



A High Resolution Picture of the Observer ***Questions and Answers***

After further contemplation, our most recent revelations regarding the observer have been further modified. The precise locations of conscious me, pure conscious me and fundamental me that were defined in the last two articles remain unchanged. However, it is more accurate to make a clear conceptual distinction between the embodied essence-me (conscious me) and its expression as the functional identity of the observer, which is tied to the center of external attention. Therefore, after conscious me has been awakened, we will call the observer the ‘secondary center of the conscious me’. Obviously, while we have used this term before to describe the observer, its primary identity of conscious me now refers to slightly different center of me than was previously thought.

That observer can furthermore be regarded as a bridging-identity between the soul and the human, as the center of intelligence that both the soul and human share. The part of the observer that is wired into the mind and emotions represents our human sense of self in the mind, while its content free identity of external attention is of the soul. Based on this modified map of the soul, we can see it to be composed of seven centers: pure me of being, pure me of the heart and pure me of consciousness, fundamental me, pure conscious me, conscious me, and the secondary center of conscious me (the observer).

The following questions from students, and their detailed answers, present a very high-resolution depiction of essential me, where the observer is put under the microscope of detailed analysis through various complimentary lenses.

What is the Observer? The Secondary Center of Conscious Me

I am not fully clear what the observer actually is, once conscious me is awakened. Are conscious me and the observer not then the same, seeing as they have the same center of me?

First of all, the term ‘observer’ is not perfect. It seems to limit this part of our consciousness to function of ‘observing’, while as we know it has many complex functions including active thinking; when we think consciously, we are obviously not observing our thoughts. Observing thoughts is an old concept in spirituality

that is based on a misguided concept of meditation. Why would we want to observe our thoughts? It is not a means of entering a meditative state. One can observe or even let go of thoughts for a hundred years and nothing will change. Observing the mind relies too much on external attention, which pulls us even further away from our pure nature. On the positive side, the term observer points to the capacity to have a certain distance from the mind and to the fact that we are in a relationship with our own thoughts, and this gives us an accurate sense of the observer's role in our consciousness. In addition to this, you should bear in mind that the term 'observer' includes within itself the notion of the 'thinker' the 'checker' and so forth. The observer is the center of our intelligence, the headquarters of the mind and it can perform many functions.

In spirituality, the observer has been associated with ego and equated with the false self due to the fact that it is responsible for the split between subject and object, which causes a sense of separation. However, this sense of separation is due to the fact that initially, the observer is disconnected from pure subjectivity, and it therefore creates an isolated center in the mind. The observer is actually supposed to separate the subject from objects, as this duality is necessary for the functioning of our intelligence. But it is only when the observer becomes conscious and is linked to the pure subjectivity of the soul, that this duality is no longer translated as separation. Rather, it is experienced as a positive function of consciousness that allows us to experience the joy of living in creation.

It is true that conscious me and the observer use the same center of essence-me, but even so they are experienced as quite distinct. When we say the observer arises, it means that external attention is added to conscious me. But what is this external attention? It is an important thing to contemplate. When we look at a tree, we can say there is conscious me and our recognition of tree, which are bridged by a rather intangible external attention. However, external attention is in fact quite tangible. It has an energetic dimension that adds something to our experience of conscious me. Part of conscious me re-orientates itself in the direction of external attention. This is why we say that in thinking there is a slight movement of the external attention up, while in visual perception there is a slight movement forward.

What is it that moves up or forward? Conscious me itself does not leave its seat, and yet something moves *from* it towards the object. This something is focused external attention which connects conscious me to the object of recognition. In order to function, that focused external attention creates its own center on the top of conscious me. This is why, even though the observer arises from conscious me, it has a unique quality. It is not enough to call it 'conscious me plus external attention' as this doesn't fully describe what is happening. The observer has its own center of identity, a functional center of the conscious me, which we can call the external or secondary center of conscious me.

