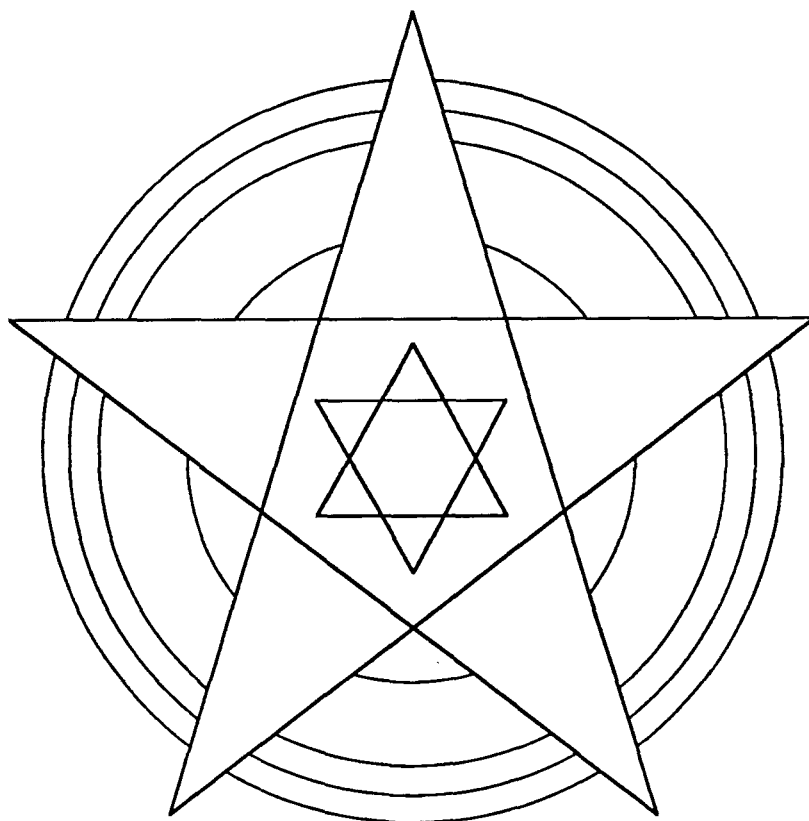


# LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

JOHN HERON

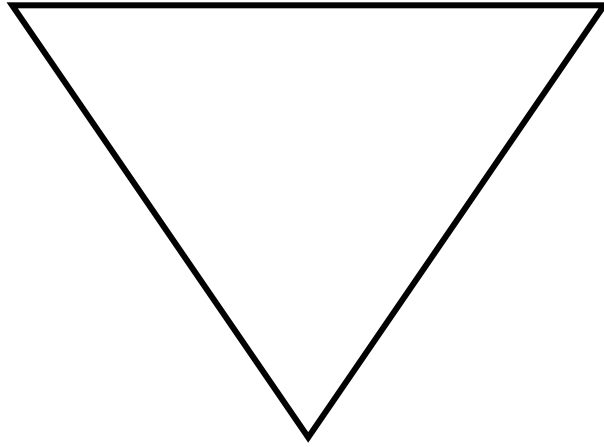


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# LIVING IN TWO WORLDS



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Third edition

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This book was first published as *Confessions of a Janus-Brain: A Personal Account of Living in Two Worlds* by Endymion Press, London, in 1987. The text was substantially revised and enlarged in 1994, and made available as an e-book at [www.human-inquiry.com](http://www.human-inquiry.com) in 2003, with the title *Experience of the Subtle Realms*. The current version, *Living in Two Worlds*, is thus the third edition. For the companion volumes, see Heron, J., *Sacred Science: Person-centred Inquiry into the Spiritual and the Subtle*, Ross-on-Wye, PCCS Books, 1998; and Heron, J., *Cosmic Psychology*, Auckland, Endymion Press, 2006.

Living in Two Worlds

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## Foreword

This book is a personal account of my experience of the subtle dimensions of existence, the lower subtle and the higher subtle realms, as these are defined by contemporary cartographers of transpersonal states (e.g. Grof, 1988). A lot of my reports are about ways in which the subtle realms interact with ordinary life, so that one is effectively living in two sorts of world at once, the subtle ones and the physical one.

In running workshops in this field, I have been struck by how many people need legitimation for subtle experiences which they have had, but which cannot be categorized in terms of the belief-systems of our dominant culture. In support of this need, it is useful for sensitives to report such experiences in a way which helps to clarify both the nature of them and the issues involved in having them. Hence this book.

In order to be an effective witness, I deal almost exclusively with personal experience. I have sought to give a clear account of it, a basic phenomenology which is true to what seems to have occurred. Alongside this I have tried to develop some kind of simple conceptual framework that makes the whole thing intelligible without falling foul of either excessive scepticism or excessive credulity. There is intermittent theory along the way and it becomes more elaborate in the last four chapters.

I have not wanted to criss-cross the text with references to the diverse experiences and explanatory concepts of others. This comes at a later stage. First and foremost is the need for a sustained and coherent personal statement with which the reader can compare and contrast his or her own experience; and this is what I seek to offer.

It seems to me that the brain with its nervous system faces two ways, like Janus, the Roman gods of doors, who looked both in and out, commanding entrance and exit. The brain normally mediates perceptual experience of the physical world, but it can also under suitable conditions refract awareness of a subtle world that is within and beyond the physical world.

It is as though the brain has a double code within it. One code enables us to organize and make sense of the external physical environment. The other code, more deeply buried and guarded within the cortex, empowers us to make sense - although intermittently and much less systematically - of another kind of universe altogether: an unseen universe that both interpenetrates and transcends the defining parameters of physical existence.

