

# **The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object**

A Discussion of the Nature of Transcendental Consciousness

by Franklin Merrell-Wolff

Part 6 of 25

## **PART II\***

### **The Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

##### **The Levels of Thought**

###### **Section 1**

In the semi-esoteric psychology of Buddhism, Vedantism, and Theosophy, there is to be found a division of “mind” into two parts or facets.<sup>1</sup> While it is affirmed that the essence of mind is unitary, yet in the process of manifestation mind becomes like a two-faced mirror, one face oriented to the objective, the other to the subjective. Since the mind functions in considerable measure like a mirror, it takes on the appearance of that which it reflects, and thus its own essential nature tends to become hidden. The objectively oriented facet reflects the world and is colored by the conative-affective nature of the personal man. The inwardly directed facet, like that which it reflects, is marked by the undistorting colorlessness of dispassion.<sup>2</sup> But since both facets are of one and the same essence, there is a native affinity between them. Because of this, the consciousness of man, by the appropriate means, is enabled to cross what would otherwise be an impassable gulf of unconsciousness. This is not to say that the empiric or personal man, if unpossessed of mind, would actually have no connection with his roots, but it would mean that the relation is unconscious in the strict sense. Through the doubly reflecting mind of one essence it becomes possible, in principle, for the

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\* [The first part was entitled “The Ground of Knowledge.” It was so entitled because the problem of knowing is fundamental to any development of a philosophy. In the second part we begin the development of the philosophy which is based upon the ground unfolded in PART I. The philosophy as developed in PART II will not be systematic, but, rather, a development of certain elements that could become a systematic philosophy. Now we come to PART II which we will call “The Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object, Chapter 1, “The Levels of Thought.”]

<sup>1</sup> In this instance I am using ‘mind’ as a synonym of ‘*manas*’. While this practice is quite common, it is far from being strictly correct. The Western definition and usage of ‘mind’ is a good deal wider than that of ‘*manas*’, which has a specifically restricted meaning. For fuller discussion of this see *Pathways Through to Space*, page 193.

<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the two facets of the mind seems to be approximately, if not identically, that given by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* in his usage of the conceptions of “surface mind” and “subliminal mind.”

personally integrated consciousness to know the roots. Thus there is a Way whereby man may know the Transcendent.

For Western psychology and much of Western philosophy the acquaintance with mind is restricted to the outwardly oriented facet of the Oriental conception. This is true for the reason that the exclusively objective methods of Occidental science, at the outset, exclude the possibility of direct acquaintance with the more hidden facet. There would be little or no harm in this if it were realized that only a facet, and not the whole, was the real object of study, but all too commonly it is inferred that the method employed can provide conclusions justifying privative judgments. Thus we have the widely held attitude that the total possibilities of human consciousness are exclusively of the type that are true enough of the objective facet of mind. This standpoint simply is unsound, and this unsoundness can be verified by the appropriate means. Here science, in the familiar Western sense, does not mean “to know fully,” but rather “to know restrictedly,” and therefore does not justify privative judgments. Science, in the sense of knowing fully, cannot be restricted to objective material, but must, as well, be open to other possibilities of awareness. Western psychology is limited in its possibilities through a restriction imposed at its roots by methodological presuppositions. Accordingly, mind can never be known in its totality by this means.

As it appears through the Western method of research, the mind tends to appear as quite lacking in self-determination. Thinking seems to be entrained behind wishing and unable long to continue on its own momentum. Thus the conception has grown that thinking is only instrumental to action, the latter being the direct outgrowth of the conative factor in consciousness. Clearly, such a view greatly restricts the supposedly valid zone of the judgments of thought. Among other consequences it excludes the possibility of a genuine knowledge of the transcendent, which is just the center of focus in the present work.

It is a tribute to the relative competency of Western psychological methodology that the derived interpretation of mind-functioning is in substantial agreement with the Oriental psychology with respect to the lower facet. This latter is often designated “kama manas,” but since ‘kama’ is the Sanskrit equivalent of “desire,” we derive the meaning of ‘desire mind’, and this is very easily identified with thinking led by wishfulness. Wishfulness in thinking is undoubtedly a part truth, but it is not the whole truth.

