

Various Philosophical Considerations

Part 2 of 2

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Let us return now to a portion of the letter that was quoted earlier. This portion is as follows:

It seems to me that as we ascend into the planes above ordinary mind, perception and conception merge. The split in us between these two aspects of cognition is due to the fact that we are ourselves, in a sense, split beings. We are mental beings in a physical world. If we were mental beings in a mental world, I believe that we would still have an objectivity before us, though perceiving and conceiving would be unified in an intelligible intuition, which need not be knowledge by identity in the most exalted sense. By descending into the physical we forfeit the objectivity of the mental plane, but by our essential nature as mental beings, we retain the characteristic forms and categories of mind to impose them on the physical world. In this way, I believe the schism arises. Our sense organs are limited to physical experience while our cognitive faculty of mind is descended from another and higher realm. My point is that a division between the theoretic and the aesthetic need not be an essential one and that Indian philosophy may well have disregarded the distinction by way of transcending it. I would be interested in your reaction to this if perhaps you would include something about this in a future tape.

The suggestion here is indeed very interesting and I am not inclined to take a pejorative attitude toward it. It may be an entirely valid suggestion; however, not in the sense of disputing this position, but in the sense of another suggestion, I would like to add this thought for it tends to conform with my experience. It is stated in *The Secret Doctrine* that at a certain period in the distant past certain entities that formed a class of *Dhyan Chohans*, who are defined as ex-humans who are evolving beyond the human level; it is there stated that this class of *Dhyan Chohans* had been guilty of something that we would call a kind of sin or failure and that the penalty of this was that they had to descend into evolving entities that were what might be called animal-humans spoken of as ape-like creatures; that here was a case of a massive *tulku* type of incarnation; that they had to enter into these embodied entities to advance their evolution and thus recover their own position later having made restitution for their earlier failure.

Now, there is a sense, if one is reasonably good in his self-analysis, in which one can identify a certain disjunction in one's nature. There is something that seems to belong to this higher kind of evolution and that that something is reflected in our conceptual cognition. The sensuous cognition would be that which was brought by the animal-humans or ape-like creatures and the conceptual cognition was planted within them by

the descent of these fallen *Dhyan Chohans* or *Manasaputra* as they are called in *The Secret Doctrine*. Now, this is a thought that persists with me, that there is a possibility of self-identification with the fallen *Manasaputra* that is riding on the back of the ape-like creatures, but there is also the possibility of our identifying ourselves with the ape-like creatures having a *Manasaputra* riding on their backs. If one has the former orientation, he finds a certain deep distaste for the association with the ape-like creature, the sensuous being, and longs for a time when his lowest manifestation will be as a conceptual entity. He would thus be, if we might speak this way, at his lowest the manifestation such as we have in pure mathematics and at his higher reaches completely transcending anything that man as man could imagine. That here alone in the higher reaches of conceptuality there is this overlapping; that such entities are not sensuously apparent, not even subtly sensuously apparent, but strictly super-sensual, yet in their lower form are still conceptual entities. Conceptuality would be the principle of formation. Their essentiality would transcend that beyond the reach of our possible imagining. This is an alternative picture, one that can be found in *The Secret Doctrine*. I present it here as an alternative possibility.

There is a question not raised explicitly in the letter, but which does arise implicitly, and that is, what is the relation between Buddhism and the Vedanta, especially the Advaita Vedanta. In this connection I recall an essay in an early number of *The Theosophist* written, as I remember, by Mohini Chatterji in which he said that there always has been a Buddhism even before the time of Gautama Buddha and there always has been a Vedanta even before the time of the beginning of the Vedanta we now know; that these indeed were two wings of the ultimate truth, two facets that are expressions from a more integral whole. My own experience, or rather my own group of imperiences, would tend, as far as they go, to confirm this position. The implication is that there is a truth, perhaps beyond the reach of our present powers of conceptual thought, which is rendered manifest in these two forms. To reach to something of it, would require that one travel a way which includes something of both these streams of thought and practice. I do not find such an integration in the thought of Sri Aurobindo, although he has integrated a great deal. I do not find his discussion of Buddhism reflecting an adequate understanding of Buddhism as it is given in *The Life Divine*. He does, in one of his letters, identify himself as occupying a position intermediate between the Vedanta and the Tantra, but leaning rather more strongly to the Vedanta. This would mean that there is an orientation there between the principles of *Shakti* and *Purusha*, with the edge of emphasis upon the *Purusha*. As I look upon the stream of thought that has come from that great intelligence, it has seemed to me that from the period of the *Arya* magazine to his last days there was a movement from a more strongly Vedantist position to a position that was more in line with the Tantra, which implies an increasing emphasis of the Divine Mother as contrasted to the emphasis placed upon the *Purusha*. Such a position is integral in the sense as bringing about a certain integration between the Tantra and the Vedanta, but it is not an integration between the Hinduistic point of view as a whole and the Buddhistic point of view. This is a larger and more difficult problem and one with which I am much concerned. This is a thought just thrown out that has a bearing relative to the questions in the letter although the letter does not specifically bring up this problem.

