Cartesian Subject and Irrationality

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Research Article

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Abstract: Determines the modern subject ontology, which manifests itself through cartesian design, through a negative distinction. Accordingly, in the soul-body dichotomy, the body is seen as a mere diffusion and has a secondary status, while the soul is identified with the mind. In this respect, the modern subject distinguishes itself from the mind, which it accepts as unchanging, unrestrained and universal in nature. The desire to establish a subject that is complete, complete and can dominate all existing ones becomes evident in such an understanding. With the Cartesian design, the whole of the ontic world is reduced to the designs of the subject; the world of knowledge overrides the world of the existing. In this respect, the first distinction made on the ontological plane for the Cartesian subject, which does not have the possibility of existence without the act of boundary and successive exclusion that reveals the dualities, emerges through reason and irrationality. Because while the existence of the soul is considered as mind; "I" exists only through the act of thinking. The main argument of our study is that "modernity identifies irrationality with being non-human and deems as an ontological problem by reducing human beings to mind".

Keywords: Cartesian subject, irrationality, rationality, reason, dualism.

Introduction

The main reason it is seen that why one of the main elements that embraces the history of philosophy, determines the plane it is positioned, allocates a specific purpose to it is the issue of duality as an expression of the pursuit of the unchanging, mobility, unaffectedness or, in other words, the "moon-top" world.

According to this, the truth can be revealed by the act of contacting a theoria, who is at the boundaries of the whole, and that he can only pursue comprehension, or can manifest himself. In other words, the intellectual mind, which is one of the four types of grasp, and which is considered to distinguish man from all other beings, consists of pure concepts, and does not contain any minor elements in it, and thus purifies the supply completely free from the sensory. However, this acceptance brings with it a distinction and therefore exclusion. The intellectual mind; the sense of comprehension separates itself from the imagination and the vehicle, and differs from them, and in this way, it invokes on an irreducible difference. As a matter of fact, in accordance with Whitehead's statement that "The History of Western Thought is a footnote to Plato", the philosophical search towards the immutable and fixed, or the general expression of truth itself, that can be initiated with Plato, deepen the controversy between post-modern era and take sides, or watch over negation.

However, Modernity draws a visibly sharp boundary between all other periods by identifying the human with the mind rather than centering the mind. The sharpness and even the impassibility of the border makes the period and understanding in question exclusive to itself. Undoubtedly, the most basic indicator of this situation appears in the goals adopted and the concepts centered.

As a matter of fact, human-God, human-nature and humanhuman relations in the Ancient Greek, Medieval and Renaissance periods differ as much as possible from the modern period. Because, in the modern period, when a new definition of people is being made, all relations are reorganized. Man defines himself as a universal and rational being, and in this context, the existence of nonhuman beings is absolutely determined by man. In this way of understanding, the whole of the earth becomes the subject's designs.

The Medieval Age, however, refers to a period in which the physical realm was regarded as an unchangeable and perfect cluster of signs. Accordingly, no being consists of himself; even man is a sign, and in this direction, he differs from the whole of the beings only because he is in a position to discover the meaning of those signs.

Similarly, in the Renaissance period, as a worldly entity, human beings are on a journey of discovery in the richness of their field of experience. In this period, sensation and perception are prioritized before thinking. In ancient Greece, *techne* activity for the purpose of transforming nature binds as an underestimated activity against *theoria*; the main thing for man is to distance himself from the object and realize his action, because complete and complete happiness can only be achieved in this way.

On the other hand, every area, from architecture to painting, from religion to education, extending from thought and practice to life is opened to question with modernity and is subject to a transformation beyond change. The main motive behind all these transformations is about the desire of modernity to establish a subject that can be dominant in the complete, complete and existing ones. With such a subject, it is aimed to establish a system whose boundaries are reinforced and that does not allow any element out of the plan. In this sense, the subject concept itself has to be transformed, and it is almost ex nihilo defined by going out of the frames drawn in the past.

The modern subject distinguishes itself from the mind, which is accepted as unchanged, unlimited and universal. As of this stage, while the whole of the ontic world is reduced to the designs of the subject; the world of knowledge overrides the

world of existing. The subject ceases to be an entity subject to time and space boundaries and open to influences. Identity is entered between mind and human, and it is impossible to mention any entity that is not considered within the intellectual categories. Accordingly, the rational is real and the real is considered rational.

