intuitions.

#### 6.11 Conceptual Connections Of Percepts

[28] Except through thought and perception nothing is given to us directly. The question now arises as to the interpretation of percepts on our theory. We have seen that the relation of the subject to the object in the world is a connection, not a mere juxtaposition in space, a mere succession in time, a chaos of disconnected particulars—that is what it is. None of these things which come and go on the stage of perception has any connection with the thing perceived. The naive man is unable to understand the possibility of identical concepts without distinctions of value. None plays any greater part in the nexus of the world than any other. In order to realize that this or that fact has a greater importance than another we must go to thought. As long as we do not think, the rudimentary organ of an animal which has no significance for our activity, appears equal in importance to whatever it may be besides this.

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[29] Let us assume that a certain percept, e.g., red, appears in consciousness. To continued observation, the percept shows itself to be connected with other percepts, e.g., a certain figure, temperature, and what else is there in the section of space in which they are? I shall then find mechanical, chemical, and other processes in that section of space. I shall go further and study the processes which take place between the object and my sense-organs. I shall find oscillations in an elastic medium, the character of which has not the least in common with the percepts from which I started. I get the same result if I trace further the connection between sense organs and brain. In each of these inquiries I gather new percepts, but the connecting thread which binds all these spatially and temporally separated percepts into one whole is thought. The air vibrations which carry sound are given to me as percepts just like the sound.

Thought alone links all these percepts one to the other and exhibits them in their reciprocal relations. We have no right to say that over and above our immediate percepts there is anything except the ideal nexus of percepts (which thought has to reveal). The relation of the object to the subject is a connection, not a mere juxtaposition in space, a mere succession in time, a chaos of disconnected particulars—that is what it is. None of these things which come and go on the stage of perception has any connection with the thing perceived. The naive man is unable to understand the possibility of identical concepts without distinctions of value. None plays any greater part in the nexus of the world than any other. In order to realize that this or that fact has a greater importance than another we must go to thought. As long as we do not think, the rudimentary organ of an animal which has no significance for our activity, appears equal in importance to whatever it may be besides this.

The particular facts reveal their meaning, in themselves and in their relations with other parts of the world, only when thought spins its threads from thing to thing. This activity of thinking has always a content. For it is only through a perfectly definite concrete content that I can know why the small belongs to a lower type of organization than the lion. The mere appearance, the percept, gives me no content which could inform me as to the degree of perfection of the organization.

[30] What then is a percept? This question, asked in this general way, is absurd. A percept appears always as a perfectly determinate, concrete content. This content is immediately given and is completely contained in the given. The question concerning the "what" of a percept can only refer to the conceptual intuition which corresponds to the percept. From this point of view, the problem of the subjectivity of percepts, in the sense in which the Critical Idealists debate it, cannot be raised at all. The "what" of a percept is experienced as belonging to the subject can be determined.

To form a link between subject and object is impossible for any real process, in the naive sense of the world "real," in which it means a process which can be perceived. That is possible only for thought. For subjective percept: external to the perceiving subject, as subject of perception I remain outside his consciousness and which are independent of him. He asks: How much can we learn about them indirectly, seen that we cannot observe them directly?

From this point of view, he is concerned, not with the connection of his conscious percepts with one another, but with their causes which transcend his consciousness and which exist independently of him, whereas the percepts, on the other hand, disappear as soon as he turns his sense-organs away from the things themselves. Our consciousness, on this view, works like a mirror from which the pictures of definite things disappear the very moment its reflecting surface is not turned towards them. If, now, we do not see the things themselves, but only their reflections, we must obtain knowledge of the nature of the former indirectly by drawing conclusions from the character of the latter.

The whole of modern science adopts this point of view, when it uses percepts only as a means of obtaining information about the motions of matter which lie behind them, and which alone really "are." If the real existence indirectly by means of his mental pictures. His interest ignores the subjective world of mental pictures, and pursues instead the causes of these mental pictures.

[4] The Critical Idealist can, however, go even further and say, I am confined to the world of my own mental pictures, even if I am not. I have no right to think that I am confined to my mental pictures, this concept, once more, is nothing but my mental picture.

An Idealist of this type will either deny the thing-in-itself entirely or, at any rate, assert that it has no significance for human minds, i.e., that it is as good as nonexistent since we can know nothing of it.

[5] To this kind of Critical Idealist the whole world seems a chaotic dream; in the face of which all striving for knowledge is simply meaningless. For him there can be only two sorts of men: (1) victims of the illusion that the dreamings they have woven themselves are real things, and (2) wise men who see through the thinnings of this woven world, and who gradually lose all interest in trying to trouble themselves further.

From this point of view, even one's own personality may become a mere dream phantom. Just as during sleep there appears among my dream-pictures a picture of myself, so in waking consciousness the mental picture of my own Self is added to the mental picture of the outer world. I have then given to me in consciousness, not my real Self, but only my mental picture of my Self. Whoever denies that things exist or, at least, that we can know anything of them, must also deny the existence, respectively the knowledge of one's own personality.

[6] Whether he who believes that he recognizes immediate experience to be a dream, postulates nothing but this dream, or whether he professes that his present mental picture is the actual thing is immaterial. In both cases, if it were really so, the subject would have to be a dream, and without a mind which has the dream; into a dream which is nothing but a dream of itself." (Cp. Fichte, Die Bestimmung des Menschen.)

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## VII HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY

### Journal

**What is this chapter about?** *Mental pictures are individualized concepts, so the principles of forming mental pictures includes those factors that make us individuals.*

**What is its value?** *To avoid the life of an "un-thinking traveler" I form universal concepts and fit them into my ideal system of concepts and ideas. To avoid being an "abstract scholar" I acquire experience by relating my universal concepts to life. In Part II we look at imaginatively transforming universal ideals into specific goals to guide one's action. An individual can creatively express truth in an individualistic way by imaginatively translating a universal concept into a concrete mental picture.*

Whatever takes place in the universe is part of the universal world process. It unfolds and develops in evolutionary stages. We can distinguish two sides of this process; perception gives us the external course of events in space and time and thinking gives us the inner law ruling it, the actual driving and active principle in things.

The universal world process produces my perception of the tree and my perception of myself as existing in space, me here and the tree over there. To perception I am different than the tree, but through thinking I discover the common element that exists in the tree and myself—the corresponding concept—and become the same as the tree. Thinking is the only process into which I can completely place myself, into which I can merge, and become one with the tree.

In thinking I take part in the universal cosmic process and become one whole with the cosmos. But in ascending to the realm of universal concepts the character of my separate being, my individual personality, becomes lost. It is feeling that leads me back into myself and makes me an individual. But withdrawing into my personal feelings cut me off from the universal life.

I make universal truth my own by fitting it into my thought-system and experiencing it in life. When a particular percept from my life situation appears my intuition connects a member of my thought-system, a corresponding concept, to the percept and creates a mental picture. In this individualized form, I retain it as a memory and it becomes part of my life experience. For example, I can form a universal concept of a lion without ever seeing a lion, but a mental picture of a lion is formed by combining my concept of a lion with my observation of an actual lion. The full reality is given by combining the corresponding concept with the percept into a mental picture.

