



The Wisdom of an American Yogi:
Quotations from Franklin Merrell-Wolff

Compiled by the Franklin Merrell-Wolff Fellowship

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Please note that that (10) and (11) are republished in (5), and that (14) is a substantially edited version of (7).

Table of Contents

Subject

Awakening, Realization & Recognition	1
Conception	4
Consciousness	5
Consciousness-without-an-object	6
Death and the Dying Process	7
Divinity	8
Equality	9
Expression and Transcendent Consciousness	10
Fire	12
Freedom & Joy.....	13
The “I”	14
Idealism.....	15
Immortality	16
Ineffability.....	17
Knowledge & Knowing	18
Logic	19
Mathematics	20
Meditation	21
Metaphysics	22
Morality.....	25
Nirvāṇa.....	26
Omnipotence	27
Omnipresence	28
Omniscience.....	29
Philosophy.....	30
Plato’s Cave	31
Sādhanā.....	32
Science	35

Suffering	36
Thought	37
Timelessness	40
Yoga	41
Zero	42

Awakening, Realization & Recognition

Pathways Through to Space

We are now ready to return to the Recognition of ten days ago. I say ‘Recognition’ rather than ‘experience’ for a very definite reason. Properly it was not a case of experiential knowledge, which is knowledge from the senses whether gross or subtle, nor knowledge from deduction, though both forms, particularly the latter, have helped in a subsidiary sense. It was an Awakening to a Knowledge which I can best represent by calling it ‘Knowledge through Identity’ and thus the process—in so far as we can speak of process in this connection at all—is best expressed by the word ‘Recognition.’

(p. 4)

Now, just as awakening to cognitive capacity enormously enriches development in terms of sensation and affection, so also the Awakening to Higher Consciousness tremendously augments the capacity in the already partially unfolded inferior dimensions. The result is that the greater portion of the best in religion, morals, art, philosophy, science, etc., has come from the hands or lips of those Men who have had this Higher Awakening in at least some degree. Here is an effect that the man limited to three dimensions of consciousness can in some measure evaluate and appreciate, even though the Key Power is as yet beyond his understanding. In fact, two of the earmarks of the Illumined Man are afforded by an increase, amounting sometimes almost to a revolution, in the intellectual and affectional functions or dimensions. Now, an animal may well recognize that somehow man can excel it in its own field, as is revealed by the fact that man is a far more dangerous killer than the most predatory animal, but the animal has no idea of the key that gives man that peculiar power. Likewise, ordinary subject-object conscious man, however much he may appreciate the superior excellence of the God-Conscious Man in the former’s field, is utterly unconscious of, or blind to, the Key that unlocks the latter’s Power. As has been repeated over and over again, man must Awake to understand this, and it is quite useless for him to try to circumscribe that Awakening by attempting to divine what It actually is. When something of It is suggested, as in the present case, by the use of an analogy or symbol, It is not being circumscribed in the sense involved in all effective definition.

(pp. 153-4)

Realization. The Awakening to the Transcendent or Cosmic Consciousness. As used in the text when this word is given this meaning it is spelled with a capital ‘R.’ Realization is not a development of consciousness in the subject-object sense. It implies a radical event involving a shifting of the level of consciousness.

(p. 279)

Recognition. Used in the text with essentially the same meaning as ‘Realization,’ this term emphasizes the implication that Awakening is a return to that which had been ‘known’ but which had been forgotten, perhaps for ages. The use of this word in this sense does imply a theory of knowledge that diverges in important respects from the more current theories. It implies that Real Knowledge is not derived from experience, but rather that experience is the occasion or the catalytic agent which arouses the Recognition of inherent Knowledge.

(p. 279)

So long as the independence of objects is believed in—a state that implies bondage to objects—Sangsara appears as the Adversary, i.e., Mara, Satan, etc. But just so soon as this delusion is destroyed, Sangsara in this sense vanishes. This vanishing of Sangsara applies to the past as well as to the present and future, for it ceases, not only to be, but as well ever to have been. This is a mystery to relative consciousness which is rendered intelligible only by the transformation of consciousness-base known as the Awakening.

(p. 280)

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

The final thought before the “breakthrough” was the very clear realization that there was nothing to be attained. For attainment implied acquisition and acquisition implied change of content in consciousness. But the goal is not change of content but divorcement from content. . . . I am already that which I seek, and therefore, there is nothing to be sought.

(p. 81)

Introceptualism

In our ordinary usage we think of “presence” in the sense of “presence of.” It is thus conceived as the “presence to a self of someone or something.” This is not the meaning of the mystical Realization of Presence, though, I must confess, a mystic who did not discriminate clearly between the mystical state per se and a subsequent complex of the memory of that state, together with the ordinary consciousness, might confuse the meaning. The mystical significance is nearer to the dictionary meaning as “the state of being present.” The mystic is in the state of being present to him or herself, that is, in concentric relationship, rather than in the ordinary state of eccentric relationship. Becoming consciously centered in the Center is to Realize Presence.

(p. 283)

The immediate experience of the mystic is its own justification and its own authority. Thus the Realization of Presence is the Realization of all it implies. It is Reconciliation, Repose, Security, Union, Harmony and the rest. It is not that in the mystical state something new is gained or attained, but a false condition, like the above belief in the mirage, is lost. It is because men had been in a deluded state in which they felt unreconciled, restless, insecure, lost and at war with themselves, that the mystical awakening takes on the positive values corresponding to the negative conditions of the deluded state. The mystical Realization does not prove a metaphysically existing God, but it disproves the mirage of the world.

(p. 284)

As the [mystical] state deepens toward purity the capacity to apprehend in the comparative sense tends toward dissolution. I am sufficiently familiar with this tendency to be able to analyze a good deal of it. It is as though there were a process in which, in intellectual terms, there was a progression in an infinite series which the intellectual side of the mind followed as far as it could. The conceptual side becomes more and more subtle and the concepts less and less granular or definitive until, at the utmost limit of abstraction, the concepts together with the process of conceiving and judging begins to dissolve into a state wherein there is no more thinking. At this point I stopped the further process, since I was interested in maintaining the intellectual continuity. But the direction of the development is intellectually clear in much the sense that the thinking mind can apprehend an infinite series from the nature of a developing progression. By such a process we are able mathematically to sum an infinite series without actually passing over the infinitely large number of terms in the series. The summation is a reaching beyond the consciousness of the concrete mind, but its truth and actuality is not, therefore, less certain to the mathematician. Now, we may liken the pure mystical Realization as the actual culmination of that, which to the intellective consciousness is a converging infinite series. Thus the intellect can apprehend the culmination in the mathematical sense. The final term is the point wherein intellection is reduced to zero. The extent to which this process can be followed with conscious intellection depends upon the equipment of the individual mystic.

(pp. 285-6)

Experience and Philosophy

It is true that I would place this treasure far above anything that may be obtained in the ordinary world field, in whatever domain, such as achievement in government, in business, in science, philosophy, mathematics, or the arts. All these stand as values far inferior to these greater values which come from the Fundamental Realization.

(p. ix)

The Awakening is a Death and a Birth. The Real Life for the tired man begins. And what is that Life like? No words can really convey It as It is. Art in language, or in other forms, conveys adumbrations, but these are easily misunderstood and have often been grossly misinterpreted. There is but one way to know and that is by Awakening. We report the Glory, the Joy, the Freedom, and some of the wonderful possibilities. We demonstrate, from time to time, the Powers beyond the command of the merely egoistic consciousness. All These are signs of the Beyond. We give testimony as to what We have found and move for seasons among men, awakening foretastes here and there, both when the latter are in ordinary waking consciousness and when asleep. But We cannot carry to the egoistic consciousness this other Reality. Man must Awake to Know and thus to solve his really great problems. Without Awakening, there is no solution to these problems. Brother fights brother for the crumbs that have fallen from the Feast, seeing not enough for all. Yet, if but for a single moment, man would look up, he would see on the Table an endless supply, limitless abundance for all. So We are not much concerned with vain social plans and programs, with the changes of governments and financial reform, for We Know that all organizations, all institutions, all systems are sterile if they do not incarnate the Light.

(pp. 78-9)

In analyzing the difference between the recognition and the theoretical acceptance without recognition, it seems that in the latter instance there is a quality that might be called meditative distance, while in the case of recognition there is the closeness of immediacy.