No one may validly affirm the truth of a read or spoken statement merely because he has read it or heard it. Western science is by no means more insistent upon this than was the Great Buddha himself. Indeed, the latter was the more exacting of the two. The individual must verify for himself, or at least be able to do so, before he may justifiably accept, save as possibility. Thus we cannot affirm the actuality of the inner facet of mind until we know it directly, as no more is ignorance competent to deny its actuality. I affirm the actuality of the inner facet on the ground of direct acquaintance, and further affirm that it may be known directly through the transformation process by anyone who fulfills the conditions.

There is another kind of thought, dispassionate and self-directing, that stands in contrast with the thought that is guided by wishing. It may be said that this thought thinks itself, or tends to do so, depending upon the degree of its purity. It is not concerned with

the preconceptions of the relative consciousness nor with the pragmatic interest of man. It tends to be authoritarian in its form, and, while possessed of its own logic, yet ignores or tends to ignore that part of logical process oriented to objective referents. Most readily it expresses itself in aphoristic form, with more or less dissociation of statement from statement. But this dissociation is a surface appearance only. An analogous form is to be noted in the groups of postulates which form the bases of formally developed systems of mathematics that by themselves do not give an explicit logical whole, but rather provide the components from which a logical whole may be developed. However, the genuine aphorism differs from most groups of mathematical postulates in that the latter are generally inventions of the unilluminated mind, while the aphorism is a spontaneous production out of an illumined state. They could well serve as postulates from which systematic logical development could be constructed, in which case they might well be conceived as authentic *axioms* and not merely as *fundamental assumptions*. Something of the character of this thought I have been able to isolate, and thus have been enabled to see somewhat of the root whence springs the aphoristic thought.

## Section 2

There are certainly four kinds of thought which I find discernible, with various gradations and intermixtures. Of these, three employ or can employ verbal concepts with more or less adequacy. The fourth has no relation whatsoever with any possible word-concept, as far as its inner content is concerned. Thus the latter is not related to communication as between different centers of consciousness. The other three serve communication in some sense.

In its most lowly form, thought is inextricably entangled with bodily existence. Here thought serves organic need and relation. It is the commonest thought of everybody and is not wholly beyond the comprehension of animals. This is the thought in absolute bondage to desire, which has no value save as it serves organisms. Obviously it has no eternal worth. Its language may be just as well the grunt or the gesture as the more highly developed word.

Above this is a thought well known to cultured man. It is the thought of the liberated or partly liberated concept, and is thus the thought for which the word is the peculiarly adapted vehicle. This is the thought out of which grow science, philosophy, mathematics, and much of art. It is extremely articulate. In some manifestations it attains a high order of purity, but may be more or less contaminated with the inferior kind of thought. Most actual human thinking is such a contamination. Even those who have known this thought on its levels of greater purity cannot maintain themselves at the requisite pitch of discipline during a large proportion of waking consciousness. It is consciously directed thinking and is achieved at the price of fatiguing labor. The writing here, at this moment, is of this class.

At the deepest level of discernible thought there is a thinking that flows of itself. In its purity it employs none of the concepts which could be captured in definable words. It is fluidic rather than granular. It never isolates a definitive divided part but everlastingly interblends with all. Every thought includes the whole of Eternity, and yet there are distinguishable thoughts. The unbroken Eternal flows before the mind, yet is

endlessly colored anew with unlimited possibility. There is no labor in this thought. It simply is. It is unrelated to all desiring, all images, and all symbols.

Between the deepest level of thought and the unconscious and laborious thought, there is a fourth kind which, in a sense, is the child of these two. In high degree, this thought flows of itself, yet blends with verbal concepts. Here the conceptual thought and the transcendent thought combine in mutual action. But the lowly thought of the organic being has no part in this. It is a thought that is sweet and true, but fully clear only to him who has Vision.