The final portion of the letter brings up a totally different problem. I will introduce this by reading that final portion.

A wholly different topic I wish to raise is that of Aurobindo's conception of the Divine Person. I do not feel that in the past you have fully dealt with the problem as A presents it. I feel you have not truly come to grips with the conception as A presents it, but have only come to grips with lesser theism. I find implicit in A, the definition of a person as a self-conscious unity which is aware of its manifestation. So the question is seen to hinge on these two qualities: self-awareness and awareness of the manifestation; and these two are really one, for each implies and demands the other. A's attribution of this kind of personality to the Divine appeals greatly to me because rather than creating a dualism, as you have seemed to imply at times, it brings about a greater unification. There is no longer the "absurdly symmetrical equipollence of [in] mutual rejection" of which A speaks referring to the fact that we end with an inert superconscience, on one hand, and an inert manifestation on the other—each eternally oblivious to the other.¹ So the question is not that of a too human personal God, but of the conscious unity of the Real. Is it not possible that while the individual's experience of the Real may leave him overwhelmed with the impersonality of That, That as it is in itself apart from his necessarily incomplete experience, is a self-conscious unity? It is as if a man stood so close to the sun that his limited faculties saw only the sun's light and not the sun itself in all its sphericity.

Is it conceivable to you that beyond the reach of our present ability to cognize, the High Indifference itself might fold infinitely in upon itself to reveal itself as *Purushottama*, Absolute Person? Released from *maya*, one realizes one's own *atman* to be *Brahman*. Perhaps it is by becoming ourselves masters of that *maya* that we are enabled to see that *Brahman* to be also *Ishvara*, the master of his *maya* no longer doomed to be either the pawn of *maya* in the state of *avidya* or oblivious to its reality in the state of *Moksha*—finally and fully One. And it would seem that according to A's

¹ Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, vol. 18 of the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 505:

For it would be irrational to suppose that the superconscient Knowledge is so aloof and separate as to be incapable of knowing Time and Space and Causality and their works; for then it would be only another kind of Ignorance, the blindness of the absolute being answering to the blindness of the temporal being as positive pole and negative pole of a conscious existence which is incapable of knowing all itself, but either knows only itself and does not know its works or knows only its works and does not know itself,—an absurdly symmetrical equipollence in mutual rejection. From the larger point of view, the ancient Vedantic, we must conceive of ourselves not as a dual being, but as one conscious existence with a double phase of consciousness: one of them is conscient or partly conscient in our mind, the other superconscient to mind; one, a knowledge situated in Time, works under its conditions and for that purpose puts its self-knowledge behind it, the other, timeless, works out with mastery and knowledge its own self-determined conditions of Time; one knows itself only by its growth in Time-experience, the other knows its timeless self and consciously manifests itself in Time-experience.

teaching the individual is not master of his own *maya* in the full sense until the realization in the Supermind or causal plane.

I do not know that this last paragraph will be at all clear to you for lack of explanation, but forgive me if I do not go more deeply into it at this time. It would probably be better to discuss it in person.

This closes that portion of the letter.

It is perfectly true that in my previous discussion of the conception of the Divine Person, I did not cover it in all of its bearings. It is possible that the discussion hinges upon a question of etymology, for the word ‘person’ is derived from the notion of *persona* or mask that was used by the actors in the Greek plays, and it thus seems as something belonging preeminently to the surface of things than to the depths of things. Is the notion of Absolute Person tenable? If taken in this sense, that notion would seem to be a contradiction in terms.