(p. 258)

The transcendental state of consciousness . . . is not an experience, but a Recognition or an Awakening on a timeless level of consciousness.

(p. 264)

Through the Recognition, I attained a state wherein I could be at rest and contented in the most profound sense. For me, individually, it was not necessary to seek further, to achieve further, nor to express further in order to know full enjoyment.

(p. 267)

For my own part, never in my life have I lost objective consciousness, save in normal sleep. At the time of the Recognition on August 7 (1936), I was at all times aware of my physical environment and could move the body freely at will. . . . I was in a sort of compound state wherein I was both here and "There," with the objective consciousness less acute than normal.

(p. 276)

I was quite unprepared to find that there were even deeper levels of transcendence.

(p. 279)

The culminating Recognition came with the force of an unexpected bestowal without my having put forth any conscious personal effort toward the attainment of it.

(p. 280)

The profounder State of Consciousness . . . has continued ever since to seem close in the deeper recesses of my private consciousness.

(p. 288)

There finally arrived a stage wherein both that which I have called the Self and that which had the value of Divinity were dissolved in a Somewhat, still more transcendent. There now remained nought but pure Being that could be called neither the Self nor God. No longer was "I" spreading everywhere through the whole of an illimitable and conscious Space, nor was there a Divine Presence all about me, but everywhere only Consciousness with no subjective nor objective element.

(p. 288)

Conception

Introceptualism

To arouse self-consciousness is the great office of the conceptual function. Within the dreamlike state of pure perception there can be no awakening of self-consciousness. The child born in the womb is sustained by the psychical forces which it does not control. It is, but does not know that it is, and it is conscious but does not know its own consciousness. The labor pains of conceiving first arouses the power of consciousness to be aware of itself. And when this power of consciousness to know itself has grown enough the introceptive door may be opened and, leaving even thought behind, consciousness may still retain the power not only to be, but to be aware of itself as well. Thus the crossing is consummated over the bridge of conception. Beyond lie further possibilities; among them, the union of conception with introception.

(p. 155)

Again, I am implying that the office of conceptual thought in relation to the function of introception is of instrumental character. But this is instrumentalism interpreted in a very different sense from that of the instrumentalism of the Pragmatist wherein conception is viewed as serving solely the end of more experience in the perceptual field. Actually, here, both knowledge and the conceptual function are to be viewed as relatively terminal with respect to experience. The kind of conception which has transcendental roots *is not derived from experience*. With respect to this kind of conception, experience enters into the picture solely as a catalytic agent which drops away more or less completely as the conceptual process takes hold on a totally different kind of base. One comes to value experience for the knowledge it arouses and the conceptual process which it helps to start, rather than the other way around. The Pragmatist values knowledge and knowing because of the further experience to which it leads. Thus a radical difference of orientation is implied. In the end the conceptual process leads beyond itself, but, in the case of introception, the end is a spiritual Realization, and not merely more experience. After the attainment and anchorage in the spiritual Realization, the conceptual order may serve a new office, with bearings upon the field of experience. But in this case the relationship is hierarchical with conception serving as the law-giver with respect to experience and the perceptual order generally. But even in this case, conceptual knowledge is only a surrogate for the introceptive content for such individual consciousnesses as do not know the latter directly.

(p. 160)

Consciousness

Introceptualism

So far I have not attempted to define consciousness. As a matter of fact, I cannot any more define it than I can the distinctive quale of any perceptive state. One can, for instance, define a one-wave color as consisting of a given wave length, of a given wave rate and of a given wave form, but he cannot define the distinctive quale of the color seen by an individual subject. This definition gives that which a man born blind could understand, but the distinctive quale of the color is something which cannot possibly be conveyed to him save by immediate personal experience. Consciousness, being of this same nature, is, therefore, indefinable. We can point to consciousness by saying that it is that which becomes less and less as a man sinks into dreamless sleep and that which becomes more and more as he slowly returns to waking consciousness, and no man who has never had this experience or its equivalent could ever possibly know what consciousness is. In other words, a state of continuous consciousness which never had stood in contrast with unconsciousness in some sense, could never be known as consciousness. It is thus conceivable that there could be a primordial consciousness that never knew its own conscious quality. Nay, more, even the so-called unconscious of analytic psychology may very well simply be a consciousness of this sort.

(pp. 140-1)

Experience and Philosophy

Consciousness is the common denominator underlying the possibility of any philosophy, world view, religious attitude, art, or science. I, therefore, affirm the systematic primacy of consciousness as such.

(pp. 320-1)

Consciousness can never know absolute unconsciousness, for where consciousness is, unconsciousness is not. . . . [just as] light cannot know darkness, because where light goes the darkness vanishes. But light can, in principle, know the light, as it is of its own nature.

(pp. 325, 327)

The most fundamental principle of this philosophy is that consciousness, as such, is original and primary, and thus not merely an attribute of something else.

(p. 328)

I predicate that pure consciousness is the self-existent antecedent of all these modes of ordinary states of consciousness, also of the less familiar mystical states, and likewise of the forms of consciousness characteristic of nonhuman beings.

(p. 329)

Dreamless sleep is to be regarded simply as a state of consciousness where self-consciousness—that is, consciousness that is conscious of itself—is unawakened.

(p. 330)

Consciousness-without-an-object

Experience and Philosophy

As soon as consciousness is concerned with objects, then inter-relations and other complexities are introduced and, accordingly, all sorts of divergencies. Deleting content, only Consciousness-without-an-object remains as the common denominator.

(p. 321)

When I say that Consciousness-without-an-object is, I imply its independence and self-existence. . . . Consciousness-without-an-object is an unshakable base, and thus is an assurance transcending both unverifiable faith and relative knowledge.

(p. 321)

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 that is aware of them.

(p. 321)

Modern psychology distinguishes between objects that it calls real and objects that it calls hallucinations. From the standpoint of Consciousness-without-an-object there is no important difference between these two sets of objects.

(p. 331)

Consciousness-without-an-object is the keystone that completes the arch. It is the final step necessary to produce a self-contained system of consciousness. . . . It should be equally acceptable to religious and scientific consciousness.

(p. 341)

Consciousness-without-an-object is not a First Cause; it is the substratum underlying all possible states and causes.

(p. 347)

The final position is: The One, nonderivative 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.

(p. 350)

Death and the Dying Process

“Death and After” (transcribed edition)

In the drama of life, death stands as a door to an unknown and a more or less dreaded mystery. Is It the end? Does It spell disaster to all humanity's fondest hopes and aspirations? Or, is It, perchance, merely the prelude to wider and happier vistas of Consciousness? If only we could feel certainty concerning these questions, how much simpler life would become! Yet, would the simplification of the problems of life bring out the best potentialities which lie hidden within us? Is it not the peculiar office of problems to bring into manifestation our hidden powers? If everything in life were clear and definite then there would be no reason for the exertion of any effort. Failure to exert effort, at least for one who is not a sage, leads to degeneration, a sort of “running down” of force by a process of exhaustion. Man still needs the problem of the Unknown to intrigue him so that he will call out from the depths of his nature that which otherwise might remain forever hidden. It has, therefore, been desirable that man in his present stage of unfoldment should not have possessed too great an assurance concerning his future. Great Sages find the world, as it is, to be the manifestation of a profound Wisdom, and in general as the individual gains in Wisdom he is less disposed to be at war with the order which exists. Thus in the historical sense, it has undoubtedly been well that man did not know too much concerning the states which lie before him, as knowledge without the power of Understanding is far too apt to be a curse.

(p. 1)

Divinity

Experience and Philosophy

The Godless secular universe vanishes, and in its place there remains none other than the living and all-enveloping Presence of Divinity itself. So, speaking in the subjective sense, I am all there is, yet at the same time, objectively considered, there is nought but Divinity spreading everywhere. . . . So the sublimated object and the sublimated self are one and the same Reality, and this may be represented by the judgment: "I am the Divinity."