The best of poetry has much of this kind of thought. It is the poetry that stirs the souls rather than the senses of men. It is the poetry of content rather than of form. But most of all from this level of thought are born the aphorisms, that strange kind of thought which is both poetry and something more. For it stirs the thinking as well as the feeling and thus integrates the best of the whole man. Mystery is an inextricable part of this thought.

### Section 3

It should not be hard to recognize in the transcendental thought and the organic thought the purest forms of the superior and inferior facets of mind. The conceptual and aphoristic thinking are derivatives from these.

It is a misconception that conceptual thought is exclusively a child of the organic kind of thinking—something which developed *solely* to serve the adaptation of a living organism to its environment as the difficulties became more complex. It has possibilities of detachment that could never have been born out of organic life. At its best, it is more than lightly colored with the dispassionate otherworldliness of the transcendental thought. Something of both the transcendental and the organic is in it, sometimes more of one, at other times more of the other.

It is in the realm of this kind of thought that the West has outdistanced the East. It is peculiarly a Western power. Its potential office in the transformation process is not to be found in the Oriental manuals. Here we face new possibilities.

The aphoristic thought is the child of the transcendental and the conceptual. This is the highest form of articulate thought. He who would understand cannot do so with his conceptual powers alone. He must also let the understanding grow up from within him.

## CHAPTER 2<sup>†</sup>

### The Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object

1. Consciousness-without-an-object is.
2. Before objects were, Consciousness-without-an-object is.
3. Though objects seem to exist, Consciousness-without-an-object is.
4. When objects vanish, yet remaining through all unaffected, Consciousness-without-an-object is.
5. Outside of Consciousness-without-an-object nothing is.
6. Within the bosom of Consciousness-without-an-object lies the power of awareness which projects objects.
7. When objects are projected, the power of awareness as subject is presupposed, yet Consciousness-without-an-object remains unchanged.
8. When consciousness of objects is born, then, likewise, consciousness of absence of objects arises.
9. Consciousness of objects is the Universe.
10. Consciousness of absence of objects is *Nirvana*.
11. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lie both the Universe and *Nirvana*, yet to Consciousness-without-an-object these two are the same.
12. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lies the seed of Time.
13. When awareness cognizes Time then knowledge of Timelessness is born.
14. To be aware of Time is to be aware of the Universe, and to be aware of the Universe is to be aware of Time.
15. To realize Timelessness is to attain *Nirvana*.
16. But for Consciousness-without-an-object there is no difference between Time and Timelessness.
17. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lies the seed of the world-containing Space.
18. When awareness cognizes the world-containing Space then knowledge of the Spatial Void is born.

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<sup>†</sup> [We come now to Chapter 2 of PART II which deals with “The Aphorism on Consciousness-Without-an-Object.” At this point I would like to say a word about the manner in which these were written. They virtually wrote themselves without effort and required perhaps not more than two hours of time. They seem to have a clear logic of their own, and yet when viewed from the external point of view they are far from being obvious; and there are developed therefore later, in Chapters 3 and 4, somewhat extensive commentaries upon these in order to make them clearer if possible.]