In this direction, our study examines the Cartesian subject, which shows itself as the subject of modernity, through the negative distinction that is inherent to its ontology. The first distinction made on the ontological plane for the Cartesian subject, which does not have the possibility to exist without the boundary concept that reveals duality and the act of successive exclusion, arises through reason and irrationality.

As a matter of fact, the Cartesian subject of Descartes communicates exactly as the triangulation point of the mind-human identification. According to this, the human is defined as an essential thinking entity through the soul-body dichotomy. More precisely, according to the definition of modernity, it would not be possible for a madman to be accepted as a human being due to the lack of thinking angel of the baby or, for example, an Alzheimer's patient. Accordingly, the main argument of our study is that "modernity identifies human-irrationality with being nonhuman and deems it as an ontological problem by reducing it to mind".

Subject at Zero Point

The relationship between the subject who knows until the modern period and the known object follows a transcendent dimension that cannot be reduced to pure knowledge. Accordingly, the subject does not have an absolutely independent ontology from the object; all idea, Agathon, episteme or eidos etc. Despite the concepts, the beginning of knowledge is on perceptions that emerge with sensations. With modernity, a radical transformation takes place, and the world of knowledge takes precedence over ontology, the world of existing ones; epistemic status

of information is determined only by subject. However, as we have stated, in the ancient world, the knowledge has an identity shaped according to the existing as well as the subject. For example, in Plato, the knowledge of the ideas is in the status of an episteme, while the information about the visible objects is accepted in the doxa class. In this sense, information in Plato is not only determined by the subject, but also by the presence of the subject. In this situation, the act of knowing does not consist solely of the designs of the subject. In short, information in Plato is neither because of the subject nor the object, it is considered as a product of the subject's transcendence and the connection in question. In this context, knowledge represents a situation that transcends epistemological boundaries and is of an ontological nature.¹

With the subject emerging with modernity, we witness that the ontological nature is denied, and what exists is reduced to the designs of the mind. According to this, out of the mind for any being would consist of nothingness. In other words, the disconnection between the design that emerges in the mind of the subject and the thing in itself is denied, and the status of being is granted only for the subject who can be fully manipulated by the subject.

The modern subject, neglecting the transcendent and existing aspect of knowledge, shapes itself through the desire to dominate the world of being. The subject in question reduces the object to which it is directed to a ready-to-use entity. As such, the world of existence will not be able to speak of any pre-design beings, as it is made sense only through the designs in the mind of the subject.

However, while the understanding in question makes the human being a worldly being, it makes it free from the borders of time and space. For humans, all of the assets become a project

Harun Tepe, Varlık ve Bilgi: Ontolojik Yaklaşımla Felsefe Yapmak (Ankara: Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu Yayınları, 2017), 25-9.

topic. Indeed, twentieth-century philosophers, from Heidegger to Adorno, from Levinas to Bauman, did not consider Holocaust or Hiroshima as a deviation, a factual phenomenon, or a bad error, the practices revealed by the subject's subject position. They saw it as a result of course. As a matter of fact, Bauman expresses his thoughts as follows:

Holocaust was born and practiced in our rational society, on the high stage of our civilization and at the peak of human victory, and is therefore a problem of society, civilization and culture.²

It is clear that the modern subject wants to fulfill the desire to be complete, complete and dominant. For this reason, it moves itself out of time and space and denies its existence with someone else. However, every existing in the world has to be subject to the boundaries of time and space, to the face of another, to the being itself. This state of subjection is also the source of the meaning that will arise between the human and non-human realms. In other words, the temporality state corresponds to an ontological situation for Human beings because it is an entity that goes to death. As a matter of fact, according to Heidegger, Dasein may find the meaning of his own existence temporally. He says:

The existence of Dasein finds its meaning in temporality. As a matter of fact, temporality is a possibility condition of Dasein's historical status, which is a temporal asset of itself, as well as whether Dasein exists in "time" and how it exists in "time".³

On the other hand, Descartes, who is accepted as the chief architect of modern thought, subordinates the subject to a hierarchical duality in thought and space. According to this distinction, which can take place in the dominant hierarchies of Derrida, which is subjected to structure-dismantling, and can be the source of all other "bullies", body-space is a secondary entity; besides, the concepts of mind, soul and mind have a central posi-

² Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernite ve Holocaust*, çev. Süha Sertabiboğlu (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınları, 1997), 11.