Experience of this other universe is still subject to considerable cultural repression, which typically operates in several interlocking ways, all of which reduce awareness of the subtle realms to something else. There is reduction to the material: all experience, whatever it appears to be about, refers when properly analysed only to matter in motion in the physical world. There is reduction to the psychological: encounters with another world are really nothing but subjective mental events. There is reduction to the pathological: claims to extrasensory perception are the hallucinations of a sick mind. And there is reduction to the demonic: impressions from the subtle realms are all the work of the devil.

Of course, some claims to so-called occult experience are just ordinary experience misconstrued, or private phantasy, or deranged delusion, or even sinister possession. But when *all* experiences of the subtle realms are dismissed by repressive use of one or other of these views, then we have fearful and rigid monopolar thinking defending itself against the fundamental bipolarity of the cortex.

The total reductionist is standing in the doorway of the brain insisting that it be used by him or her and everyone else as an exit only, never as an entrance. The reasons for this repressive stance is an anxious intolerance of ambiguity. But to own the Janus-like bipolarity of the cortex requires a high tolerance of ambiguity. If the brain has two codes, one for physical experience and one for subtle experience, they can sometimes get mixed up: we can mistake the physical code for the subtle code or vice versa. It takes a certain amount time and patience, and a little bit of courage, to sort this all out.

Also the subtle code may overlap the physical code in certain quite critical ways, but because of restricting belief-systems we are solely aware of the physical code features of the relevant experience. We don't notice the subtle code aspects on which the physical code features depend for their coherence. When the subtle realms inform the very heart of the way we grasp this world, but we don't realize this, then we are in trouble indeed in our understanding of what kind of universe we live in.

The first chapter deals with the issue of ambiguity in two world experience. It proposes a simple way of turning such ambiguity into a tool of inquiry.

If the door of the brain is to swing freely in both directions, opening on to the inner worlds as well as on to the outer world, then it needs well-appointed hinges. The mistress of Janus was Cardea, who was the goddess of door hinges. She was identified by Robert Graves with the White Goddess. He or she who works with the bipolarity of the cortex is wisely her votary.

I am grateful to Barbara Langton and the late Mary Corr for support in important inquiries, and to Wiet Palar and Eva Maria Schulte for valuable contributions to the content of Chapter 9. I am indebted to the work of George Adams for prompting a lot of my thinking about the geometry of subtle space; and to the writings and friendship of Lawrence Hyde who many years ago affirmed my seership at a critical time.

John Heron  
Kaukapakapa  
January 2006

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# 1. Heron's beard

## 1. The other world

This book is an exploration of my personal belief that we live in two worlds at once, the physical world and the other world. By the physical world I mean the world of nature and human society. By the other world I mean non-physical, non-subjective subtle realms of places, powers and presences; realms that have their own distinctive spatial, temporal and energetic properties; that are in some respects independent of the physical world and in other respects in continuous interaction with it.

As well as 'subtle realms' many terms can be used to refer to these domains: the psi world, the matrix world, the inner world, the tacit universe, the unseen universe, the occult world, the beyond. The word 'psi' has been extensively used in parapsychology to refer to extrasensory faculties. Thus the psi world is a zone of being beyond the reach of the physical senses. Then there are terms drawn from other cultures and traditions.

There is the ka world - adapted from the ancient Egyptian concept of the *ka* soul, set free from the human body at death to enter the future world. I used the term 'ka' a great deal in an early draft of this book, as a generic word for the other world and our experience of it. It has simplicity, clarity and resonance, and echoes a great esoteric tradition of the ancient world. However, I have dropped the use of it in this final version because of its unfamiliarity, and have replaced it for the most part with the term 'subtle', which is more relevant and in accord with current usage (Grof, 1988: 39).

Late Egyptian definitions of 'ka' - as an indwelling divine principle whose presence saves the soul - had a strong influence on the development of the doctrine of the Logos in Hellenistic and early Christian thought, and run deep into the foundations of western culture. Thus St. Justin (c.100-163 AD), the most important of the apologists of the second century, propounded his theory of the 'seminal Logos': the transcendent Word of God implants fragments of the truth in the minds of all persons of good-will.

'Ka' was written, in the ancient Egypt of 3000 BC, by a hieroglyph of uplifted arms, and the letter K by the hieroglyph of a slightly cupped hand. Among the Semites of 1500 BC, the letter K was 'kaph' - also the word for the palm of the hand. Via the Phoenicians, the letter passed into the Greek, then the Roman alphabets. And it was originally written with its angled arms open to the left, not the right. 'Ka', with its initial letter K, combines incisiveness of sound with the symbolism of receptive gesture. This is relevant to the practice of bodily alignment as a mode of access to the other world - which I describe in Chapter 7, section 5. It also relates to the notion of angles as powers - section 3 in Chapter 7.

There is the akashic realm - from the Samkhya system of ancient India in which *akasha* is subtle matter, vibratory, radiant, full of energy and out of which gross physical matter evolves. Then there is the chhi universe - from the Neo-Confucian thinker Chu Hsi for whom *chhi* is tenuous non-perceptible matter or aethereal waves, out of which *chi* or solid, perceptible physical matter is formed. Actually, Aikido people today simply use the word 'chi', rather than 'chhi', to refer to subtle energy.

The concept of the etheric world originates in Aristotle's notion of *aether*: celestial matter, the fifth element, translucent, bright and incorruptible, out of which is made the celestial spheres that carry the sun, moon, planets and stars. The term 'etheric' has been a strong favourite to describe the other world in nineteenth and twentieth century occult literature and also in the story of spiritualism since 1848 (Conan Doyle, 1972), now vigorously revived in the form of modern channelling (Klimo, 1987).

