

# The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

A Discussion of the Nature of Transcendental Consciousness

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Part 10 of 25

## PART II

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

#### CHAPTER 4

##### Commentaries on the Aphorisms on Consciousness-Without-an-Object (continued)

##### 3. Though objects seem to exist, Consciousness-without-an-object is.

This aphorism relates to that state wherein objects, in any sense, appear to consciousness *now*, whereas the preceding aphorism refers to that which seems to be before the present appearance. All existence which objects may have is for the “now” only, though we may distinguish phases of the “now,” such as existence in memory, existence as given in the present presentation, and existence in the imagination as future. There is a recognizable qualitative difference between these three phases of the “now,” but no phase can be actually isolated from the “now” of consciousness and still have existence, in any sense, predicated of it. For predication is a present act within consciousness itself.

In the first part of this aphorism, the crucial word is “seem.” No object requires more than *seeming* in order to exist for consciousness. Existence conceived in any other sense, than as for consciousness, is entirely meaningless. For that existence is found to be dependent upon *being conceived*, which, of necessity, is a conscious act or state. In the strictest logical sense, therefore, all objects rest upon the same base, namely, that of *seeming*. To be sure, purposive interest will lead to the abstraction of certain objects as being important, while others will remain in greater or less degree irrelevant. Relative to purpose, then, degrees of reality or unreality may be predicated of the manifold of all objects. But this predication is valid only in relation to the given purpose, and confusion arises when this is forgotten. Thus, for some purposes, the dream-object may be more real than the objects of our so-called waking consciousness. For the purposes of our scientific culture, a certain class of objects belonging to the waking state is significant. We have formed the habit of calling these real, and of thinking of them as being real in some non-relative sense. In this we forget that the reality which they possess is relative only to our specific scientific purpose. Our psychologists tend to distinguish between this

class of objects and all, or nearly all, other objects by calling the latter phantasy. This is a terminology which is prejudicial to the latter class and is not logically justified, unless the condition is explicitly implied that they are phantastic and unreal with respect to a certain scientific interest. Considered *as such*, apart from any purposive motive, we cannot distinguish any relative difference in degree or reality as attaching to any class of objects when contrasted to other objects. All objects are equal in that their existence is a *seeming* to consciousness and no more. But whether there is one kind of purpose or another, or a complete absence of all purpose, consciousness, *per se*, is an indisputable reality. This Consciousness is a Reality that unites, on the one hand, the youngest child, the idiot, or the insane, with the wisest and most developed intelligence, on the other. The differences that mark the gulf between these extremes are differences in content only, and not of Consciousness taken apart from content.

There is no doubt but that a valid significance attaches to difference in valuation of the various contents of consciousness. But these valuations are always relative to purpose and level, and not significant out of relation to all purpose or perspective. Thus valuation, itself, is but one of the derivative contents of consciousness, subject to development and decay. Beneath valuation, as the substratum that makes it, as well as all else, possible, is pure Consciousness apart from content.

#### **4. When objects vanish, yet remaining through all unaffected, Consciousness-without-an-object is.**

Objects vanish when they are no longer present to consciousness as currently present, or present in memory, or finally, present in imagination. The fact of vanishing is not affected by the arising of other objects. Thus, vanishing operates as a principle, whether it is complete or only partial.

Consciousness-without-an-object is the binding principle underlying the progression and evanescence of states or objects of consciousness. This binding principle neither develops nor disintegrates. It is thus the invariant element associated with all variation. At certain stages in the analysis of consciousness it appears as though the invariant element were the pure Subject or the Self, but at this stage the analysis has not isolated the subtle distinction between pure Subjectivity and Consciousness, as such. It thus appears as though the pure Self were a sort of permanent atomic nucleus, which is persistent through all states. But, when analysis is carried further, this notion is seen to fail. Ultimately, it is found that the Self is derivative as well as the objective pole of consciousness. Thus, there remains as the sole non-derivative principle the Pure Consciousness Itself.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Subject or Self occupies a position analogous to that of the parameter in mathematics. In simple and general terms, the parameter may be thought of as a local invariant that varies when considered over a larger domain. With respect to a specific case of a given curve, it stands as the invariant element, but in the generation of a whole family of curves of a given type, it is a variable. The ultimate invariant is the plane or space in which the curves lie. This supplies us with a thinkable analogue.