"A true individuality will be the one who reaches up the farthest with his feelings into the region of the ideal".

It is our feelings that frequently impel us to hold certain opinions. The reasons that are put forward are often a screen or mask for our feelings. To bring ourselves to a point at which reasoning possess a real significance for us, we must learn to love reason itself. Only when we have learned to love factuality and objectivity will reason be decisive for us.

Many people whose thinking is not yet developed enough for them to arrive at a unified world view grasped in full conceptual clarity are, nevertheless, very well able to penetrate into the inner harmony of the universe with their feeling. Their hearts give them what reason offers the scientifically developed person. The unity of all existence, which before was felt or of which one even had only dim inklings, is clearly penetrated and seen by reason. Reason leads back to reality.

When we come to appreciate the difference between the properties of "thinking" and "feeling", we can arrive at a better understanding of how these two work in the formation of our being. Thinking puts us into contact with the cosmos itself, it is the means by which we take part in something objectively much larger than ourselves. Feeling is the means by which we come to know ourselves as distinct from the cosmos.

Truth is not, as is usually assumed, an ideal copy of some supposed real object, but is freely created by the human being. The universal concept, given by intuition, is individualized in the formation of the mental picture. In mental pictures I form my representation of universal truth.

### Study Topics

#### principles of mental picturing

##### 7.0 Corresponding Concept Relates Self To The World

I am really identical with the objects; not, however, "I" in so far as I am a perception of myself as subject, but "I" in so far as I am a part of the universal world process. I can discover the common element in both (percept and self), so far as they are complementary aspects of the world, only through thought which by means of concepts relates the one to the other.

##### 7.1 Sense Perception Of Motion

Just as we can say that the eye perceives a mechanical process of motion in its surroundings as light, so we can affirm that every change in an object, determined by natural law, is perceived by us as a process of motion.

##### 7.2 Mental Picture: Conceptual Intuition Related To A Percept

The moment a percept appears in my field of observation, thinking also becomes active through me. An element of my thought system, a definite intuition, a concept, connects itself with the percept.

##### 7.3 Mental Picture: Individualized Concept

The full reality of a thing is given to us in the moment of observation through the fitting together of concept and percept. By means of a percept, the concept acquires an individualized form, a relationship to this particular perception.

##### 7.4 Mental Picture: Acquired Experience

The sum of those things about which I can form mental pictures may be called my total experience.

##### 7.5 Mental Picture: Subjective Representation Of Reality

Reality presents itself to us as the union of percept and concept; and the subjective representation of this reality presents itself to us as mental picture.

##### 7.6 Refer Percepts To Feelings

We are not satisfied merely to refer the percept, by means of thinking, to the concept, but we relate them also to our particular subjectivity, our individual Ego. The expression of this individual relationship is feeling, which manifests itself as pleasure or displeasure.

##### 7.7 Two-Fold Nature: Thinking And Feeling

Thinking is the element through which we take part in the universal cosmic process; feeling is that through which we can withdraw ourselves into the narrow confines of our own being.

##### 7.8 True Individuality

A true individuality will be those who reach up with their feelings to the farthest possible extent into the region of the ideal.

##### 7.9 Point Of View

Ideas give to our conceptual life an individual stamp. Each one of us has his special standpoint from which he looks out on the world. He has his own special way of forming general concepts.

##### 7.10 Intensity Of Feelings

Each of us combines special feelings, and these in the most varying degrees of intensity, with our perceptions.

##### 7.11 Education Of Feelings

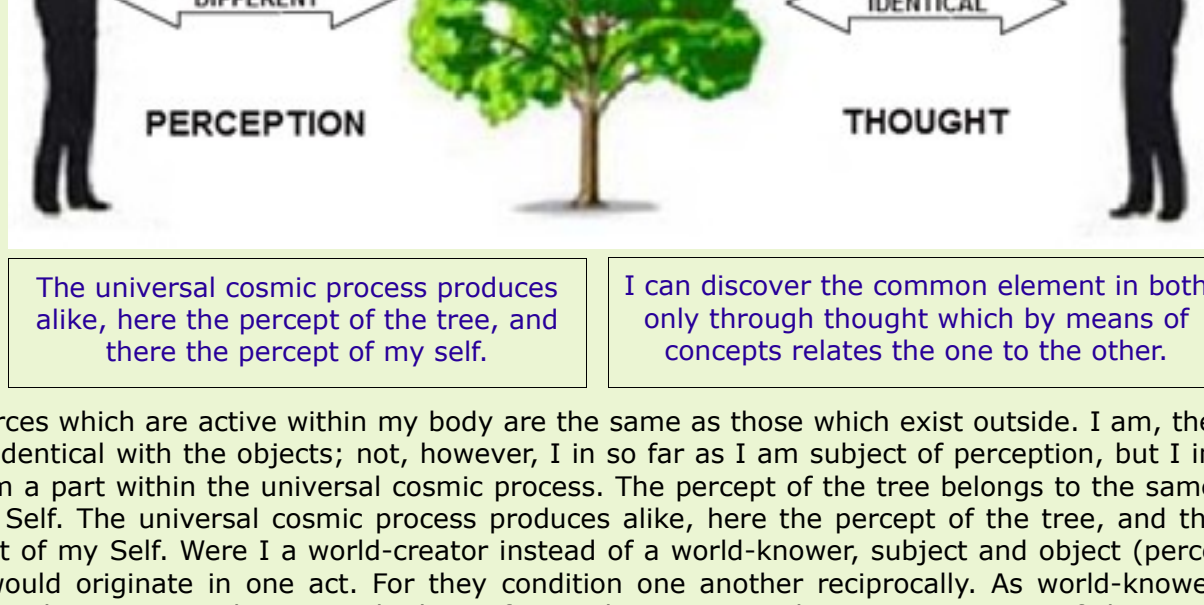
Knowledge of things will go hand in hand with the development and education of the life of feeling.

##### 7.12 Living Concepts

Feeling is the means whereby, in the first instance, concepts gain concrete life.

##### 7.0 Corresponding Concept Relates Self To The World

[1] PHILOSOPHERS have found the chief difficulty in the explanation of mental pictures in the fact that we are not identical with the external objects, and yet our mental pictures must have a form corresponding to their objects. But on closer inspection it turns out that this difficulty does not really exist. We certainly are not identical with the external things, but we belong together with them to one and the same world. The stream of the universal cosmic process passes through that segment of the world which, to my perception, is myself as subject. So far as my perception goes, I am, in the first instance, confined within the limits bounded by my skin. But all that is contained within the skin belongs to the cosmos as a whole. Hence, for a relation to subsist between my organism and an object external to me, it is by no means necessary that something of the object should slip into me, or make an impression on my mind, like a signet ring on wax. The question, *How do I gain knowledge of that tree ten feet away from me*, is utterly misleading. It springs from the view that the boundaries of my body are absolute barriers, through which information about external things filters into me.



The universal cosmic process produces alike, here the percept of the tree, and there the percept of my self.