Martin Heidegger, Varlık ve Zaman, çev. Kaan H. Ökten (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2008), 20.

tion because they create thought. Descartes explains his opinion in this direction as follows:

At this moment where we believe that there is nothing really present or existing other than our thought, when we examine what we are, we need neither elongation, shape, place, or anything else that is given to the body, and just because we think. we clearly know that we exist. Therefore, the concept we get from our soul or thought comes before we get it from the body.⁴

Aiming to reach a certainty that will never shake and change over meditations, Descartes' main purpose consists in finding an Archimedes point that will move the earth, which corresponds exactly to the mind.

Descartes thinks that the purpose of certainty can only be achieved by doubting everything. At this point, for those who want to reach certainty by opening a parenthesis, we have to say that the method comes before the idea and that the ideas are determined according to the method. In this regard, the modern subject acts as an entity prioritizing the methodology. As a matter of fact, Descartes explains the method of reaching certainty through the apple basket metaphor. Accordingly, if there is any doubt that some apples in the basket are rotten, the whole of the apples should be emptied. Thus, the spread of rot can be prevented. In short, Descartes thinks that certainty can only be achieved by returning to the zero point. Zero point, on the other hand, corresponds to the existence of self or consciousness, and any factor that creates a ground for negativity. However, Leibniz criticizes Descartes for reversing the apple basket on a false assumption. Because Descartes thinks that the number of apples is finite, whereas according to Leibniz, the number of apples is infinite; therefore, the basket will never be emptied completely.⁵

For Descartes, the act of doubt itself figures supply as the on-

⁴ René Descartes, Felsefenin İlkeleri, çev. Mesut Akın (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2017), 72.

Ulus Baker, Sanat ve Arzu, ed. Tansu Açık (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018), 41.

ly fact that can be known at the first stage and will not give the slightest place to discuss it. Thus, it can be said that the codes of Cartesian philosophy are formed by the identification of doubt and reality, in this case the reality of the person who has suspicion will not be a subject of discussion. Indeed, Descartes says:

I had convinced myself that there was nothing in the world, that there was no sky, no earth, no mind and body, so did I not believe that I did not exist? Absolutely no, if I had convinced myself about something or just thought of anything, I was without a doubt.⁶

As it can be understood, doubt, thought or belief can only be permanent with the existence of man, Descartes reaches "Ego sum" and "Igo existo", that is, "I am" and "I am" through this understanding. However, Descartes is still at the head of Meditations, and therefore is not sure of the reality of either God or nonhuman beings; he was only convinced of the certainty of the existence of "I". The "I" in question consists of thought, as stated.

The Importance of the relationship between thinking and "I"

Until this stage of our study, it was seen that the concept of "I", which corresponds to a kind of reflection that is introverted, self-verifying, indifferent to the other, has no place and time, denies its body, is identical to the act of thinking for Descartes. Accordingly, "I" represents a phenomenon that can only exist as long as it thinks and ends when it stops thinking. As a matter of fact, this thought is the key point of Meditations: "So, I'm just something to think about, if we say for sure; that is, I am a mind, a moment / a dream, or a mind / understanding."

Descartes, who deals with the ideas in the Third Meditation, states that it is natural to doubt the correctness of the ideas that exist in the mind about objects. Because, according to him, such ideas are obtained through the senses. However, there is no conclusion yet about the reality of the sensible area. In addition, there are ideals that are represented in the mind by their own,

⁶ Descartes, *Meditasyonlar*, cev. Engin Sunar (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2018), 58.

⁷ Descartes, *Meditasyonlar*, 61.

which have more objective reality and higher perfection than others. But Descartes develops an idea that reminds Anselmus' "ontological proof"; According to him, there is an idea that neither "I" nor any interference of the senses can be involved in its formation; the ide in question corresponds precisely to God. Despite his limitations and deficiencies, he thinks that the idea of perfection in man can only come from God, which is eternal.