In my previous discussion of the conception of the Divine Person, I was presenting two points of view other than my own—the Aurobindian point of view as presented in *The Life Divine*, on one side, and the standpoint of the one known to us as Koot Hoomi as presented in the Tenth Letter of *The Mahatma Letters*.² Koot Hoomi spoke explicitly as a Buddhist and a philosopher. The two points of view stood in the most radical contrast. Koot Hoomi treated the conception of *Ishvara* as essentially a very surface conception, one that was the product of *maya* and *avidya*; whereas, with Aurobindo it is given a very profound, even a fundamental root meaning. No two positions could contrast in greater degree; and the question arises, to what extent is this contrast here that which exists between Buddhism, on one side, and the Vedanta, on the other? I think I see in more abstract terms the essence of the difference. The analysis, for instance, of fire as given by the Great Buddha took this form: is fire a substance of the qualities which are called heat and light? Buddha said no. Buddha said the qualities are all there is to fire. This defines a position which is analogous to, if not identical with, that of Positivism as presented by Auguste Comte. In contrast, the assertion of an absolute Person, or *Purushottama*, behind the veil would seem to suggest a philosophy or point of view that implies a substance behind the appearances. This, then, would mean that between Buddhism and Vedanta there is the contrast of a radical Positivism, on one side, and a Substantialism, on the other—precisely the contrast between the points of view which in Western philosophy are made so strong by Spinoza, on one side, and Auguste Comte, on the other. Are we forced to choose between these two positions or can we in some way integrate them? Is there some standpoint perhaps not yet formulated from which each can be viewed as a partial representation of the Ultimate—something which we may be unable at present to grasp at our present stage of conceptual evolution.

I stated in that discussion that the standpoint presented by Koot Hoomi was closer to the position of the fifth Realization than the position formulated by Aurobindo, but which is the profounder view? It is not an easy question to answer. As I see it, I found behind a principle like that of Pure Consciousness which is not to be viewed as the

² See the audio recording “Further Thoughts on the Relation of Buddhism and the Vedanta with Special Reference to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo,” part 6.

consciousness of an entity or of a self however highly conceived, but as the Root Source from which all entityhood or selfhood is derived, a self-existent, original, and eternal Consciousness, more like an essence or a Suchness, to use the Buddhist term, than like an entity. Ultimately, I found a *sutra* which seems to accord with the point of view I have formulated. This is the *sutra* which is dealt with in the book called *The Great Liberation*,³ a *sutra* given, it is said, by Padma Sambhava. In that he gives a positive statement contrasting rather strongly with the negative statements that are so common throughout the Buddhist *sutras*, in that he makes the ultimate principle the One Mind. But as Dr. Jung pointed out in his psychological commentary, this One Mind is not to be identified with that which we in the West call the mind. It is much more akin to that which Dr. Jung called the collective unconscious, but rather viewed as another kind of consciousness. This psychological *sutra* comes the closest to my own position of any of the Buddhist *sutras* that I have seen. I present my position here. I do not condemn other positions that do not seem to accord with it. I leave the question open, for there may be still other Realizations that somehow reconcile the apparently irreconcilable difference between a *substantial* point of view oriented to ultimate entity and the *positivistic* point of view ultimately oriented to an undefined Suchness or Pure Consciousness which is self-existent and the source of all that is.

I shall not here introduce a discussion of the last paragraph of the main body of the letter as it strikes a personal note and does not fall properly within the range of philosophic treatment. It deals rather with a matter of religious attitude and that is touching upon sacred ground. But there is a postscript to the letter that deals with another problem connected with an earlier tape of my own, and this I shall read into this tape.

Since having written the foregoing letter, I have heard another in your latest series of tapes, number nine I believe, in which you deal with an argument against the aestheticist Buddhist position in order to win a place for the theoretic order in the yogic philosophy.⁴ Your argument was based on the fact that certain theoretic developments have a potential of radically altering the aesthetic field, such as relativity physics which has resulted in nuclear weaponry. But does not the Buddhist is question hold the empirical sense world to be but an illusion of mind in just the way he holds all theories to be? Both are imaginatively constructed. If this is the case, I'm afraid he would agree with you that the entities of one order of illusion can have a potent effect upon another, for they both arise from the same mental faculties in the perceiver. The pure sensation which corresponds directly to the real cannot but be unaffected by $E = mc^2$, and he will hold sense is the only door leading to it. I think that you have only shown that theoretical thought can be as potent a tool for dealing with the empirical world as direct observation. You have in no way, in my opinion, demonstrated that the Buddhist is incorrect in holding that while sense

³ W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954). See the audio recording "Perception, Conception, and Introception," part 1, for a more complete discussion of this material.