19. To be aware of the world-containing Space is to be aware of the Universe of Objects.
20. To realize the Spatial Void is to awaken to *Nirvanic* Consciousness.
21. But for Consciousness-without-an object there is no difference between the world-containing Space and the Spatial Void.
22. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lies the Seed of Law.
23. When consciousness of objects is born the Law is invoked as a Force tending ever toward Equilibrium.
24. All objects exist as tensions within Consciousness-without-an-object that tend ever to flow into their own complements or others.
25. The ultimate effect of the flow of all objects into their complements is mutual cancellation in complete Equilibrium.
26. Consciousness of the field of tensions is the Universe.
27. Consciousness of Equilibrium is *Nirvana*.
28. But for Consciousness-without-an-object there are neither tension nor Equilibrium.
29. The state of tensions is the state of ever-becoming.
30. Ever-becoming is endless-dying.
31. So the state of consciousness-of-objects is a state of ever-renewing promises that pass into death at the moment of fulfillment.
32. Thus when consciousness is attached to objects the agony of birth and death never ceases.
33. In the state of Equilibrium where birth cancels death the deathless Bliss of *Nirvana* is realized.
34. But Consciousness-without-an object is neither agony nor bliss.
35. Out of the Great Void, which is Consciousness-without-an-object, the Universe is creatively projected.
36. The Universe as experienced is the created negation that ever resists.
37. The creative act is bliss, the resistance, unending pain.
38. Endless resistance is the Universe of experience; the agony of crucifixion.
39. Ceaseless creativeness is *Nirvana*; the Bliss beyond human conceiving.
40. But for Consciousness-without-an-object there is neither creativeness nor resistance.
41. Ever-becoming and ever-ceasing-to-be is endless action.
42. When ever-becoming cancels the ever-ceasing-to-be then Rest is realized.
43. Ceaseless action is the Universe.

44. Unending Rest is *Nirvana*.
45. But Consciousness-without-an-object is neither action nor Rest.
46. When consciousness is attached to objects it is restricted through the forms imposed by the world-containing Space, by Time, and by Law.
47. When consciousness is disengaged from objects, Liberation from the forms of the world-containing Space, of Time, and of Law is attained.
48. Attachment to objects is consciousness bound within the Universe.
49. Liberation from such attachment is the State of unlimited *Nirvanic* Freedom.
50. But Consciousness-without-an-object is neither bondage nor Freedom.
51. Consciousness-without-an-object may be symbolized by a SPACE which is unaffected by the presence or absence of objects; for which there is neither Time nor Timelessness; neither a world-containing Space nor a Spatial Void; neither tension nor Equilibrium; neither resistance nor Creativeness; neither agony nor Bliss; neither action nor Rest; and neither restriction nor Freedom.
52. As the great SPACE is not to be identified with the Universe, so neither is It to be identified with any Self.
53. The great SPACE is not God, but the comprehender of all Gods, as well as of all lesser creatures.
54. The great SPACE, or Consciousness-without-an-object, is the sole Reality upon which all objects and all selves depend and derive their existence.
55. The great SPACE comprehends both the Path of the Universe and the Path to *Nirvana*.
56. Beside the great SPACE there is none other.

**OM TAT SAT**

## CHAPTER 3

### General Discussion of Consciousness-Without-an-Object

#### Section 1

The aphorisms which constitute the material of the preceding chapter are to be regarded as a symbolic representation of the culminating stage of the Recognition reported in the second chapter of PART I. The direct value of that Recognition is inexpressible and inconceivable in the sense of concepts meaning just what they are defined to mean and no more. Of necessity, all concepts deal with content in some sense, as they are born in the tension of a subject aware of objects and refer to objects. Consciousness-without-an-object is not an object on the level where it is realized. But just as soon as words are employed to refer to it, we have in place of the actuality a sort of shadowy reflection. This reflection may be useful as a symbol pointing towards the Reality, but becomes a deception just as soon as it is regarded as a comprehensive concept. Conceivable conclusions may be derived from the original symbol, but the full realization of That which is symbolized requires the dissolving of the very power of representation itself.

There are two lines of approach to, and employment of, the aphorisms. They may be regarded as seeds to be taken into the meditative state, in which case they will tend to arouse the essentially inexpressible Meaning and Realization which they symbolize. This we may call their mystical value. On the other hand, they may be regarded as primary indefinables upon which a systematic philosophy of the universe and its negation, *Nirvana*, may be developed. In this case, they may be viewed as a base of reference from which all thought and experience may be evaluated. From the standpoint of strict logic, they would have to be regarded as arbitrary in the same sense as the fundamental assumptions of any system of mathematics are logically arbitrary. For any individual to determine whether they are more than arbitrary would require a direct Gnostic Realization of the Truth symbolized by them, but, for the individual lacking such a Realization, they may be evaluated as any system of pure mathematics or work of art is commonly evaluated. In the latter case they are justified if they enrich the consciousness of man, entirely apart from any determination of their ontological validity. I offer the aphorisms to the reader in this sense, if he is unable to find any more fundamental justification for them.