Descartes *causa sui* states that God is a complete and perfect being. Such a God does not mislead anyone, nor chooses to deceive. Thus, doubts about the reality of the ontic world outside the "I" disappear in this way. Despite this, the states of error that arise result from the disproportion between free will and perception power.⁸ As will be understood, together with the philosophy of Descartes, man is accepted as an entity capable of isolating himself from the whole of the ontic world. In this case, he is positioned as an unhistorical subject, far from any influence. As a matter of fact, it is seen that Descartes' human-subject reached the existence of God through the angel of thinking and through him the reality of the whole of the ontic world.

However, the scholastic understanding that prevailed before modernity has a much different paradigm. The church has allocated its central position to God, not to man. In this respect, any building can only be realized by taking the God out of the way, and the reality of the "I" or the subject and the ontic world, which is called masiva, can be reached through a single God. Therefore, human has only a secondary position in this thought. In short, modernity distinguishes itself at the very beginning of the road with the definition of "I" it has revealed from previous periods. From this stage, the meaning of the article is determined by the human-subject.

Exclusive Subject

As can be seen, the Cartesian subject identifies with the mind through the soul-body dichotomy, making it impossible to speak

⁸ Descartes, Meditasyonlar, 82.

of an irrational person and to accept such an entity within the category of human. Because without reason, it is not possible for a person to reach any consciousness about the reality of neither I, God nor the beings other than himself.

However, of course, it is not possible for all of the people to be placed in the "I" in question, to be accepted in the same category due to the status of differences or differences. In this case, either the way of modifying the model is chosen, or people are included in the "I" category by selecting certain classifications. Accordingly, the concept of border and the act of exclusion with it arise. Because each of them distinguishes between a boundary and an inner-outer difference. In this sense, in our opinion, the Cartesian subject refers to a subject who cannot do ontologically unlimited, cannot exist without the concept of boundary, and therefore cannot realize himself without resorting to the acts of exclusion and objectification in this way.

The Cartesian subject of modernity redefines human-world, human-human, human-goods and immanent-transcendental relationships, and in this way the world is embedded in a new system of signs, meaning. Although it does not have absolute transcendence, apart from the ontic realm that cannot be within the boundaries, I form the whole life, including language, around its own axis. Therefore, unlike all objects, it goes out of the indicators, and with this feature, it classifies, measures, and observes the presence in front of it.

On the other hand, it is possible to search the extension of the thought in question on a theological plane. As a matter of fact, the modern subject is identical with the provision of "the power of naming belongs to human" that Bacon received from the Old Testament. In this sense, there is an almost ontological difference between the named and the named. With his authority from God, man has the power to position himself on the boundaries of space and time, as well as the ability to decide what can be taken into the category of objects. In this way, the subject positions all of the existing by dividing and dividing and

classifying in this way. According to Descartes, there is no one that the subject cannot classify: "There is nothing too complicated and messy that cannot be put within certain boundaries and placed under certain headings."

In the world view of the Cartesian subject, the subject, which is itself on one side, and the whole of the existing ones on the other side; thus, the world borders are divided into two clearly and precisely. This division process takes place by transforming the object confronted with the subject into the subject of pure information. The basic desire of the Cartesian subject is to establish a major order that covers the entire world of ontic. Accordingly, all assets are positioned in a certain order, goal and purpose according to a particular method, principle or law. The subject does not allow any entity that it does not categorize, classify or classify for this purpose. Bauman says:

Modernity belongs to a period of thought on order; this order reflects the order of the world, the human habitat, the human self and the connection between these three.¹⁰

However, due to the nature of the article, irregularity binds as the founding other of all orders. Therefore, the desire to exclude irregularity and destroy it can never achieve a final result. The tension sliding between order and disorder continues. This tension, which never ends and never ends, is an indication that modernity will never end its mission. Because ontologically, the existence of order always needs disorder.

Therefore, there will be no order in a place where there is no disorder. On the other hand, this inability to be finalized and incomplete is essentially a desire to guarantee the existence of modernity. Because the phenomenon of irregularity, besides its founding, also maintains its exclusive property. In this way, modernity always has to maintain its alesta stance and constantly

⁹ Descartes, Aklın Yönetimi İçin Kurallar, çev. Engin Sunar (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2016), 58.

