

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
September 8, 1982
PB PARAS; EGO**

TOPIC: PB Paras
SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Three Levels of Subjectivity, Three Levels of Astrology, Non-Modal Seeing,
Ego as Combustion Process

CONTENTS:

- # PB PARAS ON EGO; THREE LEVELS OF SUBJECT CORRELATED WITH THREE LEVELS OF ASTROLOGY; EGO APPROPRIATES THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS AS ITS OWN
- # MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION
- # FLUIDITY MUST BE MAINTAINED AS TO WHICH LEVEL OF SUBJECT IS OPERATING
- # EGO STRUCTURE AS PLANET ON A DEGREE AND ITS OPPOSITE; CERTAIN TRANSITS BRING THE POSSIBILITY OF OBJECTIFYING THE EGO
- # "I" AND "ME"; DON'T CLING TO SPIRITUALITY
- # GIVING UP THE EGO; DANGERS OF INFLATION; IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY
- # NON-MODAL SEEING
- # ONLY SOMETHING THAT TRANSCENDS THE EGO CAN GRASP IT; IDENTIFY WITH THE STILLNESS
- # EGO AS A SELF-ACTUALIZING PROCESS OF THOUGHT WHICH BELIEVES IN ITS OWN REALITY

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*], published 1984-1988. Some Paul Brunton quotes are, as of 2018, unpublished, and are noted as such.

NOTE: Earlier transcript versions exist.

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1982 09/08 at Wisdom's Goldenrod

PB Paras; Ego

Readable Edited Transcript

PB PARAS ON EGO; THREE LEVELS OF SUBJECT CORRELATED WITH THREE LEVELS OF ASTROLOGY; EGO APPROPRIATES THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS AS ITS OWN

[Audio File 1982 0908a Begins]

(Q: Class ran for about 1/2 hr. reading quotes (below) and discussing the ego in terms of the natal chart before Anthony joined the discussion, at #453 on tape counter. Excerpts from the essay "PB: A Talk on Ego" and from Tim & Devon's PB notes were also read at the beginning of the class.)

PB: "The need of self-humbling . . ." (18d.3 (ew1/126/1) 18.3.2)

PB: "To describe the ego as "little" . . ." (8z-blk.3 (rvls/549/1) 8.4.104)

PB: "The humility needed . . ." (18d-sp.4 (4v/87/13) Persp. p. 225 & 18.3.20)

PB: "The ego knows that . . ." (8d.a (11g/31/49) 8.3.53)

PB: "To trace the ego . . ." (8e-lair.a (11g/52/38) 8.4.387)

PB: "The "I" thinks: . . ." (8b-so.a (11g/11/4) 8.2.63)

PB: "The "I" gets angry . . ." (8d.g (11g/27/121) 8.3.40)

PB: "It is not a change . . ." (8z-path.g (11g/25/111) 8.4.168) (Q: followed by 2 minute discussion)

PB: "How can a man . . ." (8.1.158) (Q: followed by 9 minute discussion)

PB: "What is the ego but the Overself surrounded with barriers, conditioned by its instruments--the body, the feelings, and the intellect--and forgetful of its own nature?" (8a.g (11g/30/6) (8.1.6))

RC (excerpt): In these quotes we can equate the ego with the natal chart, the way we think about the natal chart as representing this system of conditioned instruments--producing the body, the feelings, and the intellect. Our natal chart is a system of complexes, a system of planetary functions in a particular position, imposing a particular point of view.

I'm thinking of the seven Chaldean planets on certain degrees. When we have a planet on a degree we would say that the ordinary level that we operate on, either unreflectively or reflectively, objectifies itself on the opposite degree--there's a dualistic consciousness that operates (that's set up) there that necessarily involves a subject in relation to an object. But the last part of this quote seems important--the "forgetful of its own nature" part. It seems to be very different to speak in terms of an individual whose chart is a vehicle to express the real being that he or she know he is, than to speak of a person who has the same tendencies and the same impulses but doesn't know what they express.

If you have one of the trans-Saturnians come around and sit on that degree you may have the opportunity to experience THAT VERY SAME DEGREE with an entirely different kind of consciousness instead of experiencing that in the bifurcated mode as ego and its world.

(more student discussion)

JL: It sounds like they're talking about two levels of the ego.

RC: No, I think this is the same level, that the fact that you are forgetful of your nature is what makes that center seem empty. If you were aware of your nature it probably wouldn't seem so empty.

AD: The trans-Saturnians functioning through the ego is forgotten. Whenever you have the superior consciousness operating through the categories, then that's forgotten. Like, for instance, if you take the example when Einstein woke up in the morning and clearly understood the ideas: it was taken over, let's say appropriated, by the ego and considered to be a result of the ego's functioning. And so at that moment when the Higher consciousness was operating, it was forgetful of its own origin. Once it comes through the categories of the imagination, and the ego is very strong, it will appropriate that superior consciousness as its own, and say, "That was ME thinking it out."

PC: Anthony, what can you say about the Rational Soul operating through the categories?

AD: Well, that's always trying to correct and reform and perfect the ego. If we say that the ego represents the structure of the planets at the moment of birth, the interrelationship is the way Randy said, he said there is a bifurcation that's going on in the Chaldean set; by the way that's ongoing, that will go on forever. So you have a planet sitting on a point, on a degree, and it expresses itself objectively insofar that we understood, and there you have the bifurcation. Now the Rational Soul is always circumventing, always going around that, and it's trying to make necessary additions, subtractions, whatever's necessary. So it's always trying to perfect the ego. That's part of the mental perfection that he's speaking about.

PC: So that would be included within the ego.

AD: The ego is being built up. It's being developed to the ultimate degree possible by the Rational Soul.

PC: You would include the Rational Soul itself within the ego?

AD: No. That's correcting the ego. So if you have a Saturn in a dignity and power sitting on (this appropriate) (Q: or "a mis-appropriate") Mars, it's trying to correct the shadow functioning, bring some order there. So it would be the Rational Soul, that would be the mental, trying to correct the categories of the imagination. But then the spiritual would be the trans-Saturnians also coming in and trying to bring in their light into the ego. But he says, strangely enough, that the Superior Consciousness when it comes into the ego structure gets appropriated by the ego and then the ego considers it as its own functioning. That's where it is very cunning. So you know, if a big idea comes into you, you say "I got an idea." You were given the idea; you don't have it.

RG: I don't know how much you want to pursue the astrological part of the discussion, or not . . .

AD: Well, I only do it because it helps me to understand a little bit, you know, to classify what he's talking about.

RG: OK good. So in that context though, we also talk about the Chaldean planets as Rational Soul powers, and if Rational Soul powers are not the ego, then we're saying at some point the Chaldean planets are the ego, and at some point they're not.