Just as we must regard the presence of objects as a seeming, and no more, so is the vanishing only a seeming. The non-derivative Reality is unaffected in either case.

### 5. Outside of Consciousness-without-an-object nothing is.

Within the widely current realistic and naturalistic thought, both naive and critical, there is a deeply imbedded habit of viewing objects as existing quite independently of consciousness. From this perspective, objects are viewed as self-existent things. But this is an hypothetical construction, in the invidious sense, for the simple reason that it is incapable of verification, either through experience or as a necessity of thought. For verification necessarily implies the presence of consciousness, and so the, so-called, independent thing is reduced to the status of an object in dependent relationship to consciousness, at the moment of verification. There is no necessity, such as a logical necessity, which requires the predication of the existence of things quite independent of consciousness, in every sense, in order to account for the arising of objects. For objects arise and vanish with respect to a *state* of consciousness, and merely cease to be traceable beyond the borders of that state, for that state alone. Their continued existence for another state beyond those borders is not only in principle possible, but is verifiable through the use of the appropriate means. Though logic and the principle of causal connection may require that the arising of objects shall not be completely *de novo*, it is not necessary to predicate existence of things, totally independent of consciousness, in order to satisfy this requirement.

Objects, for the state of waking consciousness, vanish upon going to sleep, and an entirely different state or system of objects is realized. But though the system of objects that may be realized in the dream state is quite different, the analysis of dreams has often shown a connection between some of these objects and the contents of the waking state. Some dreams reveal a continuity of objects from past waking states, while others are prophetic with respect to objects experienced in future waking states. Here we have an instance of a widely experienced movement of consciousness from state to state with objects traceable in quite different systems of objects. These two examples of specific states, admittedly, are insufficient to trace the whole genetic and disintegrative history of objects. But they do afford empiric demonstration of the possibility of consciousness to shift from state to state, and thus render conceivable, in principle, the broader application of this possibility. Thus, again, there is no logical or epistemological need to predicate the existence of things apart from consciousness.

The aphorism goes further than barely to affirm that the predication of the existence of things, outside consciousness in every sense, is unnecessary. It asserts, categorically that

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With respect to a specific entity, the invariable entity is the Self, but with respect to all creatures and all modes of consciousness, the Self becomes a parameter that varies. Behind and supporting this parameter is the ultimate invariant, Pure Consciousness Itself. Herein we have a key for the reconciliation of the *Atmic* doctrine of Shankara and the *anatmic* doctrine of Buddha. Esotericism states that the *Atmic* doctrine was a “stepped down” formulation of the Buddha’s doctrine and thus was more easily assimilated by relative consciousness, whereas the pure Buddhist doctrine was well nigh completely incomprehensible without a preliminary reorientation of human consciousness.

“outside Consciousness-without-an-object nothing is.” This may be viewed as simply applying a primary definition of “something.” Thus “something” is that which is an object in consciousness in some sense. Actually, no meaning attaches to the notion of “something” in any other sense. Such a notion is useless, as well as unnecessary. To say, “outside of consciousness in every sense there exists thus and so” is just to produce a meaningless collection of words, like the classical combination, “the barren woman’s son.”

## **6. Within the bosom of Consciousness-without-an-object lies the power of awareness which projects objects.**

Pure Primordial Consciousness must be conceived as enveloping the subjective power of awareness, in relation to which objects exist. The subjective power of awareness and the content of consciousness stand in a relation of interdependence. In the most abstract case, wherein there is a consciousness of absence of objects, this absence has the value of content, since it stands in polar relationship to the subjective power of awareness. Thus there is no subject for which there is no content, in every sense, or stated conversely, where there is no content, there is no subjective pole of awareness.