I can discover the common element in both only through thought which by means of concepts relates the one to the other.

The forces which are active within my body are the same as those which exist outside. I am, therefore, really identical with the objects; not, however, I in so far as I am subject of perception, but I in so far as I am a part within the universal cosmic process. The percept of the tree belongs to the same whole as my Self. The universal cosmic process produces alike, here the percept of the tree, and there the percept of my Self. Were I a world-creator instead of a world-knower, subject and object (percept and self) would originate in one act. For they condition one another reciprocally. As world-knower I can discover the common element in both, so far as they are complementary aspects of the world, only through thought which by means of concepts relates the one to the other.

##### 7.1 Sense Perception Of Motion

[2] The most difficult to drive from the field are the so-called physiological proofs of the subjectivity of our percepts. When I exert pressure on the skin of my body, I experience it as a pressure sensation. This same pressure can be sensed as light by the eye, as sound by the ear. I experience an electrical shock by the eye as light, by the ear as sound, by the nerves of the skin as touch, and by the nose as a smell of phosphorus. What follows from these facts? Only this: I experience an electrical shock, or, as the case may be, a pressure followed by a light, or a sound, or, it may be, a certain smell, etc. If there were no eye present, then no light quality would accompany the perception of the mechanical vibrations in my environment; without the presence of the ear, no sound, etc. But what right have we to say that in the absence of sense-organs the whole process would not exist at all? All those who, from the fact that an electrical process causes a sensation of light in the eye, conclude that what we sense as light is only a mechanical process of motion, forget that they are only arguing from one percept to another, and not at all to something altogether transcending percepts.

electrick shock	sense	impression
	eye	light
	ear	noise
	nose	phosphoric smell
	skin nerves	impact

I experience an electrical shock by the eye as light, by the ear as sound, by the nerves of the skin as touch, and by the nose as a smell of phosphorus.

Just as we can say that the eye perceives a mechanical process of motion in its surroundings as light, so we can affirm that every change in an object, determined by natural law, is perceived by us as a process of motion. If I draw twelve pictures of a horse on the circumference of a rotating disc, reproducing exactly the positions which the horse's body successively assumes in movement, I can, by rotating the disc, produce the illusion of movement. I need only look through an opening in such a way that, at regular intervals I perceive the successive positions of the horse. I perceive, not separate pictures of twelve horses, but one picture of a single galloping horse.



[3] The above-mentioned physiological facts cannot, therefore, throw any light on the relation of percept to mental picture. Hence, we must seek a relation some other way.

##### 7.2 Mental Picture: Intuition Related To A Percept

[4] The moment a percept appears in my field of consciousness, thinking, too, becomes active in me. A member of my thought-system, a definite intuition, a concept, connects itself with the percept. In the next, the percept disappears from my field of vision, what remains? The intuition with the reference to the particular percept which it acquired in the moment of perception.

*the moment a percept appears, its intuition connects itself to it...*

The degree of vividness with which I can subsequently recall this reference depends on the manner in which my mental and bodily organism is working. A mental picture is nothing but an intuition related to a particular percept; it is a concept which was once connected with a certain percept, and which retains this reference to the percept.

My concept of a lion is not constructed out of my percepts of a lion; but my mental picture of a lion is formed under the guidance of the lion without his ever having seen a lion, but I can never give him a living mental picture of it without the help of his own perception.

**concept lion:** not constructed out of my percepts of a lion.  
**mental picture lion:** formed under the guidance of the percept.

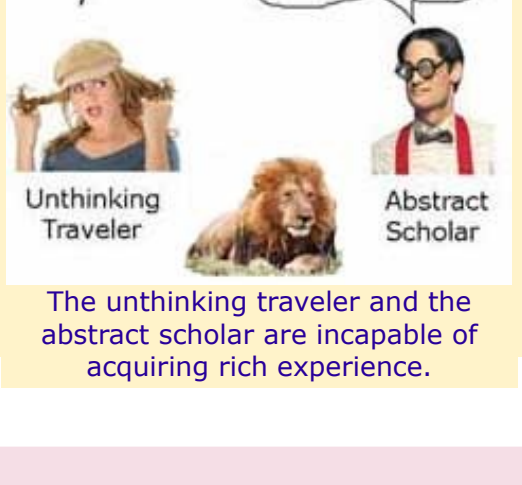
##### 7.3 Mental Picture: Individualized Concept

[5] A mental picture is therefore nothing but an individualized concept. And now we can see how real objects can be represented to us by mental pictures. The full reality of a thing is present to us in the moment of observation through the combination of concept and percept. The concept acquires by means of the percept an individualized form, a relation to this particular percept. In this individualized form which carries with it, as an essential feature, the reference to the percept, it continues to exist in us and constitutes the mental picture of the thing in question. If we come across a second thing with which the same concept connects itself, we recognize the second as being of the same kind as the first; if we come across the same thing twice we find in our conceptual system, not merely a corresponding concept, but the individualized concept with its characteristic relation to this same object, and thus we recognize the object again.

[6] The mental picture, then, stands between the percept and the concept. It is the determinate concept which points to the percept.

##### 7.4 Mental Picture: Acquired Experience

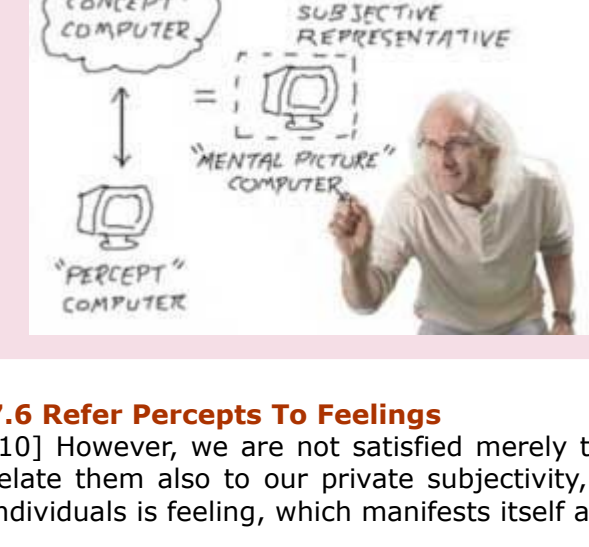
[7] The sum of my mental pictures may be called my experience. The man who has the greater number of individualized concepts will be the man of richer experience. A man who lacks all power of intuition is not capable of acquiring experience. The objects simply disappear again from the field of his consciousness, because he lacks the concepts which he ought to bring into relation with them.



The unthinking traveler and the abstract scholar are incapable of acquiring rich experience.

On the other hand, a man whose faculty of thought is well developed, but whose perception functions badly owing to his clumsy sense-organs, will be no better able to gain experience. He can, it is true, by one means and another acquire concepts; but the living reference to particular objects is lacking to his intuitions. The unthinking traveler and the student absorbed in abstract conceptual systems are alike incapable of acquiring a rich experience.

##### 7.5 Mental Picture: Subjective Representation Of Reality



[8] Reality presents itself to us as the union of percept and concept; and the subjective representation of this reality presents itself to us as mental picture.