AD: Let me try this way. At the moment of birth, there's a fixed aspectual relationship between the seven planets which reveals something about that ego. The first thing we have to recognize is that there was a kind of universal life surrounding the world, we call it the dragon, and that your life is a particle from that universal life. Now, in itself, that's the ego. But when the series of thoughts or the ego says, "This is my life," as soon as that ego structure says, "This is my life," it has appropriated, separated itself from (Q: inaudible), and that is the fixed ego structure, fixed in the sense that the possibilities are fixed, you're not going to think about anything but you're going to think according to certain lines. The aspects show the way that's going to manifest. Alright? This is very important. There's a universal life system that pervades the Earth, and at the moment of birth you are, so to speak, separated out. We should really say we're distinguished from that universal life, but the ego says, "No, I'm different from everyone else." That's the separation. So everything that takes place within the functioning of the seven Chaldean planets and the aspects they have, that's within the ego. OK?

RG: But it still seems that the appropriation of that structure as yours is different than the structure itself. In other words, the distinguishing of the structure is part of the universal life which we allow as possible in our development.

AD: But then that's a false assumption, isn't it? But then it's inherent in what? "That this is MY life," is a false assumption, it's inherent in what?

RG: It doesn't seem to be inherent in that structure.

AD: Oh, but that's it; that's where it IS inherent. It's inherent in the very thought processes that it generates.

RG: Ah, but if it's inherent in the structure itself, then there'd be no possibility of getting free of it, getting free of that identification. So it has to be extrinsic to the structure itself.

AD: No. The notion that you as an ego are separate from everyone else is inherent in that very way of functioning and not something imposed upon you by the universal life.

RG: I agree with that. But then how do you get out of the fact that if it's inherent in the thing . . .

AD: How do you get out of it . . . Go to Saturday's class. (Q: Saturday = epistemology/Astronoesis)

VM: You get free because you're more than just that structure.

AD: The way you get free of it would be the accumulating and climactic effect that the Rational Soul has on the ego and the Super-Rational Soul has on the ego. That's the way you'd ultimately get out of it.

RG: But we're talking about the Rational Soul as the transits of the Chaldeans, right? And in that context there's a magical transformation of the natal Chaldeans also in which there's a realization that in fact that structure is part of the universal life and is not separate from it.

AD: Yes, in other words the ego's becoming rational, or let's say it's assimilating rationality.

RG: So we have this understanding of the Chaldeans in two ways; on the one hand you're calling it the ego . . .

AD: No, only when it's fixed in the aspectual relationships at the moment of birth. That's the ego. Because if you've got a square, let's say a one-degree square between two planets, at that moment of birth, that is a fixed structure that your ego is operating with. In other words, the matrix of thoughts which gets generated will always be rooted in that square.

RG: I agree with that. But is it utterly necessary that the person identify with that square, and say "It is my square." And it isn't just the square.

AD: Well, as long as he's operating within he's going to say, "It's my square"--If he's operating within the seven Chaldean's structure, as long as he's within that he'll say, "That's me. That's mine."

RG: Right, but when he gets out of that he'll see that it isn't.

AD: Yes.

RG: But it's a funny paradox, because those seven same planets then become, not that identified ego, but become rational.

AD: No, it still remains the ego of that soul, it remains the field within which that soul will manifest and develop the potentialities that are in that ego.

RG: But he doesn't seem to take it as MINE at that point.

AD: Have you noticed that? Your development usually means you have to forget the mine. You can't be thinking that I'm doing this when you're doing something. If we took a classical example, you have, like we said, an exalted Saturn or in dignity, well aspected, it sits on your Mars, alright. Now we're speaking about the transiting Saturn, and some correction is made within the ego structure. But it will always be in terms of those contents. Those contents remain what they are. The adjustments or the rationalization of the ego, its growth, is by the action or the activity of the other planets on it. I mean by that the transiting planets. Otherwise, let's say Saturn goes on your Venus, it wouldn't mean anything. So very simply, if we could put it this way? Let's have you reread those things, and I'll show you the way I interpret them, the way I could pigeon-hole my understanding. It's loose, it's flexible, I'm not worried. Why don't we read over quickly.

PB: "What is the ego but the Overself surrounded with barriers, conditioned by its instruments--the body, the feelings, and the intellect--and forgetful of its own nature?" (repeat)

AD: Just try to recall the explanation the way I gave it.

RC: So, you could say the planets as Soul Powers are the Overself. But if you put them into some fixed aspectual relationships with each other, now it becomes conditioned. Its powers have become conditioned. And that structure of conditioned powers is what brings about the body, the feelings, the intellect.

AD: And it must work through those things.

RC: And now the introduction of its being forgetful of its own nature is like the clinging to these aspects?

AD: Well, if we recall, we said that the life from the trans-Saturnians or the Superior Consciousness which gets involved in that ego structure loses sight of its own origin. Just like when Einstein had this great idea, this modalized Universal Knowing came into his ego structure, it lost fact of its origin. And then Einstein's ego took it over and said, "This is mine." (Q: last word cut off.)

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0908a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AD: . . . You will not say it's from your Higher Consciousness, you will think it's something coming from within you. But Beethoven was wiser, wasn't he? He said, "I do not create; I only bear witness to the creation that takes place in the Soul."

PC: Anthony, when you say it loses sight of its origin, are you saying the EGO loses sight of its origin?

AD: No, I'm saying that that moment that you experience yourself as a Superior Consciousness is immediately or swiftly forgotten.

PC: By the ego?

AD: No, it wouldn't be by the ego. That Higher Consciousness which comes into you and is an illuminating factor in the ego, in regard to the contents within the ego, that loses sight of its origin, and then the ego immediately appropriates it as its own. Go over it in your mind because otherwise the next and the next will not make sense.

PC: But we say on the other hand that the Overself itself is never deluded by the ego's functioning. But you say it's not the ego which loses sight, so what is it that forgets?

AD: You see, you're coming again from a theoretical point of view, and I'm trying to ground it in an actual case, the actual example that we're dealing with. Now, if you took any chart we were talking about, when there were trans-Saturnian aspects going on, and this greater knowledge came into the person, it was immediately appropriated by the ego, and that greater knowledge which belonged to a greater source forgot itself. Now don't go back to another theoretical formulation because that's not going to help. Now you're going to ask me to go into the metaphysics of the Overself. I don't want to do that. I just want to stick to what the ego is. That's all I want you to see very clearly, WHAT THE EGO IS. And Einstein was a good case in point because--for those of you who remember--he got up one morning, he had a clear transparent understanding of what it was all about. At that moment the ego took it over and it was the ego's property. That's appropriation by the ego. It's like, once it gets into that circle of the categories of the imagination, it's like a quagmire: it goes in but it's never going to come out, except the way the ego makes it come out.

RG: So to paraphrase, you're saying the ego basically equals the Chaldean planets when operating as the categories of the imagination. But when the Chaldeaans are operating as the Rational Soul Powers, that's not the ego . . .

AD & RC: . . . that's the Rational Soul.

AD: And you can see the mental development that is being forced upon the ego by the Rational Soul constantly, without interruption.

BS: Would you say that's after the appropriation has taken place, that the Rational Soul's functioning refines the contents of the ego?

