

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

A Discussion of the Nature of Transcendental Consciousness

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Part 9 of 25

PART II

The Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object

CHAPTER 3

General Discussion of Consciousness-Without-an-Object

(continued)

Section 15

It has been stated that the key to *Nirvanic* Consciousness consists of an anesthetizing of the power of experiencing and of thinking, combined with a continuing self-consciousness. This is the essential process that reveals the significance of the step. Practically, the process of transformation may or may not involve the complete anesthetizing. If the anesthesia is complete, then the consciousness of the universe of objects is wholly annulled, either temporarily or permanently. This is the mystic destruction of the universe and the Awakening to *Nirvanic* States. Objectively viewed, the individual who does this appears to enter a complete state of ecstatic trance, in which there is a suspension of vital conscious process in the *Sangsaric* sense. This is all that the physical scientist *qua* physical scientist can observe. And if the observer holds to the theory that the *Sangsaric* type of consciousness is the only possible consciousness, then he would say the trance involved the total extinction of consciousness in every sense. Some psychologists take this position, but since they are unable to trace what they cannot see, they are quite unqualified to pass judgment upon the state in question. For in this matter, the bare observer is entirely helpless. The realizer may report the continuity of his self-consciousness, but the observer, as such, has no check whatsoever. If, in turn, he should become a realizer in his own right, then he would Know, but that knowing would not be the result of his observing external states or conditions. He would no longer be a bare observer.

Now, it is possible, by a modified technique, to become a realizer and remain, in some degree, an observer at the same time. In this case, there is substituted for the literal anesthetizing a process of dissociation of the two kinds of consciousness. The thinking and experiencing powers are set on one side, as it were, while the larger portion of the self-conscious principle, but not all, is withdrawn into the hinterland. In this case, there is no black-out trance state but a sort of slowing down of the *Sangsaric* consciousness and the objective life-stream. It is a critical kind of balance to maintain, as there is a constant tendency for the consciousness principle to “flop over” completely to one side or the other. But if, through steadiness of the will, the balance is maintained and the self-

analyzing power functions with clear discrimination, then it is possible to be conscious on two levels without confusion. In this case, dissociation accomplishes the essential effect of the anesthesia.

The latter technique has a decided advantage in that it effects a conscious bridging of two levels of consciousness. This facilitates the construction of interpretative symbols, and as well, opens a door whereby a stream of *Nirvanic* Consciousness may be made to penetrate the universe of objects and be more or less consciously directed.

Section 16

From the standpoint of Consciousness-without-an-object there is no problem concerning immortality. The directly known truth is: Immortality is, but no embodied or object-bound stage of consciousness is immortal. This simply means that the Sea of Consciousness is without beginning or end, being completely unconditioned by time, but the various stages wherein that Sea supports objects are temporary. Thus man as man is not immortal. Here it must be understood that “man,” as well as any other name of an object, is only a designation for a stage along the Way. Immortality attaches to consciousness as a principle, not to the stages. Man may achieve immortality by superimposing his evolved power of self-consciousness upon the Primordial Consciousness itself, but in this case he simply ceases to be a man. The self-conscious *Nirvani* is no longer a man, though in his case the differentiated consciousness-principle once passed through the human stage. Actually, the *Nirvani* is a Divine, rather than a human, being. The consciousness-principle is the Pilgrim which passes through many stages, absorbing from those stages many values in terms of progressively awakened self-consciousness. When man succeeds in assimilating the Pilgrim by transference of his self-consciousness, then his self-identity is one with immortal consciousness, but the self-identity ceases to be merely human. Put in other terms, all somatic stages are temporary; the consciousness stream is without beginning or end.