Consciousness-without-an-object is not simply the power of awareness, for It comprehends the content along with the power of awareness itself. The power of awareness we may conceive as the first modification of the unmodified. It has its roots in, and derives its being from, the unmodified. It is this power which may be regarded as the First Cause—a Power which is Ever Concealed, but renders possible the revealed and reflected.

Ordinarily we think of the power of awareness as playing a purely passive or receptive role in the receiving of impressions. It is true that on the empiric level it does function, in some measure, in the receptive sense. But in the ordinary creative activity of men, even, we can see that this is not its exclusive function. Thus, a work of art is first creatively imagined, then projected into objective form, and finally, received back as an impression. In turn, the received impression may arouse further creative activity and lead to a repetition of the same process. However, in this series, the function of the received impression is that of a catalytic agent, which simply arouses the creatively projective power. It is the impression from the object that is passive and not the power of awareness. Clarity with respect to this point is of the very highest importance, as it is right here that the invidious participation in objects begins. When an individual views the power of awareness as standing in passive relationship to impressions from objects, he places himself in a position of subordination to objects, and this constitutes the essence of bondage. The universe of objects then becomes a great prison-house, instead of the playground of free creative activity. As a prison-house, the universe of objects takes on the seeming of evil—the great adversary of man—but as the playground of free creative activity, it is an invaluable agent for the progressive arousal of self-consciousness.

The projective power of awareness is *a priori*, namely, it precedes experience. It is true that experience, in turn, reacts upon this power, but it acts as a stimulating, rather than as an essential, agent. The whole externally causal series consists only of such stimulating agents. While the stimulating agent may be viewed as a sort of

trigger cause of subsequent creative projection, it is not the material cause. The purely creative phase of the projective power is a first cause from which effects follow, but which is not itself an effect of previous causes. At this point energy flows into the universe of objects. It is a misconception that an equation may be set up between any two states of the universe of objects, as between any two such states there may be an actual increase or decrease of content. The creative projection effects an increase of content.

**7. When objects are projected, the power of awareness as subject is presupposed, yet Consciousness-without-an-object remains unchanged.**

The projected objects become the experienced objects, and the latter appear to be a restricting environment. The restriction is a constant irritation, and thus is the basis of the ubiquitous suffering which runs through the worlds of objective experience. The ultimate effect of this irritation is to arouse the latent power of consciousness to be conscious of itself, an effect which could not be developed where there is no seeming of restriction placed upon the free play of consciousness. Out of consciousness of the consciousness of objects there is finally aroused the inverse realization of the subjective principle. We thus find the substratum on which all objects rest. By superimposing an objective character upon this substratum, we evolve the notion of an ego having an atomic existence analogous to that of objects, save that we give to it a fixed character in contradistinction to the ever-changing character of all genuine objects. The ego is thus produced as a compound of the atomic nature of objects and the relatively deathless persistence of pure subjectivity, and this atomic ego is a false construction, and not the genuine subjectivity. It is, in fact, but another object in the universe of objects; however, it is the peculiarly invidious object whereby consciousness is especially bound.

The true Recognition of the pure Subject is something quite different, in that the Self must be so recognized as never to become a new subtle object. It is that which underlies all notions, but is never itself a notion.

The aphorism reasserts the immutability of Consciousness-without-an-object. The point is that no degree of development of consciousness in terms of content, or in terms of the recognition of the subjective principle, has any effect upon the pure principle of Consciousness *per se*.