AD: No, that's a different thing, Bert. The development and the refinement of the ego is taking place because you're constantly having aspects going on. That's the development by the Rational Soul. But the other thing we were talking about was when the higher knowing comes into a person, that there's an appropriation of that higher knowing by the ego. The reason why I'm emphasizing this is to show how the ego can take over the higher knowledge and insist that it belongs--it is ITS Knowledge, it is ITS Being, that IT is spiritual. That's the whole point.

RG: Right, the IT arises through the categories of the imagination, not through the Rational Soul powers. That's the . . .

AD: Egotism.

RC: The egotism. That's the distinction you are making between the two levels of the Chaldeans. Now the ideal would be when the Rational Soul powers do their transits, they would make the natal chart into that also, and we are allowing for that possibility too. And then it would be Rational.

AD: Exactly, but that's what he spoke about when he spoke about the need to perfect the ego and develop it. Let's read another one. Just go over them quickly.

MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

PB: "How can man fully express himself unless he fully develops himself? The spiritual evolution which requires him to abandon the ego runs parallel to the mental evolution which requires him to perfect it." (repeat, 8.1.158)

AD: OK? Now the spiritual evolution would be the trans-Saturnians which require abandoning the ego and the Chaldean or the Rational Souls are demanding that it gets fulfilled.

RC: And it seems to me that the degree to which the abandonment is accomplished has a lot to do with the degree to which the perfection will be accomplished. That the more impartial you can be towards your own ego, and look at yourself as if you were somebody else, and see how you measure up to your own inner standards, that the more capable you'll be of perfecting it.

AD: Yes.

RC: But if you're stuck inside of it, then its purpose becomes you! In fact you don't have to do anything in it.

AD: Isn't that what we try to do on Monday nights when I ask the boys to make a dossier, or a brief portrait of the seven Chaldean planets? What I'm asking is really try to make a picture in your mind of the way this ego is organized and the way it functions because of the basic organization that it's operating with. Once we get that, then we could see how the trans-Saturnians are affecting it. But not until we get a dossier or this thumbnail picture of the way this person's ego is. So when we were studying Emerson and we were putting together some of the ego structure of the person, we begin to see that it has - Pace Buddhism, Pace Vedanta, I mean to say this is almost criminal - that there's something really worthwhile

built into the structure of the ego if we know what to do, instead of deriding it, kicking it out, saying it doesn't exist, it's illusory, this, that, and the other thing. OK? Follow the point?

AH: You seem to be making a very subtle distinction which I'm having trouble grasping. The parallel evolution of this ego and the spiritual. And they work in unison in some way.

AD: Yes.

AH: But they also are in conflict continually.

AD: No, they're not in conflict. A man that is approaching a spiritual level of integrity, I think you'll always find they are very humble and simple men. (Q: inaudible) So that's not a conflict, that seems to be that as a man mentally is getting perfected, alright, there's a spiritual distance from that ego that's being evolved. There's no conflict there.

AH: So this is the development of the ego in the context of a spiritual path. Not the development of the ego in the context of genius or . . .

AD: No, that would be included. A person is developing all the potentials that's within his ego. Let's take a Michelangelo or Da Vinci, alright? There's inherent in the very structure of his personality this potentiality for genius and he develops it. But if he starts saying, "Ain't I the greatest?", then he's egotistical, now you say this is egotism. This you don't need.

AH: As a matter of fact in his case he went back and carved on his statue... "I made this." I'm really confused. I don't know what it means to talk about...

AD: The development of the ego, and spiritual freedom from it: what else could you develop?

AH: We develop that which prevents us from our spiritual birthright?

AB: Before you made this point, that as soon as there's a higher point of view operating, the ego appropriates it. Now when we speak of the abandonment of the ego, aren't we really speaking of not appropriating the higher as the lower? So the ego's still there, the ego's still functioning, but on this path that's spiritual, the higher, you let go of the appropriation by the ego of the higher, so that the ego goes on but you don't say "Oh, I did that or I did that." So in terms of Andrew's question, the mental development within the ego still goes on but the attachment or the appropriation by it is what's given up in the spiritual.

AH: Well, then the conclusion would be that the mental development is not, after all, in conflict with the spiritual development.

AD: Exactly, exactly. That's one of the things we've been hammering away, for a long time.

AH: But that contradicts the quote we read about a half hour ago.

AD: That to go into a cave and shut the doors to everything that has been beneficial and influential towards the development of the ego, is not unspiritual. I think it's the other way around! When certain organizations insist you don't listen to music, you don't have no art, this that and the other, I think THEY'RE unspiritual.

HS: Yeah, but mental development you wouldn't say it's necessarily spiritual. It's just mental development. Spirituality just seems to be like an X factor.

AD: But can you imagine trying to explain Prasangika to a Neanderthal? You have to be mentally developed.

HS: No I don't see the necessary correlation between mental and spiritual. . . .

AD: It's true that a mentally developed person doesn't have to become spiritual, but it's pretty hard for a person to become spiritual without a certain mental development.

HS: Well that I'd agree with. So like your example of the atomic bomb. If they were all Buddhas, then you could have an atomic bomb in every garage. There'd be no problem at all. The punch line is that we have to purify ourselves.

DB: In the quote he's speaking about spirituality as an abandonment of the ego. Doesn't the perfection of the ego seem to apply to growing development and understanding of the necessity for that abandonment?

AH: It can, it can, but under very special circumstances. But that's not a natural consequence of the perfection of the ego... you say well my ego is perfected enough now, that I'd better think about getting rid of it. I don't think that's a natural sort of. . . . (Q: inaudible comments between Andrew and David)

DB: Spirituality is to be understood as the abandonment of the ego. Then the perfection of the ego, the parallel mental development seems to imply the necessity for understanding that fact, that idea, and it would have to be able to bring it about.

RC: So the extent to which there is clinging to the ego within the center of an individual's consciousness, that will give you a pretty good index of that individual's spiritual development. It seems that what you're saying is that in the course of his spiritual development going on, the loosening of the clinging to the ego is what makes it possible to perfect the ego. Now why would that be? Isn't it because now you can objectify to yourself these impulses that you previously had been identified with and blind to?

DB: Yeah, I mean it seems to me that the functioning of an ego is understood as being more close to the purpose than not. It doesn't seem to me to be like you're just a better ego-maniac than you were a week ago. So you're actually capable of seeing it function, it's becoming a little bit more transparent, and it seems to me that . . . (Q: inaudible Randy and David) The other thing about this is that it seems that an ego that is interested in becoming more and more perfect, that mental development is a process of understanding itself, its relation to the world, and both of their relationships to reality.

BS: That's in a conceptual mode though, isn't it? Can't a person be spiritual and still put his name to the product? Isn't it possible to consider an objectification of the ego as his very development? If it wasn't objectified, it would stifle that development at least in part. So even if he throws his whole egocentricity into it, the very development would deny that egocentricity, and perhaps give it spiritual validity.