But while immortality ceases to be a problem, an entirely different problem arises. This may be stated in the form: How is it possible, within a beginningless and endless Primordial Consciousness, for transitory states to arise? I am not here attempting any solution of this problem but simply indicating the shift of problem form. This new problem, unlike the old one concerning immortality, has no tragic implications. Reflective consciousness, aided by insight and observation, may undertake its resolution at leisure, with all the time in the world to complete the search. For with the problem thus stated, there is no deep religious or psychological need at stake. The resolution of the problem would have theoretical and working value, but there is no time-pressure to drive reflective consciousness to a quick solution.

There is but one consideration that I shall suggest here. It is unthinkable that the formless and attributeless Primordial Consciousness, all of a sudden, at a certain point, started to project Itself into the subject-object series of states. Rather, no beginning or end to the series of states is thinkable, one state being always the consequent of a preceding state and the cause of the one that follows. Consciousness-without-an-object is not a First Cause; it is the substratum underlying all possible states and causes.

Section 17

For one who has made himself familiar with the stream of Western philosophy from the time of the Greeks to the present day, it should be evident that there are certain differences of base and valuation which have divided philosophers throughout the whole of that period. The development of scientific knowledge, of mathematics, and of epistemological criticism has not succeeded in bridging these differences so that a philosophic agreement could be effected. All these developments have only had the effect of changing the form in which the differences appear, so that they have become more subtle and intellectually sophisticated, but the essential differences still remain, however much transformed in their statement. There still are incompatible philosophic schools, represented by men of comparable degrees of intellectual ability, training, and knowledge. All of which reveals, clearly, that the factors which make for philosophic differences run deeper than the material with which science can deal and resolve factually and interpretatively once for all.

Some psychologists have taken cognizance of these philosophical tendencies and have shown that they are connected with differences of psychological type. The immediately taken base and the accepted values are not the same for all men. And this immediate element belongs more to religion, in the broad and fundamental sense, than it does to science. It is something which precedes, rather than follows, science. In fact, that attitude which makes the scientific point of view itself possible is of the nature of these more fundamental and extra-scientific adjustments. Justice demands that we accept these differences of adjustment as relatively valid and renounce the hope and desire for universal philosophic conformity. The conflict of philosophic schools is both desirable and necessary.

Two important types of differences in valuation and immediate insight will account for the principle differences of philosophical systems. One is a difference in the valuation of the two principal groups of objects, namely, objects of sense and objects of thought. The other is a difference in the valuation of objectivity, as such, as contrasted to the subjective pole of consciousness. These differences I shall discuss briefly, so as to relate my own system to them more clearly.

Evidently the overwhelming majority of men in thought and practice most of the time predicate substantial reality of the objects of sensation, particularly in terms of the social waking consciousness of our ordinary life. Most, though not all, physical scientists take this position, as well as the majority of the men of action. Among the current philosophical tendencies Naturalism definitely, and sometimes quite naively, takes this standpoint. This is also true in considerable degree, but not entirely, of the representatives of Pragmatism. The position of Neo-Realism is more involved, in that, while it is highly objective, its objects are not conceived as objects of sensation or of thought, but as independent existences which, in their real nature, are neither physical nor psychical, though capable of passing through both psychical and physical systems without being altered in their essential nature. However, Neo-Realism is frankly and intensely objective in its valuation, and therefore stands in closer relationship to both Pragmatism and Naturalism than it does to Idealism.

There is a smaller class of men who find the objects of thought more real than the objects of sensation. These are represented in the philosophic systems of rational Scholasticism, Rationalism proper, and in those philosophic systems currently called intellectualistic. There may be more or less blending between these philosophic currents and Naturalism, Neo-Realism, and Idealism, though they are definitely non-pragmatic, since the latter school seems pretty thoroughly united on the principle of anti-intellectualism, in the philosophic sense.

The two foregoing groups largely agree in that they attach primary importance to objects, in some sense, and may be divided by regarding one group as sensationalistic and the other as rationalistic or intellectualistic.