Are you saying that the term 'secondary center of conscious me' is still relevant?

Yes, it is still relevant. However, it is now the secondary center of the newly defined conscious me, while when we used the term in the recent past, it signified the secondary center of what we now call pure conscious me. The observer is a function-identity of conscious me and the center of external attention. This center derives its existence from essence-me, or conscious me when essence-me is realized, and it cannot exist without it. The observer is in fact the identity of external attention. It has its own sense of me that exists on top of conscious me. When the observer is relaxed and unfocused, however, its sense of me is entirely transparent and as such, barely distinguishable from conscious me itself.

Do all humans experience the secondary center of conscious me?

You are confused. Most humans do not experience the secondary center of conscious me, because for them the observer is not connected to conscious me at all. They do not have the primary center of conscious me, so the observer is not experienced as its secondary center.

If the observer is the center of external attention, who is directing the flow of pure attention?

When you have embodied your pure subjectivity, pure attention flows through the body of the soul spontaneously, like the blood in your veins. However, in order to cooperate with your evolution you must also direct pure attention intentionally, and the one who creates this intention is the observer. In order to evolve you need to look at yourself as if from the outside; you need to take a certain distance from yourself to gain a higher perspective. This is the role of the observer. For instance, if you recognize that your being is weak it is the observer that is doing this. When you then decide to surrender deeper, it is also the observer making this decision. However, it is not the observer that is doing the surrendering. Here, the observer has to relinquish its control and get out of the way for pure attention to flow.

The Relaxed and Focused Observer

So what happens when the observer is just relaxed, and our external attention is not focused? Do we still experience the secondary center of conscious me?

Yes we do, but it is harder to identify the energetic dimension of external attention because it is more transparent. In fact, when the observer is totally relaxed to the point of not paying attention to anything, there is no longer a conscious link between conscious me and external attention and here, external attention becomes subconscious. However, often we experience the observer somewhere in-between its focused and relaxed modes. Meaning, it is still the conscious observer (or the transparent observer) but the connection between

conscious me and external attention is minimal. If there is no conscious connection with external attention at all, we have a case of conscious subconscious observer. Here essence-me is conscious of itself, but external attention is subconscious. One cannot experience subconscious external attention as a tangible energy center because the sense of self that defines the secondary center is too defused.

When the observer is fully relaxed, will subconscious thinking inevitably arise?

The more the observer is relaxed the better, but this relaxation should be integrated with alertness. It is when this alertness is lost that the space for subconscious thinking opens up. There are two ways to stop the mind: one is to remain alert on the level of the observer and the second is to activate focused pure attention. Ideally, these two are combined. If you were to consciously keep surrendering from, for instance, fundamental me, your pure attention would be focused and this focus would naturally arrest the mind. But when the observer is at rest, it must additionally maintain a certain alertness because it also sustains the continuity of dynamic pure attention.

When you actively embody your pure subjectivity, the observer is most often relaxed and occasionally you may feel like there is no observer at all and that external attention is deactivated. But in reality the observer is present here in a very transparent way or it is merged with the conscious me. Only in trance-like samadhi where our intelligence is suspended is the observer is completely absent.

When external attention is subconscious, can we still say that the subconscious observer is a center of external attention?

Yes, it is still a center of external attention, it is just a subconscious center. If the secondary center of conscious me has been awakened to its subjectivity, even when it is subconscious it is still present as translucent bare attention. In some way, it is similar to not paying attention to pure me of consciousness even though it is still there. Such a pure me could be considered subconscious. The difference is that the observer is a functional identity and, when it is subconscious, it causes our relationship with the external reality and the mind to be subconscious as well.

So there are only two scenarios for the transparent observer – relaxed and focused?