(p. 284)

Equality

“Death and After” (transcribed edition)

Not all people stand at the same level in their evolution, and as different stages of unfoldment call for correspondingly different forms in thought-structure, in religious and social institutions, the peculiar needs of all individuals can never at any one time be satisfied by the same limiting forms. With their characteristic profundity the East Indian sages of old solved this problem with a social form which gave the maximum freedom to the widest range of relative degrees of evolutionary unfoldment of individuals. In its original sense, caste structure corresponded to actual differences in character and unfoldment of the individuals composing the membership of one caste-form as compared with another. The formal life and religious rites of each form were designed to meet the peculiar needs of that group. At the same time, the formal barriers of separation between groups made possible autonomous cultures graduated to meet the needs of different stages of development of the psychical nature. The result was that, in the same land and with equal freedom, the primitive Dravidian and the high-caste Brahmin of the very highest spiritual consciousness, together with every degree of intermediate group, were able to live essentially harmoniously, each according to his nature and spiritual needs. The Aryan invasion of India did not spell the extermination of the primitive peoples which were found in that land, nor did it destroy for them their native culture. On the other hand, the spiritual life of the highest type of man was not made impossible by being forced into a smothering psychical matrix, as would have been the case if the Brahmin had been forced to amalgamate with the psycho-sphere of the low-type Dravidian.

With us in the West, and in America especially, the ideal of equality has actually worked to destroy the freedom which that idea, in theory, was supposed to serve. The tendency here has been the regimentation of institutions, and while this has facilitated the raising of the formal culture of the average man, it has in general depressed the life-expression of those whose conscious state lies above this regimented dead-level. For those who lie at the extremes, our system has been deadly. Really great men, in the sense of inner profundity, have not had the protection of the insulation through which alone they can reveal themselves effectively, and our civilization has been much the poorer for this. At the other extreme, the groups which cannot adjust themselves to our cultural forms are destroyed. The humaneness of the Aryan in his relation to the Dravidian stands upon an incomparably higher level than does the spirit which we have manifested with respect to the North American Indian.

(pp. 2-3)

Pathways Through to Space

There are only two senses in which it may be said that men are born equal. First, all men and all things from an atom to a star, are equal in the sense that at the heart of everything is the one unchanging and indivisible Spirit. In the second place, all men are equal in the bare fact that to be a man a creature must have awakened into consciousness on the cognitive level. But in the degree of relative development of powers, in any sense, no two men are equal.

(p. 162)

Expression and Transcendent Consciousness

Pathways Through to Space

The speech and writings of the God Realized Men are not representations of external existences, but are the actual embodiments of the SELF. The Sage and the Mystic live in the words that They utter as truly as in Their fleshly encasements, and sometimes even more fully. Hence, to the reader or hearer these Words carry the very Presence Itself. Such Words, therefore, have magical power to transform the man who attends to Them.

(pp. 74-5)

Figures of speech or analogies seem to be absolutely essential to express the realities of Profundity. The direct meaning of language does not express the actuality of the Higher Consciousness. We might say that the Actuality envelops the expression but is not directly contained in it. Thus the reader should strive not so much to understand the formal meaning contained in these writings, but to make a certain turn in his own consciousness toward a Matrix that surrounds the expression. He should concentrate upon faint stirrings in his consciousness which he cannot really express, even to himself. They constitute a certain 'plus' quantity added onto the formal meaning. The formal meaning serves as a sort of focal point that entrains the subtle 'plus' value. It is very hard to reach the latter without the use of the focal point until a rather high level of spiritual development is attained. Hence it remains important to employ various means of expression. But if the expression is taken too much in the rigorous or defined sense, the real and deeper Meaning is lost. Therefore, the words of an Illumined Man should never be taken in the literal sense when He is giving a cross translation from the Beyond. Now, the 'plus' quality at first is almost indistinguishable from nothing or emptiness. It is like a breath that has just escaped, a momentary gleam caught from the corner of the eye that disappears when the full focus of sight is turned upon it. It must be reached for very gently, as one must act in seeking the confidence of a defenseless and fearful creature of the wilds. One should reach out almost as though not reaching at all.

(p. 147)

The immediate content of the Higher Consciousness cannot be cross-translated, but certain formal properties can be through the use of systematic symbols . . . In fact, if the consciousness-equivalents of the entities and operations of pure mathematics were realized, we would find that, in that great science and art, cross-translation in a lofty sense already exists.

(pp. 208-9)

Introceptualism

Our most abstract language [mathematics] is the best vehicle of ultimate truth.

(p. 180)

“Purpose Method, and Policy of this Work,” part 6

In the dictation or writing of composition, I do not always know when I shift from off-beam to the on-beam position. Often I can detect it only afterwards when I listen to the material which I have produced. The reason for this is clear. When one is producing a formulation, there is a complex mental effort put forth: there is the formless thought, to begin with, for which one is selecting words that fit the meaning intended and the sentence structure, the syntactical problem; and when one operates on the typewriter, there is also the additional operation of spelling the words; and in the sum total, the operation is complex and calls for focused attention.

(pp. 5-6)

Experience and Philosophy

The kind of consciousness that falls outside the subject-object field is more than difficult to express in relative terms. It is absolutely impossible to do so. It is not simply a question of our not yet having developed sufficient skill. The impossibility inheres in the fact that the subject-object form, essential to language as such, can only distort the Transcendent.

(p. 141)

Fire

Experience and Philosophy

A Fire descends and consumes the personal man. For a time, short or long, this Fire continues. The personal man is the fuel, and the fuel, in greater or less measure, does suffer. But fire does not destroy; it simply transforms. This fact can be realized by an analysis of what takes place through the action of ordinary fire. If a log is burning, the fuel is principally, if not wholly, in the form of carbohydrates, and the fire transforms these into carbon dioxide and water vapor. There remains a small amount of ashes, the persistently earthy portion of the log. The carbohydrate in the log was a fixed form, partaking, for a time, of the earthy solidity of the mineral associates in the log. But as the carbohydrates become carbon dioxide and water vapor, they take on new form in the freer world of the air. So too, does the Fire which descends and consumes the personal man but Transform him. Only the ash of the personal nature is left behind, while the rest, the best of the personality, is taken up to be conscious in airy spaces. The ultimate state is one of a far, far greater Joy.

(pp. 34-5)

Freedom & Joy

Pathways Through to Space

Sherifa tells me that I should write of a little incident that I would have let pass as many, many others have already passed. We were at the table partaking of the noonday meal. I had just left my writing and was still active in the current of thought. I happened to glance out of the door where a small yellow kitten was playing on a broad cement platform. It ran across the platform and I felt a thrill of delight. It was as though a tiny melody from out the Cosmic Symphony had trilled joyously into my mind—a little sketch born forth from the Grand Harmony. And from this a wave of Joy was distilled and pulsated through me.

It is not that the physical or photographic fact became different, but surrounding the incident was an enveloping matrix of meaning. It was this matrix that sublimated the ordinary so that it became joyous.

(p. 16)

Experience and Philosophy

Ideas that formerly had had the effect of constraint upon me now had a definitely joyous and freedom-giving value.

(p. 258)

I felt myself to be on a level of consciousness where there is no need of an active joy. . . . The consciousness was so utterly whole that it was unnecessary to administer any affective quality to give it a greater richness. I was superior to all affective modes, as such, and thus could command and manifest any of them that I might choose. . . . within that perfection there is no need for any augmentation or diminution.

(p. 282)

I, The

Experience and Philosophy

Reaching beyond the personal stage, the “I” rapidly grows in impersonality until it acquires the value of a Universal Principle. Thus the inner ground is a common ground just as truly as is the objective content of consciousness common to all men.

(p. 250)

The inner core of the “I,” like Nirvana, is not an objective existence but is, rather, the “thread” upon which the objective material of consciousness is strung. . . . it is at once everywhere and nowhere, both in space and time.

(p. 259)

Idealism

Introceptualism

I have introduced this discussion of introception into the general subject of Idealism since I conceive it as absolutely essential to an understanding of the true meaning of Idealism. I am not writing a mere history of philosophy. If I were I should have to consider the Idealistic theories of knowledge as they have actually been developed by the leading Idealists. It must be admitted that such theories have followed the intellectualistic pattern. In following this course the Idealists have made themselves vulnerable to criticism and have given a false impression of what actually is their base of assurance. I believe that the great Idealists would agree, in their private hearts, substantially with what I have said above. Perhaps they have hesitated to place their systems frankly upon what I have called an introceptive base with the idea that such was an unseemly course for a philosopher. It is also possible that there was a defective differentiation between intellectual form and introceptive content. The isolation of the purely logical features of mathematics has given us today an advantage over the older writers. We are enabled to see that there is a vital difference between rigorously formal mathematics and mathematics which results from the union of logic and intuition or introception. This shows very clearly that something is stripped away when pure mathematics is reduced to an exclusively logical formalism. This something is in addition to the pure concept. Now, the bearing of this point upon Idealism is very vital. It means that rigorous logical system, by itself, does not give content. Content enters as something extra-logical or as an undefinable in the logical sense. The logical demonstration renders explicit a truth implicit initially, in the original content, but does not supply the initial content. Once this is understood, all reasoning becomes relative to a reference supplied by some other means than by reason itself. If, now, it is assumed that perceptual experience is the only possible extra-logical reference, then it readily follows that all conceptual or rational thinking is instrumental to empiric content. But from perceptual content the Idealistic transcendentalism cannot be derived by logical implication. As a result, the Idealistic thesis falls.