In contrast to both these groups there stand those who attach the greater reality to the subjective pole of consciousness. In the philosophies these are represented by Idealism and Vedantism. However, this class seems to be more widely represented by individuals whose dominant expression is not consciously philosophical. More often their expression appears in the form of a mysticism which is more poetic than philosophical. Yet, within the mystical group, there is a further differentiation to be made between those who emphasize union with God and those who emphasize union with the Self in a transcendental sense. However, the whole mystical movement is in a subjective direction, so, when the emphasis is placed upon more or less Divine objects, these objects are subtle rather than gross.

In the present system all objects are regarded as derivative, and therefore possessing, at best, only a derivative or symbolic reality. Yet some objects may have a higher order of relative reality than others. I have already pointed out that the valuation here is relative to purpose and not absolute. Thus, the ordinary gross objects of sense, common to waking consciousness, are given no superior status as such. Essentially, dream objects and mystical objects are given the same validity. Relative to particular purpose, the one or the other class of objects may be judged as possessing the superior order of reality. Concerning the two classes of objects, namely, objects of sensation whether subtle or gross, and objects of thought, the same principle applies. Objects of thought, or some classes of the objects of thought, may, in some purposive situations, possess an inferior reality as compared to that attaching to the objects of sensation. On the other hand, the reverse is equally true in other purposive situations. To sum up: All objects of whatever type, whether objects for sensation or for thought, whether subtle or gross, whether abstract or concrete, in the last analysis possess only a derivative reality, and thus may be regarded finally as a *seeming* only.

There remains to be considered the view this system presents concerning the subjective pole of consciousness. In this, I am referring to that which is variously known as the "ego," whether in the personal or higher sense, the "I," the "Self," or the "Atman," whether in the individual or supreme sense. In this subjective pole there are discernible differentia, just as there are between different classes of objects. Now, in the present system, the subjective pole, both in its inferior and superior aspects, is viewed as the reflex or inverse of the object, as such, though in the higher sense it is viewed as essentially the higher pole. This means that the "I," in whatever sense, whether empiric or transcendental, is as much derivative as the objective world. Thus the present system is not to be identified with either Vedantism or current Idealism, though it is arrived at by a

process of passing through these schools of interpretation and thus stands genetically, although not necessarily formally, closer to them.

The final position is: The One, non-derivative Reality, is THAT which I have symbolized by "Consciousness-without-an-object." This is Root Consciousness, *per se*, to be distinguished from consciousness as content or as state, on the one hand, and from consciousness as an attribute of a Self or *Atman*, in any sense whatsoever. It is Consciousness of which nothing can be predicated in the privative sense save abstract Being. Upon It all else depends, while It remains self-existent.

The question of the means by which any individual may arrive at a direct Realization of Consciousness-without-an-object is one that is very involved and the solution has many variants, corresponding to the psychical status of the various individuals. All evidence confirms the view that it is reached by a progressive series of steps, such that a lower attachment or identification is renounced for one that is superior, the process being repeated again and again until, from the vantage ground of a high transcendental position, the final step can be taken. Beyond this general statement the question of technique cannot be entered into here.

Apart from the actual Realization of Consciousness-without-an-object, it is possible to take the symbol itself as an object of thought and use it for the purpose of philosophic and general mystical integration. This is the procedure of assuming the symbol as a fundamental premise and then observing the consequences which follow. There is some reason to believe that such a method of procedure is possible within the setting of Western culture, as might not be the case for Oriental culture or for any culture that has preceded ours of which any record exists. This possibility I see as growing out of our peculiar mathematical development. In mathematics we excel all other cultures, and, as I see it, all other genuine superiority we may have has resulted from this mathematical excellence. In other respects, as far as the greater and durable values are concerned, there are other cultures in the Orient, whether of the present or the past, that just as clearly excel us. Now, it is by its power, and not its weakness, that an individual or a class attains the best. Thus, I would select the mathematical road as the one of preeminent power so far as Western culture is concerned.

