

The educator who ignores the characteristics of independent being, and sees only in the world dependent being which transmits without modifying the forces which come to it, will always misunderstand essentials in education, for he will always translate the really spiritual action, which is always self-activity, into mere processes such as exist in nature. This is the difficulty with Herbart. He takes ordinary causality as the only causality. Ordinary causality receives and transmits force without adding any new elements to it.

This he shows in the most glaring manner by his fundamental theory of psychology, namely, that the mind does not form its ideas but possesses ideas already formed. These ideas act upon each other and produce modifications the one on another, much in the manner that fragments of rock, mountains of ice, and streams of water within a glacier produce modifications the one upon the other, and round pebbles and much else result. So, according to Herbart, the ideas from without collide with the ideas which are already stored up in the mind and new mental pebbles, so to speak, result. This, you see, is the concept of the ordinary causality applied to mind. It is a fundamental and radical misconception of the facts of consciousness, as anybody may perceive if he will practice reflection a sufficient length of time to get said facts of consciousness before his mind.

For ideas are universals and not particular objects in space and time. An idea must be held in the mind; may be recalled, always can be reproduced in the mind; it is a different order of being from the existent objects which the senses contemplate. Even the senses cannot contemplate the objects of nature without the aid of universals; even the animals, however little they may be

conscious of general ideas, have to use general ideas in order to perceive any object whatever.

This will be evident if we consider that a perception marks off a particular reality on a background of universal possibility. Any object, every object, is a limitation of this general possibility. It is this particular limitation and it excludes all other different forms. It is a rock and not a tree or a cloud; it is a bird and not an ox or a whale. On every object perceived or felt, or in any way apprehended by man or beast, there is a fringe of potentiality, a very deep and wide fringe perceived by man, a narrow one perceived by the animal. Even the earth worm of the garden perceives a margin of potentiality because he at once acts and proceeds to assimilate what he can of the elements of the soil. If he did not feel that there was an opportunity for modifying something he would not act. Even the worm, perhaps endowed with only one sense, that of feeling or touch, acts because of his ability to transcend in his feeling the actual limits of the object; for it is a potentiality perceived or felt and not a reality perceived or felt, which constitutes the basis of desire. The animal does not desire what is, but what is not; he desires a modification of what is, and could he not transcend the actual existence of his environment and feel or think some potentiality not yet realized, he would never desire at all.

Herbart, therefore, in admitting desire (*Begierde*) admitted a transcending self-activity in the soul; but he thought that feeling is a product of the interaction of ideas and not a manifestation of self-activity. Hence, although he did not deny desire he did deny will, because he saw that in admitting will he must admit self-activity.

Self-activity (*Selbst-Thätigkeit*) is