⁴ See the audio recording "General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy," part 9.

perception is one step away from truth, indirect knowledge is two steps away. Finally, I seem to recall that Nagarjuna said that the yogin beholds all things, name and form, under the aspect of Suchness—not just *form* or the sensuously perceived, but also *name*, the theoretically conceived. Now, if my interpretation is correct, Nagarjuna himself cannot be considered in his Suchness doctrine to be more or less oriented to sense than to the concept. He, like his Hindu brothers, seeks to overpass both in his search for that which stands behind both.

First, in dealing with this portion of the letter, let me make myself perfectly clear in that I am dealing only with the logical Buddhism in the midst of that discussion that was worked out by Dignaga and Dharmakirti, and not with Buddhism as a whole. The position as there presented would seem to have this form: that the originally given, the ultimate reality, is itself pure sensation and not something represented by pure sensation. To make this clear and explicit, I shall read again quoting from the “Ultimate Reality” of *Buddhist Logic* namely, Paramartha-sat. And the first portion is: What is [the] Ultimately Real.

The two preceding chapters and the introduction [must] have elicited with sufficient clearness the manner in which the Buddhists of the logical school have tackled the problem of Ultimate Reality. Positively the real is the efficient; negatively the real is the non-ideal. The ideal is the constructed, the imagined, the workmanship of our understanding. The non-constructed is the real. The empirical thing is a thing constructed by the synthesis of our productive imagination on the basis of a sensation. The ultimately real is that which strictly corresponds to pure sensation alone. Although mixed together in the empirical object, the elements of sensation and imagination must be separated in order to determine the parts of pure reality and of pure reason in our cognition. After this separation has been achieved it has appeared that we can realize in thought and express in speech only that part of our cognition which has been constructed by imagination. We can cognize only the imagined superstructure of reality, but not reality itself.

It may be not amiss to repeat here all the expressions with the help of which this unexpressible reality has nevertheless been expressed. It is—

1) the pure object, the object cognized by the senses in a pure sensation, that is to say, in a sensation which is purely passive, which is different in kind from the spontaneity of the intellect;

2) every such object is “unique” in all the three worlds, it is absolutely separate, i.e., unconnected in whatsoever a way with all [the] other objects of the universe;

3) it is therefore an exception to the rule that every object is partly similar and partly dissimilar to other objects, it is absolutely dissimilar, only dissimilar, to whatsoever objects;

4) it has no extension in space and no duration in time; although an indefinite sensation produced by an unknown object can be localized in time and space, but this localization is already the work of the understanding which locates the object in a constructed space and in an imagined time;

5) it is the point-instant of reality, it has no parts between which the relation of preceding and succeeding would obtain, it is infinitesimal time, the differential in the running existence of a thing;

6) it is indivisible, it has no parts, it is the ultimate simple;

7) it is pure existence;

8) it is pure reality;

9) it is its [the] “own essence” of the thing, as it is strictly in itself;

10) it is the particular in the sense of the extreme concrete and particular;

11) it is the efficient, it is pure efficiency, nothing but efficiency;

12) it stimulates the understanding and the reason to construct images and ideas;

13) it is non-empirical, i.e., transcendental;

14) it is unutterable.

What is it then? It is something or it is nothing? It is just something, only something, something “I know not what”. It is an X, it is not a zero. It could be at least likened to a mathematical zero, the limit between positive and negative magnitudes. It is a reality. It is even *the reality*, the ultimately real element of existence. There is no other reality than this, all other reality is borrowed from it. An object which is not connected with a sensation, with sensible reality, is either pure imagination, or a mere name, or a metaphysical object. Reality is synonymous with sensible existence, with particularity and a Thing-in-Itself. It is opposed to Ideality, generality and thought-construction.⁵

What seems to be very clear here in this form of Buddhism is the identification of ultimate reality with pure sensation. As it is explained elsewhere, this pure sensation is the first moment of a presentation before it is recognized. That it is different from the empiric, in the sense that we do experience determinate objects such as trees, houses, mountains, and so forth, but is the first moment of any such presentation in its initial indeterminateness—just pure sensation itself. The empiric, or that which we call properly perception, is a joint product of the conceptual and the sensational as handled here. So that, therefore, perception would not seem to be, as it is suggested in the letter, let me quote again, “You have in no way, in my opinion, demonstrated that the Buddhist is incorrect in

⁵ Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhistic Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 181-183.

holding that while sense perception is one step away from truth, indirect knowledge is two steps away.” It would seem to imply that sense perception, in the sense of empiricism, of definite objects, is a resultant of the conceptual element and the pure sensation, and that therefore the conceptual element would be rather one step away and the sense perception, as empiric object, two steps away, and not in the order given in the letter.