The notion of the ether also played a dominant role in the development of modern science, from the time of Descartes, Boyle, Gilbert and Newton onwards. It was interred in Einstein's special theory of relativity in 1905. Its replacement, in the new physics, is in the guise of the implicate order, the tacit universe (Bohm, 1980, Weber, 1981).

There are links, too, with the *mana* of the kahunas of Polynesia, a potent supernatural fluid which can be charged into objects and is an anchor or foothold for presences in the other world; with the *orenda* of the Iroquois, *manitou* of the Algonquins, *wakanda* of the Sioux; with the original meaning of *kami* in Japan; and with shamanism (Eliade, 1972). I find important echoes of my experience in these traditions. But the touchstone of what I write is felt upon my pulse, encountered by my being, lived through today.

## 2. Belief and ambiguity

I don't *know* that we live in two worlds at once because my evidence is not sufficient to warrant a claim to knowledge. But it is sufficient to warrant a claim to belief. The evidence which I recount here is personal experience, most of it mine, some of it recounted to me directly by others with the ring of authenticity.

The content of the experience is often ambiguous. It is suspended between what merely seems to be the case, and what really is the case; between an illusory and a veridical perception. It is 'as if' I am in two worlds at once, but the other world component *could* be something else - a sensation or misperception at the physical level, or a bit of purely imaginary content.

Now it is my belief that this ambiguity occurs precisely because there are two worlds interacting in my consciousness. Several interrelated effects can occur. I can mistake this world experiences for other world experiences, and vice versa. In zones where the two kinds of perception overlap I may not be clear which is which. I may ignore one kind totally in favour of the other. What starts out as an ordinary state of consciousness of this world, may end up as an altered state disclosing the other world. And what starts out as an altered state may collapse into an ordinary state.

## 3. Heron's beard and Occam's razor

Because of all this, I hold to one cardinal principle: if you are aware of an ambiguous experience in which it is *as if* there are other world components, then it is a good thing to foster and elaborate the ambiguity, rather than try to reduce it and eliminate it sceptically. Apply first of all a principle opposite to that of Occam's razor.

William of Occam was an English philosopher who died about 1349. Occam's razor is the principle that the fewest possible assumptions should be made in explaining anything (Lacey, 1986). So if you have some ambiguous experience, you should seek to explain it in terms of this world, and not invoke the extra assumption of some other kind of world. This explanatory principle often leads to reductionism: claims to extrasensory experience are explained away in terms of, reduced to, ordinary sorts of experience.

My opposite principle is that it is wise to encourage an ambiguous experience to acquire luxurious growth in the direction of the complex and the occult, rather than rigorously cut it down to an awareness of the simple and the obvious. I will call this new principle the principle of Heron's beard.

Now Heron's beard is not yet an explanatory principle: it is a principle for the management of an ambiguous experience. It commends you to give such an experience the extrasensory benefit of the doubt - to go with it as if some other worldly phenomena is afoot, to let it develop expansively and imaginatively. Then notice what happens to it. Does it collapse into the obvious after all? Or does it enhance its claim to be explained in terms of wider assumptions than apply to ordinary states of mind.

Heron's beard is sometimes (but by no means always) paradoxical in its application. Consider this case. I have an ambiguous experience in which the supposed subtle world content really is nothing more than a bit of sensation, of private imagination, or a misperception. There is nothing psi about it. Yet if I apply Heron's beard to it, then it may actually develop from an ordinary to an extraordinary, from a sensory to an extrasensory, state of consciousness.

A simple example of this is an ambiguous image before my closed eyes: is it merely a retinal image, or is it the dawning of a clairvoyant perception of the other world? Now even if, when it first appears, it is in fact nothing other than a retinal image, if I apply Heron's beard to it and imaginatively foster its development in my consciousness, it may *turn into* a clairvoyant window on the subtle world.

If you are too committed to the use of Occam's razor, you will cut an ambiguous experience short, and rush into a premature, usually reductionist, explanation. Better to indulge the experience a bit, nurture it and foster it with your attention. Postpone explanation until the experience declares itself more fully. Go with what seems, let the immediate phenomena unfold. Elaborate its content, and notice carefully what is going on before explaining it.

Occam's razor goes for a more rapid and sceptical reduction of the ambiguous to the usual. Heron's beard goes for a more leisurely and imaginative elaboration of the ambiguous to the unusual. Actually, the two principles are complementary and need each other. For sometimes the beard simply becomes a mass of illusory growth, and then you need the razor to shave it off. But the rule is: grow the beard *before* you decide whether or not it is appropriate to use the razor. Don't contract before you expand your awareness; and only contract it if the expansion results in an obvious nonsense.

#### **4. A simple canon of inquiry**

Let me systematise this a little bit further. Suppose I have an ambiguous experience which has some apparent other world content. Now this other world content may be illusory (that is, really physical world content) or it may be genuine. So we have the following possibilities.

1. Apply Heron's beard to what only seems to be other world content but really isn't, and as a result it actually *becomes* genuine other world content. This is my example above: Heron's beard turns what at first was only a closed-eye retinal image into an authentic clairvoyant window.
2. Apply Heron's beard to what only seems to be other world content but really isn't, and as a result it becomes quite obvious that it is nothing but an illusion. In which case

apply Occam's razor and strip the illusion off the physical world content. Thus the attempt to develop some ambiguous image before your closed eyes into clairvoyance, may show it up to be what it really is - an ordinary retinal light.

3. Apply Heron's beard to what only seems to be other world content but really isn't, and as a result it becomes more and more illusory, but you don't notice this. You are now systematically deluded, desperately need Occam's razor but sadly don't know it. You are in trouble. Thus you may persistently imagine that what in fact is nothing but retinal light is a clairvoyant window.