RC: Well, I think in trying to make himself into a legitimate anything, a legitimate artist, it seems he has to develop within his psyche all the skills, all the capacities, all the concentration that anyone would have. What would be the difference in terms of his becoming a spiritual man, would be the extent to which that

whole process was objective to him as an activity of the universal life force, and the extent to which it was him that was doing it as one person competing with other people who also call themselves artists.

HS: Could you say why you equate objectivity with spirituality here?

AD: Closer identification with the higher consciousness. Your ego becomes more objective to you the closer you're identified with the higher consciousness.

AH: Is that to say that perfection of this ego is actually when the ego becomes more and more spiritual?

AD: No. We made a distinction. The mental development of the ego is one thing. The spirituality is another. And they are parallel processes. As the ego is developing, there could be a detachment from that development and yet that development could go on.

AH: But that development of the ego is in no sense a spiritual one.

AD: It very well can be or not be. We have met people of extreme intellectual ability who use it for other purposes than spiritual ones.

AH: So in the context of this discussion when we speak about the perfection of the ego, we're speaking about the ego becoming more and more spiritual?

RC: It's not the ego thinking itself perfect, but the real individual perfecting the way the ego operates. It's not even that the ego would be thinking itself perfect.

AH: Well then, it's the real individual that's becoming more and more spiritual.

RC: As he becomes more spiritually advanced, he's capable of developing a more perfected vehicle for expression. (Q: inaudible) For the purpose of discussion we're going to pretend that we've got two very different things, an ego and a spiritual being, although hopefully when we get a little further down the road we'll be able to talk in terms of how it's really inappropriate to think of two minds here.

I think you'll see that they'll be a state of consciousness which will be coordinate with a particular kind of object, and it's going to be a sliding scale, but the kind of consciousness to which the object is the ego, or the kind of consciousness to which the ego can be an object, I just don't want to confuse that with ego consciousness.

HS: In the context of ego consciousness, when you speak of the "spiritualization," how is it done? What are you doing, do you just like read about the Overself and you become spiritual?

RC: OK. Now that's a whole different direction we could go in because he's talking about how basically the ego not only isn't going to succeed at doing this, but it's going to actively oppose your succeeding...

FLUIDITY MUST BE MAINTAINED AS TO WHICH LEVEL OF SUBJECT IS OPERATING

HS: When you say "YOU" in this sentence, who do you mean right there? You're talking directly to my Overself? To the conjunction? Or are talking to my conscious mind that's sitting there?

RC: To answer I'd have to say that as many levels of me as are addressing you that many levels of you are being addressed.

HS: OK. But let's say I've only got a very narrow consciousness. So I don't understand why this discussion subsumes the conscious mind's functioning. Why are we saying the conscious mind can't do this. It seems to me all we have is the conscious mind.

RC: You don't believe that. You think it's your conscious mind that tells you not to shake hands with this guy who wants to shake hands with you at the moment?

HS: I don't understand that mode of behavior. It's that of the instinctual that has been made conscious, yes.

RC: Has it been made conscious? Is the ego telling the conscious mind where to go? Are these instinctual reactions still pushing the conscious mind around?

HS: That's the question I'd like to address. It seems to me that the whole field is the conscious mind and if the instinctual reactions are pushing around the conscious mind, then something needs to be done in that area.

RC: Insofar as I can call this field "me"--this field which is objective, which is known--I'll put that in the conscious mind. But now I get this feeling, I don't know if it's me or what it is, but I'm inclined to do this thing, I don't know if it's me or not.

HS: OK. You'd like to say in this example that it's appropriate and it's from the higher. Now who tells? What's going to tell you that it's lower or higher.

AD: Herbie, let's go back, alright? We're taking this entity which we said was the creature that was born and is part of the universal life and distinguishes itself from that universal life, and we're referring to this as the ego structure. And within that ego structure, there is a bifurcation process of a subject and an object going on all the time. But this in itself is not conscious. There is no consciousness in it. Now, the next level the Rational Soul or the Superior Soul, the light of that, infuses, or let's say is diffused through, that ego structure. Now that ego structure appropriates that light and because it appropriates that light, it can say of itself, "I am me." So that means that there is a fluidity that has to be maintained as to what you're referring to when you say "I." Is it the "I" that is the result of the functioning within the ego-complex? Is it the "I" whose light, let's say, is diffused through the ego-complex's functioning? Or the Rational Soul? Is it a superior consciousness? You want the address and the box number and everything else. And there's only one way that that could be answered and that would be at the individual case that is occurring. Now you may be crossing the street, using your common-sense judgment, and everything is going fine, and the next moment you're about to cross the street, you suddenly for no reason at all decide not to cross the street, and there a car comes whizzing by, and you would have got killed. Now whose understanding was it that prevented it? Was it the ego's consciousness? In that case you'd know who the subject was who was delivering so to speak the right information and guiding you in that. But the question cannot be answered in this general way, alright, unless you bring a very specific point or instance to bear.

HS: I don't know what you mean, Anthony. It seems to me that--and I think specifically now, I think everyone, so to say, sits down, gets up, walks around, goes through their day. They've got their mind and they've got the stuff that enters in it. It seems to come from a lot of sources. OK?

AD: All of that is all within the ego-consciousness.

HS: OK. And his ego feeds his consciousness now. The ego seems to want to continue going.

AD: Alright, let's say it keeps perpetuating itself, sure, go ahead.

HS: OK. Now, I can't see how an individual has much more, and this might be too general, than his ability to think right on the spot.

AD: To what?

HS: Think, see, all these kinds of words, discern, discriminate, and that's what I'm trying to say is the conscious mind. I think most people sort of have one.

AD: Wait, wait, wait, wait Herbie. You gotta go over that 'cause I don't understand what you're saying.

HS: I'm just trying to locate the place of this discussion of how to find the ego.

AD: Well, Herbie, here's something you can do instead of keeping it so theoretical.

HS: I don't think it's theoretical.

EGO STRUCTURE AS PLANET ON A DEGREE AND ITS OPPOSITE; CERTAIN TRANSITS BRING THE POSSIBILITY OF OBJECTIFYING THE EGO

AD: One of the ways of handling this is: look at every planet sitting on a degree, study it and see the way it subjectively functions and the way it objectively manifests. And within the realm of those seven, you will find the ego that you're looking for.

HS: And will I find it in my everyday existence? Or AS my everyday existence?

AD: That IS your everyday existence. That's what you KNOW of yourself. This is what you think you ARE.

HS: And I'll find it by looking at the planets?

AD: Just by studying very carefully the manifestation of those meanings with which you were born with. That will give you your ego structure, highly predictable . . .

HS: I've got no problem with that, obviously we're all working down our grooves and our ruts. That seems to be terribly abstract. And I don't really take that line of thought here.

RG: If that's abstract, what's practical?

HS: This discussion right here, if we could get the practical aspects of it, your internal ability to discriminate your thoughts, feelings, emotions . . .

RC: Let's talk about the ego as this collection of thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas. Would you permit me to use a language where I could be very specific about the source of your thoughts, your feelings, your ideas, your emotions, your subjective sensitivity. That's the way to be close to the chart (Q: last words hard to hear, could be: "we could approach the chart"): it would be very specific about you, so that we didn't have to float in generalities.