#### Section 2

It is a fundamental principle of this philosophy that the aphorisms are not derived from experience. In its employment here I have restricted the term ‘experience’ to the meaning formulated in Baldwin’s *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*. This rules out definitely any state of consciousness which may have an absolute or timeless character as being properly regarded as experience. It is a primary consideration that experience should be defined as a time-conditioned state of consciousness in which events or processes transpire. Whether or not thought with its products may be regarded as a part of experience, and likewise whether ‘experience’ is to be restricted to the “raw immediacy” of phenomena before it is analyzed by reflective thought is unimportant for



my present purposes. It is important, simply, that “experience” should be understood as time-conditioned. This seems to be sufficiently consonant with the meaning of the term as it is employed in the various empiric philosophies. So, when it is predicated that the aphorisms are not derived from experience, it is meant that they are derivative from a consciousness which is not conditioned by time. Of course, their formulation was an event and a process in time, but it is only as symbols that they are time-conditioned. Their meaning and authority inhere in that which is beyond experience.

I am well aware that several philosophies affirm or imply that all consciousness is of necessity time-conditioned. But since this is undemonstrable, it has only the value of arbitrary assertion, which is countered by simple denial. This affirmation or implication is incompatible with the basis realized or assumed here—whichever way it may be taken. At this point I simply deny the validity of the affirmation and assert that there is a Root Consciousness which is not time-conditioned. It may be valid enough to assert that human consciousness *qua* human is always time-conditioned, but that would amount merely to a partial definition of what is meant by human consciousness. In that case, the consciousness which is not time-conditioned would be something that is transhuman or nonhuman. I am entirely willing to accept this view, but would add that it is in the power of man to transcend the limits of human consciousness and thus come to a more or less complete understanding of the factors which limit the range of human consciousness *qua* human. The term ‘human’ would thus define a certain range in the scale of consciousness—something like an octave in the scale of electromagnetic waves. In that case, the present system implies that it is, in principle, possible for a conscious being to shift his field of consciousness up and down the scale. When such an entity is focused within the human octave it might be agreed to call him human, but something other than human when focused in other octaves. Logically, this is simply a matter of definition of terms, and I am more than willing to regard the human as merely a stage in consciousness, provided it is not asserted dogmatically that it is impossible for consciousness and self-identity to flow from stage to stage. On the basis of such a definition this philosophy would not be a contribution to Humanism but to Transhumanism.

### Section 3

The *Critique of Pure Reason* I regard as a philosophical work of very high importance. The most significant conclusion of that work seems to be that the pure reason, acting by itself, cannot solve the ontological problems. The reason can work upon a material that is given, but cannot, itself, supply the original material. If material is given through experience, then the reason can derive consequences that are also valid within the field of experience. However, the reason operates within the matrix of a transcendental base, and thus is something more than experience, though it be ever so impossible to recognize and isolate reason before the conscious being has had experience. The transcendental base is a pre-existence determined after the fact of experience. Now, if we regard Kant’s criticism as a sort of circumscription of a certain field of consciousness, his work may very well be permanently valid in its main outlines. I am disposed to think that it is. But I question whether his analysis was broad

enough to cover the whole field of human consciousness. It would seem to fit more especially that particular phase of human consciousness in which lies Western scientific knowledge. In any case, it is not an analysis of subhuman consciousness, such as that of the animal, nor is it competent as a study of the forms of consciousness realized in the various mystical states.