(p. 103)

Immortality

Experience and Philosophy

I readily realized that if pure subjectivity, or the bare power to be aware, was a permanent or unchanging element and therefore must, as a consequence, stand outside of time and be unaffected by any history, then it must be, of necessity, immortal. I saw that this kind of immortality is wholly impersonal and does not, by itself, imply the unlimited persistence of the quality of individuality that distinguishes one man from another.

(p. 255)

Ineffability

Pathways Through to Space

The Ineffable Transition came, about ten days ago.

(p. 1)

Experience and Philosophy

I found myself at once identical with the Voidness, Darkness, and Silence, but realized them as utter, though ineffable Fullness in the sense of Substantiality, Light in the sense of Illumination, and Sound in the sense of pure formless Meaning and Value. The deepening of consciousness that followed at once is simply inconceivable and quite beyond the possibility of adequate representation. . . . All language, as such, is defeated when used as an instrument of portrayal of the transcendent. . . . The immediate Noetic and affective values of the insight, while they may be directly realized, cannot be conveyed by any formulation or representation whatsoever.

(p. 263)

Knowledge & Knowing

Pathways Through to Space

In contrast to formal and empirical knowledge, Real Knowledge is essentially wordless, for It does not deal with objects. This is Knowledge through Identity. Hence, It does not *represent* Substance, but *is* Substance Itself. So, it is true that ‘I’—the self or Atman—am not different from that Knowledge. The speech and writings of the God-Realized Men are not representations of external existences, but are the actual embodiments of the SELF. The Sage and the Mystic live in the words that They utter as truly as in Their fleshly encasements, and sometimes even more fully. Hence, to the reader or hearer these Words carry the very Presence Itself. Such Words, therefore, have magical power to transform the man who attends to Them. Real Knowledge is not instrumental but is an End-in-Itself. It may be clothed in highly organized intellectual form and, in that case, we have true Philosophy, which also is an end-in-itself.

(pp. 74-5)

“On the Meaning of Realization,” part 4

There are certain states of Realization where the separation between the object and the self, or the subject, is dissolved and the field of consciousness and the cognizer coalesce so that they are coextensive. This is a mystical experience that has been reported over and over again—one with which I am also familiar. Now, the result is that when one is in this state of consciousness he is dealing with a kind of awareness which...just so soon as you attempt to represent it in any form. The minute that you begin to represent it you are giving it exclusively an objective form, whereas in its reality, on its own level as pure truth, it is objective and subjective at the same time—all-embracing. The name for this type of consciousness is *knowledge through identity* or *knowledge by identity*. It is not knowledge as concept, and cannot be such, nor is it knowledge by perception; it is knowledge by identity. For that reason necessarily then, no positive conception can be completely and integrally true. I put in the word positive for a definite reason. In as much as I wish to leave open the door to the possibility that we may have a negative conception that is completely true, as for example a conception concerning the limitations of the possibility of conceptions—just what we’re dealing with now. Some of you may have recognized that I am, thus, avoiding a logical trap, namely this: if no conception could be completely true, then that conception itself is not completely true. However, despite the fact that no conception can be completely or integrally true, it still remains possible, and I believe indeed a fact, that a conception may be perfect in its restricted zone. It may be correct, and in that sense, in the restricted sense, complete enough . . . As a matter of fact, we do have conceptions that are of this sort, or very nearly of this sort, in the body of pure mathematics—the only place in this world that I have discovered perfection.

(p. 1)

Experience and Philosophy

Knowing is a Light that drives away the darkness, and thus forever fails to comprehend darkness.

(p. 329)

Transformations in Consciousness

In conclusion, we may say that the final knowledge of the mystic takes the following form: Negatively, it is a denial of all substantial reality to all worlds, physical or metaphysical, and an equal denial of all selfhood in the same sense. Positively, it affirms the indubitable reality of consciousness, and of all its immediately realizable states. In the ‘as if’ sense, there may be all kinds of worlds, objective and metaphysical, with their corresponding kinds of beings and selves. This supplies everything that is necessary for all kinds of possibilities.

(p. 291)

Logic

Pathways Through to Space

The understanding of the place of logic is also becoming clear. There is no doubt that logic wields the final authority within the kind of knowledge that belongs to the subject-object manifold, in so far as logic has applicability. The law of contradiction is absolute in this domain. Every logical dichotomy divides the whole of the relative universe into two parts, so that of that universe we may always say: "It is either X or not X." ('X' in this case standing for any concept whatsoever.) But from the standpoint of Real Knowledge such a dichotomy is neither true nor false, but simply irrelevant. It involves even more fundamental irrelevance than that contained in questions such as the following: "Is a lion organized according to the principles of a fugue or a symphony?" Likewise, from the perspective of Knowledge through Identity, there is no meaning in applying the logical criterion of contradiction. Here, within this subject-object, time-space manifold, there is no principle more fundamental than that 'A cannot be both A and not A at the same time and in the same sense.' But what bearing could that possibly have upon a Consciousness which transcends both space and time, as well as the subject-object field? For all possible spaces and all possible times and every sense in which an idea may be employed are at once comprehended in the pure apperception of the SELF.

(pp. 76-7)

Experience and Philosophy

While in the State [of High Indifference] I was particularly impressed with the fact that the logical principle of contradiction had no relevancy. It would not be correct to say that this principle was violated, but rather, that it had no application. For to isolate any phase of the State was to be immediately aware of the opposite phase as the necessary complementary part of the first. Thus the attempt of self-conscious thought to isolate anything resulted in the immediate initiation of a sort of flow in the very essence of consciousness itself, so that the nascent isolation was transformed into its opposite as co-partner in a timeless reality. . . . It seemed to be the real underlying fact of all consciousness of all creatures.

(p. 286)

Mathematics

Pathways Through to Space

Man will have long since ceased to be human, in the restricting meaning of the term, by the time he has awakened in terms of Consciousness at the most advanced levels represented by mathematical concepts and symbolic formulae. Mathematics thus constitutes a thread to the Beyond that has never been lost.

(p. 219)

I am convinced that the greatest achievement of western genius has been in the development of the abstract thought which has its crown in higher mathematics. The freeing of thought from dependence upon the sensible image is an accomplishment of the very greatest difficulty. Until thought has won this power, it cannot penetrate into the Realm of Imageless Consciousness. Now, once it is realized how much has been accomplished in this direction in the field of higher mathematics, it is easy to see what a powerful instrument in the practice of Dhyana we have forged.

(Appendix A)

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

In mathematics we excel all other cultures, and as I see it, all other genuine superiority we may have resulted from this mathematical excellence. In other respects, as far as the greater and more durable values are concerned, there are other cultures in the Orient, whether of the present or the past, that just as clearly excel ours. 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.

(p. 172)

In high degree, the consciousness of the mathematician qua mathematician is not concerned with either a self or objects . . . In higher degree than anywhere else, except perhaps 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.

(p. 172)

Meditation

Experience and Philosophy

A common error in meditation—and one which I had been making right along—lay in the seeking of a subtle object or experience. Now, an object or an experience, no matter how subtle, remains a phenomenal time-space existence and therefore is other than the supersensible substantiality. Thus the consciousness to be sought is the state of pure subjectivity without an object.

(p. 263)

Metaphysics

“Concept Percept, and Reality”

In much of contemporary philosophy the concept, together with all intellectual consciousness, is viewed as instrumental, functional or creative. It is interpreted as meaning an object which, in turn, when arrived at, is an immediately given sensuous presentment. Thus viewed, it is not itself its own value, or its own meaning, or an end-in-itself, but a pointer toward objectives that are essentially sensational in their nature. It is regarded as true when it has succeeded in leading a self to the appropriate object, and then may drop out as no longer needed. Its meaning or value is the percept or is contained in the percept. Thus, for example, a concept of a machine may be likened to the blue-print and specifications of the given machine, developed before the latter is constructed out of the appropriate materials. Once the machine has been builded it becomes a perceptually given existence and the original concept has completed its function and, in a sense, may now be dispensed with. If correctly conceived the machine will perform the service expected of it in the sensational world. The functioning machine was the end sought, while the concept was merely the means leading toward that end. Apparently, in this series, the conceiving was a creative act leading on to something that is other than a concept, i.e., a perceived existence.

