

HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY

Study Topics

principles of mental picturing

6.0 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.

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 Mental Picture: Acquired Experience

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

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

6.8 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.

6.9 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.

6.10 Intensity Of Feelings

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

6.11 Education Of Feelings

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

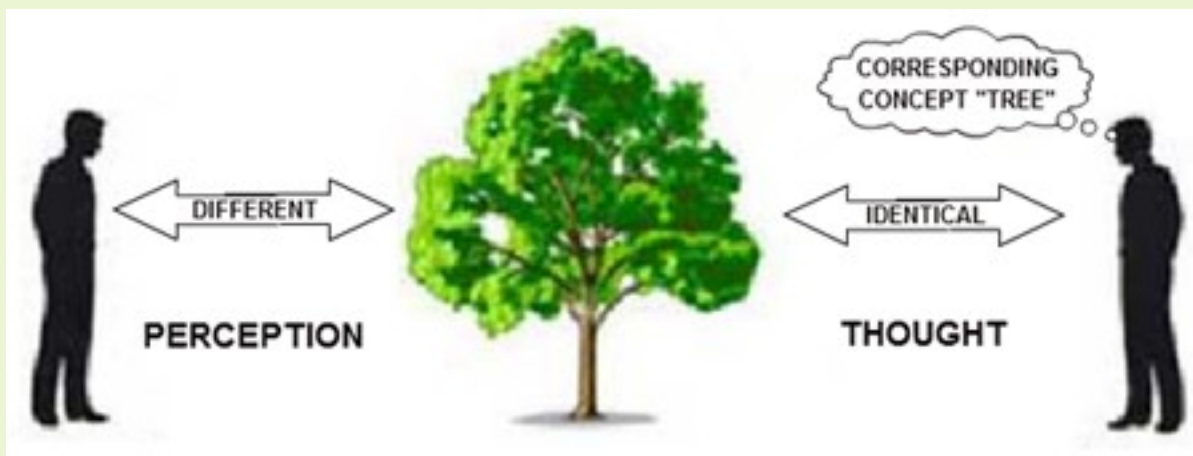
6.12 Living Concepts

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

[top](#)

6.0 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.

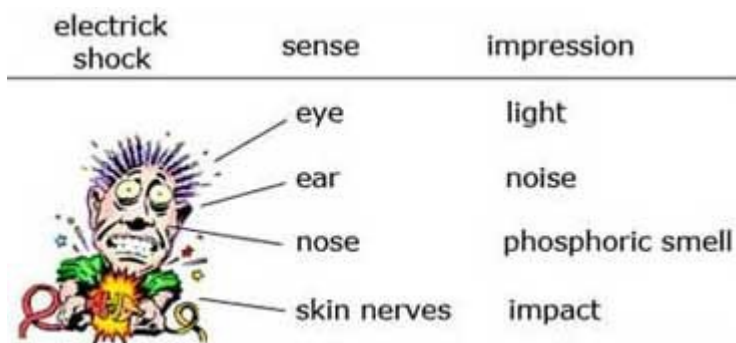
I can discover the common element in both only through thought which by means of concepts relates the one to the other.

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.

[top](#)

6.1 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,



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.

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.

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.

[top](#)

6.2 Mental Picture: Intuition Related To A Percept

[4] The moment a percept appears in my field of consciousness, thought, too, becomes active in me. A member of my thought-system, a definite intuition, a concept, connects itself with the percept. When, 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, an 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 percept. I can teach some one to form the concept of a 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.

[top](#)

6.3 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.

[top](#)

6.4 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.

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.



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

[top](#)

6.5 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.

[top](#)

6.6 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.

[top](#)

6.7 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.

[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.

[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.

[top](#)

6.8 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.

a true individuality will be the one who reaches up with their feelings into the ideal

[top](#)

6.9 Point Of 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.

[top](#)

6.10 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

[top](#)

6.11 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.



[top](#)

6.12 Living Concepts

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