For my own part, I do not contend that the pure reason, either acting in a strictly formal sense or upon a material given by experience, can demonstrate a transcendental reality. On the contrary, this reality must be realized immediately, if it is to have more than a hypothetical existence. But assuming that a given individual has awakened to a transcendental realization, it is possible for him to reflect the transcendent through concepts, when the latter are taken in a symbolic sense. Such concepts may then serve as original material upon which the reason can operate and derive consequences. Some or all of these consequences may well prove to have value within the range of relative consciousness, including experience. I do not suggest that such a system will necessarily prove competent to render experience, as such, unnecessary. It may only supply that which experience, by itself, cannot supply, namely, an interpretive framework capable of comprehending all possible experience however unpredictable its specific *quale* may be. Experience as raw immediacy does not define its own meaning. A given “raw immediacy” cast in the framework of traditional Christian theology arouses a meaning that is quite different from that afforded when the base of reference is such as assumed by physical science. Neither of these frameworks are derivative from nor proved by experience. Logically, they are simply presuppositions from which observation, analysis, and interpretation proceed. Historically, each has supplied human consciousness with positive values, and for that reason has persisted over considerable periods of time. But today we know that both are inadequate. Our science has given command over external nature that the older theology failed to achieve, but in turn it leaves a very important part of the demands of human consciousness unsatisfied—a fact which is exemplified by the growth of psychosis and parapsychosis at the present time.

#### Section 4

A transcendental reality cannot be proved by logic nor can it be experienced in the time-bound sense, but it may be *realized* mystically. It is impossible to prove the actuality of God, freedom, immortality, or any other supposed metaphysical reality, in the scientific sense of proof. With respect to these matters, either to affirm or to deny is unscientific. The competency of any scientist *qua* scientist need not be affected by either an attitude of belief or of disbelief. But an attitude of belief or disbelief may make a lot of difference to him as a complete human being. There is an enormous divergence between a human consciousness which is rich and filled with assurance compared to one which is starved and uncertain, and this difference is important to relative life itself, even though not affecting technical scientific competency. Practically, men assume much which they do not know and which cannot be known within the limits of the methodology of physical science. In spite of themselves, men do act upon transcendental assumptions, even when the assumption is in the form of a denial of the possibility of a transcendental reality. And all this does make a difference for life as actually lived.

The man who has not realized the transcendental, in the mystical sense of realization, is not freed from the necessity of acting “as if” with respect to some transcendental base which forms his outlook on life. Barring mystic certainty, the relative merits of one “as if” when compared to others is to be judged by the values afforded for life as actually lived. No dogmatist, whether ecclesiastical or scientific, has any right to challenge the freedom of any man in the selection of his purely transcendental “as if.” Such an “as if” can never contradict the raw immediacy of experience, since the former is related to value or meaning, which is another dimension of consciousness entirely. For instance, a scientific determination that the secretions of the ductless glands, in the case of a given individual, differs from the norm, proves nothing concerning the value of the consciousness enjoyed by the individual. The deviation from the norm may or may not be favorable for a long life, but in any case this is irrelevant when we measure the value of the consciousness in question. We are simply dealing with another dimension of consciousness altogether.

The aphorisms may be regarded as affording a particular “as if” basis for integrating in terms of value the totality of relative consciousness. In this case, it is unnecessary to raise the question as to whether they are true or false in the scientific sense. In fact, they are neither true nor false when these judgments are employed as they are in physical science. They stand simply as the basis for the integration of relative consciousness. They may be viewed as of only psychological significance, though for me there is no doubt concerning their positive metaphysical rooting. They are not a mere “as if” for me, though I am quite willing to assume the “as if” status for them as a minimal basis for the purposes of discourse. However, entirely apart from the question of metaphysical actuality, it remains true that there is an enormous practical difference between a self which is out of harmony with the not-self and a self which has attained harmonious integration with the not-self. The steps toward such harmonious integration in their less comprehensive phases are known as “conversion,” and when more profoundly developed, as “mystical awakening.” That these aphorisms have the power to produce such transformations I have already demonstrated empirically in connection with others than myself. This fact, alone, is sufficient to vindicate their use as an “as if” basis, at least in principle.