In my discussion of this subject previously, the point I was making was not dealing simply with the change that a theoretical development would make in the empiric world, the point was, this would—an atomic explosion—make a difference in the first moment or point-instant of an immediate sensation, which remember is what is called ultimate reality here. Or would that first moment be what it would have been if there had not been an atomic explosion? I’d hesitate to say that that first moment would be unaffected by the monumental impact of an atomic explosion. Let this question rest at this point with that suggestion. The subject has many ramifications, but I think that this discussion is probably enough for the present.

A further thought has come to me relative to the interrelationship between Buddhism and the Vedanta in the light of what was said earlier from the article written by Mohini Chatterji in the early numbers of *The Theosophist*. This thought is that this relationship may be dialectical. But to make myself clear I shall have to say something about the meaning of the term ‘dialectical’ in this connection. As I noted in another tape,⁶ the logical Buddhists who affirm that there are only two organs, functions, or faculties of cognition, namely, sense perception and conceptual cognition, have also asserted that the relationship between these two are dialectical, and the point that I am bringing up must bear that point in mind for we may have here something of importance for clarification. While the word ‘dialectical’ does mean simple discourse or discussion or logical development in one sense, there is a second sense which is connected with the name of the philosopher Hegel, and is there known as the triadic dialectic; and it is in the latter sense that I understand the use of the term and am so using it now. This is a general and broad principle, that we know anything only by the contrast to its contradictory or to its opposite, and, uh, that that is characteristic of all dualistic consciousness whatsoever. We are all familiar with the idea that the attainment of Liberation or Enlightenment involves the transcendence of this dualism and the emergence into a consciousness that is unitary, that may be identified by the number 1 as was done by Plotinus. I’ve been thinking a good deal about this and the thought has evolved in ways that involve certain complexities, and I would like to bring them forth at this time.

To render clear what is implied by the statement of Dignaga and Dharmakirti with respect to the dialectical relationship between sense perception and conceptual cognition, this is the important point: that in the universe of discourse called cognition, if there are only two terms, such as sense perception and conceptual cognition, then the systematic rejection of one by its logical denial leads to the other. Thus you deny the validity of every possible conception whatsoever in some such form as saying this *ultimate* of which I speak or this *real* of which I speak is not any conception *a*, nor is it to be found in the conception *not-a*, nor is it to be found in the combination of conception *a* or the conception *not-a*, nor is it to be found in a conceptual standpoint which is neither *a* or

⁶ See the audio recording “General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy,” part 9.

not-a. Such a systematic rejection would lead to the other pole of the universe of discourse which in this case is predicated as sense perception. I think this may possibly be the meaning that Nagarjuna had in mind.

Now, if the dialectic is only two-term as here, and I have been told that that is characteristic of Buddhism, this is the consequence we reach. But I would like to suggest that the three-term form of Hegel is more profound and could be applied to Buddhism and as well to the relationship of Buddhism to the Vedanta in a more constructive and helpful way. Thus, if we view the antithesis in the dialectic of Hegel as not the *contradictory*, as it appears to have been used by Hegel, but as the *opposite*, we leave then a zone not covered by the thesis and the antithesis which is a zone of possible emergence into a higher field. To illustrate what I mean by the difference between the logical opposite and the logical contradictory, consider the relationship between up-ness and down-ness. Down-ness is the opposite of up-ness, but the logical contradictory of up-ness includes every possibility that is other than up-ness and thus has an extension greater than that of simple down-ness. Horizontal movement or horizontal directedness would also be in the contradictory. Let us apply this dialectic in what we might call the polar form—the opposite pole of up-ness is down-ness. The opposite pole of conceptual cognition, assuming the relationship to be dialectical with respect to sensuous cognition, would be sensuous cognition. But the contradictory could include other forms of cognition, if such do exist, and as I affirm they do exist as based upon my own imperiences. The negation in that case of the major thesis would not therefore imply an exclusive possibility of the opposite pole, but a third term, a *tertium quid* between the two.