Within certain limits, at any rate, this seems to be a valid enough interpretation of the place of concepts in the field of conscious human values. Unquestionably, much in the active phase of human experience reveals a relationship-manifold of concepts and percepts of the type just given. But is this fact enough to justify the definition of concepts as being instrumental toward a perceptual object in the privative or exclusive sense? Some concepts, or concepts sometimes, or concepts in one aspect of their full nature, may be instruments leading toward a concrete and sensible particularity, and yet it may remain true that the whole significance of concepts is not comprehended within this definition. For my own part, I often find the relationship between concepts and percepts the reverse of the above described. On the whole, I do not find percepts adequate as resting points or termini. Characteristically, the bare percept reaches me with the value of an irritant which demands the awakening of the corresponding concept. When the appropriate concept is aroused, the tension or irritation produced by the percept is resolved and I have the sense of having reached at least a relative terminus or resting point. In such cases the percepts were instrumental to the awakening of a conceptual significance. So the concepts thus stand as, at any rate, relative aids-in-themselves which the percepts indicated or meant. When this point is reached I find that the percept can drop out of consciousness, as having completed its work, and I realize the state of having-arrived in some degree.

(pp. 398-9)

Pathways Through to Space

Just as in mathematics there are infinitudes of higher orders infinitely transcending lower infinities, so it is in the Transcendent World. . . I have found an Infinite World, and then another Infinite consuming the first . . . It is an Infinity of some higher order, that is an INFINITY which comprehends lesser Infinities.

(p. 115)

Sangsara (Sk). A Buddhist term including the same meaning as the ‘world field,’ used in the text. It has, however, a wider connotation as it includes all levels of consciousness in which there is an awareness of an object, combined with the delusion that the object has an existence independent of the observer. Thus, the dream state, while not a part of the world held in the narrower sense, is part of Sangsara. The relatively subjective realms such as the various heavenly worlds, the purgatories and the hells are also part of Sangsara. Even relatively high orders of Seership, like that of Swedenborg, penetrate no further than superior aspects of Sangsara. However, Enlightened Consciousness includes the possibility of awareness of objects, but the difference in this case lies in the fact that the dependent existence of the object is Realized. Such awareness of objects is not Sangsaric, as it does not imply bondage to the object.

(pp. 279-80)

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

An object exists as a tension. Although, in the ultimate sense, every tension is balanced by its opposite phase, so the equilibrium is never actually destroyed, yet consciousness, taken in a partial aspect, may comprehend only one phase, or may be only imperfectly conscious of the counterphase. For this partial aspect of consciousness, equilibrium does not exist.

(p. 228)

“Abstract of the Philosophy,” part 2

At the close of the preceding tape, I developed a feature which grew out of the fourth Realization that had been relatively neglected in previous presentations. I there stated that the impact carried this force: that the content of this Realization revealed a sense of order, a sense of harmony, and a sense of rationality, with respect to which all of that which lay in the Sangsara or the adhar seemed to be, at least relatively, irrational. It would lead to an aphoristic statement of this sort: that Reason is God, or that Reason is Yahweh, or that Reason is Allah, or Reason is Brahman, or Reason is Buddha; in other words, that it is identified with that word or sign which is used by different peoples to designate or point to the Ultimate. But in order to remain as universal and abstract as possible, I prefer to say Reason is THAT—the ‘THAT’ being spelled with uppercase letters.

Now, there is an important Reason for making the word ‘Reason’ the subject of the proposition. I do not therefore say that THAT is Reason, or that God is Reason, and so forth, but the reverse. Now, the logic of the position here is this: that the predicate of every proposition which is more than a simple identity is of greater extension than the subject. Therefore that sign or word which points to the Ultimate is always the predicate of every proposition and not the subject of any such proposition. This is the logic of the

(p. 1)

Experience and Philosophy

It is not the field of subject-object consciousness, as such, that is an Illusion or Maya in the invidious sense, but the secondary universe.

(p. 179)

That in some sense the Object exists cannot be denied, for it is unquestionably a datum for immediate experience. But to affirm further that the Thing exists is to add an overbelief that is not necessary for either experience or reason. . . . The “Thing” is that which is supposed to exist, quite independently of any relationship to or within consciousness.

(p. 332)

Transformations in Consciousness

As I use the term ‘Substantial’ it is that which is Real, perdurable and Self-existent. In contrast, the phenomenal is that which depends upon something other than itself as it appears. However, the phenomenal is not conceived as a direct manifestation of the Substantial, so that by a direct movement of consciousness toward the noumenal, the Substantial can be attained, if the movement is maintained far enough. Rather, the phenomenon is produced by what might be called a “relative withdrawal of substance,” so that a movement of consciousness toward the phenomenal is equivalent to a movement away from the real. The Real is attained by a movement of consciousness in the direction opposite from that by which the phenomenon is experienced. The key to the Realization of the Real lies in the turning about of the stream of consciousness toward its source.

The movement of consciousness toward experience as an end in itself is equivalent to growth of spiritual poverty. The ultimate effect of this movement is a state of complete slavish bondage to the object, in which the entity becomes a mere appendage to appearance. Consciousness in this state is quite without depth; that is, it is a soulless state in the sense that all the values connoted by soul are completely unconscious. Even so, the unconscious depths of the individual are by no means inactive simply because

the individual consciousness is not aware of them. Thus it follows that anyone in this state is completely at the mercy of autonomous psychological forces, impossible and tragic situations where in what is done, or has to be done, one would prefer to have been done otherwise. The conscious individual or national will has no control over the factors that are unconscious to it.

(pp. 201-2)

Morality

Pathways Through to Space

In spite of the practical importance of the moral discipline, however, it remains true that the Awakening can, and has, taken place in the midst of a life even less moral, in the *objective sense*, than the average. To be sure, the Awakening, in such cases, effects at once a moral revolution and a radical change of character. This simply shows that the preliminary moral discipline, while of the highest desirability, is not a *sine qua non* of Recognition of, at least a minor order. Some other contributory external circumstance or, perhaps, pure and unaided spontaneity may effect the Transition.

(pp. 61-2)

He who becomes identical with Beauty is incapable of producing ugliness, including moral ugliness.

(p. 62)

Joel Morwood Interview of Wolff

I recommend the most honorable kind of life that you can live: In all human relationships to cultivate the attitude that the end is the triumph of good; not my good, but Good as such.

(50:45)

Experience and Philosophy

While in the State [of High Indifference] . . . the imperative of the moral law no longer existed, for there was not, and is not, either good or evil. . . . It was as though any choice whatsoever became immediately Divinely ordained and superior to the review of any lesser tribunal.

(p. 287)

Nirvāṇa

Experience and Philosophy

It is as though the “I,” which in the original state was like a bare point within the universe and circumscribed by objects, had suddenly transformed itself into a space that comprehended all objects. But there still remains a self that is aware, that maintains its own identity and may be said to have a content that is the inverse of experience: for such a self certainly realizes values such as bliss, peace, and freedom. The more familiar name for this state is Nirvana.

(pp. 322-3)

While realization of the Nirvanic State is dependent upon detachment from the Object, it is not dependent upon noncognition of the Object. . . . Thus realization of Nirvana is, in principle, compatible with continued cognition of the World, provided there is nonattachment to it.

(p. 404)

Omnipotence

Experience and Philosophy

As an intimate part of that supernal consciousness, there is a sense of power and authority literally of cosmic proportions. By contrast, the marching of the Caesars and the conquests of science are but the games of children.

(p. 283)

Omnipresence

Experience and Philosophy

At the time of the culminating Recognition I found myself spreading everywhere and identical with a kind of “Space” that embraced not merely the visible forms and worlds, but all modes and qualities of consciousness as well.

(p. 283)

Omniscience

Experience and Philosophy

It seems as though, in an unseen and dark sense, I already know all that is to be known.