HS: When we say “We’re going to be very specific about you,” . . . you’re telling me that it’s the looking at the chart that’s more immediate than the experience of the planets in your existence?

AD: It’s not more immediate, no, we’re not saying that. It’s a way of understanding the immediacy of your experience. So if we see that you have a Saturn squaring a Moon and I can almost say you are going to be depressed tomorrow, that’s not the immediacy, the immediacy is the depression you experience. But insofar that it shows the way your emotions and thoughts and feelings are organized, I can refer to that symbolically as basically your ego structure. Now that could get invaded, inundated...

HS: No, but that’s the symbolic representation of the ego structure...

AD: Yes, it isn’t your ego structure . . . no, the marks on a piece of paper are not your ego structure.

HS: OK. So when you want to have an analysis, and you say, “I would like to spiritualize my existence,” what does that mean?

RC: Let’s say we want to develop a kind of consciousness which is capable of objectifying the image. So, one of the things that we’re trying to do, if we use astrology as a means, is to say, OK, let’s sit down together, let’s look at this particular degree that you’ve got this particular planet on, can you at this moment manifest within yourself a kind of consciousness that could show you that your feelings tend to operate this way, that could show you that your life... We’re not trying to be abstract when we’re reading a chart. We’re sitting down together, and the astrologer’s asking you, “Can you at this moment manifest within yourself a kind of consciousness which is capable of seeing this apparently subjective functioning as an object? Can we get an interval between you and it?” He’s not asking you to logically come up with a syllogism that says VENUS conjunct this degree means this for a logical reason. He’s asking you to dip into a deeper level of consciousness.

HS: OK, let me see if I follow what you’re saying. An individual lives a certain amount of years, he has certain kind of experience, right? And they are qualitatively different, some thinking feeling willing experiences, I’m sure there’s one for each of the functions. Now you’re saying what about that? A planet goes on a degree, and in relation to your natal chart...

RC: Well let’s say that a trans-Saturnian goes onto a natal Chaldean degree. Let’s say there’s something that has normally been presented to you in a dualistic bifurcated mode, with a subject set up in contradistinction to an object, it might be able to become available to you as a universal truth in which it’s appreciated by a kind of consciousness that doesn’t operate in that bifurcated mode. So if we’re talking at a time when you’ve got URANUS opposite the SUN, then it would probably be appropriate to gear the discussion so that the knower in you could actually get some insight into how your Sun operates. It might not be a good day to talk about some other function.

AD: But the point is that at that moment you will objectively perceive the way your ego functions. A perception of that nature automatically calls into operation the higher consciousness.

HS: So you’re saying there’s a kind of knowledge that’s being made available in this mode of discussion that’s a presupposition of the present functioning?

AD: Can you say it simpler? So you perceive objectively the way your ego functions. Now, what were you saying?

HS: I don't understand that. I think there's made available a conceptual mode to think about it.

AD: Alright, alright, let's say in a conceptual mode, ok, that's good. And in a conceptual mode, you perceive the way your ego is functioning, OK? Before you couldn't see it at all but now conceptually you can perceive the way your ego functions. THAT'S A SPIRITUAL EFFORT. That's spiritual. Because it has detached you from the identification with the ego and put it at a distance. Even if it's only a few inches away.

HS: Would you say you could further . . .

AD: Oh, you could go much further, yes.

HS: OK, now is there any point where you abandon the conceptual modes and think about the existence directly? Is that a possibility?

RC: The moment that you see it objectively, during that moment you're not gonna take that as seriously as being you as you did before.

HS: What's the "that"?

AD: That functioning that you perceived as your ego. You saw that at that moment that wasn't you, at that moment you had an instance of higher knowledge. Why do you insist on denying it?

RC: Immediately the ego will jump right up and cover it right over. It seems to me to be the perfect time to slow the mind down with meditation, become more penetrating of the object.

AD: You see, Herbie, you got the idea that this is some kind of conceptual knowledge and I'm trying to point out it isn't. At the moment that you perceive the way your ego functions, that moment is not conceptual knowledge. That's real knowledge, not the highest but good. (Q: laughter)

HS: You say the moment you perceive the way that ego functions which is good knowledge. Now in relation to the planets on the degrees...?

AD: That's subjective functioning, the way the ego functions.

HS: The mode of seeing the way the ego functions that's...

AD: That's modeless. You say you SEE it. You're not using words to see it. You got this bugaboo that conceptual knowledge is always something that's operative, that you can't see with concepts, that in order for me to see a snake I gotta bring into my brain the word 'snake' and then I see it.

HS: I thought in order to see a snake you just look at the snake. The snake is right in front of you.

AD: Exactly. The moment that you see the way your ego subjectively functions, that moment you have spiritual knowledge. I'm not saying you're Brahman, alright? I'm just saying you have spiritual knowledge at that moment. It's the most elementary tenet of almost any psychology if they expect abreaction to operate. They want you to SEE.

HS: To see from the outside.

AD: Well, you can't see from the inside.

AH: That's not a question of manipulating contents within the ego.

AD: No, that's the point. It's not the manipulation of content within the ego, but getting outside of it.

AH: How do you tell the difference?

AD: Well, let's not worry about that now. Let's see if we understand that point.

AH: That's the only thing I am worried about. I don't have any other worries. (laughter)

AD: You will know that it is so because it's efficacious right then and there.

HS: Efficacious in that it's freeing? In that it's detaching? Is that the efficacy?

AD: Yes.

RC: It might be like that thing we read about last week where instead of it seeming like a great freedom, it might seem like a tremendous yawning emptiness that you want to run away from as quickly as possible.

AH: It also can seem like a counterfeit kind of illumination.

AD: It's not counterfeit. It's quite beneficial. It may not be a big satori that will blow your head off, but really this does have value.

RC: I read a thing the other night about this guy who was trying to break a cannon and he hit it with a hammer a hundred times. Finally after so many blows the cannon broke and they asked him which one broke it and he said "All of them."

AD: Did you get the point of the joke? That it takes a long time to get illuminated. And it's going to take a series of blows, a series of insights, maybe a few lifetimes of insights.

HS: Wang Yang-ming says it takes a hundred deaths and a thousand trials.

AD: We'll have to expand that a little bit--a thousand lives and a million trials, the way we are going. (Q: big laugh from class.) These are such obvious truths--all they require is a momentary disassociation.

HS: Are they obvious as obvious? Or are they just obvious after they're true? Isn't that the way truth is qualified by this simple--or upon knowing it?

AD: All they require is attention, that's all they require. (pause)

HS: I'm not satisfied.

AD: Alright, let's go on a little more. We hope to satisfy you before we are finished. YOU, Herbie, not your ego.

(Q: some mindless banter about the pros and cons of using astrology and then:)

"I" AND "ME"; DON'T CLING TO SPIRITUALITY

RC: Orange #11, p. 22, #67.