In his *Dance of Life*, Havelock Ellis has developed the thesis that both science and philosophy are arts and therefore have the same justification as any other art, at the very least. This is to say that both are creative constructions, whatever else they may be. In this respect Havelock Ellis’ position is consonant with my own. It simply means that a real philosophy is a Way of Life, however much it may also be a system of notions. I regard the aphorisms as affording a basis that is valid in both senses. However, criticism may give them quite different valuation, depending upon the sense taken. In any case, I insist upon their value in determining a Way of Life. That is to say, that before and above all other ways, they determine a religious attitude. But for me, individually, no religious attitude is satisfactory which is not, at least, philosophically and mathematically adequate, and ultimately, justly comprehensive of all phases of consciousness. However, I ask the reader to view, and if possible, accept this philosophy as he would a work of art, even though he can go no farther.

## Section 5

The basis of integration afforded by the aphorisms is that of the radical assertion of the primacy of Consciousness. In this respect the present thesis stands in a position counter to that of the so-called scientific philosophies. In the case of the latter, matter, things, or relations are assumed as original, and then consciousness is approached as a problem. "How did consciousness spring up in the universal machine?" This becomes the most baffling of mysteries. I affirm that this mystery is purely artificial and grows out of assuming an inadequate base of reference. For "matter," "thing," and "relation" are creatively constructed notions and by no means originally given material. On the contrary, consciousness is original and is presupposed in the very power to recognize and formulate a problem. There is something sterile in the speculation concerning that which is eternally outside consciousness. Just as light can never comprehend darkness, for the simple reason that darkness vanishes as light penetrates it, so too the unconscious vanishes as consciousness pierces it. Thus every element that is brought into any speculation is, of necessity, within the field of consciousness. The eternally unconscious is indistinguishable, at any rate, from absolute nothingness, if it is not identical with it. It simply *is not* for any practical or valid theoretical purpose. This much we know, even though we know nothing else, "Consciousness is." For it is presupposed even in the acknowledgement of ignorance and in the agnostical and skeptical attitudes. But while every man is a living demonstration to himself that "Consciousness is," not every man has realized that "Consciousness-without-an-object is." The radical element in my philosophic departure inheres in the "without-an-object." Herein lies precisely the difference between a state of consciousness that is only relative or saturated in raw immediacy and no more, and one which involves profound mystical realization. However, consciousness is the common denominator underlying the possibility of any philosophy, worldview, religious attitude, art, or science. I, therefore, affirm the systematic primacy of consciousness as such.

As soon as consciousness is concerned with objects, interpretations and other complexities are introduced, and, accordingly, all sorts of divergences. Deleting content, only Consciousness-without-an-object remains as the common denominator. If approached in a purely theoretical spirit, this might have merely the value of an abstraction. I have demonstrated its actuality as a direct realization, but found it the most difficult of all things to attain when starting from the basis of reflective consciousness. However, when realized, it is the simplest of all things. When I say that Consciousness-without-an-object is, I imply its independence and self-existence. Everything else may be only a symbol. Problems concerning the genesis of specific symbols may become very difficult and require all the resources of highly trained capacity. But Consciousness-without-an-object is an unshakable base, and thus is an assurance transcending both unverifiable faith and relative knowledge.

As I assert the dependency of all contents upon Consciousness-without-an-object, so likewise do I affirm the concomitant dependency of the Self and all selves, because the existence of a self implies the existence of objects, whether subtle or gross, and, as well, the existence of objects implies the presence of a self which is aware of them. The object and the self are polar existences which are interdependent. The notion of a self that is conscious without being conscious of anything does not correspond to any possible

actuality. The object may be very abstract, such as a bare field of consciousness viewed as an object, but analysis will always reveal a polar relationship. The subject is the inverse or complement of the object, or, in other words, its “other.” Thus, for example, the object is the totality of all possible experience, and this is manifestly multiform and heterogeneous. In contrast, the pure self, conceived as the polarized power *to be aware*, is unitary and homogeneous. Taken in abstraction, the object, as such, is not a universe, but simply a multitude without interconnection and therefore not even a collection. The *universe* is the resultant of the interaction of the self and its object—that is, a disconnected multiplicity integrated through the unity of the self.