[9] If our personality expressed itself only in cognition, the totality of all that is objective would be contained in percept, concept, and mental picture.

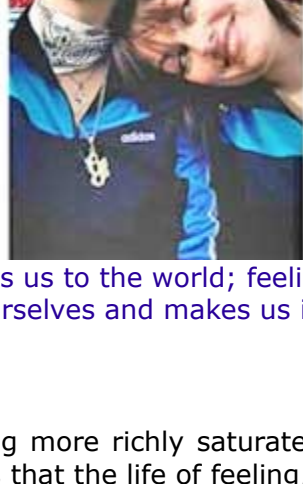
##### 7.6 Refer Percepts To Feelings

[10] However, we are not satisfied merely to refer percepts, by means of thinking, to concepts, but we relate them also to our private subjectivity, our individual Ego. The expression of this relation to us as individuals is feeling, which manifests itself as pleasure and pain.

##### 7.7 Two-Fold Nature: Thinking And Feeling

[11] Thinking and feeling correspond to the twofold nature of our being to which reference has already been made. By means of thought we take an active part in the universal cosmic process. By means of feeling we withdraw ourselves into the narrow precincts of our own being.

I am universal, a part of the whole.



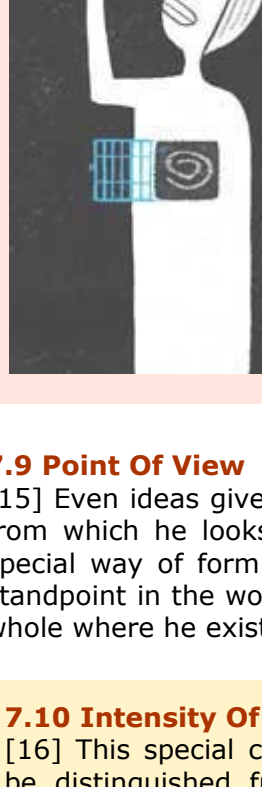
I am special, just being myself.

[12] Thought links us to the world; feeling leads us back into ourselves and thus makes us individuals. Were we merely thinking and perceiving beings our whole life would flow along in monotonous indifference. Could we only know ourselves as Selves, we should be totally indifferent to ourselves. It is only because with self-knowledge we experience self-feeling, and with the perception of objects pleasure and pain, that we live as individuals whose existence is not exhausted by the conceptual relations in which they stand to the rest of the world, but who have a special value in themselves.

Thought links us to the world; feeling leads us back into ourselves and makes us individuals.

[13] One might be tempted to regard the life of feeling as something more richly saturated with reality than the apprehension of the world by thought. But the reply to this is that the life of feeling, after all, has this richer meaning only for my individual self. For the universe as a whole, my feelings can be of value only if, as percepts of myself, they enter into connection with a concept, and in this roundabout way become links in the cosmos.

##### 7.8 True Individuality



[14] Our life is a continual oscillation between our share in the universal world-process and our own individual existence. The farther we ascend into the universal nature of thought where the individual, at last, interests us only as an example, an instance, of the concept, the more the character of something individual, of the quite determinate, unique personality, becomes lost in us. The farther we descend into the depths of our own private life and allow the vibrations of our feelings to accompany all our experiences of the outer world, the more we cut ourselves off from the universal life.

True individuality belongs to him whose feelings reach up to the farthest possible extent into the region of the ideal. There are men in whom even the most general ideas still bear that peculiar personal tinge which shows unmistakably their connection with their author. There are others whose concepts come before us as devoid of any trace of individual colouring as if they had not been produced by a being of flesh and blood at all.

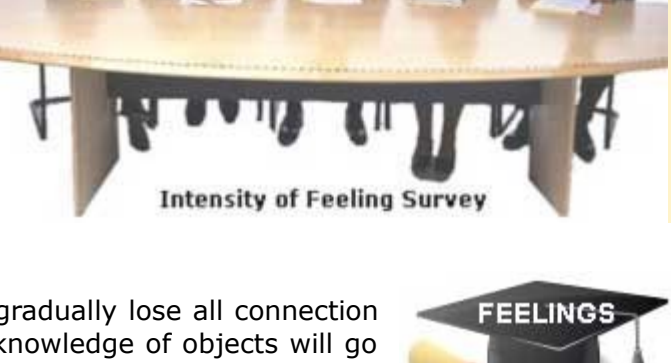
##### 7.9 Even Ideas View

[15] Even ideas give to our conceptual life an individual stamp. Each one of us has his special standpoint from which he looks out on the world. His concepts link themselves to his percepts. He has his own special way of forming general concepts. This special character results for each of us from his special standpoint in the world, from the way in which the range of his percepts is dependent on the place in the whole where he exists. The conditions of individuality, here indicated, we call the milieu.

##### 7.10 Intensity Of Feelings

[16] This special character of our experience must be distinguished from another which depends on our peculiar organization. Each of us, as we know, is organized as a unique, fully determined individual. Each of us combines special feelings, and these in the most varying degrees of intensity, with his percepts.

This is just the individual element in the personality of each of us. It is what remains over when we have allowed fully for all the determining factors in our milieu.



Intensity of Feeling Survey

##### 7.11 Education Of Feelings

[17] A life of feeling, wholly devoid of thought, would gradually lose all connection with the world. But man is meant to be a whole, and knowledge of objects will go hand-in-hand for him with the development and education of the feeling-side of his nature.



##### 7.12 Living Concepts

[18] Feeling is the means whereby, in the first instance, concepts gain concrete life.

## VIII ARE THERE ANY LIMITS TO COGNITION?

### Journal

What is this chapter about? According to the principles of cognition as described here, there are no limits to cognition. As soon as the Self – which in the act of perceiving is separated from the world – reinstates itself into the continuity of things by constructive thought, all further questioning ceases having been but a result of the separation. Cognitive satisfaction is individualistic.

What is its value? Things demand no explanation. Knowledge is not a concern of the universe in general, but one we must settle for ourselves. The separation between Self and the world (see chapter 3 Desire For Knowledge) depends on each ones particular organization. The bridging of the gap, therefore, can take place only in the quite specific way that is characteristic of the person.

I set my own questions that arise due to the confrontation between my perceived-world and my thought-world. My task consists in reconciling these two spheres, both of which I am well acquainted. If I set myself questions that I cannot answer, it must be because the content of the questions is not in all respects clear and distinct.

Since it is only through me, the subject, that the whole appears out in two at the place between my percept and my concept, the uniting of those two gives me complete cognition. For someone else with a different perceptual world, the continuum would appear broken in another place, and the reconstruction would have to take a form specific for that person. It may be that, at any particular moment, this or that remains unexplained because I am prevented from perceiving the things involved. These limits are only transitory, and can be overcome by progress in perception and thinking.