PB: "The movement upward from the ego's "me" to the real "I" consciousness is as sure as the movement of the planets themselves." (26d-c.3 (llg/22/67) (26.4.221))

RC: That's exactly what we are trying to do when we talk in terms of tying the development of the individual life into the flow of the cosmic life. The one above that:

PB: "The "I"-consciousness is the essence of the "Me," the seeming self." (8b.a (11g/22/64) (8.2.5))

RC: So I found that most useful (Q: hard to hear). It doesn't lend itself in my mind to a great deal of conceptualization. But to really focus on the difference between where I come from when I'm saying "I," and where I come from when I say "me," there's a big difference. I can become aware of things that have nothing to do with me.

JC: For instance?

HS: Name one, please?

JC: "The "I"-consciousness is the essence of the "Me," the seeming self."

RC: Yeah. He's calling the me, the seeming self.

AB: But the "I"-consciousness is its essence.

(Q: student discussion)

AD: Let's say the "I" is the Atma, alright? The light of the Atma shines through the ego structure, that's the "me." Or, astrologically, the light from the trans-Saturnians shining through the categories of the imagination, now it thinks itself to be a "me."

RC: (Q: repeats quote) Oh, here's a real nice one, we keep saying how. It's on the same page, p. 22, #71:

PB: "Within his heart, he may call or keep nothing as his own, not even his spirituality. If he really does not want to cling to the ego, then he must cling to nothing else. He is to have no sense of inner greatness, no distinct feeling of having attained some degree of holiness." (18e-how.4 (llg/22/71) (18.4.140//Persp. p. 225))

(Q: student comments, hard to hear)

AD: As soon as you say you're spiritual, the ego has taken over. Would you read the one in the brown vinyl, there's two of them there:

[Audio File 1982 0908a Ends]

[Audio File 1982 0908b Begins]

[Note: Some of quote may be cut off.]

GIVING UP THE EGO; DANGERS OF INFLATION; IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY

PB: “To give up the ego is to refuse to accept its dominance or to acquiesce to its thoughts. It is to regard the ego as the shadow masquerading as the light. But the mere holding of such a view does not result in the dismissal of the ego. For that, a long course of preparation and training and labor and discipline is required. This course is what we know as the quest. To give up the ego, one must begin by hating it, one must go on to an incessant struggle against it, and one must end by overcoming it.

“The aspirant must train himself to view his thoughts in the proper perspective, refusing to regard their insistent attractions and repulsions as his own. He must cultivate the habit of being an observer of his own thoughts and activities in the same objective way that he observes strangers in the street. He must regard himself with detachment and his experiences with calm, if he is to arrive at the truth of the one and learn the lessons of the other. While he clings to the possessive little ego, he clings also to fears and anxieties, discords and despair. He gets too emotionally involved in his personal problems and so obscures true issues, or distorts or magnifies them.

“However much a man may wish to free himself from the tyranny of the ego, he finds that wishing alone does not do it for him. Aspiration alone can not achieve it for him. It is because of this weakness in human nature due to the age old character of the ego’s life that the training and the discipline and the practices of the quest have been instituted. Through them he may be able to achieve what wishing alone is unable to accomplish.” (Q: (ew1/181/1-3) paragraphs 1 and 3 are neither typed nor published. Paragraph 2 is published in “Surrender of the Ego” essay, page 189. Note: ew1 is also bound in brown-jf.)

EC: It seems like from that quote the ego has to be built up to some degree to be able to approach the quest, doesn’t it?

AD: Yes, that’s what they were referring to before as the mental perfection of the ego, the mental development of the ego.

AH: So one aspect of this training is his continual attempt to observe one’s own motivations, actions in the same kind of dispassionate way that you can observe a stranger’s.

RC: To see that square operating as that square, I’d have to be in a somewhat impartial consciousness to be able to see it.

AH: That’d be a certain level of objectivity.

Louis: Also like that other quote he read last week where he said, “Stop a hundred times a day and try and look at yourself.”

RC: He says if it’s mechanical it won’t work; you really have to fill that stopping with a current from the heart, a real desire to see. But if you just stop mechanically, it becomes a habit within the ego.

AH: But initially, it’s a question of manipulating contents within one’s own imagination.

RC: It’s usually helped by the fact that the part of your mind which is not the conscious mind comes out and you relate to it by projecting it onto someone else who might have some information for you or might live in an exemplary manner. One reason or another for a certain period of time you take one kind of structure or another from that person. But that again--the conscious mind isn’t doing it, it’s not the conscious mind choosing to project the guru projection onto this fellow or not. It’s not your conscious mind that’s doing that. But the part of you that does make that projection, that takes either a writer or a

teacher of any kind as an authority, it's having a very strong effect on the way the conscious mind does behave.

AH: Yes, that's certainly so. But accuracy is not guaranteed. It's not as if everything unconscious is correct. I mean people have projected that on perfectly silly...

RC: It's interesting that one of the ego's real tricks is leading you to false teachers. That's why the real teachers usually don't get bothered very much. Most people just do it to affirm their egos.

AH: I'm still looking for a way of validating this alleged objective experience that we're always having. How do we validate it? What criterion, because the extreme of that is the possibility of living in a magical consciousness...

AD: There are a couple of ways, Andrew. One way is speaking to a teacher or someone who you regard as a friend in spiritual matters. Another way is to watch the consequences; that's always very revealing. A third is to use your reason, common sense--that's another way. But basically a teacher will tell you. He might not put it very bluntly, it depends on the teacher. He might say "Well, that's not really the way it is, it's the other way." But what you say is true, you know, you come out of mystical experience with a vision that you are the new messiah, and someone has to put you in your place. Now, you can go the hard way, you can go out with a sign and say, "The world's ending tomorrow," and walk in front of the Washington, D.C. White House, or you can go over to your teacher and say, "Well that's just the ego interpreting the experience that it has and it got very inflated." The ego will be right there, right along side the spiritual experience misinterpreting it, don't worry. You'll find out.

VM: Can I read this quote to support what you're saying?

PB: "The student must beware of the cunning disguises of the retreating ego. He must beware of its self-flattery pretending to be the Overself's flattery. He must be aware of any "mission" to which he is appointed. If the inner voice promises him a remarkable future, whether a spiritual attainment or a worldly triumph, disbelieve it. Only if it makes him humbler and meeker should he believe it." (p. 185, "Surrender of the Ego" essay & (ew1/135/1))

AD: That's even a better criteria, isn't it? Makes you humbler. That's the criteria.

AH: That has a correct clue to one's path, if it leads to a situation of humility and being made humble.

AD: At least you know the ego isn't taking over.

AH: You could be sure of that much.

AD: Let's have a few more.

NON-MODAL SEEING

NH: I was wondering. We were talking about seeing the ego's functioning objectively, and I'm wondering if just by seeing it, it becomes available. In other words those barriers we were talking about in that one quote, does that suddenly break down a barrier or two?

AD: By “seeing,” you know what is meant? Maybe we should have ask Herbie, by “seeing,” what do we mean?

