

The Principle of Indeterminacy and the Subjective Infinite

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To try to understand the nature of indeterminism we must study the nature of the *infinite* and consider its various meanings.

1) There is the indeterminate-infinite and subatomic physics. This shows only that strict determinism—in physics—has not been demonstrated, and that, at any rate, it could probably not be reached. Here we do not see the infinite as intimate value and reality.

2) There is the objective indeterminate-infinite, as when we talk of the infinite of space, of time, of the stars, of drops of water in the sea, of grains of sand. The objective infinite does not constitute a value in itself, but it can represent an incentive, an occasion, a medium of expression for the intimate-infinite and for a value of originality.

3) Altogether different is the intensive indeterminate-infinite, that is, the infinite of identity (i.e. the interior, substantial, dynamic, subjective, intimate . . . infinite). This is deeply immanent in physic reality, or better still, it is all one with it. The terms “potentiality” (actually experienced), “uniqueness,” “undivided,” “identity of self with self,” “unity,” “internal universality,” “interior necessity,” “intrinsicity of nature,” “eternal,” (not in the sense of super- or extra-temporal), “intrinsic” . . . equally describe or imply either subjectivity, or an absolutely inherent active infinite.

“Potentiality,” as actually experienced reality, can indeed be another term for the principle of indeterminacy. A still better term, I would say, is that

of “infinite” (interior, subjective, dynamic, creative, qualitative infinite; infinite of identity, of intensity, of freedom—irreplaceable, vitally and essentially unobjectifiable, immeasurable).

Because it lacks form, it may seem as if we should deny the interior infinite of its reality—other than a reality of appearance or “epiphenomenon.” Form has a twofold reality: *eternal birth* and *abstract conservation*. (In other terms: “Plastic, creative, formative, active form,” and on the other hand: “formed, finite, static, limited, material form.”) Actually, the two aspects do not exclude one another at all. In form the *given*—the finite—must also ever be *not given*, a great expectancy: here is the secret of its delicacy, of its transparency and of its unity and value. It is, as it were, an interior contrast, this which gives life to form. The infinite of iden-

Leone Vivante was born in Parma, Italy, in 1887. In his various books—Principles of Ethics; Intelligence in Expression; Notes on the Originality of Thought; Studies on Precognitions; The Concept of Indeterminacy; English Poetry and its Contribution to the Knowledge of a Creative Principle; A Philosophy of Potentiality, most of which have appeared in English as well as in Italian—he stresses the underived, self-sustaining, originally active nature of psychic reality. He regards poetry, and English poetry in particular, as a corpus philosophiae unequalled in its richness. He was a friend of Santayana, Bosanquet and T. S. Eliot who wrote the preface to his book on English Poetry. He was in England from 1938 to 1946, and came to America on a lecture tour in 1952. His wife, Elena de Bosis, a painter, died in 1963. He has three sons and one daughter, and lives in the country near Siena.

¹ Dante: *Inferno*, Canto V, v. 135.