Yes, but there are situations in-between where the observer can be more focused (even double-focused, when visual and mental attentions are both present in focused way) or more relaxed. The thing to bear in mind is that even the focused observer should be relaxed – it should be a relaxed-focused observer. The observer does not always have to be focused but should always be relaxed; relaxed but conscious, based on its connection to itself and to conscious me. In other words, the center of external attention has to always be linked to conscious

me, pure conscious me and fundamental me. In this way, external attention is tied to the energy of surrender and restfulness. If this is not the case, focused external attention will cause your relationship with conscious me to deteriorate, or even pull you back into the false observer.

When conscious me is awakened but not properly integrated with external attention, this will prevent you from experiencing the conscious or transparent observer properly. Here, conscious me is pulled too much by external attention and becomes the self-conscious or false observer.

Can the observer without object be focused?

Yes, the observer without object can be both focused and relaxed. The more it is focused, the more you can feel it as a center of external attention. In our practice of watching the thought-threshold, for instance, the observer is relaxed but its intention to guard the mind against subconscious thinking means it also focused. Such an observer could be called the ‘relaxed-focused observer’.

The Mental and Visual Observer

If the observer is the secondary center of conscious me, how can it exist on two levels – as a mental and visual observer – at the same time?

This is an excellent question. The secondary center of conscious me can further subdivide itself into two centers, so that we experience these two centers of external attention simultaneously. Evidently, the observer is very good at multitasking! Additionally, it is possible that visual observer is subconscious while the mental observer is conscious and vice versa. The observer is not meant to always be conscious on all levels because external attention consumes a lot of energy.

When you speak of the ‘observer without object’, are you referring to the visual or mental observer?

Only the mental observer can be without object. The mental observer represents a higher secondary center of the conscious me, because it is the true center of intelligence. Only humans have developed the mental observer and this is the direct result of the higher development of our mind.

You speak about two aspects of the observer – visual and mental – but isn’t the observer also linked to other senses? For instance, what about auditory attention?

Our essence-me is the center of our consciousness and so naturally, it is the axel of the whole of our psychosomatic awareness. In this more general sense, we

could speak about two aspects of the observer – the mental observer and the sensory observer. However our sensory observer has developed primarily through the visual gateway of perception. The reason for this is that vision is our most active sense, while other senses are more passive. In the act of seeing we are not merely reflecting what is out there in front of our eyes; we actively co-create our visual perceptions. The brain has to perform many complicated processes for any image to be registered in our consciousness, and the observer is the one who gives that image its final shape.

Another important reason why we speak of the visual observer instead of a more general, sensory one is that in the act of seeing, the observer has to change its position within our consciousness. So it is not merely registering sensory stimuli: its own identity is being affected. The same applies to the mental observer. When registering visual information, the visual observer moves forward from its natural location in the middle of the forehead, only very slightly, but that movement is perceptible. The mental observer moves up slightly, towards thinking. The auditory observer on the other hand, does not move: it does not have to change its location to hear a sound. And the other senses, which use the physical pathways of touch, smell or taste, are even more rudimentary. Only a somatic type of awareness is involved that requires a basic level of the observer.

In other words, in focused visual perception the observer has to form an energetically focused center of external attention. In connection to other senses, the observer is present as if in the background; it does not feel like it is directly involved.

I have heard about cases where through contemplative listening, people have awakened deeper awareness. Can such listening, like to the sound 'Om' for instance, be used as a means of awakening?

Paying attention to anything relaxes the mental observer and can allow one to experience a moment of silence. But whatever you are listening to, including the overrated sound 'om' which is a vibration of consciousness, it is still an object. You cannot awaken consciousness through awareness of an object. You can only awaken by becoming directly conscious of the subject.

Because the auditory observer is more passive than visual one, contemplative listening can bring more silence to the mind than contemplative looking or gazing; in contemplative gazing the observer is still active and hence standing in the way to complete relaxation. Additionally, since our ears are located at the back of the head and are closer to the horizontal portal to universal consciousness, in some instances of such 'silent hearing' one can have a glimpse of objectless awareness. When you are 'listening,' external attention flows back to the audio receptors causing the experience to feel more internal.