4. Apply Heron's beard to what in fact really is other world content, and as a result it becomes illusory. This is unfortunate, but it probably often happens. So you get the first glimmerings of a real clairvoyant window on the subtle world, and when you try to elaborate it you only succeed in losing it. You then need to apply Occam's razor quickly and realise you are now seeing nothing but retinal lights: an altered state has collapsed into an ordinary one.

5. Apply Heron's beard to what in fact really is other world content, and as a result it becomes more and more authentic. Thus you have the first glimmerings of a real clairvoyant window on the other world, and as you expand your awareness into it, the psi content becomes much clearer, more detailed, specific and convincing. You really are seeing another world, and you know it. Occam's razor is unused.

6. Apply Heron's beard to what in fact really is other world content, and as a result it becomes more and more authentic, but you can't allow yourself to believe the evidence of your psi capacity. So you quite inappropriately slash away with Occam's razor and destroy a real growth of seer ship. As a clairvoyant window opens up into more systematic and detailed 'seeing', you put a stop to it with compulsive scepticism and insist it is pure delusion.

All the six possibilities given just above can occur and have occurred in my experience of the Janis-brain state. Understanding this six fold repertoire provides a rudimentary canon of inquiry for getting at the truth of the matter. Numbers 3 and 6 are the pathological parts of the repertoire to be avoided at all costs in gross form, but are probably bound to occur from time to time to a greater or lesser degree. Number 3 in gross form is the most pathological. Number 4 is often due to lack of skill: practice can make it disappear. Numbers 1, 2 and 5 keep the show on the road.

The frequent ambiguity of content keeps me on my toes, exercising vigilance and discrimination, balancing experience and explanation, expansion and contraction of consciousness, elaboration and reduction of content, the growth of Heron's beard with the use of Occam's razor.

## 2. Passive hierarchies of the second kind

By a 'hierarchy' I mean a social system in which one set of persons makes decisions for another set of persons. Those who make the decisions may or may not consult, seek representation from, or be representative of, those for whom the decisions are made: so a hierarchy as I have defined it, can be either democratic or autocratic.

By a 'passive hierarchy' I mean a hierarchy experienced by those for whom the decisions are made, over whom influence is exercised. Correlatively, an active hierarchy is one considered from the standpoint of those who are making the decisions for others, exerting power over them.

To say that I am the passive one in a hierarchy is only to say that I am the one for whom a decision is being taken by the active person or persons in that hierarchy. It does not necessarily mean that I go along with the decision made for me. A young teenager may be in a passive hierarchy with their active parent, but may reject and rebel against the parental prescriptions.

By a 'passive hierarchy of the first kind' I mean a social system in this world, in earthly human society, as experienced by those for whom decisions are made by the active persons in the hierarchy. By a 'passive hierarchy of the second kind' I mean a social system between the two worlds, in which human beings in the physical world experience decisions being made for them, influence and power being exerted over them, by intelligent beings in the other world. A hierarchy of the third kind would be a social system exclusively in the other world. Figure 2.1 shows the three kinds.

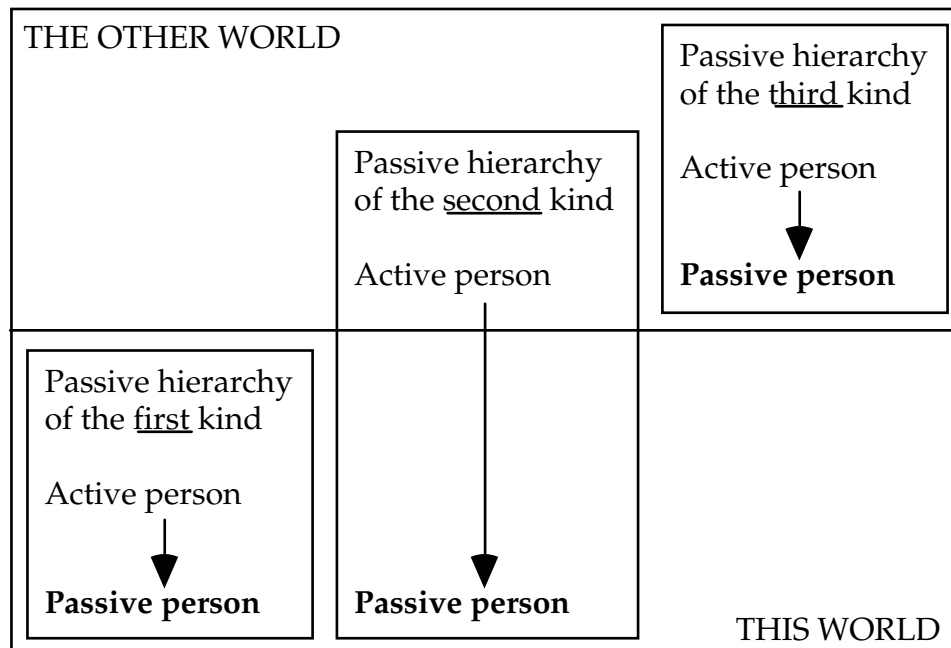


Figure 2.1 *Passive hierarchies of three kinds*

In this figure the recipient passive person is in bold print to indicate that to call the hierarchy passive is to refer to it from the standpoint of the recipient's experience of it.



This implies that passive hierarchies are consciously known by those who are subordinate within them. In the sections that follow, I describe some ambiguous, 'as if' experiences that incline me to believe in passive hierarchies of the second kind, where I have some sort of awareness of what is going on. These only occur occasionally. But they may be *continuous* and *unconscious* passive hierarchies of the second kind, of which I simply have no awareness at all. This raises fundamental issues in two world politics and I discuss these further in section 10 later in this chapter.