Now the validity of mathematics is established upon a basis that is quite impersonal and universal. Its authority is not dependent upon the name of any writer of any mathematical treatise. In its purity it deals only with the transcendental or ideal objects of the very highest order of thinkable abstraction or universality. In high degree, the consciousness of the mathematician *qua* mathematician is not concerned with either a self or objects. To be sure, this is not absolutely so, but this position is attained in mathematical consciousness in higher degree than anywhere else, except in states of *Samadhi* of a high order. Herein is revealed the power of pure mathematics as an instrument of consciousness-transformation on a very lofty level.

Again, pure mathematics is the only real invariant that we have in the ever-changing phantasmagoria of experience. When an individual undertakes to chart an unknown sea, he must have fixed bases of reference by which to navigate his course, if he would not run the risk of being hopelessly lost. To be sure, there is a profound sense in which the pure Self is a similar invariant, but the peculiar psychology of the West is too objective in its orientation to permit this Self to be generally and effectively accessible. It

is otherwise in India. This profound psychological difference renders it impractical to hope to graft Oriental method upon the Western man, save in some exceptional cases. That would be using the right method with the wrong man, and such a procedure leads to wrong results. Hence, the Western psychology being what it is, the available invariant seems to be pure mathematics.

I am not speaking with a naive ignorance of current philosophic and logical analysis of pure mathematics. But I shall not enter into this extremely technical question at this time. I am well aware that the invariant element does not lie in the fundamental assumptions, or so-called axioms, from which a mathematical system starts. These assumptions may be chosen as a largely free creative act, but just as soon as the process of deduction of theorems begins, free creativeness ceases. The law that governs the flow of consequences is tougher than tempered steel and harder than the hardest rock. Save in the Self, here, as nowhere else, is there something to which human consciousness can tie and give its trust, though all else become fluid and confusing. And this invulnerable core carries straight through to Consciousness-without-an-object. Only at the very last does the logical invariant vanish in the eternally Ineffable, but then the Wanderer has arrived at the place of Final Security and Completeness, beyond the relativity of all science, art, religion, and philosophy.

And supposing the Wanderer has at last arrived, is there nothing more than a ceaseless consciousness without content? No, before him there stands all possibilities, both those of the universe of objects, in every sense, and also of *Nirvana*, likewise in every sense. But the arrived Wanderer is now Enlightened and is secure against all dangers and all possible entanglements in all kingdoms or states of consciousness from the Heavens to the Hells. He may produce creatively or not, but in any case He is superior to either action or refraining from action. In a word, He moves upon the plane of a higher order of evolution. This is the meaning of Consciousness-without-an-object.

CHAPTER 4

Commentaries on the Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object

FORWARD

In their depths, feeling and thought spring from the same root. This root, in its own nature as unmanifested, has a character which appears to the relative consciousness as both devoid of feeling and without conceptual form. But, when realized, it has the value of fulfilled feeling and completed thought. Consciousness no longer feels a reaching out for an unattained completeness. With this, both thought and feeling lose their differentiated and, therefore, identifiable particularity. But when the root is projected into the actualizing consciousness it loses some measure of its purity, since to actualize is to particularize, even though on the most abstract level of expression. The aphorisms on Consciousness-without-an-object constitute such a projection on a level of exceptional abstraction and universality, whereby the unthinkable becomes, in some measure, the thinkable. But since, in this act, the universal comprehender appears in the field of the comprehended, we stand, in the latter case, not in the presence of Truth herself, but come into possession of a symbol of Truth.

To step from the symbol to that which is symbolized, though this does afford a peculiarly exacting demand upon acuity of thought, yet requires much more. Here, feeling, in the best sense, must fuse with the thought, so that, in the highest degree, he thinks devotedly. It is not enough to think clearly, if the thinker stands aloof, not giving *himself* with his thought. The thinker arrives by surrendering himself to Truth, claiming for himself no rights save those which Truth herself bestows upon him. In the final state of perfection he possesses no longer opinions of his own nor any private preference. Then Truth possesses him, not he, Truth.