(p. 263)

Philosophy

Pathways Through to Space

The real end of all the higher religion and philosophy is the attainment of the Awakened Consciousness. Call It what you will, Cosmic Consciousness, Specialism, Liberation, Nirvana, Enlightenment, the Kingdom of Heaven, Moksha, Transcendentalism, Christ Consciousness, Seraphita, Beatrice, or any other name, these all point to one and the same fact, be it well or poorly understood. From one point of view It may be regarded as the Awakening of a new Sense but, if so, the difference is at least as radical as the shift from sensation to conceptual thought. The change is so great as to form an entirely new Man within the frame of the old. He may apparently still live here, yet in the essential sense He is not here. For Him the great and baffling questions of reflective consciousness are solved; the problems that underlie the great antinomies are resolved. His deep soul yearning is satisfied, and the tragedy which dogs the steps of this life here below is gone forever. With the Awakening the end of religion is attained. The man, at last, is born again, and a new 'Twice born' steps into a New World.

(p. 89)

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

The office of great philosophy is to be a Way of Realization, and not solely a monitor of doing.

(p. 1)

The present sad estate of much philosophy is the result of a critical acumen that has run far ahead of the unfoldment of balancing insight.

(p. 2)

Introceptualism

The universal . . . is in closer affinity to the Illuminative cognition than is the particular . . . since it is from the general or universal concepts that the largest deductive development is possible, it follows that a philosophy grounded on the Illuminative Cognition would elaborate itself mainly as a deductive system . . . Here we can see the possibility of a mathematics which is . . . a revelation of truth.

(pp. 67-8)

Plato's Cave

Experience and Philosophy

In the subsequent phase, continuing to the present, I have rather taken this transcendent consciousness as a base and focused more toward the relative world. . . . Referring to a symbol that Plato has made immortal, I would say that this was a time when I stepped outside the “cave” and realized directly the glory of the “sun-illuminated” world, after which I turned back again to the life in the “cave,” but with this permanent difference in outlook—that I could never again regard the “cave life” with the same seriousness that I had once given it.

(p. 277)

Sādhana

“Death and After” (transcribed edition)

But however desirable a particular state of consciousness may be when taken in its setting, it by no means follows that that state is, in and of itself, permanently good. Thus the wise man may look upon the customs of savagery among a primitive people and find them relatively good, though regarding them as unqualifiedly evil if incorporated into the lives of people who have awakened to at least the external elements of culture. A scaffolding is a necessary structure in the early stages of erecting a building, but if, when the building is finished, the scaffolding is allowed to remain, it becomes an unqualified architectural evil. Thus every form, whether in the objective or psychological sense, must be evaluated with due regard to its setting. No form can ever be completely true or perfect in the absolute sense, for all form exists in a domain which is ever in a process of becoming. Thus all structures can never be completely adequate for more than but a moment. Yet formal structure is necessary, and should never be destroyed until something more perfect and truer is found to take its place. Changing form merely for the sake of change is worse than preserving a structure beyond the day of its real usefulness. It is very unsafe to tear down a scaffolding until the builder has found some other foundation to stand upon. And unless the new foundation is something better than the old, there is no point in making the transition at all. It is real Wisdom which requires the innovator to carry the burden of the proof, although without the builder of new forms stagnation is the result.

(p. 1)

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

However, even Shankara did not supply all the specifications for the method that became finally effective. Also, I had to discover adaptations that would satisfy the needs of an academically trained occidental nature . . . what I added as a sort of creative discovery was peculiarly decisive in its effect. At the present time I am convinced that some such original discovery is vitally important in effecting a self-induced transformation.

(p. 23)

Introceptualism

In the transformative process, everything else is incidental to the attaining of the self-giving attitude.

(p. 143)

The Christic morality implies a denial of the will to live, or of the desire for sentient existence. There must be no thought for the morrow; no provision for one's own sustenance or self-protection; no thought or action motivated by prudential considerations. This is mystically equivalent to a will to die, and, again, is identical with the Buddhistic motivation. Life is to be lived so long as the automatic dynamist supports it and external circumstance permits it, but there must be no egoistic clinging to life or striving to maintain it. There is no teaching that life should be hated and, hence, destroyed, but on the contrary all manifestations of it outside of one's self are to be carefully cherished. The total attitude is one of compassionate indifference. That which comes, is to be accepted, but with loving compassion, not with cold stoicism.

(pp. 219-20)

Compassion and the Love of Truth are the only valid and effective motivations [for Mystical Realization], and the Compassion must be utterly self-disregarding, and the seeking of Truth must be so pure that every preconception is offered up on the altar of sacrifice.

(p. 225)

“Lectures to University Students,” part 4

I received as a Christmas present in 1949, *The Life Divine*, and on looking through the table of contents, I

came across a chapter heading that made my eyes bulge out: “Knowledge by Identity.” I had some years previously, in fact in 1936, invented the title “Knowledge through Identity” for expressing a certain state of cognition; and this was the first writing that I found any language like that anywhere and I was immensely interested. So, of course, that led to ten years of saturation in the literature of Aurobindo, and I’ve given many lectures, and I’ve tried to communicate something of his yoga to the *sadhakas*, because I don’t care whether one follows the yoga that I followed or not. I only care that Realization shall be attained by any way that may work, and there is no one way that is the sole path for all creatures.

(p. 3)

“Sangsara Nirvana and Paranirvana,” part 1

You have got to have the courage to dare, make the gamble, and find it for yourself. The guru may take your hand for a while, but ultimately you’ll have to take that gamble; and you don’t know beforehand whether you will succeed or whether you’ll get into a cul-de-sac. But you’ve got to have the faith and confidence to dare. This is a heroic path. Of course you’re not asked to do it before you’re ready, and the guru helps you as far as he can. But ultimately you’ve got to make that step yourself.

(p. 6)

“Abstract of the Philosophy,” part 3

I would say that the essential precondition favorable to the Awakening in consciousness is a profound religious attitude, but an attitude that is shorn or freed from all religious dogma and formalism. I would agree that religious formalism is more apt to be a barrier than an aid, or if not a barrier to the psychological event, it is a force of distortion in the meaningful interpretation of the event. Yes, I would say that it is important to discard religious formalism since there is much in religious form and dogma that seems to be designed to capture for its own purposes the fruits of a truly mystical or cosmic conscious Awakening. It captures, thus, the interpretation that may come forth from it, predetermines a form which it may take, instead of the true attitude of listening with open mind to the meaningful content of the state. It is religious in the truest sense of the word, not in the formal sense of the word.

(p. 7)

Experience and Philosophy

Thus, when a man learns to become detached with respect to his pet opinions or ideas, and is willing to accept conclusions quite counter to his preferences when either evidence or logic points that way, then he is practicing asceticism in a higher and nobler sense. This kind of asceticism does cut far deeper into the real vitals of a man than any restraint connected with the mere carnal nature, and if he can succeed in the higher discipline then anything remaining in the lesser nature requiring to be purified becomes a mere detail.

(pp. 161-2)

I became convinced of the probable existence of a transcendent mode of consciousness that could not be comprehended within the limits of our ordinary forms of knowledge.

(p. 251-2)

I had had some brief contact with the oriental manuals on transformation and realized that they seemed to point to a kind of consciousness that, while not generally realized by mankind, yet was potentially within the range of human attainment.

(p. 252)

Again and again I found the statement that, if a man would attain the transcendent realization, he must renounce all, and not merely part, of what he personally is.

(p. 253)

I had attained an intellectual grasp of the vitally important fact that transcendent consciousness differs from our ordinary consciousness in the primary respect that it is a state of consciousness wherein the disjunction between the subject to consciousness and the object of consciousness is destroyed. It is a state wherein self-identity and the field of consciousness are blended in one indissoluble whole.

(p. 254)

Early in my studies I found that the manuals emphasized the necessity of killing out desire. . . . It was only after some time that I discovered that the real meaning consisted in a changing of the polarization of desire. . . . Instead of objects and achievements in the world-field being sought, an eternal and all-encompassing consciousness should be desired.

(p. 255)

Transformations in Consciousness

The problem concerning the method by which the function of Introception may be aroused into conscious activity is one of great difficulty and has vast ramifications. There is indeed quite an extensive Oriental literature on the subject, but much of it is so largely adapted to the peculiarities of a psychical development foreign to the Occidental that it is practically useless for the Western student. Nonetheless, even a casual perusal of these sources will convince one that the Oriental sages have given the problem very serious and profound consideration. There can be no doubt that Oriental students of the subject were as thoroughly convinced of the value of the investigation as we are of our science. There is unmistakable evidence that they attained positive results and that they valued such results above all other achievements. The typical Western supercilious attitude toward the Oriental will not survive a serious examination of Eastern wisdom. Oriental intelligence simply developed in a different direction from our own and achieved results that are in no way inferior to our own. Where we have progressed in the physical control of matter, they have advanced most in the understanding and control of the psyche.