### 1. Critical decision episodes

I am about to make a critical decision that radically alters the existing pattern of relationships with important other persons in my life, or that inaugurates a new pattern of interactions. Quite outside my personal feelings and thoughts on the issues involved in the change, it is *as if* an unseen mentor is commenting on my plan by some kind of thought transmission. And it is *as if* that mentor is 'speaking' for and out of a network of unseen others who have taken a decision about, or at least have a chosen view upon, the current pattern of my social life.

Now of course I can apply Occam's razor and insist to myself that this unseen mentor is in fact nothing other than a dissociated bit of my own thought process - whose content is suspect precisely because the thought is dissociated. And I always need to be ready to wield the razor in case I dress up bits of my own psyche in other world disguises.

But equally I can grow Heron's beard, in which case I may get a sense of a whole pattern of relationships among intelligent beings in another world, which I call the subtle world; and a sense that this unseen pattern has some critical points of interaction with the network of human relationships in my life.

So far so good. But what am I to do with this notion of interacting social patterns in two worlds? If I become too preoccupied with divining and following dimly felt intimations from the beyond, I become neurotic, superstitious and a slave of unseen hierarchs. If I ignore totally all such promptings, I cease being true to the authenticity of my subtle experience, and lose sight of the vigour, richness and liberation of living awarely in two worlds at once, in two kinds of interacting social systems.

One answer is to say that I will use the hidden comments as a device to check over the validity of my purely human thinking about the issues. And conversely, I can use ordinary rational thought to test the status of the unsolicited hunches. So the hunches can be used to examine my reason, and vice versa. And normally this relation of mutual scrutiny and validation seems best.

But sometimes it is *as if* the intimations of the unseen mentor hint at issues that are beyond the range of my human awareness. I then have a choice. Either I can apply Occam's razor and cut out the guidance on the grounds that it is of dubious origin and that in any case to follow it would involve a dangerously irrational loss of human autonomy. Or I can take an experimental risk, and see whether adopting the proposed course initiates me into a grasp of its rationale, in terms either of this world issues or other world issues.

Unseen mentors, if they exist, and if they are responsible, have a tricky task. On the one hand they are not being responsible either to their own interests or to human interests if they do not try to alert human beings to critical ways in which social systems in the two worlds interact. On the other hand, they compromise human autonomy and

human learning through trial and error if they bring too much subtle psychic and mental influence to bear upon the decision-making process of human beings.

Furthermore, such mentors may be both well-meaning and in error. Their perspective on two world issues may be limited by false or outmoded assumptions, even though they are genuinely committed to human welfare. Finally and unpleasantly, there may be nasty hierarchies of the second kind, in which unseen mentors are ill-meaning and malicious, seeking to set up corrupted interactions between social systems in the two worlds.

Given all these possibilities, in the world of *as if*, unceasing vigilance and discriminating awareness are minimal attributes of the inquiring human. One thing is certain: if we human beings really are in hierarchies of the second kind, we are going to have more control over our response to them if we practise being aware of their influence.

## 2. Taking it down

I take full responsibility for what I write, but there are clearly and frequently times when it is *as if* thoughts, words and phrases are popped into my mind from someone nearby in subtle space. Sometimes whole sentences and paragraphs will have this quality of being taken down as if by silent mental dictation from an unseen other. I am doing the thinking, but supervening upon this exercise of my autonomous intelligence, there is a regular injection of ideas and words from I know not whom.

Poets, novelists, scientists, creative writers and thinkers of many kinds have reported the same sort of *as if* experience (Harding, 1942). It may, of course, be nothing more than a phantasy projection of the psycho-neurological processes whereby a new idea arises in consciousness. On the other hand, it may be that when I write and think, I am part of a creative passive hierarchy of the second kind, and that my work is done in the context of a field of thought generated by one or more persons in the other world.

Even if this is so, nothing follows about the validity of the ideas I may receive in the context of such a hierarchy. How ideas are generated, where they come from, does not entail or guarantee anything about their truth or falsity. I must be careful not to commit a two worlds version of what logicians call the genetic fallacy - which supposes that the origin of an idea determines its truth.

The genetic fallacy has frequently been committed by those who have believed they have been receiving ideas from the other world. They have improperly supposed that the source of the ideas in the beyond provides a self-evident and sufficient guarantee of their truth. But of all fallacious criteria of truth, an exclusive appeal to the authority of a higher world is probably the worst.

## 3. Over the shoulder

I have done a great deal of group work over the last few years. And in many of the groups that I run, such as co-counselling training, I will be working with one person in front of the rest of the group, facilitating regression, catharsis and insight, positive growth and change. Very frequently it is *as if* there is an unseen counsellor over my shoulder in subtle space, feeding interventions into my mind which I immediately express and 'pass on' to the client with whom I am working.

What distinguishes these over the shoulder interventions that I seem to receive is their light, surprising, elegant, often 'outrageous' form. This is particularly so in what in co-counselling we call direction-holding, in which a form of words is offered to the client

to contradict their ingrained compulsion to be self-deprecating. Both the choice of words and the meaning light upon my mind unexpectedly. They are startling and usefully shocking to the client too.

But the same kind of over the shoulder prompting seems to occur with many other kinds of interventions when working with an individual in front of the group. And it is *as if* the context provided by the human group, the energy of attention focussed on the client and myself, greatly facilitates the ease, intensity and clarity with which this phenomenon occurs.

The interventions thus apparently received still seem to me to be characteristically mine, part of my style, expressive of my distinctive imagination. There is here the classic paradox of receiving inspiration while at the same time exercising a high degree of creative autonomy. This paradox applies, too, to the previous *as if* experience which I called 'Taking it down'.

To be in a creative passive hierarchy of the second kind is to discover your own distinctive capacities at the same time as you receive promptings from some person or being in the other world. This hierarchy-autonomy paradox is, I believe, central to the validity of the experience. What is given is already mine. The inspiration is a catalyst of my personal power.