He who would become one with the Eternal must first learn to be humble. He must offer, upon the sacrificial altar, the pride of the knower. He must become one who lays no possessive claim to knowledge or wisdom. This is the state of the mystic ignorance—of the emptied heart. He who thus has become as nothing in his own right then is prepared to become possessed by Wisdom herself. The completeness of self-emptying is the precondition to the realization of unutterable Fullness. Thus mere “knowledge about” becomes transformed into Knowledge as Reality.

To know THAT which the aphorisms symbolize is to be possessed by THAT and, then, to be one with THAT. Thenceforth, all thinking, all feeling, all particularization, and all selfhood lie below. To be sure, all these remain, but no longer as claimants to a Throne which they could not possibly fill. They remain thenceforth as the actors in the Divine Drama, but no more.

Before the candidate the ordeal of the mystic death appears as a terror-inspiring apparition. But he, who, with stout heart challenging the seeming of ultimate dissolution, enters into the awful and terrible presence, finds only utter Glory. Terror has become beatitude. Only liabilities have been lost as he finds himself, not lost in the Eternal, but become that Eternal Itself. All the dangers of the Way are only ghosts, possessing no power save such as the candidate has himself projected upon them. However, since there

is much darkness and fear in the heart of man, there are apparitions of terrible visage. But they have no power of their own and must vanish, helpless before the will of the undaunted candidate.

He who receives the aphorisms as guideposts along the Way will find in them powers to dissipate all apparitions, whether of terror or seduction. The threatening appearance of darkness will be dissipated before him as he journeys along the Path. In the end, the Door to Glory will loom clear before his gaze, and he will know no conflict with terror in any part of the Way. Yet he who does not find himself able to go so far, may yet find in the symbols content for his thought which will illumine that thought. Thought in the light is much better than thought groping in darkness. To think from the base of Light, though it be that that Light is not yet understood, is far better than thought grounded in the darkness of no vision. For upon some base all thought must be grounded if it is to be more than that absolute nescience which leads in darkness from nowhere to nowhere. To have more than such hopeless darkness, he, who is not yet Knowledge, must base himself upon faith, whether it be faith in the Eternal, or some lesser light. Lacking Knowledge, man must have faith if he would not perish.

1. Consciousness-without-an-object is.

The fundamental principle underlying all the aphorisms is that Consciousness is the original and self-existent Reality. This Consciousness is both Substance and Life. It would be possible to view the Primordial Principle in terms of Life or of Substance, as well as in terms of Consciousness, but I approach the subject from the standpoint of Consciousness for the reason that this is the phase of Reality of which we are most immediately certain. Consciousness, Life, and Substance are not to be regarded as three distinct realities, but as merely three facets of the nondual Reality, as the latter appears to the analytic consciousness.

The Primordial Consciousness is not to be regarded as the consciousness of some transcendent being who is aware of some content. Herein lies, perhaps, the main difficulty with respect to understanding the idea contained in the symbol of Consciousness-without-an-object. We are in the habit of regarding consciousness as something derivative—a quality possessed by something else or a kind of relationship. It is necessary to abandon this view if the aphorisms are to be understood. Let this Consciousness be considered as original, and then both the subject and the object become derivative. That which is primary and original, then, is a great Void of Consciousness, to all consciousness of the type that depends upon the subject-object relationship. It is as though that Consciousness were nothing, while actually It is the all in all.

This Absolute Consciousness is, from the relative standpoint, indistinguishable from unconsciousness. Most generally, philosophy is written from the perspective which views the ultimate as unconscious, whether of psychical (as for example von Hartmann's view) or non-psychical nature (as for example the view of the materialists), and thus has taken the relative consciousness as the ground of approach, but the aphorisms are written as from the ultimate Transcendental Base, and then, from that viewpoint the problems of relative consciousness are approached. We are following a deductive process of descent from the most universal to the concrete or particular,

rather than the inductive method which is so characteristic of analytic science and much philosophy, including that of von Hartmann.