Now, I wish to apply this principle, then, to the relationship between the Vedanta and Buddhism; that they are, as suggested in the essay to which I referred earlier, two wings of an ultimate truth, two ways in which that ultimate truth could be formulated, although these two formulations seem to be logically incompatible; that, then, the negation of each does not imply simply the movement towards the other, but could mean a movement towards the *tertium quid*, which may very well be beyond conceptuality as we know it today, though I would suggest that there is an evolution in our conceptuality whereby it becomes more and more subtle and more comprehensive both in the sense of extension and intension, using these terms in the logical sense, so that what is not now comprehensible conceptually may indeed sometime in the future become so comprehensible. At any rate, the implication here is that there is a truth, today perhaps beyond our capacity to comprehend it conceptually, in which are fused or united the two standpoints of Buddhism and Vedanta.

If, now, we identify Vedanta with the substantialistic point of view which would assert a soul or substance behind the appearance or manifestation of everything, as in the emphasis of the permanent *atman* as the *Paramatman*, and Buddhism in contrast taking a position that is radically positivistic in which there is a denial of any substance or soul or self behind the qualities or appearances, but viewing these qualities or appearances as all there is in that very positivistic sense, how could we grasp these two as relative reflections, partial reflections of a more ultimate truth? How could we then grasp something like that which is both positivistic and substantialistic? It seems to be beyond our comprehension today. We could invent terms such as a positivistic-substantialism or a substantialistic-positivism, but the terms would hardly correspond to anything

meaningfulness for us at present. It would be only a schematic form suggesting a meaning that might emerge later.

And now let us consider the question of unutterability. How absolute is this unutterability? It is a little impressive, I think, to find a chapter called “Ultimate Reality” in the *Buddhist Logic* in which we have fourteen distinct utterances concerning the unutterable. How can we define that point-instant which is there predicated as sensation if we are incapable of any utterance concerning it? In fact, what I find implied here is that the unutterability is not absolute. And this leads to a conception of what the relationship between that which cannot be expressed and the expressible may be. Our most natural way of viewing this would be to think of a ceiling that marks the absolute limit above us of anything that can be uttered and that transcending that ceiling, which might be conceived of as an impenetrable sheet of steel, that after reaching above this we enter into a zone that is absolutely unutterable. I do not find it that way. And as time goes on one finds this which at first seemed inexpressible not so inexpressible as at first it might have appeared. And this leads, then, to a different conception of the ultimate unutterability. First of all, we can utter the consequences that grow out of it. There are consequences that descend into our relative consciousness and which can be formulated, and therefore we have attained a certain utterability there. Then, as time goes on, one finds the unutterability is not so absolute as it appeared at first. One can penetrate into it more and more deeply and can formulate in terms that are more and more subtle, so that something has been uttered which in the beginning it seemed impossible to utter.

So I would like to introduce a figure here to express the nature of this unutterability; and that is again a conception drawn from mathematics. We have in mathematics, as I have pointed out before and as every student of the subject knows, numbers which we regard as rational—the numbers which we can ordinarily operate with completeness of precision—they including the normal digits and the fractions both positive and negative. But there was with the discovery of Pythagoras of the $\sqrt{2}$ along with all square roots and all n th roots that cannot be precisely formulated, and in addition to this the numbers which we call transcendental, like π and e , and a vast infinity of others with which we are not ordinarily familiar. These numbers can be formulated in rational terms, namely, as a whole number plus a fraction written in decimal form only approximately. Their complete rational formulation would consist of a non-terminating and a non-repeating decimal. The two designations are important since there are definite rational fractions such as $\frac{1}{7}$ which when formulated in decimal form are non-terminating but they are repeating. These irrational numbers of which the $\sqrt{2}$ is a type and π and e are types are expressible rationally only as non-terminating and non-repeating decimals.⁷ For quantitative operation we approximate the values and that serves our purposes, but if we use these numbers as symbols of transcendental meaning, the quantitative approximation would no longer necessarily be valid. The difference between true value and approximate value instead of being insignificant could be highly significant. Now, the incommunicability, or the unutterability, or inexpressibility of that *tertium quid*, or introceptual component, would not be an absolute but be the ultimate value of the irrational—that which is expressed only by a non-terminating, non-repeating decimal.

⁷ Wolff probably meant to say, “. . . of which the $\sqrt{2}$ is a type . . .”

But advance in the power of conceptuality could be viewed as a growth in the power of rationalizing and represented by a progressive comprehension reaching out through the series of decimal digits ever more and more. We can set no limit as to how far this power can reach in a rigid or absolute sense, but we can say that it can never attain the complete representation of the irrational or, in our present terms, can never attain the complete comprehension of the introceptual. Perhaps this is one part of the meaning of evolution, a progressive rational comprehension of the ultimately incomprehensible.