(p. 148)

The problem of method, whereby the latent introceptive function may be aroused to conscious activity, is peculiarly difficult since the solution proves to be one that can never be completely attained by method. Moreover, effective method is found to vary with individual temperament. The means that have proven effective for an individual of one temperament may fail completely for another with a radically different psychical organization. Recent work concerning the differences of psychological types sheds considerable illumination upon this aspect of the matter.

(pp. 148-9)

Yet, even if we knew the last word that could be uttered about method, we would then control only one side of the problem. The other part of the arousing process is autonomous or spontaneous, and is thus something that no one can command by willed effort alone. To use a metaphor in the Eastern spirit, the individual, through the faithful employment of method, merely prepares the cup, which is filled when something other, and quite beyond his or her control, acts on its own initiative. Sometimes it so happens that an individual may have unconsciously prepared the cup, and then received the benefit of a spontaneous filling as a matter of complete surprise. It would follow that the conscious employment of method is neither an absolute essential nor does it provide a positive assurance of success within a prescribed time. Even so, the consensus of Oriental experience abundantly confirms the view that the application of appropriate method abundantly confirms the view that the application of appropriate method vastly increases the probability of success, so work in this direction is well justified.

When I was a university student, the problem came to my attention and ultimately came to occupy a central place there. I finally proved that the discovery and use of the appropriate method could eventuate in a successful outcome, though success was not attained until after more than twenty years. Yet, today, though I am aware of the office of method and the meaning of what it can achieve, I still find it impossible to define the crucial step. In the end, everything hung upon a subtle psychical adjustment that is truly inexpressible, since the very act of expression gives it a false appearance of an objective character that is not at all true to the real meaning. I found that the key consisted in attaining a moment within which there

is a thoroughgoing detachment from the object and from the activist attitude of ordinary consciousness.

The simplicity of this statement hides a real stumbling block, for the degree and the extent of detachment implies an uprooting of very deep-seated habits. There is a sense in which we may say that a thoroughgoing breaking of the dependence upon the object, as well as the activist attitude, is like a conscious dying, which long established psychological habits tenaciously resist. It may take considerable work to attain the critical state.

(p. 149)

Science

Introceptualism

Quite commonly, if not always, the scientific problem has the following form. It is desired to investigate some zone of manifested fact which we will designate by the letter "A." But A, it so happens, is of such a nature that it cannot be directly known by means of scientific observation. However, it may be determined that A is associated with certain phenomena of a sort that can be observed, which we will call "B." We have then the initial proposition that "A is B" or, more exactly, "the class A is a member of the class B." Then instances of B are studied by the methods of scientific observation. Some uniformity of character is found in these observed instances. These are generalized as always true of B. Then the original proposition is converted simply and we get "the class B is a member of the class A." This, of course, is an elementary logical fallacy, but science justifies herself by securing a number of results that do work. But this means that the justification of scientific results is pragmatic only. Empiric science does not determine Truth and Law in an objective or ontological sense.

(pp. 275-6)

Suffering

Experience and Philosophy

I saw that, in reality, there is no suffering anywhere, that there is no creature in need of an aiding hand. The essential consciousness and life of all beings are already in that State (the Profounder State of Consciousness), and both never had been, and could not be, divorced from it. The world-field with all its striving and pain, seemingly lasting through billions of years, actually is, or seems to be, a dream occurring during a passing wink of sleep.

(p. 286)

Thought

The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object

The thinker must learn also to feel his 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 that 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.

(p. 178)

Introceptualism

It is now evident that we must differentiate thought into three forms or aspects. In its most familiar and common form, thought is concerned with a content given through experience. In this case, the relatedness of thought is to a perceptual datum with perception, in the broad sense which includes sensation, feeling and intuition, guiding the course of the thinking. This is the only kind of thinking which is given recognition by the Empiricists—including the Pragmatists and the Nominalists—as possessing genuine validity. It is clear that thought in this sense is of only instrumental value in relation to an experienced or perceptual content. But there is a second kind of thought wherein the concepts are taken in abstraction from meaningful reference. In this case, the process starts with concepts and ends with concepts without implying a reference to anything else. In this case the concepts do not mean anything that may be perceived or experienced nor do they refer to a spiritual essence. There is thus no material, but only a formal content. This is the thought of symbolic logic and of formalistic mathematics. In this case, the truth and existence of a system lies only in the self-consistency of the system. Such a body of thought is neither materialistic nor spiritual, but lies in a realm between the transcendental and the mundane. It really corresponds to the neutral entities of the Neo-Realists which are conceived as neither body nor mind. If we call the first kind of thought empiric or perceptual we may call this pure thought. The third kind of Thought is strictly transcendental and so I differentiate it from the other kinds by spelling the word with a capital T. Thought, in this third sense, does not stand apart from the thinking subject, but is to be viewed as identical with the SELF. Thus there is a sense in which we may say the SELF is Its own Thought, and this Thought is the SELF, and yet we may employ the two notions for the purpose of emphasis—the word “SELF” referring to a center of consciousness in its purity, and the word “Thought” to its quality as Meaning. Thought, in this highest sense, may be conceived as pure Meaning stripped from all form, whether conceptual or perceptual. Meaning, in this sense, is to be conceived as unconditioned by time, space and experiencing. It is purely transcendental and pre-existent with respect to all history or process. Neither experience nor pure thought, by themselves, can lead to the transcendental Meaning of the higher Thought. It can be attained only through another function which I have called “introception.”

(p. 123)

The truly Royal Thought stands above the formalism of words and concepts, though it may ensoul these. Let it be clearly understood that I am not here speaking in terms of a speculative abstraction but of something which, under the appropriate conditions, may be known directly. There is a state wherein one may be clearly aware of a dual thought process within the mind which may even be present concurrently. One, the deeper Thought, moves or develops without words, concepts or images, and reaches into the more objective mind only through an incipient and casual contact with conceptual fragments. It is a thought of an enormous clarity and sweep. Until one has had the impression corrected by subsequent experience, it seems as though this thought would be very easy to formulate. But actually the formulation is extremely difficult. It does not precisely fit any conceptual or word forms. A pure meaning grasped almost instantaneously is only by laborious effort partially conveyed in a form which can be written or spoken.

Often very strange constellations of conceptual forms are required to suggest the primary meaning. Such constellations are of an order which make little or no sense in terms of the more familiar conceptual references. Thus, for example, ordinarily the notion of “flow” implies a movement from a point here to a point there, either in space or time. This is a fixed meaning which we habitually give to the notion of flowing. It is most certainly progressive, in some sense, rather than static. But how would one convey an immediate value or Realization wherein the static and flowing quality were equally emphatic? I used the notion of a life current constantly moving but, at the same time, so turning upon itself that there was no progress from a past to a future. I thought I turned the trick in giving a clear formulation of an immediate content, until someone gently suggested to me that it did not make sense! I caught his point of view right away. Yet that did not change the fact that I knew what I knew. Actually, this difficulty is not so strange, for if one manages to abstract his purely perceptual consciousness from the ordinary complex of concepts and percepts which form the manifold of daily conscious content, and then tries to formulate the raw perceptual material in terms of concepts, then he finds that the concept and word forms do not fit either. The pure perceptual quale is more like impressionistic, futuristic or surrealist art. Anyone who tries to capture that sort of thing in terms of concepts and words so that they will really make a straightforward and understandable statement will have a real labor on his hands.

(p. 126)

Thought gives eyes to blind perception, and so leads it. But thought is led by introception and gives form to it. With respect to the transcendent realm, thought gives form to unlimited formless possibility. With respect to perceptual filling, thought determines the range of possibilities. It clothes Spirit in form and illumines the matter of perception. These are the dual offices of conception in its relation to introception and perception.