**8. When consciousness of objects is born, then, likewise, consciousness of absence of objects arises.**

To be able to cognize any thing or object implies the isolation of it from that which it is not. While the degree to which this is accomplished does vary, yet the isolation must have proceeded to some discernible degree before an object can exist, either for thought or perception. Where an object is completely defined, the isolation is perfected. In that case, the universe of discourse is divided into two classes, namely, the

class of those instances which fall within the limits of the definition and the class of those which fall outside. But always, in order to form any definition, there must be a cognizance of the excluded class as well as of the included class. This is a process which proceeds continuously on the part of all individuals whose consciousness is concerned with objects in any sense, even in the case of those with whom the process lies very largely in the background, where it is more or less “unconscious” or “subconscious.”

To have reached the point in the evolution of consciousness such that the cognition of the class of all possible objects, in any sense whatsoever, is born, is also to have attained at least a shadowy awareness of *absence* of objects, in every sense, as a state or condition which stands in contrast. This awareness of the absence of objects, in its purity, is not a cognition of an object, but another form of consciousness that is not concerned with objects. However, a reflection of this state of consciousness may be produced so that a special cognition arises, of such a nature that its content is definable as the inverse of all objects. This produces a sort of ideal world which is neither the universe of objects, proper, nor *Nirvana*, but one which partakes, in some measure, of the nature of both. This sort of ideal creation is very well illustrated in mathematics in connection with the development of the notions of negative, imaginary, infinitesimal, and transfinite numbers. All these may be regarded as of the nature of inverse cognitions. But they are not, therefore, cognitions devoid of meaning; however, their meaning is of a more transcendental and ineffable nature than that which is connected with the original positive real numbers, particularly the integers, which have been significantly called the natural numbers. These inverse numerical cognitions have been not only valuable but, in some respects, even necessary for the development of certain phases of Western culture. They are unquestionably significant.

Now, when the awareness of the absence of objects has become embodied in a sort of inverse concept, the latter has a different kind of meaning as compared with that of the direct cognitions from which they rose genetically. This meaning stands in purely symbolic relationship to the inverse cognitions and lies outside the definitions, in a sense and degree, which is not true of the meaning of the direct cognitions, where the meaning in some degree or some sense lies within the definition. There is a sense in which we may say that we comprehend the direct cognitions with their meanings in a non-mystical manner, but in the case of the inverse cognitions the meaning is realized only through mystical insight. If, however, the inverse cognitions are interpreted as comprehensions in the non-mystical sense, then we have merely created a subtle sub-universe of objects, with the consequence that the consciousness-principle has not destroyed its bondage to objects, as such, but merely sublimated the field of objects. Nonetheless, such sublimation may very well mean progress towards true Liberation. It may serve very much like a scaffolding, from the upper platform of which the step to true Liberation may be much facilitated.

The kind of consciousness symbolized by the system of inverse objects is of a totally different quality from anything entering into ordinary relative consciousness. It is an ineffable State of the type realized in the higher mystical states of consciousness or in *Samadhi*.

## 9. Consciousness of objects is the Universe.

In one sense, this aphorism may be viewed as a definition of what is meant by the term 'Universe'. It is that domain of consciousness wherein a self is aware of objects, the latter standing as opposed to, or in contradistinction to, the self that is aware of them. In this sense the Universe is much more than that which is connoted by the term 'physical universe', since it includes as its field, in addition to waking physical consciousness, the fields of all dream objects, of all objects of the type which psychologists call "hallucinations" or hypnogogic visions, and of any other objects, which may be experienced during objective life or after death, that there may be. In this sense, the psychical states in which the phantasies, so called, are experienced are classed as part of the Universe.

Since the whole field of Western science is restricted to the study of the objects of consciousness, it can never extend into that realm of consciousness which is other than the universe. This science takes as its most primary base of operation the subject-object relationship in the structure of consciousness. This fact, at once, defines the limits of its field of possible action. Such delimitation does not exclude the possibility that science, in the Western sense, may develop without limit in the particular dimension defined by the subject-object relationship, but this science, as such, is forever excluded from the dimensions of consciousness not conditioned by the subject-object relationship. Nor is science capable of critical evaluation of its own base, as this base is the original "given" with which it starts and is implied in its own criticism. Competent criticism of this base is possible only from that perspective which is freed from exclusive dependence upon the subject-object relationship.