HS: I would say you mean kind of a “seeing through” to the actual meaning-knowledge present in an event.

AD: “Seeing through” is good, Herbie. It’s like if you say that in the epistemological relationship you have: the object, the subject and the seeing, alright. You notice the strange thing about “seeing,” it includes both. That would be seeing. If you don’t “see” that way, you haven’t seen. It’s just the ego functioning. Follow? “Seeing” includes both the subject and the object. By “seeing,” that’s what I mean. I don’t know what you mean. If you say, “I see something,” that’s not the “seeing” that’s going to bring about the detached, impersonal objectivity that we are calling for. The I, the ego, when it sees something, you do not have detachment, objectivity. It’s only “seeing” that will show that the ego has (Q: as?) a subject and the object that it claims to perceive. It’s only when you truly “see” will you see that they are two sides of the same coin.

HS: And you said before it doesn’t have a mode, it’s non-modal?

AD: That that SEEING is non-modal. It’s neither subjective nor objective.

AH: Should we try to understand that SEEING that you described as a continual aspect of our experience?

AD: No, that’s not continual.

AH: It’s a rare occurrence in our experience?

AD: It’s not that rare but it depends. Again, it’s a general question. I can’t answer it. You’d have to tell me who you’re referring to.

AH: Are you equating that SEEING with SATORI?

AD: Yes, it can be a satori. It can also be a moment, an insightful moment in the daily life. Don’t make these things so mysterious and religious and put monk’s robes on them and have temples built. They go on all the time!

AH: It just seems to me, Anthony, forgive me for pursuing this, that any objectification of that ego is not a very normal sort of occurrence.

AD: Yes.

AH: But we seem to be talking about it as if it happens maybe once or twice a week.

AD: IT MIGHT IF YOU LISTEN! IT MIGHT EVEN HAPPEN ONCE OR TWICE A DAY! Why are you trying to quantify what I’m saying? These things happen. I’m just trying to make it as prosaic as possible, so that you stop thinking that it belongs somewhere in the Himalayas. I’m talking about what is going on all the time. You don’t have to be a genius like Einstein and have the theory of relativity. Why do you people insist on making these things so mysterious?

AH: It’s just that on the one hand we speak of this ego as being such a...

AD: So clever, yes. And on the other hand, you've been here ten years and you've been listening to me ranting and raving. That too counts, doesn't it?

RG: No.

AD: No, Richard? (big laugh) I surrender. It happens, it happens. And it's better that you keep a positive outlook about these things so that you can defend yourself in class. I mean YOUR class. (laughter)

EC: Anthony, that seeing is non-modal, but it's the higher "I". Isn't that the higher "I"?

AD: Sure it's the higher "I". But now you already put a roadblock, "It's the higher "I," it won't happen to me. Let me get back to my ego way." It's just like when we used to say YOU think hardness into existence, and Dickie used to say, "ME? I do no such thing." Come on, let's resume.

ONLY SOMETHING THAT TRANSCENDS THE EGO CAN GRASP IT; IDENTIFY WITH THE STILLNESS

RC: A lot of them could be read. One at a time the next few aren't real big ones in themselves but they build up: (Orange Vol. 11, p. 34, #38:)

PB: "All your thinking about the ego is necessarily incomplete, for it does not include the ego-thought itself. Try to do so, and it slips from your hold. Only something that transcends the ego can grasp it." (8b-so.4 (llg/34/38) (8.2.66//Persp. p. 96))

RC: That's what I think we've been trying to talk about with the "seeing," the difference between being inside and thinking about it, but not being able to objectify the ego-thought with that kind of discursive consciousness.

AH: Is he talking about the objectification of the ego-thought per se rather than any content associated with that thought? Now what do you think that thought per se is?

RC: OK, that's what I've been trying to talk about, exactly that. Where does this sense of "me" come out. I am aware of it as being not the same as the sense of "I," and that's been the most fruitful approach to me is to really try to focus on that and see that there is a difference in watching myself in the course of the day.

HS: So how would you character it?

RC: One is characterizable, the other isn't.

HS: OK, so how would you characterize the character?

RC: There are a number of ways. It's got a Venus-Moon-Pluto conjunction, it's got Saturn conjunct the Moon, it's got squares to Mars...

HS: That's how you would...

RC: Sure, I could sort them out pretty well. On one level at least.

HS: You characterize it by looking towards those aspects and their relationship to your chart.

RC: It helps. When I'm looking at what is going on right now in me. I try to relate that to the symbolic system of the chart with planets and degrees and say can I find these meanings actually operating in me.

HS: You're trying to find how in your conceptual, emotional affective life these meanings are operating.

RC: Yeah, I tend to work backwards. I don't try to go from a conceptual understanding I have and then tell myself what my life experience should be, but I look at my life experience and say do these names and these labels and the meanings I've associated with them have any value in helping me understand what's actually happening there.

HS: You mean in the degree symbols. At any time do you actually just try to analyze your way out of an emotional state? But you say the first way you start is to look at it and say what aspect it is.

RC: In my particular structure that's a little easier because I got a Moon-Saturn conjunction. So for me to wonder why other people have as much difficulty disciplining their emotions, it's hard to appreciate psychologically. I think anybody that's had Saturn on their moon would realize they might experience it negatively as depression or they might experience it joyously as having a moment of emotional self-control. There's a big difference in trying to universalize the psychology of my planetary configurations and trying to understand how these principles are working in someone else's chart.

HS: You have like this felt "me," right, in this congerie [sic; congeries] of thoughts feelings and emotions... this is what you're doing?

RC: That is the self.

HS: That's the self and you're trying to isolate it in there? I'm just trying to get a technique so I could do it. You know what I mean? And then you look at the chart and you see what? You say, "Oh, that's an objective process and it shouldn't be, or that's an objective process and that's why it is"?

RC: I try to abstract the meaning out of it; I try to look to the degree symbols, see what the idea is, what the thought is...

HS: But what about the immediate identification with the mood, with the petulance or something like that?

RC: It doesn't go away.

HS: Or with the mother complex some of us might have.

RC: I'm trying to back out of it, and look at it, and objectify it. Like when you're walking down the street, you're in the middle of a crowd and there's a lot of movement. Let's say you know the names of some of those people.

HS: OK, you're walking down your psyche, and you're in the middle of a bunch of complexes...

RC: And you know the names of a few of them. And as soon as you put a name on them, it's not "I".

AH: I see. That's how you hold a distinction between "me" and "I".

HS: Could it ever be that as soon as you put the name on it, it could appropriate the naming itself? Isn't that possible?

RC: Yeah, that's why I've been really trying to stress this thing of how the quality of consciousness is really different between when you see it and when you don't. And I think it really requires a great deal of self-honesty to admit to yourself when you see and when you don't.

HS: OK, when you say you see it what do you see? Do your Moon Saturn conjunction; you said you saw an emotion operating? What did you see just then?

RC: Well, early in life I saw a tendency to really squash my emotional life, not to live it at all.

AD: May I ask you to read it again?