Cognition transforms the world of appearance into a unified whole by assigning to each percept its rightful place in the world. There outside stands a tree. I take it into my mind. Within me the tree becomes more than it is outside. That part of it which enters through the portal of the senses is integrated into my inner content. This says infinitely more about the tree, which the tree outside cannot tell me. Now the tree is no longer the isolated being that it is in external space. It becomes a part of the whole inner world living within me. It combines its content with other ideas that exist in me. It becomes a part of the whole world of ideas, which embraces the vegetable kingdom; it is further integrated into the evolutionary scale of every living thing. What the tree is only shines upon it out of me.

To arrive at the essential core of the world means to grasp reality as thought, as idea. In the idea we recognize the active principle of things. We become united with this principle; therefore the idea, which is most objective, appears to us at the same time as most subjective.

Everything in the world that does not appear directly as idea will still ultimately be recognized as going forth from the idea. What philosophers call the absolute, the eternal being, the ground of the world, what the religions call God, this we call the Idea.

## Study Topics

### principles of cognition

#### 8.0 Cognitive Unity

It is due, as we have seen, to our organization that the full, complete reality, including our own selves as subjects, appears at first as a duality. Cognition overcomes this duality by fusing the two elements of reality, the percept and the concept gained by thinking, into the complete thing.

#### 8.1 Hypothetical World Principle and Experience

It is quite natural that a dualistic thinker should be unable to find the connection between the world principle which he hypothetically assumes and the things given in experience.

#### 8.2 Ego-hood's Questions and Answers

It is not the world which sets us the questions, but we ourselves. Only when the Ego-hood has taken the two elements of reality which are indivisibly united in the world and has combined them also for itself, is cognitive satisfaction attained.

#### 8.3 Reconcile Familiar Percepts and Concepts

Our cognition is concerned with questions which arise for us through the fact that a sphere of percepts, conditioned by place, time, and our subjective organization, is confronted by a sphere of concepts pointing to the totality of the universe. My task consists in reconciling these two spheres, with both of which I am well acquainted.

#### 8.4 Conceptual Representation Of Objective Reality

We can obtain only conceptual representations of the objectively real.

#### 8.5 Real Principles in addition to Ideal Principles

The ideal principles which thinking discovers seem too airy for the dualist, and he seeks, in addition, real principles with which to support them.

#### 8.6 Real Evidence of Senses in addition to Ideal Evidence

The naive person demands the real evidence of his senses in addition to the ideal evidence of his thinking.

#### 8.7 Vanishing Perceptions and Ideal Entities

Its realities arise and perish, while what it regards as unreal, in contrast with the real, persists.

Hence naive realism is compelled to acknowledge, in addition to percepts, the existence of something ideal. It must admit entities which cannot be perceived by the senses.

#### 8.8 Perceptible Reality and Imperceptible Reality

Metaphysical realism constructs, in addition to the perceptible reality, an imperceptible reality which it conceives on the analogy of the perceptible one.

#### 8.9 Sum of Perceptions and Laws of Nature

If we reject the untenable part of metaphysical realism, the world presents itself to us as the sum of percepts and their conceptual (ideal) relationships. Monism combines one-sided realism with idealism into a higher unity.

#### 8.10 Separation and then Reunion of "I" into World Continuity

Bridging over the antithesis can take place only in the quite specific way that is characteristic of the particular human subject. As soon as the I, which is separated from the world in the act of perceiving, fits itself back into the world continuum through thoughtful contemplation, all further questioning ceases, having been but a consequence of the separation.

#### 8.11 Sum of Effects and Underlying Causes

This is an inference from a sum of effects to the character of the underlying causes. We believe that we can understand the situation well enough from a sufficiently large number of instances to know how the inferred causes will behave in other instances. Such an inference is called an inductive inference.

#### 8.12 Subjective and Objective World Continuity

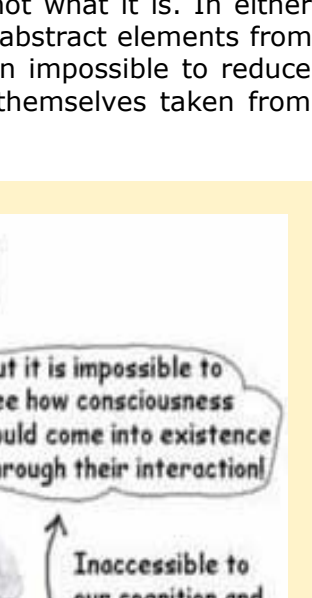
Through considerations of the process of cognition he is convinced of the existence of an objectively real world continuum, over and above the "subjective" world continuum which is cognizable through percepts and concepts. The nature of this reality he thinks he can determine by inductive inferences from his percepts.

#### 8.0 Cognitive Unity

[1] We have established that the elements for the explanation of reality are to be taken from the two spheres of perception and thought. It is due, as we have seen, to our organization that the full totality of reality, including our own selves as subjects, appears at first as a duality. Cognition transcends this duality by fusing the two elements of reality, the percept and the concept, into the complete thing. Let us call the manner in which the world presents itself to us, before by means of cognition it has taken on its true nature, "the world of appearance," in distinction from the unified whole composed of percept and concept. We can then say, the world is given to us as a duality (Dualism), and cognition transforms it into a unity (Monism). A philosophy which starts from this basal principle may be called a Monistic philosophy, or Monism. Opposed to this is the theory of two worlds, or Dualism. The latter does not, by any means, assume merely that there are two sides of a single reality, which are kept apart by our organization, but that there are two worlds totally distinct from one another. It then tries to find in one of these two worlds the principle of explanation for the other.

[2] Dualism rests on a false conception of what we call cognition. It divides the whole of reality into two spheres, each of which has its own laws, and it leaves these two worlds standing outside one another.

[3] It is from a Dualism such as this that there arises the distinction between the object of perception and the thing-in-itself, which Kant introduced into philosophy, and which, to the present day, we have not succeeded in expelling. According to our interpretation, it is due to the nature of our organization that a particular object can be given to us only as a percept. Thought transcends this particularity by assigning to each percept its proper place in the world as a whole. As long as we determine the separate parts of the cosmos as percepts, we are simply following, in this sorting out, a law of our subjective constitution. If, however, we regard all percepts, taken together, merely as one part, and contrast with this a second part, viz., the things-in-themselves, then our philosophy is building castles-in-the-air. We are then engaged in mere playing with concepts. We construct an artificial opposition, but we can find no content for the second of these opposites, seeing that no content for a particular thing can be found except in perception.



#### 8.1 Hypothetical World Principle and Experience

[4] Every kind of reality which is assumed to exist outside the sphere of perception and conception must be relegated to the limbo of unverified hypotheses. To this category belongs the "thing-in-itself." It is, of course, quite natural that a Dualistic thinker should be unable to find the connection between the world-principle which he hypothetically assumes and the facts that are given in experience. For the hypothetical world-principle itself a content can be found only by borrowing it from experience and shutting one's eyes to the fact of the borrowing. Otherwise it remains an empty and meaningless concept, a mere form without content. In this case the Dualistic thinker generally asserts that the content of this concept is inaccessible to our cognition. We can know only that such a content exists, but not what it is. In either case it is impossible to transcend Dualism. Even though one were to import a few abstract elements from the world of experience into the content of the thing-in-itself, it would still remain impossible to reduce the rich concrete life of experience to these few elements, which are, after all, themselves taken from experience.