An inevitable question is: How can this Primordial Consciousness be known? To this it is answered: Through a Recognition transcending the *Nirvanic* State. Complete verification of the validity of the aphorisms requires this. However, a partial or pragmatic verification may be achieved through willing to accept them *as though* they were true symbols of the Reality, and then drawing the consequences which follow from them, finally noting how they affect the problems of life and thought as practically experienced. If the investigator finds that they tend to simplify the problems and to bring the self into more harmonious adjustment with the not-self, then they prove to be an orientation which enriches life, and are thus pragmatically justified.

Naturally, it is implied that Recognition is a human possibility. Otherwise, the aphorisms would have to rest upon one or the other of two bases: a. intellectual speculation grounded exclusively in relative consciousness, or, b. external superhuman revelation beyond the possibility of human verification. Both these standpoints are denied here, especially the latter. The notion of external superhuman revelation, when subjected to analysis, does not possess any really intelligible meaning, and belief in this tends toward both intellectual and moral suicide. From this belief follows the attitude made famous in the words of Tertullian: "I believe because it is against reason." Such a viewpoint is utterly foreign to the spirit in which the aphorisms are written.

It is affirmed that the aphorisms mean a content given through immediate Knowledge, and that for the Realization of this content the functioning of a generally latent organ is the proximate means. Hence they are not to be viewed as metaphysical speculations of which the concepts would have no real content, as Kant pointed out in his *Critique of Pure Reason* in relation to metaphysical subject matter. Thus it is maintained that the aphorisms are not mere developments of the pure reason, and accordingly, avoid the challenge of the Kantian criticism. Therefore, philosophic criticism of the present philosophy, in so far as it is strictly philosophical, must assume the actuality of the inner organ.

The critical problem takes the form: Does the inner organ or *Samadhindriya*—as it is known in Sanskrit—exist? This is a psychological, or rather, metapsychological question. I have explored with care the possibilities of logical proof that such an organ must exist, but have been forced to conclude that no such demonstration is possible. Yet logical disproof is equally impossible. The only possible proof depends upon immediate experience of the activity of the organ. On the other hand, empiric disproof is impossible, since empiric disproof of any supposed psychical function or organ presupposes demonstrably complete knowledge of every psychical possibility. I am not aware that any psychologist lays claim to such omniscience.

Now, if any individual should have immediate acquaintance with the functioning of a psychical organ, which with most men either lies wholly inactive or functions in such a way as to be unrecognizable to the relative consciousness of the individual, he would know as a matter of genuine private knowledge that the function or organ is an actuality. But if he sought to prove this actuality to those in whom the function was wholly latent, he would face serious difficulties. Anything which he succeeded in introducing into the consciousness of the latter would, of necessity, be in terms of the functions which were

already active in them. In general, this means in terms of the so-called five-sense rational consciousness. Anything more that was strictly peculiar to the new organ would stand in incommensurable relationship, and therefore, be ineffable; it could not be communicated at all. But that which could be communicated would be, as said, in terms of the usual five-sense rational content. And this could always be explained away by the appropriate ingenuity, so that it would appear to the unawakened consciousness that the hypothesis of a new organ was unnecessary. The inventive ingenuity of the human intellect is, undoubtedly, quite capable of inventing the appropriate hypotheses. But if, for instance, the born-blind could invent hypotheses which would explain everything that the seeing ones could convey to their consciousness, in terms that would dispense with the hypothesis that anybody had sight, this might be quite convincing to other blind men, but it would leave those who had sight quite unimpressed. The result would be a stalemate.