PB: (reread) "All your thinking about the ego . . ."

AD: Basically we would say that within the structure of the ego-complex you cannot grasp it. That at the very most what you would get would be an aspect of the way it functions, but you wouldn't be able to grasp the ego-thought itself because you have to step outside of that.

RC: So you can read the degree symbols inside the ego, you can read the ephemeris inside the ego, but you can't SEE inside the ego.

AD: No, because you're inside doing that. You have to get outside. And that means that you'd have to identify with the calmness or the stillness, right Herbie?

HS: Yes.

AD: But who wants to be calm and still when we could have so much agitation and activity going on up there?

HS: OK, that there could be real calm or real stillness, is that presented to the ego's thinking or does the ego's thinking get juxtaposed to that kind of peace?

AD: Well, if it's a real calm, what are you talking about? If you're calm, if you're still, what are you talking about?

AH: Is it appropriate to say "I am calm"?

AD: No, because then you're agitated. If you say anything you've already produced all the agitation you need.

RC: He says here,

PB: "The egoist has as much chance of finding real peace of mind as the historian has of finding truth in politics." (8z-ism.g (11g/11/7) (8.3.150)) (laughter, then re-read)

HS: OK, but would you say that "calm abiding" is the mode that you use?

AD: If you want to know the ego.

HS: There's no way you could ever gain any sort of knowledge of it?

AD: Knowledge of the ego?

HS: Yes.

AD: The ego itself cannot be known. What he's saying there is that the ego itself cannot be known from within the ego.

RG: It can only be known from that calmness.

AD: From outside.

RG: Right, from the calmness it can be seen as an object. That's the way it can be known.

AH: I thought that "seeing" subsumed subject and object. You just said it can be known as an object.

RG: Yeah, the whole subject-object situation is known. Don't say 'object,' --it's the word. It's given. It's seen.

AH: So then the ego is not known as an object.

RG: If you want to get hung up on the word 'object,' no, it's SEEN. As the subject-object of what you were doing.

AD: In other words, the ego and its image-activity, its imaginal activity, are both present. Instead of saying subject and object, say the ego and its image-activity. The activity of the ego is to make images.

AH: That's present.

AD: Yeah, that would be present while you're still. Because if you're still, if you're calm, then you are the higher consciousness.

AH: That presence is not to be construed as any kind of dualistic circumstance. It's not like you have a higher subject and a higher object.

AD: No, it isn't that you have a higher subject and a higher object. No, it isn't like that at all.

AH: That would be impossible, logically.

AD: Yes. Because then you can go on doing that forever.

DD: Is it a seeing in calmness or is it noted as that which disturbs or interrupts calmness?

AD: No, it's a "seeing," the way I used the term 'seeing' which includes subject-object relationships. And that seeing is very very calm. There's no agitation because it's not a seeing on the part of the ego. It's not a seeing that the ego has. When they speak about the Prajna-eye sees, you're not to think of another eye in the middle of your head looking out at the ego and its world. It's seeing in the sense that we spoke about before, that subsumes both and includes them within itself. A little more on egotism and ego.

EGO AS A SELF-ACTUALIZING PROCESS OF THOUGHT WHICH BELIEVES IN ITS OWN REALITY

RC: These are all from Orange Vol. 11, p.11, #1:

PB: "The ego is a knot tied in the psyche of our inner being, itself being compounded from a number of smaller knots. There is nothing fresh to be gathered in, for b-e-i-n-g is always there, but something is to be undone, untied." ((11g/1/2) (8.3.1))

PB: "If we have written of the ego as if it were a separate and special entity, a fixed thing, a reality in its own right, this is only because of the inescapable necessities of logical human thinking and the inexorable limitations of traditional human language. For in FACT the "I" cannot be separated from its thoughts since it is composed of them, and them alone. The ego is, in short, only an idea, or a trick that the thought process plays on itself." (8b-est.4 (11g/5/34) (8.2.46//Persp. p. 101))

AD: How'd you like that? "It's a trick that the ego plays on itself." Would you read that again?

RC: (Rereads)

HS: I don't like that at all. (laughter)

AD: I don't blame you, Herbie.

AB: There's a couple other quotes right in that section where he says that the only reality that the ego has is the reality of a thought. Now, within the thought process that produces the ego, the ego seems to be more than a thought. It seems to be the holder of the thought or the producer of the thought. Wouldn't that be the sense in which it was a trick played on itself?

AD: It's a thought that believes in itself.

HS: So Alan, you would say that your ego is inside the continuum, right, the mental stream, and it appropriates parts of it.

AD: It IS the continuum, not inside the continuum. Within the functioning of a matrix of those possibilities, one of them is that it's going to believe in its own validity. You've seen that in many psychotics, right, "I'm Napoleon!"

HS: And it's an objective process? Like the way a circle might inhere in an object?

AD: I don't know what you mean.

AB: The ego is a thought just like all the other thoughts but in my everyday experience the ego seems to be the subject which has the thoughts, and the thoughts appear to belong to or relate to the ego. That is the sense in which it's a trick.

HS: But it's really an objective process, right?

AB: It's really another thought.

HS: So is it objective in the sense that when we look at a garbage can, say, and you see a circle inhering in it...

AB: But it's not objective to me normally. I see the garbage pail, but I think I'm seeing it. That's the trick.

AD: If the ego's a bunch of thoughts that are constantly externalizing themselves, then one of the things that they have a belief in is in its own reality. What's wrong? That's perfect. That's what's going on all the time.

HS: Perfect?

AD: It's a perfect description. The ego's a bunch of thoughts constantly externalizing and manifesting themselves and corporealizing themselves and believing in itself. What's wrong? Isn't that a perfect description of our behavior?

HS: I think the whole thing is wrong. But the description is quite accurate.

AD: It's accurate, yeah.

HS: I think the interesting thing is that you've got this objective thought that could do a job on the whole thing, that a thought could actually appropriate, attach, keep you in bondage. This is an interesting kind of thought.

AD: That's why it has to be taken seriously. It's like a snake pit. Alright Randy, thank you.

DB: There's one problem and that is that it doesn't seem like the ego is one thought amongst all the others.

AD: That's why I called it a matrix of possibilities actualizing themselves continuously and uninterruptedly and believing in that actualization.

DB: But the thing is it's the way each one of our thoughts appear. Like we have a thought; car, clothes, but each thought, as it appears, contains within it the assumption that it's appearing to an individual, separate, distinct center of consciousness.

AD: You could almost say that in the very instant where you have a subject-object relationship, that is a thought which would include both, you can almost say that at that very instant the matrix of possibilities or this nucleated structure of thought, the whole of it is present in that one instant and the next instant and the next instant. And so it goes on perpetuating its belief in itself, which, when we inquire into it, is enough to frighten us all. Remember what happened to David Hume? I told you the story. Well, he couldn't find no self in his perception, and he said, since philosophy's supposed to be some kind of pleasure, I'm not going to go on with this. So he played dominoes for the rest of his life. Thanks.

[Audio File 1982 0908b Ends]