#### 8.2 Ego-hood's Questions and Answers

[5] That the Dualist, working as he does with a completely empty concept of the thing-in-itself, can reach no explanation of the world, follows even from the definition of his principle which has been given above.

[6] In any case, the Dualist finds it necessary to set impassable barriers to our faculty of cognition. A follower of the Monistic theory of the world knows that all he needs to explain any given phenomenon in the world is to be found within this world itself. What prevents him from finding it can be only chance limitations in space and time, or defects of his organization, i.e., not of human organization in general, but only of his own.

#### 8.2 Ego-hood's Questions and Answers

[7] It follows from the concept of cognition, as defined by us, that there can be no talk of any limits of cognition. Cognizing is not a concern of the *within our Ego-hood lies* universe in general, but one which men must settle for themselves. External *the power to discover* things demand no explanation. They exist and act on one another according to *the other part of the* laws which thought can discover. They exist in indivisible unity with these laws *reality as well...* But we, in our self-hood, confront them, grasping at first only what we have called percepts. However, within ourselves we find the power to discover also the other part of reality. Only when the Self has combined for itself the two elements of reality which are indivisibly bound up with one another in the world, is our thirst for knowledge stilled. The Self is then again in contact with reality.

[8] The presuppositions for the development of cognition thus exist through and for the Self. It is the Self which sets itself the questions of cognition. It takes them from thought, an element which in itself is absolutely clear and transparent. If we set ourselves questions which we cannot answer, it must be because the content of the questions is not in all respects clear and distinct. It is not the world which sets questions to us, but we who set them to ourselves.

[9] I can imagine that it would be quite impossible for me to answer a question which I happened to find written down somewhere, without knowing the universe of discourse from which the content of the question is taken.

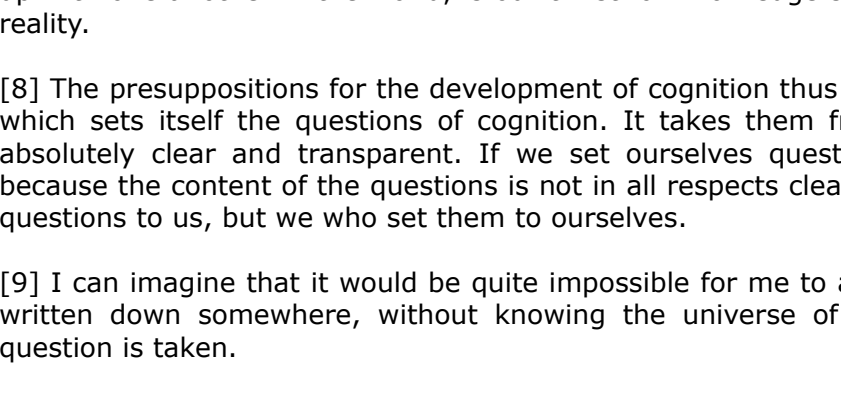
#### 8.3 Reconcile Familiar Perceptions and Concepts

[10] Our cognition involves questions which arise for us through the fact that a sphere of percepts, conditioned by time, space, and our subjective organization, stands over against a world of concepts expressing the totality of the universe. Our task consists in the assimilation to one another of these two spheres, with both of which we are familiar. There is no room here for talking about limits to cognition. It may be that, at a particular moment, this or that remains unexplained because, through chance obstacles, we are prevented from perceiving the things involved. What is not found today, however, may easily be found tomorrow. The limits due to these causes are only contingent, and must be overcome by the progress of perception and thought.

#### 8.4 Conceptual Representation Of Objective Reality

[11] Dualism makes the mistake of transferring the opposition of subject and object, which has meaning only within the perceptual world, to pure conceptual entities outside this world. Now the distinct and separate things in the perceptual world remain separated only so long as the perceiver refrains from thinking. For thought cancels all separation and reveals it as due to purely subjective conditions. The Dualist, therefore, transfers to entities transcending the perceptual world abstract determinations which, even in the perceptual world, have no absolute, but only relative, validity. He thus divides the two factors concerned in the process of cognition, viz., percept and concept, into four:

- (1) the object in itself;
- (2) the percept which the subject has of the object;
- (3) the subject;
- (4) the concept which relates the percept to the object in itself.



The relation between subject and object is "real"; the subject is objectively influenced by the object (dynamically) through the object.

This real process does not appear in consciousness. But it evokes in the subject a response to the stimulation from the object. The result of this response is the percept. This, at length, appears in consciousness. The object has an objective (independent of the subject) reality, this perceptible reality is referred by the subject to the object. This reference is an ideal one.

Cognition thus divides the process of dualism into two parts. The one part, viz., the production of the perceptual object by the thing-in-itself, he conceives of as taking place outside consciousness, whereas the other, the combination of percept with concept and the latter's reference to the thing-in-itself, takes place, according to him, in consciousness.

#### Conceptual Representation Of The Objective Real

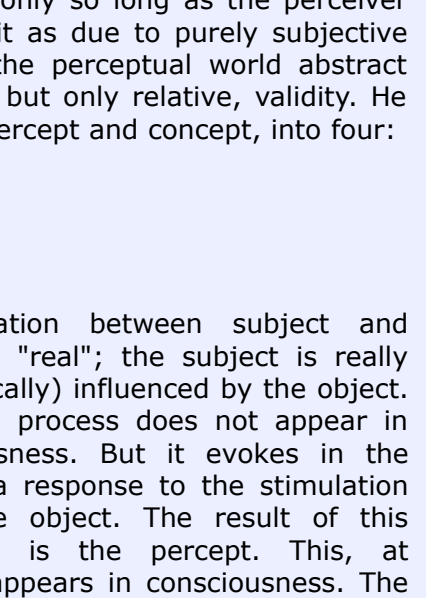
With such presuppositions, it is clear why the Dualist regards his concepts merely as subjective representations of what is really external to his consciousness. The objectively real process in the subject by means of which the percept is produced, and still more the objective relations between things-in-themselves, remain for the Dualist inaccessible to direct knowledge. According to him, man can get only conceptual representations of the objectively real. The bond of unity which connects things-in-themselves with one another, and also objectively with the individual minds (as things-in-themselves) of each of us, exists beyond our consciousness in a Divine Being of whom, once more, we have merely a conceptual representation.

#### 8.5 Real Principles in addition to Ideal Principles

[12] The Dualist believes that the whole world would be dissolved into a mere abstract scheme of concepts, did he not posit the existence of real connections beside the conceptual ones. In other words, the ideal principles which thinking discovers are too airy for the Dualist, and he seeks, in addition, real principles with which to support them.

[13] Let us examine these real principles a little more closely. The naive man (Naive Realist) regards the objects of sense-experience as realities. The fact that his hands can grasp, and his eyes see, these objects is for him sufficient guarantee of the reality. "Nothing exists that cannot be perceived" is, in fact, the first axiom of the naive man; and it is held to be equally valid in its converse: "Everything which is perceived exists." The best proof for this assertion is the naive man's belief in immortality and in ghosts. He thinks of the soul as a fine kind of matter perceptible by the senses which, in special circumstances, may actually become visible to the ordinary man (belief in ghosts).