## 10. Consciousness of absence of objects is *Nirvana*.

Here it is necessary to employ a Sanskrit term to suggest a meaning for which no Western term seems to exist. By "*Nirvana*" is meant a somewhat which has been peculiarly baffling to Western scholars, as is revealed in the preponderant portion of the discussion of this notion. The reason for this is not hard to find. It lies in the typically intense and exclusive polarization of the Western mind toward the object of consciousness. Even Western mystics have rarely attained a degree of subjective penetration sufficient to reach the genuine *Nirvanic* State. Western subjectivity scarcely means more than a domain of subtle objects, even with most of the mystics, and this is a domain still within the range of meaning of "Universe," as defined in the last aphorism.

Etymologically, '*Nirvana*' means "blown-out," and this, in turn, carries the popular connotation of annihilation. It is true that it does mean annihilation in a sense, but it is the annihilation of a *phase* or *way* of consciousness, not of the principle of consciousness, as such. A careful study of the Buddhist canon reveals quite clearly that Gautama Buddha never meant by "*Nirvana*" the destruction of the principle of consciousness, but only of consciousness operating in a certain way.

As employed in the present aphorism, "*Nirvana*" means that state of consciousness wherein the self does not stand in the relation to objects such that the self

is to be contrasted to, and aware of, objects. Only one part of the meaning of “*Nirvana*” is suggested in this aphorism, namely, that ‘*Nirvana*’ designates the consciousness wherein there is an absence of objects. Yet the subject to consciousness is not here supposed annulled in the deeper sense. Something of this quality of consciousness, but generally not in its purity, is to be found even in Western mysticism. It is revealed in the expressions of the mystics, wherein they report realization of identity between themselves and content of consciousness. This content is so often mixed with an objective meaning that the mystical states in question must be judged as not pure, but rather, a blend of a degree of the *Nirvanic* State with the typical consciousness of the universe of objects. Yet always, with the mystics, there is an ineffable substratum which he never succeeds in more than suggesting in his expression. Often his effort to do justice to this substratum leads to formulation which simply does not make sense, when judged by the canons of subject-object language. The result is that only a mystic really understands another mystic.

The ineffability of the genuinely mystical consciousness is not due to an imperfect knowledge of language on the part of the mystic. While many mystics have had a very defective knowledge of language, and are consequently especially obscure, yet others have not been so limited in their equipment. However, in either case, the ineffable and obscure element remains. The fact is, this ineffability can never be conveyed through language, any more than an irrational number can be completely equated to a rational number. All our language, as such, is based upon the subject-object relationship. Thus, consciousness which transcends that relationship cannot be truly represented through language built upon that base. Therefore, the expressions of the mystics must be regarded as symbols, rather than as concepts which mean what they are defined to mean and no more.

The pure *Nirvanic* State of Consciousness is a Void, a Darkness, and a Silence, from the standpoint of relative or subject-object consciousness. But taken on its own level it is an extremely rich state of consciousness which is anything but empty. It cannot be conceived, but must be realized directly to be known.

**11. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lie both the Universe and *Nirvana*, yet to Consciousness-without-an-object these two are the same.**