The sceptic, using Occam's razor, may say: Why should these ideas and interventions come from unseen persons or intelligent beings in another world? Why not from the activity of re-arranged neurological circuits; or from pre-conscious associative mechanisms; or from the collective unconscious; or from some kind of telepathic interaction within the field of purely human culture and society; or from God direct; or from personal imagination; or from psychotic delusions; or from dissociated thought processes; or from some physiological upset or bodily disorder; or from lack of self-confidence and self-reliance?

Well indeed, why not? My only answer is a phenomenological one. It is *as if* there is a discreet, companionable presence - a ka soul as the ancient Egyptians would have said - maintaining a high degree of anonymity and unobtrusiveness, such a remarkable degree of tact and patience that it almost goes unnoticed, who is busy from time to time priming the pump of my creativity.

#### **4. A wider scheme of things**

When making plans for the future, in relation to professional work, I have often had the feeling *as if* I am thinking and planning within a much wider scheme of things - which reaches out from this world into the other. Part of what I am doing in designing and refining a plan, is testing it for its fit in this wider scheme, whose broad configuration I can divine, but of whose precise details I have very little idea.

The other part of what I am doing, and the more important part, is entirely to do with this world. I am devising a project that accords with my beliefs and values, that is appropriate to the social context to which it is to be applied, that affirms the true needs and interests of all those involved in it, that is politically realistic, financially viable, and so on. Yet above and beyond all this is the clear sense of a jigsaw fit with the planning of those in another world who are concerned with the development of culture in this world.

This extrasensory dimension of planning is bizarre since my notion of the wider scheme is inchoate, unfocussed. But the sense of *fit* is unmistakable. It is like a nod

of hierarchical agreement from beyond. And if there is a sense of *misfit*, I will work away at the purely human parameters of the plan, trying out different valid possibilities in terms of this world, until I feel that it slots into place with what I dimly divine is going on in the other world.

The sense of a wider scheme of things stands out in my professional experience, since for years now I have only done work that I believe in, that expresses an ideology and a set of values which I have thought out and to which I am internally committed. Once I had established a position in our social system in which I could work in this way, it became clear that there was an overwhelming abundance of different possibilities for creative planning.

When the future started to pour into the present in terms of so many possibilities, the criteria of this world, while central and pivotal, did not seem enough. Intimations of the wider scheme became critical in deciding between what appeared to be equally valid this world options.

Occam's razor could be applied here. It could cut the wider scheme notion down to size and say that it is a delusion born out of the anxiety of choice. The delusion serves both to defend against such anxiety and to displace it into pseudo-ESP. Perhaps so; but once again that is not quite the way it *seems*.

It is interesting to note that the two worlds decision-principle particularly applies when I get into abundance motivation on the work front. And in terms of two worlds politics, this means that to be in a passive hierarchy of the second kind is to be a subject in the politics of abundance. It is both liberating and reassuring to be, by choice, politically subject in the midst of one's own creative excess.

## **5. Dimly felt presences**

Sometimes it is *as if* there are dimly felt persons or presences around in subtle space, yet also near at hand as it seems within physical space. They are not doing anything, or imparting anything, or seeking to intervene in any way from their world into this. They seem to be bearing witness, noticing, maybe systematically observing, or maybe discreetly lending silent support. What more can I say? Either they are there or they are not.

Suppose they are there. Then noticing them already starts to feel like being in a passive hierarchy of the second kind, even though they are not apparently seeking to exert any influence on my decisions or thinking. But to see them thus as potential hierarchs could be to misrepresent them.

For perhaps they are wanting dialogue, parity, reciprocity. Maybe they are tired of the role of active hierarch, however beneficent. Maybe that role is only a necessary consequence of human beings being unaware of them. But these are only speculations. They do not form part of any *as if* experience.

Dimly felt presences may, of course, just be projections of dissociated or unfulfilled bits of my own psyche. So I have to be careful, discriminating. I also have to allow for the fact that not all projections are *just* projections. For I may project a bit of my own psyche onto a presence in subtle space, just as I can onto another human being.

The fact that a psychological mechanism of projection is at work, does not of itself mean that there is no dimly felt presence. Indeed, if a presence is dimly felt, then this sensing of it is quite likely to trigger off the projection of some psychological material.

On a two worlds view, it is just as plausible to hold that a presence elicits a projection, as it is to hold that a projection explains away a presence.

## **6. Invisible healing episodes**

Sometimes I wake up in the night and for a second or two in that psi corridor between sleeping and waking I am aware that some persons are gathered around me in the other world ministering to my subtle body in the mode of healing. They are applying something to it, or injecting something into it, or doing some kind of psychic surgery, or administering energy. The glimpse is too brief for me to get a clear understanding of exactly what is going on. But unmistakably it is *as if* some therapeutic or medical event is afoot.

This is a healing passive hierarchy of the second kind. It is a surprising event, each time it happens. It is also agreeable and reassuring to be so cared for, even though the treatment is quite unsolicited and unexpected. I did not ask for it, and did not know I needed it. It seems as if someone is taking unilateral decisions about my welfare - yet it also seems as if I am giving my tacit consent.

The simple criterion for distinguishing this happening from a dream is that I am awake when I notice it. Only just awake, but still awake. Nor is it a recollected dream. Rather it has the urgency and immediacy of brief clairvoyance. Of course it could also be an hallucination induced by the anxiety of hypochondriasis. But the experience is too unusually matter of fact for this kind of reduction.

The treatment I receive in these healing episodes is not administered directly to the physical body. It seems, rather, to be applied to what I call the subtle matrix, the other worldly double out of which the physical body emerges. Nor am I aware of any particular physical affliction at the times when these treatments are given. They may relate to my stamina under severe stress.