Bauman, Modernlik ve Müphemlik, çev. İsmail Türkmen (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2003), 14.

redefines the boundaries it draws to exclude irregularity. In other words, modernity seems to consist of a cycle of demolition on the "eternal spin" wheel, as in Sisyphos.

In the emergence of the new meaning, the Cartesian subject identifies the laws of reason with the sharpness and invariance of the laws of nature. These laws, which are accepted as decisive, immutable and indestructible in all time and place, are almost of a divine nature. As a matter of fact, Descartes expresses the identity between human and natural laws as follows: "It is God who creates the laws of nature just like a king creates laws in his own kingdom". 11 Therefore, modern period refers to an anthropomorphism. God's attributes are attributed to man so religio leaves his place to *natio*. The power, right and authority of the root of the ambiguous in life, hence to regulate the life, and to make the whole of the ontic world determinable, now belong to man. Accordingly, there will be no room for destiny or any transcendental, illogical or transcendental interventions within the plane in question. The Cartesian subject is in a position that not only captures the sword of Caesar but also the sword of God.

While fulfilling the desire for order, the aim is not only about creating contrasts in the division process over the border. Besides the separation, the main reason for drawing the border is which side is acceptable, correct, good, normal, acceptable etc. is about marking that. Accordingly, it is not possible to accept parity or equivalence in terms of value or ontic among those who are divided on both sides of the border. Bauman says this on subject:

Duality is one of the practices of power... The second member is nothing but the others opposite, the opposite (disreputable, repressed, exiled) of the first, and its creation. Indeed, the norm of abnormality, heresy is obedience to the law, sickness of health, barbarism civilization, animal man, woman man, foreign native, enemy friend, "they" "us", madness mind, foreign citizen, ordinary

Bauman & Carlo Bordoni, Kriz Hali ve Devlet, çev. Yavuz Alogan (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2018), 51.

man specialist. These are interdependent; but addiction is not symmetrical. The second party is dependent on the first because of its designed, forced isolation.¹²

In short, the Cartesian subject, who has positioned himself above the elite world, desires to establish a permanent order that is free from all deficiencies, gaps, closed to transitions. The desire in question realizes itself through the concept of border. Because order can only emerge by excluding the irregular. It is not possible for any transformation outside the project to take place within this order, in which the boundaries are completely determined and no coincidence or contingency is permitted. The instrumental mind that comes into play to establish and maintain the order makes the outside of the subject the subject of the technique and carries the existence from its natural environment to the laboratory plane. In this way, existence is reduced to the designs of the Cartesian subject and the ontological link between practical reason and freedom is denied.

The Problem of Irrationality

As can be seen, the modern subject is endowed with a Divine power as an entity with the angels of classification, separation, exclusion and definition. However, it is not only that the "I" has such a great power. Because the main question is about which person will be brought to the position of "I", which leads to discussions between Foucault and Derrida in the analysis of Meditations. As a result, Descartes sets off from doubt and reaches the undoubted truth of consciousness; but without question the question of whether all people have this consciousness remains suspended. Will the same conclusion be reached, for example, with a physiologically ill person? Can a crazy person who has problems with his mind within the limits of the "I" in question, in other words accepted outside of the normal, enter? Or, in a much

¹² Bauman, *Modernlik ve Müphemlik*, 26-7.

¹³ Michel Foucault, Büyük Kapatılma, çev. Işık Ergüden & Ferda Keskin (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011), 31-48.

more general context, to whom will the subject draw the first boundary to establish his own ontology?