(p. 155)

As the process of abstraction is carried further and further toward the limit of tenuity wherein conceptual thought can function, the growing “thinness,” in the perceptual sense, corresponds to a growing “thickness,” in the introceptive sense. There finally is reached a point where thought continues without the use of concepts or, at least, without the use of concepts which can be represented in words. In mathematics this process has, long since, reached the stage where words, in the ordinary sense, cannot express the thought, and only symbols can serve as the conceptual instruments. But there ultimately comes the point where there are no longer any symbols, even, that are adequate. Thought then deals with a disembodied Meaning. At this point the “thinness,” in the extraverted sense, has become absolute, while the inner “thickness” has virtually become infinite. This is an extremely pregnant Thought for, in this sense, a single Idea may require even volumes for its interpretation. Indeed, it is never wholly interpreted since no objectively thinkable elaboration can ever exhaust its possibilities. We may think of it as being in its own nature like the perfect summation of a converging infinite series, whereas the objectively thinkable interpretation is not more than approximation of that summation, proceeding term by term. At any point attained in the second process, there still remains an infinite number of terms to complete the summation. So in speaking of the inner Thought as infinitely richer than the objective thought, the words “infinite” and “infinitely” are to be taken as strictly valid.

(p. 162-3)

The relative substantiality of the inner disrobed Thought may also be suggested by certain notions taken from modern physics. Today we think of matter as composed of atoms which, in turn, are composed of protons, neutrons and electrons. The atom appears to be organized with a nuclear center, consisting of protons and neutrons, while there are electrons revolving around this nucleus. The total size of the atom is conceived as the space circumscribed by the outermost electron. Now, within this space, the total volume actually filled by electrons and protons is comparable to the space filled by the sun, planets, satellites, meteors, etc. In other words, the unfilled space, even in the densest of matter found in nature on this earth, is simply vast compared to the filled portion. Now, if protons, neutrons or electrons were actually packed tight so as to rest in contact with each other, the resulting density would be almost inconceivable to the imagination. In the case of some of the heavy stars it appears that this state is, in high measure,

approximated, with the result that, according to calculation, a volume the size of a pea would weigh many million tons. If we liken ordinary conceptual thought to the atomic organization of matter as we know it here, then the disrobed or transcendent Thought would correspond to the tightly packed protons or neutrons. It is immeasurably more substantial.

Another way of presenting the idea is to say that the transcendental Thought consists of meaning in its purity, disassociated from all form. And, in this sense, even the most abstract mathematical formula must be regarded as form. Clearly, this is not thinking in the familiar sense of the word, but, nonetheless, it is Thought, though of another order. One is justified in calling it "Thought" for the reason that it is a content most nearly related to thought among the more familiar human functions. We may call this the pure introceptive Thought, but it is not to be understood as identical with the whole of introceptive content. For instance, there is, as well, an introceptive quality that bears an analogous relation to feeling with a corresponding degree of relative intensity.

(p. 163)

Experience and Philosophy

At the deepest level of discernible thought there is a thinking that flows of itself. In its purity it employs none of the concepts that 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.

(p. 308)

Transformations in Consciousness

It is the self-moving, inarticulate, flowing thought that constitutes the primary ground of the noetic aspect of mystical consciousness. I do not see any possible means of achieving direct acquaintance with this thought, other than by deep introversion. It may well be an unseen determinant in all thinking, and it is not inconceivable that a sufficiently acute analysis of objective thinking might have to hypothesize such an unseen thought. At present I am unable to speak more positively with respect to this possibility. In any case, by means of sufficiently profound introversion, this inner spiritual thought may be known directly. It certainly is not under the direction or control of the personal ego. At the appropriate level of mystical penetration wherein both the personal egoic thought and the higher thought are conscious, within a common zone of consciousness, the personally directed thought may query the higher thought, either by a direct question or by tentative predication. This will initiate a responsive activity in the higher thought.

(p. 277)

Timelessness

Experience and Philosophy

The inmost content of the [mystical] state does not lend itself to time-measurement at all.

(p. 28)

I also discovered the essential timelessness of the subject, or self, and that in its purity, unmixed with any objective element, it can never truly be an *object* of consciousness.

(p. 255)

Yoga

“Death and After” (transcribed edition)

In Yoga practice there lies a means by which every power or capacity in man can be accentuated, or brought into life if at present it lies dormant. This does not mean that every individual after having successfully pursued the practice of Yoga becomes at once complete and all-powerful in every respect. No embodied Being can possibly be unlimited. If Being as such could be completely manifested in one form then there would not be a multitude of creatures in the universe. Form necessarily implies limitation, and not even a Christ or a Buddha is an exception to this principle. Thus when the practice of Yoga deepens the nature or extends the power of a man it is in those directions which his nature and his focus of interest make possible. But within these limitations the Yogi is the equal of any genius, while in addition he possesses the superiority which grows out of the fact that he has a method by which he can systematically unfold his potentialities.

(p. 7)

Pathways Through to Space

Thus, we would say, the physicist is right in making inertia the prime mark of that which he is studying, but he is wrong if he proceeds to predicate substantial reality of his object of study. Actually he is studying a relative nothingness. This fact does not detract in the least from the practical values of his studies, but simply means that he is dealing with the obverse of metaphysical actuality. Further, once it is realized that he is unfolding the laws governing the obverse of the Real, his knowledge can be employed as a Way to the Recognition of that Reality. I can see how our present physical science is unfolding a peculiarly beautiful Path to Yoga.

(p. 159)

Zero

Introceptualism

In the sense of introception, the consciousness related to the “I” is not a consciousness of the “I.” It is immediate “knowledge through acquaintance” in the most rigorous sense. One might even speak of it as a sinking into the “I,” but the difficulty with all these formulations is that they suggest a connotation in the ordinary sense of language usage, which is quite different to the real meaning. “I am I” conveys the idea with more rigor, at the price of meaningless tautology for ordinary thinking. We might say, “I am and I am thus without dependence upon any objective setting.” I am known as I in an empty world, which is empty because I am not projected as a not-self, in the sense of Fichte, while in the introceptive state. It is I, together with consciousness that I am, immediately known and not as a mere inference. To be conscious as the pure “I” is to be conscious of Nothing, which yet is infinitely more valuable than any *thing*. I am the pure Light, which by illuminating everything gives to everything existence for me, and save as things exist for me, there is no meaning in predicating existence of them.

Knowledge toward the self, in the introceptive sense, may be likened to a zero-state that is intensely illumined. As it were, the world contracts to a zero-point and becomes pure Light. Comparatively, the old world is darkness. The immediate effect at this stage is of an absolute emptiness filled with absolute value. We are here dealing with a very profound conception where, again, it seems that only mathematics can help us.

The one conception in mathematics which required the greatest amount of genius for its birth, is the conception of zero. This was the great mathematical achievement of the East Indians. Here we have a notion which stands for nothing, and yet becomes the most vital unifying conception of mathematics. Zero is the foil which gives meaning to all numbers. The step from 0 (zero) to the numeral 1 (one) is a leap across a whole universe. From one and zero we build our systems of reference, which is merely a way of saying that with nothing as a center we have the fulcrum for control of all elaborations in form. Zero is the bare point, having only position, but no existence, on which we rest all else in our analysis.

The pure “I” is the zero-point of organized consciousness. It is the center of all systems of reference of our human kind of consciousness. When an astronomer takes the milky way as a base of reference, he really projects himself as a thinker to the milky way. This illustrates the real independence of body which is characteristic of the self or “I.” I am at the point where I center my thought. If I habitually center myself in the body then I am there in an exceedingly narrow kind of bondage. (Such identification with body is the essence of materialism.) But I actually break this bondage every time I think myself away from body, as to some other base of reference. We are actually doing this sort of thing all the time, but commonly without realizing the significance of what we are doing. Simply to realize what one is doing in all this is to take a long step in the liberating process. I literally am where I think or otherwise function.

If one sinks into his own pure self-consciousness and carefully strips away all habitual or inherited interpretations, he will find that there is no meaning attaching to the notion of body. He will find consciousness with various modifications, and nothing else. He can call certain modifications ‘body’ and by various other names, but these are merely creative or fantastic constructs. He knows only consciousness. And that consciousness is centered in its own subject, and nothing else. That subject is, always has been, and always will be perfectly free, and unaffected by any objective conditioning. To the self, the space outside and inside a granite mountain is one and the same, and access is equally free in both cases. When a surveyor establishes a point inside a granite cliff that has been pierced by no tunnel, he has actually placed himself at that point. He has not placed another physical body there; he has placed his “I” there, and from that point inside the cliff of granite he can think further.

(p. 149)