There are many 'tricks' to bring silence to the mind, but it is much better to realize who you are and not rely on external attention of any kind. As far as

awakening of conscious me is concerned, it can be never awakened by listening. An active visual observer can help you to feel your essence-me, but it is the mental observer that truly awakens it, because it is ultimately the center of the intelligence of the soul.

The False and Real Observer

Does an unawakened person experience their observer in the same way as someone who has realized conscious me, but just without the base of conscious me?

No. While the false observer operates in a similar way to the real observer of an awakened person, it is also quite different. Not only is the false observer unconscious, it is also exceedingly fragmented. The false observer has no clear sense of identity and is entirely dissipated through the activity of external attention. In order to create a sense of self, it needs to focus on itself within mental activity, but this focus is artificial and very gross. When you see a person with an intense observer, there is something very unpleasant about it. There is something monstrous about the false observer; it is like a phantom that struggles to exist but has no substance and is unable to assert its identity.

The only way the observer can possess an identity as the center of external attention is by absorbing in itself the light of pure subjectivity - conscious me.

To make sure I understand, does the false observer also operate as the same center of external attention that you are describing here, but just without the subjectivity of conscious me?

The reason I ask is that when I experience this center of external attention, I regard it as false, even if I am embodying conscious me.

Yes it does, but as we have said above, the false observer is fragmented and in certain ways it is experienced quite differently. Still, no one has to actually learn how to use the observer. We have learnt it collectively through millions and millions of years of evolution; if we didn't know, we would not be able to survive. From a simple shop owner to Ramana Maharishi, everyone uses their observer in the same way. When you drive a car you don't have to tell your observer how to behave; it is automatic. So you can trust your observer, but you also need to put it in its right place, which means it is connected to your real self. What is false and what is real is a matter of perspective. The observer is not false in itself. What makes it false is the place from which it is used and how conscious it is of its innate subjectivity of essence-me.

It is natural to identify with the center of external attention of the observer. If that center is alone, as a focused unconscious observer, it is the false observer because it is not in touch with its identity of essence-me. When that same center

is linked to conscious me, this is the real observer. That real observer needs to be both arising from awakened conscious me, and also be conscious of itself as the identity of external attention. So the conscious observer is when both the primary and secondary centers of conscious me are simultaneously conscious.

Looking further ahead, we can say the conscious observer itself is just a transitory stage. Just as the self-conscious observer is a bridge to conscious me, the conscious observer is a bridge to the transparent observer. The conscious observer is still not quite a real observer; it is semi-real and semi-false. It is relatively real, but not real enough. This is why you need to awaken pure conscious me immediately after awakening conscious me: so that you can realize the transparent observer. To experience the center of external attention from conscious me does not give you enough depth to sit in your pure subjectivity; you are still too close to the external attention.

The Pure Observer

What kind of transformation occurs when we realize the pure observer?

The pure observer comes into existence when conscious me reaches samadhi. Because the observer is tied to the identity of the conscious me, it also is pulled into samadhi. By being in samadhi it is absorbed into the soul and so is its external attention. External attention experienced from samadhi is called pure external attention. It is still external but it acquires the qualities of pure attention. Here the center of external attention, the observer, becomes the center of pure intelligence.

When the observer is in samadhi, this means that the secondary center of conscious me is merged with the primary center. These two centers remain distinct, but the secondary center comes to be experienced inside the primary center, so the observer does not feel like an external agency anymore. We call the samadhi of the observer the 'sealed state' because it seals the leakage of the light of consciousness through external attention.

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So let's conclude our contemplation about the use of the term observer. The observer is a center of external attention that derives its sense of identity from essence-me, and conscious me once essence-me is awakened. It is the functional center of conscious me, or in other words, the external or secondary center of conscious me. The observer is both the center of external attention and the identity of external attention.

Blessings,

Anadi