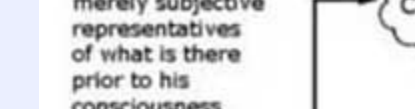
[14] In contrast with this, his real, world, the Naive Realist regards everything else, especially the world of ideas, as unreal, or "merely ideal." What we add to objects by thinking is merely thoughts about the objects. Thought adds nothing real to the percept.



Photograph of Ghost?

[15] But it is not only with reference to the existence of things that the naive man regards perception as the sole guarantee of reality, but also with reference to the existence of processes. A thing, according to him, can act on another only when a force actually present to perception issues from the one and acts upon the other. The ancient Greek philosophers, who were Naive Realists in the best sense of the word, held a theory of vision according to which the eyes send out feelers which touch the objects. The older physicists thought that very fine kinds of substances emanate from the objects and penetrate through the sense-organs into the soul. The actual perception of these substances is impossible only because of the coarseness of our sense-organs relatively to the fineness of these substances. In principle the reason for attributing reality to these substances was the same as that for attributing it to the objects of the sensible world, viz., their kind of existence, which was conceived to be analogous to that of perceptual reality.

#### 8.6 Real Evidence of Senses in addition to Ideal Evidence



Miracles of Jesus

[16] The self-contained being of ideas is not thought of by the naive mind as real in the same sense. An object conceived "merely in idea" is its reality. In contrast, the naive man demands, in addition to the ideal evidence of his thinking, the real evidence of his senses.

In this need of the naive man lies the ground for the origin of the belief in revelation. The God whom we apprehend by thought remains always merely our idea of God. The naive consciousness demands that God should manifest Himself in ways accessible to the senses. God must appear in the flesh, and must attest his Godhead to our senses by the changing of water into wine.

[17] It is even thought itself is conceived by the naive mind as a process analogous to sense-perception. Things, it is thought, make an impression on the mind, or send out copies of themselves which enter through our senses, etc.

[18] What the naive man can perceive with his senses he regards as real, and what he cannot perceive (God, soul, cognition, etc.) he regards as analogous to what he can perceive.

[19] On the basis of Naive Realism, science can consist only in an exact description of the content of perception. Concepts are only means to this end. They exist to provide ideal counterparts of percepts. With the things themselves they have nothing to do. For the Naive Realist only the individual tulips, which we can see, are real. The universal idea of tulip is to him an abstraction, the unreal thought-picture which the mind constructs for itself out of the characteristics common to all tulips.

#### 8.7 Vanishing Perceptions and Ideal Entities

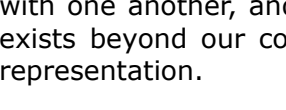
[20] Naive Realism, with its fundamental principle of the reality of all percepts, contradicts experience, which teaches us that the content of percepts is of a transitory nature. The tulip I see is real today; in a year it will have vanished into nothingness. What persists is the species "tulip." This species is, however, for the Naive Realist merely an idea, not a reality. Thus this theory of the world finds itself in the paradoxical position of seeing its realities arise and perish, while that which, by contrast with its realities, it regards as unreal endures. Hence Naive Realism is compelled to acknowledge the existence of something ideal by the side of percepts. It must include within itself entities which cannot be perceived by the senses. In admitting them it escapes contradicting itself by itself entities which exist as perceptible to that of objects of sense. Such hypothetical realities are the invisible forces by means of which the objects of sense-perception act on one another. Another such reality is heredity, the effects of which survive the individual, and which is the reason why from the individual a new being develops which is similar to it, and by means of which the species is maintained.

The soul, the life-principle permeating the organic body, is another such reality which the naive mind is always finding conceiving in analogy to realities of sense-perception. And, lastly, the Divine Being, as conceived by the naive mind, is such a hypothetical entity. The Deity is thought of as acting in a manner exactly corresponding to that which we can perceive in man himself, i.e., the Deity is conceived anthropomorphically.

[21] Modern Physics traces sensations back to the movements of the smallest particles of bodies and of an infinitely fine substance called ether. What we experience, e.g., as warmth is a movement imparted in the ether in the space occupied by that body. Here again something imperceptible is conceived on the analogy of what is perceptible. Thus, in terms of perception, the analogue to the concept "body" is, say, the interior of a room, shut in on all sides, in which elastic balls are moving in all directions, impinging one on another, bouncing on and off the walls, etc.

#### 8.8 Perceptible Reality and Imperceptible Reality

[22] Without such assumptions the world of the Naive Realist would lapse into a disconnected chaos of percepts, without mutual relations, and having no unity within itself. It is clear, however, that Naive Realism can make these assumptions only by contradicting itself. If it did remain true to its fundamental principle, that only what is perceived is real, then it ought not to assume a reality where it does not exist. The imperceptible forces of which perceptible things are the bearers are, in fact, illegitimate hypotheses from the standpoint of Naive Realism. But because Naive Realism knows no other realities, it invests its hypothetical forces with perceptual content. It thus transfers a form of existence (the existence of percepts) to a sphere where the only means of making any assertion concerning such existence, viz., sense-perception, is lacking.



Metaphysical Realism is Dualistic, constructing an imperceptible reality next to the perceptible reality.

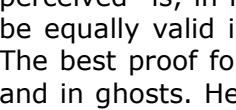
[23] This self-contradictory theory leads to Metaphysical Realism. The latter constructs, beside the perceptible reality, an imperceptible one which it conceives on the analogy of the former. Metaphysical Realism is, therefore, of necessity Dualistic.

[24] Wherever the Metaphysical Realist observes a relation between perceptible things (mutual approach through movement, the entrance of an object into consciousness, etc.) there he posits a reality. However, the relation of which the ideal relation is thereupon arbitrarily assimilated to something perceptible. Thus, according to this theory the world is composed of the objects of perception which are in ceaseless flux, arising and disappearing, and of imperceptible forces by which the perceptible objects are produced, and which are permanent.

#### 8.9 Sum of Perceptions and Laws of Nature

[25] Metaphysical Realism is a self-contradictory mixture of Naive Realism and Idealism. Its forces are imperceptible entities endowed with the qualities proper to percepts. The Metaphysical Realist has made up his mind to acknowledge, in addition to the sphere for the existence of which he has an instrument of cognition in sense-perception, the existence of another sphere for which this instrument fails, and which can be known only by means of thought. But he cannot make up his mind at the same time to acknowledge that the mode of existence which thought reveals, viz., the concept (or idea), has equal rights with percepts. If we are to avoid the contradiction of imperceptible percepts, we must admit that, for us, the relations which thoughts traces between percepts can have no other mode of existence than that of concepts. If one rejects the untenable part of Metaphysical Realism, there remains the concept of the world as the aggregate of percepts and their conceptual (ideal) relations. Metaphysical Realism, then, merges itself in a view of the world according to which the principle of perceptibility holds for percepts, and that of conceivability for the relations between the percepts. This view of the world has no room in addition to the perceptual and conceptual worlds, for a third sphere in which both principles, the so-called "real" principle and the "ideal" principle, are simultaneously valid.