Superficially considered, nothing may seem more incomprehensible than a state of consciousness from which two dissimilar states, such as the Universe and *Nirvana*, have the same value. But actually, the difficulty is not so great when once analysis has led to the realization that consciousness, as such, is unaffected by superimposed states or forms. Neither the *Nirvani* nor the man in the Universe are outside of Consciousness, as an abstract and universal principle. If a conception from mathematics may be borrowed, it may be said that the Universe and *Nirvana* have the same *modulus* but are different in *sense*. The notions of “modulus” and “sense,” as employed in mathematics, have the following meaning: In the series of positive and negative numbers we have an unlimited

number of pairs of numbers having the same absolute magnitude, but of opposite signs.<sup>2</sup> In this case, it is said that the members of such pairs have the same modulus but are opposite in sense. Applying this analogy, the modulus which is common to both the *Nirvanic* State and to consciousness in the Universe is the common quality of being *Consciousness*. The difference in “sense” refers to the opposed qualities of being objectively polarized, in the case of consciousness in the Universe, and subjectively polarized, in the *Nirvanic* State. Now, when the “modulus” of a number alone is important, then the positive and negative “sense” of the number is irrelevant and, therefore, may be regarded as having the same significance. By applying this analogy, the meaning of the aphorism should become clearer.

There is a profound Level of Realization wherein the two states of the Universe of Objects and *Nirvana*, instead of seeming like forever separated domains, become interblended coexistences. In other words, at that Level of Recognition, consciousness of objects and consciousness of absence of objects are known to be mutually complementary states, the one dependent upon the other, just as the notion of negative numbers is dependent upon the notion of positive numbers, and vice versa. And just as the student of mathematics very soon reaches the point where the notion of number, as such, comprehends the positive and negative “sense” of number, so that he no longer thinks of two distinct domains of number, so, also, is it at that higher Level of Recognition. *Nirvana* and the Universe of objects are simply phases of a more ultimate Reality. Consciousness-without-an-object is not simply consciousness of absence of objects. It is THAT which is neutral with respect to the presence or absence of objects. As such, IT stands in a position of Indifference to this presence or absence. In contrast, the consciousness of absence has a positive affective *quale*, just as truly as is the case with the consciousness of presence of objects, and this is not a state of indifference. The actuality of positive affective *quale* both during presence and absence may be noted by studying the effect produced after the performance of a fine musical composition. If a period of silence is allowed to follow the performance, and the listener notes the effects upon his consciousness, he will find that there is a development of musical value in that silence. Actually, this value has a greater richness for feeling than the music had as audible sound. Further, that silence is not like any other silence, but on the contrary has an affective *quale* that is specifically related to the particular composition that has been rendered. We may call this the *Nirvanic* aspect of the given musical selection. Now *Nirvana*, as a whole, stands in analogous relationship to the totality of the Universe of Objects. The Universe of objects is an affective privation, which becomes a corresponding affective richness in the *Nirvanic* Aspect. Also, the form-bound knowledge of the Universe of Objects becomes the free-flowing Gnosis, having inconceivably rich noetic content. But Consciousness-without-an-object stands in neutral relationship to both these aspects.

In the strict sense, from the standpoint of Consciousness-without-an-object, objects are neither presence nor absence. Presence or absence has meaning only from a

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<sup>2</sup> These are the plus and minus signs.

lower level. The older notion of space, as being that which is affected neither by the presence nor absence of bodies, suggests the idea.

## **12. Within Consciousness-without-an-object lies the seed of Time.**

Although consciousness-as-experience is time-bound, Consciousness, as such, is superior to time. That this is so is revealed in the fact that intellectual consciousness has been able to isolate and cognize time, and then, in turn, analyze it into its component parts as past, present, and future. This is further evidenced in analytic mechanics wherein time appears as a contained conception. It is impossible to analyze that which is superior to the level on which, in a given case at a given time, the consciousness-principle is operating. The roots of any mode or form of consciousness are dark with respect to that particular mode or form. If, at any time, consciousness becomes aware of those roots and succeeds in analyzing them, it is of necessity implied that the principle of consciousness has risen to a perspective superior to the mode of consciousness in question. Thus, while consciousness-as-experience is time-bound, yet, as thought, it has risen to a level where it can apprehend the time-binding roots. In this instance, we do not have to call upon the deeper mystic states of consciousness to reach to the necessary superiority of level. It is to be found in philosophy and theoretical mechanics. This is enough to show that Consciousness, as such, is not time-bound, but only consciousness-as-experience.