## **7. From a long way away**

I frequently find myself staring at the physical horizon, the line between the physical earth and the physical heavens, *as if* I am also gazing into the subtle space of my own origins, a long way away in the other universe.

It is as if I am dimly aware of where I have come from in that other universe, and of those whom I have left there, and from whom I am now separated. And it is as if I have temporarily become a willing subject in a special hierarchy of the second kind, in which the active hierarchs are people I know very well indeed. There is a sense of profound, yet deeply hidden and occluded, intimacy.

And in relation to this group, it is as if I am my own hierarch too. As though there was and is a time and space and world in which we agreed and agree upon what I am about in this world.

## **8. Ritual hierarchies**

Ritual activity can create a very powerful experience *as if* one is in a dynamic passive hierarchy of the second kind, with energy and influence streaming from presences active in the other world.

I have participated in several kinds of ritual activity over the years, with different groups of practitioners of the craft. Without exception, these groups each had their

own version of a doctrine of communion with powers and presences in the other world, for purposes of introducing helpful and healing influences into human society.

All the different rituals used had certain basic components. There was the opening up of a protected subtle space within the physical space of the room being used: this was a psychic zone close to this world, a zone that once protected and energised could receive presences from more interior spaces, whose powers could then be sent forth on their facilitative mission.

There was the use of invocations and chanting, of movement and gesture, to create this working psychic zone, to fill and protect it with human energy, to invoke presences from the beyond, and to facilitate the emission of their power. Such work can create extraordinarily intense psychic and spiritual conditions.

I have conducted two formal pieces of research into altered states of consciousness, using the method of co-operative inquiry, both of which included elements of ritual activity, and I have written about these elsewhere. I also conducted a very informal inquiry with a small group of friends in London just a few years ago. And this merits a short report.

We composed an invocation of several stanzas, the whole not more than a page in length. It began 'Invisible friends and living people, open to adventure and inquiry, unbound by rigid rules and concepts, we invite your cooperation...' - and then went on to seek support and empowerment, from those in the other world and in this, for the creation of what we called a self-generating culture whose members would live intentionally in both worlds at once.

There were opening and closing procedures and between these a variety of motions, dances, chants and gestures. We did the ritual once a month.

We also met to discuss what impact the ritual seemed to be having, if any, upon the outer world - as evidenced by events and encounters which any one of us had experienced. This became a baffling and at times bizarre exercise in decoding ambiguities. If we believed that the ritual had some impact on the flux of social events, then it was reasonable to suppose that some of these events would come our way, and that they would have some bearing on our notion of a self-generating culture. But while events that came our way and that had such a bearing were easy enough to identify, how to pick out the ones specifically stirred up by the ritual?

It was like trying to chart the influence of an imperceptible wind, with no clear criteria to distinguish the signs of its passing. At our meetings, as we sifted through the different events that had any possible claim to be ritual-induced, we always had a sense that some of them had a valid claim, but were never really sure which. The task of specific discrimination was quite beyond us. We may also, of course, have been congenially deluded about the whole business. Yet it was impossible to get away from the sense that something was going on. An interesting sort of inquiry, to be sure.

## **9. Two world politics**

It seems to me there are a few basic political points - supported by some psychological and epistemological ones - to make about passive hierarchies of the second kind.

1. If there are active hierarchs in subtle space, then they have no claim to authority other than what my human autonomy chooses to confer upon them.

2. If there are passive hierarchies of the second kind, then any conscious involvement in them can be disabling and distracting unless I have an autonomous set of beliefs, norms and values in this world.
3. If there are passive hierarchies of the second kind, then discrimination, *inquiry* and unceasing vigilance, are wise when dealing with them.
4. The *as if* perspective is an important aid to this discrimination, together with the judicious growing of Heron's beard balanced with the proper application of Occam's razor.
5. Given all these caveats, then it is *as if* passive hierarchies of the second kind can be exciting, liberating, exhilarating, enriching autonomous human interests with wider dimensions and perspectives.

Many ancient societies, of course, have seen themselves as part of a passive hierarchy of the second kind, with the shaman, priest or priest-king as the intermediary between the human race and active hierarchs in the beyond. However these were societies with no concept of independent human inquiry, and with no grasp of personal and political autonomy. Hence they were frequently riddled with dogma and superstition, with conventionalism and political oppression.

There was a grasp of the two worlds reality of the human condition. But with no theory of knowledge, they lacked discrimination in handling two worlds ambiguity, and seemed to have little grasp of distorting refraction effects between the worlds (see Chapter 14). And with no sense of personal and political autonomy, they were too dependent on assumed guidance from the beyond. All this was ultimately their undoing.

A modern approach to passive hierarchies of the second kind calls for a great deal of inquiry into all aspects of interaction between social systems in the two worlds. I address some of the issues involved in such inquiry in the next section. There are also major political issues. For if you believe the accounts given of it in a great deal of occult literature, that there is benevolent autocracy of the most far-reaching kind going on in the relations between developed persons in the other world and people in this world. The discarnates are taking all kinds of complex and subtle decisions over humans for their welfare, but without any formal consent at all.

As long as human beings do not acknowledge the existence of the other world, and are unaware that a great deal of their psychological, social and moral stability may in fact depend upon the influence of its spiritual administrators, then there is no real alternative to the model of benevolent autocracy. But it does reduce our highly sophisticated modern societies to kindergarten status, when seen in the context of the great sweep of cosmic politics.

What happens, of course, if and when human beings do become properly aware of this discarnate influence, is an important and valid question. Will unseen beings of great moral and spiritual stature, and transcendental political acumen, seek the formal consent of earthly persons for the exercise of their overshadowing power? Or when we have beings of radically different attainment, on very different levels of existence, are there principles of hierarchy which simply override such democratic notions?