As will be remembered, the main argument of our study was that the Cartesian subject made himself through negative difference and that the basic distinction or cleft that formed his ontology was excluded by the exclusion of the irrational. As a matter of fact, Descartes expresses his point of view towards the mad at the very beginning of Meditations with the following sentences:

How can I deny that this body and these hands belong to me? Of course, if I do not compare myself with the madmen who thought they were king, though they were very poor, because they were soaked and screened in the dark vapor of their minds, who saw golden-glazed redbud caftans on them while naked or imagining that they were testing or carrying bodies made of glass. What's more, these are crazy. But if I were to take them as an example, I would have been as bulky as they were.¹⁴

As can be seen, Descartes excludes insanity from the outset, reveals a distinction between human and insane and states that they do not even need to be mentioned. Descartes accepts the mad as human beings, that is close to human beings but not fully human beings. The Cartesian model, then, only corresponds to the idea of a "normal", non-insane, mental fish, conscious and healthy "I". Accordingly, Foucault thinks that the point of view towards the insane has undergone a radical transformation with the modern period. Because, according to him, Descartes does not see madness in Cogito's court in a status worth examining and sends him out of mind. Because being irrational corresponds to the logic that is deemed standard and the lack of thinking angel afterwards, it is identified with being nonhuman for modern thought. Foucault expresses his thoughts as follows:

In the order of doubt, there is an imbalance between insanity and dream and delusion. They are in another state in relation to truth

¹⁴ Descartes, *Meditasyonlar*, 48.

Tülin Bumin, Tartışılan Modernlik: Descartes ve Spinoza (İstanbul: Yakı Kredi Yayınları, 2014), 57.

and what is after him; in the structure of righteousness, illusion and illusion have been exceeded; but madness is excluded by the suspicious subject. 16

Foucault says that until the middle of the seventeenth century, the madman was approached with tolerance. They are even considered mystical beings; Thus, it is usual for the insane to be able to live their lives in society without being exposed to absolute exclusion. However, with the seventeenth century the said tolerance leaves its place to exclusion, and closure practices for the mad are put into effect at this stage. He says:

Man's fight with dementia was a dramatic debate that confronts man with the hidden powers of the world, and his experience of insanity was surrounded by images with all the wonderful boundaries of Expulsion from Heaven and Discretionary Divine, Animal, Metamorphosis and Knowledge.¹⁷

However, whenever "the objectivity of a cold, medical and scientific view emerges" 18, then a new discourse develops and becomes the subject of insane knowledge and excluded from the humane. However, in our opinion, the realization of the exclusion by the Cartesian subject is ontologically essential. Because for Descartes, he calls it as "I" who thinks about the subject; as such, irrationality runs counter to the act of direct thinking.

Conclusion

The relationship between humans and the existence until the emergence of the Cartesian subject is on a multidimensional state. Accordingly, man is positioned according to the order of the universe, but he also has the power to know the truth. As a matter of fact, truth can be obtained through the action of a mankind to be realized by leaving a distance between the person

¹⁶ Bumin, Tartışılan Modernlik: Descartes ve Spinoza, 58.

¹⁷ Foucault, Büyük Kapatılma, 27-8.

¹⁸ Foucault, Akıl Hastalığı ve Psikoloji, çev. Emre Bayoğlu (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2014), 82.

and the object. However, the idea that started with the Cartesian subject and to be completed with Kant is on the devotion of the universe to the human understanding. Accordingly, it is not possible for the subject to leave a distance between the object because the object is absolutely the designs of the subject.

The Cartesian subject creates an irreversible cleft between himself and the non-self over the negative difference. The ultimate aim is to create an order according to the clear expressions that are clear in the human mind. In this direction, the Cartesian subject draws the first boundary by identifying himself with reason and thus an ontological distinction emerges. Accordingly, the body consists of only spreading and is outside the "I"; therefore, it can only be accepted in secondary status.

As a matter of fact, while Descartes is not even sure about the existence of the body, he does not have the slightest doubt about the existence of the soul that corresponds to mind or thinking. In this regard, the mind is both a necessary and sufficient condition to be a human being. In other words, there is no reality that transcends itself for the Cartesian subject. He always remains in himself and makes his existence permanent. Therefore, as revealed in the argument of our study, it is an ontological imperative for the Cartesian subject to be excluded, rejected, and not included in the category of "I".

With all this, it is clear that the relationship between the phenomenon of "I", whose frame is clearly limited, and the universe of life has to follow a one-dimensional course due to the acceptance of the uniqueness and availability of truth. Because the "I" itself is positioned on a state that is closed to all differences, static and therefore out of shape. This situation, on the other hand, deems the subject's existence from being possible, and considers it necessary. In this sense, the modern subject is considered to be an absolute substance of substance, free from all the individual features.

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