Time is thus to be regarded as a form under which certain modes of consciousness operate, but not as an external existence, outside of consciousness in every sense. This idea is sufficiently familiar since the time of Kant not to require extensive elaboration. In the terms of Kant, time is a transcendental form imposed upon phenomena. But, it follows, consciousness, in so far as it is not concerned with phenomena, is not so bound.

The “seed of Time” may be thought of as the possibility of time. Time is an eternal possibility within Consciousness-without-an-object. Time is not to be thought of as something suddenly brought to birth, for the notion of “suddenly” presupposes time. On the time-bound level, time is without conceivable beginning or end. It is in the deeps of consciousness that time is transcended. It is quite possible so to penetrate these deeps that it is found that no difference of significance attaches to the notions of an “instant of time” or “incalculable ages of time.” Yet, all the while on its own level, time continues to be a binding form. We have here one of the greatest of mysteries.

Through time it is possible to reconcile judgments that would otherwise be contradictory. This principle is so familiar as not to require elucidation. But he who reaches in Recognition to Consciousness-without-an-object finds that the logical law of contradiction no longer applies.<sup>3</sup> Judgments which otherwise would stand in

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<sup>3</sup> Anyone who has read any considerable amount of mystical literature can hardly fail to be impressed with the frequent affirmations and denials of the same predicate. Often an assertion made is immediately denied, or a counter assertion is made which logically implies the negation of the first. The effect is naturally confusing and can, quite understandably, lead the reader to question the sanity of the writer. But the fact is that the mystic is seeking a formulation which is true with respect to his realization, and he finds that his first statement, while partly true, is also a falsification. The denial or counter assertion is then offered as a correction. Too often the reader is offered no rational explanation and is left to draw his own conclusions,

contradictory relationships are brought into reconciliation without the mediation of time. This is an even greater mystery than the mystery of time.

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which are all too likely to be unfavorable to the mystic and to mysticism as such. And, indeed, what is the good of a statement if one cannot depend upon it so as to draw valid conclusions which can be different from other ideas which are not true to the meaning intended? Or, if the credibility of the mystic is not questioned, then it may be concluded that the reality which the mystic is reporting is a sort of irrational chaos, something quite incompatible with the notions of harmony, order, and equilibrium—a somewhat which not only defeats all possible knowing but is quite untrustworthy as well.

Now the fact is, the Gnostic Reality is not a disorderly chaos but is of such a nature that a valid representation cannot be given in our ordinary conceptual forms. These ordinary forms come within the framework of the logic of identity, or otherwise stated, the logic of contradiction. The primary principle here is classification in the form of the dichotomy, namely, all things are either *A* or not-*A*. There is implied the exclusion of all which is neither *A* nor not-*A*, or is both *A* and not-*A*. This is known in logic as the principle of the “excluded middle,” and is employed considerably in reasoning with respect to finite classes. But this is by no means our sole logical principle employed in scientific thought. Thus, mathematics requires the use of logical forms which cannot be reduced to the logic of identity, nor is this adequate for the problems dealing with processes of becoming, as in organic evolution. As a consequence, there are logicians who seriously question the universal validity of the principle of the excluded middle. Thus it appears to be unsound when applied to infinite classes, as in the case of the transfinite numbers. As a consequence, then, the mystic may well be justified in his effort to get around the excluded middle, without there being any implication of defect of sanity on his part or lack of orderliness in the Reality he is trying to represent.

Actually it is not hard to see how the logical dichotomy falls short of being all-embracing. Thus, the two classes of *A* and not-*A*, which are supposed to embrace all that is, actually do not embrace the thinker who is forming the classification. This is true even when the two classes consist of the Self and the not-Self. The Self in the classification is a projected Self, and therefore an object, and thus is not the actual cognizing witness. The latter embraces both classes, but is not contained privatively in either one. Therefore, it can lie only in the excluded middle.