[26] When the Metaphysical Realist asserts that, besides the ideal relation between the perceived object and the perceiving subject, there must be a real relation between the percept as "thing-in-itself" and the subject as "being-in-itself" (the so-called individual mind), he is basing his assertion on the false assumption of a real process, imperceptible but analogous to processes in the world of percepts. Further, when the Metaphysical Realist asserts that we stand in a conscious ideal relation to our world of percepts, but that to the real world we can have only a dynamic (force) relation, he repeats the mistake we have already criticized. We can talk of a dynamic only within the world of percepts (in the sphere of the sense of touch), but not outside that world.



Monism

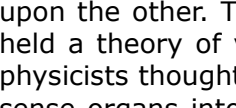
[27] Let us call the view which we have just characterized, and into which Metaphysical Realism merges when it discards its contradictory elements, Monism, because it combines one-sided Realism and Idealism into a higher unity.

**Naive Realism: the real world is an aggregate of percepts.**  
**Metaphysical Realism: reality belongs not only to percepts but also to imperceptible forces.**  
**Monism: replaces forces by ideal relations (laws of nature) which are supplied by thought.**

[28] For Naive Realism the real world is an aggregate of percepts; for Metaphysical Realism, reality belongs not only to percepts but also to imperceptible forces; Monism replaces forces by ideal relations which are supplied by thought. These relations are the laws of nature. A law of nature is nothing but the conceptual expression for the connection of certain percepts.

#### 8.9 Separation and then Reunion of "I" into World Continuity

[29] Monism is never called upon to ask whether there are any principles of explanation for reality other than perception and concepts. The Monist knows that in the whole realm of the real there is no occasion for this question. In the perceptual world, as immediately apprehended, he sees one-half of reality; in the union of this world with the world of concepts he finds full reality. The Metaphysical Realist might object that, relatively to our organization, our cognition may be complete in itself, that no part may be lacking, but that we do not know how the world appears to a mind organized differently from our own.



To this the Monist will reply: Maybe there are intelligences other than ours; and maybe also that their percepts are different from ours, if they have perception at all. But this is irrelevant to me for the following reasons. Through my perceptions, i.e., through this specifically human mode of perception, I, as subject, am confronted with the object. The nexus of things is thereby broken. The subject reconstructs the nexus by means of thought. In doing so it re-inserts itself into the context of the world as a whole. As it is only through the Self, as subject, that the whole appears rent in two between percept and concept, the reunion of those two factors will give us complete cognition. For beings with a different perceptual world (e.g., if they had twice our number of sense-organs) the nexus would appear broken in another place, and the reconstruction would accordingly have to take a form specifically adapted to such beings.

The question concerning the limits of cognition troubles only Naive and Metaphysical Realism, both of which see in the contents of mind only ideal representations of the real world. For to these theories whatever falls outside the subject is something absolute, a self-contained whole, and the subject's mental content is a copy which is wholly external to this absolute. The completeness of knowledge depends on the greater or lesser degree of resemblance between the representation and the absolute object. A being with fewer senses than man will perceive less of the world, one with more senses will perceive more. The former's knowledge will, therefore, be less complete than the latter's.

[30] For Monism the matter is different. The point where the unity of the world appears to be rent asunder into subject and object depends on the organization of the perceiver. The object is not absolute but merely relative to the nature of the subject. The bridging of the gap, therefore, can take place only in the quite specific way which is characteristic of the human subject. As soon as the Self, which in perception is set over against the world, is again re-inserted into the world-nexus by constructive thought all further questioning ceases, having been but a result of the separation.

[31] A differently constituted being would have a differently constituted *Our own cognition is sufficient to answer the questions which result from our own mental constitution...* cognition. Our own cognition suffices to answer the questions which result from our own mental constitution.

[32] Metaphysical Realism must ask, What is it that gives us our percepts? What is it that stimulates the subject?

[33] Monism holds that percepts are determined by the subject. But in thought the subject has, at the same time, the instrument for transcending this determination of which it is itself the author.

#### 8.11 Sum of Effects and Underlying Causes

[34] The Metaphysical Realist is faced by a further difficulty when he seeks to explain the similarity of the world-views of different human individuals. He has to ask himself, How is it that my theory of the world, built up out of subjectively determined percepts and out of concepts, turns out to be the same as that which another individual is also building up out of these same two subjective factors? How, in any case, is it possible for me to argue from my own subjective view of the world to that of another human being? The Metaphysical Realist thinks he can infer the similarity of the subjective world-views of different human beings from their ability to get on with one another in practical life. From this similarity of world-views he infers further the likeness to one another of individual minds, meaning by "individual mind" the "I-in-itself" underlying each subject.

[35] We have here an inference from a number of effects to the character of the underlying causes. We believe that after to have observed a sufficiently large number of instances, we know the connection sufficiently to know how the inferred causes will act in other instances. Such an inference is called an inductive inference. We shall be obliged to modify its results, if further observation yields some unexpected fact, because the character of our conclusion is, after all, determined only by the particular details of our actual observations. The Metaphysical Realist asserts that this knowledge of causes, though restricted by these conditions, is quite sufficient for practical life.

[36] Inductive inference is the fundamental method of modern Metaphysical Realism. At one time it was thought that out of concepts we could evolve something that would no longer be a concept. It was thought that the metaphysical reals, which Metaphysical Realism after all requires, could be known by means of concepts. This method of philosophizing is now out of date. Instead it is thought that from a sufficiently large number of perceptual facts we can infer the character of the thing-in-itself which lies behind these facts. Formerly it was from concepts, now it is from percepts that the Realist seeks to evolve the metaphysically real. Because concepts are before the mind in transparent clearness, it was thought that we might deduce from them the metaphysically real with absolute certainty. Percepts are not given with the same transparent clearness. Each fresh one is a little different from others of the same kind which preceded it. In principle, therefore, anything inferred from past experience is somewhat modified by each subsequent experience. The character of the metaphysically real thus obtained can therefore be only relatively true, for it is open to correction by further instances. The character of Von Hartmann's *Metaphysics* depends on this methodological principle. The motto on the title-page of his first important book is, "Speculative results gained by the inductive method of Science."

#### 8.12 Subjective and Objective World Continuity

[37] The form which the Metaphysical Realist at the present day gives to his things-in-themselves is obtained by inductive inferences. Consideration of the process of cognition has convinced him of the existence of an objectively-real world-nexus, over and above the subjective world which we cognize by means of percepts and concepts. The nature of this reality he thinks he can determine by inductive inferences from his percepts.

*The question concerning the limits of cognition troubles only Naive and Metaphysical Realism...*

*Inductive Inference: with a large number of perceptual facts we can infer the character of the thing-in-itself which lies behind these facts (but results gained are only relatively true).*

*Metaphysical Realism cannot acknowledge that what thought reveals, viz., the concept (or idea), is just as important as what is perceived...*

*Our own cognition is sufficient to answer the questions which result from our own mental constitution...*