That the conception of a latent mystical sense, active in some instances but inactive with most men, can be interpreted in such a way to supply a *sufficient* explanation of how a transcendental knowledge can be, I have not yet found questioned by anyone. It is the question of *necessity* that is raised. Now, if we assume the actuality of the mystical sense in an active state in a given case, then, although the content which could be conveyed into the zone of the ordinary five-sense rational consciousness would not necessarily require the predication of the mystical sense for its interpretation, yet there would remain the incommensurable or ineffable portion of the original content or state, which still would require explanation. So far as I have found, the hypotheses of the five-sense rational consciousness imply that the ineffable content or value is pure illusion. To the mystic this is proof of the *insufficiency* of all such hypotheses, since he claims a greater reality *quale* for the content or value realized through the mystical sense than that possessed by all the other senses. Now, how is the five-sense rational consciousness going to challenge this? By basic assumption the mystic has the five-sense rational consciousness plus all the consciousness-value received through the mystic sense, and therefore, is in a position to establish a comparative valuation, and this the exclusively five-sense rational consciousness cannot do. At this point the less gentlemanly of the psychologists descend to the street urchin's device of labeling the other fellow with bad names, though usually highly technical language is employed. I submit that this is beneath the dignity of true scholars and gentlemen.

It is a principle of logic that a rigorous argument shall satisfy both the categories of necessity and sufficiency. But this perfection is attained only in pure mathematics. No inductive, hence no scientific, hypothesis satisfies both these conditions. There is no scientific hypothesis that is necessary in the logical sense, since other hypotheses could be invented. But a scientific hypothesis must pass the test of sufficiency, namely, it must be such as to incorporate *all* relevant facts into a systematic whole. Now, if we are to leave out mutual name-calling as a valid line of argument as between the possessors of the mystic sense and those of the exclusive five-sense type, then it is the five-sense type of interpretative theory that fails to satisfy the canons of scientific hypotheses. For these hypotheses do not satisfy the condition of sufficiency.

As to the ineffable content or quality of mystical states of consciousness, it may be pointed out that there is nothing at all strange about this. 'Ineffable' means unspeakable or incommunicable. But incommunicability is not at all strange, for such a limitation attaches even to sense-experience. The peculiar *quale* of one sense cannot be

communicated in terms that are understandable with respect to another sense. And indeed, there is something fundamentally ineffable in the relationship between percepts and concepts. Concepts convey perceptual values from one individual to another only to the extent that the two individuals have a commonality of perceptual experience. Since the referents are in common the concepts convey meaning, but otherwise they do not. Now, the mystic knows an ineffable content or quality *in the case of communication to a non-mystic*, but, in general, the concept, the sign, or symbol will convey this content, more or less adequately, to a fellow mystic. It is just a case of the concepts, signs, or symbols having a different kind of reference and of two or more individuals having common acquaintance with the relevant referents.

In the highest sense of Transcendental Consciousness we have to abandon the whole idea of organ of consciousness, since the notion of organ implies delimitation. But so long as there are stages in mystical consciousness, the idea of an inner organ is valid.

2. Before objects were, Consciousness-without-an-object is.

This aphorism emphasizes the priority of Consciousness to content. But this is not a priority in time in the sense that a causal antecedent precedes a consequent. Primordial Consciousness is no more a cause of objects, *in the temporal sense*, than is space a cause of the stellar systems. But without space there could be no stellar systems, and likewise, there could be no objects without the support of Consciousness. Hence Consciousness-without-an-object is, not in the sense of a present which is a mere point in the flow of the future into the past, but in the sense of an Eternal Now. This “isness” is a denial of time. Consciousness-without-an-object is not a cause which determines any particularization, but it is the Causeless-Cause whereby all particularization is possible.

Here “Objects” must be understood in that most general sense of any modification of consciousness whatsoever. It is not only objects as seen or thought, but, as well, any feeling-toned state of consciousness. For, a feeling-toned state, being recognizable as such, is, therefore, a content or object.

We cannot conceive of a first object, since before that object there must be its causal antecedent. The stream of objects is a stream reaching from nowhere in the past to nowhere in the future. There is no substance in this time-stream, and hence an eon of eons is precisely the same as the smallest division of time, just as a finite section in a line is as rich in points as the infinite totality of the line. The drama of time is played in the Sea of Consciousness, and yet it is as though nothing at all had happened.