What is clear is that two worlds politics is a deeply interesting, entirely unacknowledged and unexplored field of study. It brings us face to face with the reality and dynamics of theocracy. If high-raised beings in the other world are in some sense commissioned by the divine to exercise subtle beneficent power over us, where does this leave our right, if there be one, to encounter the divine on our own terms and in

our own way, or through intermediaries of our own choice? Or to put it in another way, if God has a right to appoint guides over us when we are in ignorance of their work, does that theocratic right continue when we become aware of what they are doing?

There is a bizarre note of unreality about such questions. Is this simply because the whole language of political jurisprudence is quite inappropriate at this level of being? Or is it, rather, that at a deeply unconscious level we have become so conditioned to political impotence in the theocratic arena, that we are uncomfortable at the thought of claiming our rightful power?

## **10. Other world science**

Charles Tart wrote an important paper years ago (Tart, 1971) on what he called state-specific science. Special conditions attach to researching altered states of consciousness, because you have to enter the state to do the research, and that state may start to redefine what constitutes research into it. Thus research into the other world has certain other world protocols attached to it. I will discuss these as a set of issues.

*Initiation and inquiry.* The traditional approach to other world was authoritarian. It prescribed initiation through a set of procedures laid down from on high. The neophyte was guided on a hazardous journey into unfamiliar terrain, and required faith and dedication. The element of inquiry was always there in rudimentary form as watchfulness and discrimination. But in the last analysis the final court of appeal was established authority within the tradition - the high priest who was guided by the gods.

Fully-fledged inquiry is self-directed and is at odds with the benign authoritarianism of traditional initiation. Finding out what the other world is like is very different from being told or being shown. The former way be dangerous and the latter may be restricting. How to resolve this dilemma? The modern protocol, I believe, is that some element of initiation is wisely accepted. This proceeds not through a priestly hierarchy, but directly by psychic prompting from the subtle realms. This also has its own difficulties, mainly the validity of the prompting.

Some sort of map is also needed. In *Cosmic Psychology* (Heron, 1988), I distinguish between the realm of the recently deceased and the realm of presences and powers (similar to the lower and higher subtle realms in Grof, 1988). The latter is the domain of those with a mastery of the divine powers of creation. Prompting from presences of this order is characterised by a fiery energy that kindles the subtle body with its stimulating force, and is evidence that they are drawing near.

To enter the other world with enough thoroughness to inquire into it is to be presented with this basic geography, to differentiate between these two realms and to seek the prompting of the higher rather than the lower.

*World-transformation and inquiry.* This is a closely related point. Those in the realm of powers and presences have their own important agendas in relating to this world. These include clearing up past confusions, and preparing for the emergence of a new order of earthly life. When approached they will invite you to share this concern with them, so that what you initiate as an inquiry process may turn, through their influence, into a clearing or preparatory ritual. But some balance needs to be kept between these two kinds of claim. Too much inquiry and the other world is veiled off by excessive pedantry and caution. Too much ritual work in attunement to the risen, and an enervating lack of discrimination can occur.



*Basic data.* In the light of the former two points there are certain basic data that present themselves from the outset. They are the state-specific preconditions of other-world inquiry, its inalienable first fruits. (1) There are benign and powerful presences in a luminous world of their own. (2) When invoked they will signal their response with a rush of fiery psychic energy to the subtle body of the inquirer. (3) Their domain is other than, and transcendent to, the realm of the recently deceased. (4) They will initiate you by means of direct psychic prompting into paths and conditions for inquiry. (5) They have their own clearing and preparatory agendas which may cut across too much preoccupation you may have with inquiry as such. Already in these statements there are a mass of embedded inquiry issues.

*Attitudes of mind.* Approaching the other world involves certain fundamental attitudes. The first two seem to me to be aspiration and faith. Aspiration is a moving of the soul toward a more enriched awareness of what and who there is; an orientation of the will and the emotions toward a deeper acquaintance with the universe in all its modes. Faith is a buoyancy of belief that is sustained by hunches, intimations and intuitions which far transcend the inquirer's current range of experiential evidence. Without these twin supports the process of inquiry has little chance of taking off and being upheld.

The inquirer also needs a continuously discriminating awareness, the exercise of a subtle critical subjectivity, an inner alertness that makes appropriate distinctions and boundaries. This, in turn, is allied with self-determination, the commitment to find one's own way, to take in idiosyncratic journey, to create the inquiry out of personal imagination and ground it in personal experience.

The final pair of attitudes needed are the social ones of co-operation and confrontation. The inquirer needs to co-operate with peers at various stages of the inquiry. And in this context of co-operation, be willing to give and receive critical confrontation, by which I mean consciousness-raising feedback which helps to correct the delusions and aberrations that can beset purely personal experience.

*The cosmic and the mystical.* The other world resonates closely to its creator. An inquiry into the former will climax in an inquiry into the latter. Elevated souls in the realm of powers and presences carry with them an aura of divinity that potentizes the human inquirer with a zeal for the holy and the sacred. Aspiration and faith can take the inquirer to the very nub of personal experience: its source. It follows that there are two dynamically related poles of the inquiry. One is to do with the unseen universe and its inhabitants. The other is to do with the divine source of all that is, and centres on the fields of theology, and religious psychology.

*Thought becomes experience.* In ordinary inquiry it is appropriate to make a distinction between the poles of thought and experience. An ordinary state co-operative inquiry moves to and fro between immersion in relevant experience and reflection on it. The distinction starts to break down when inquiring into the other world. Thinking itself becomes a mode of experiencing the other reality. Changes of thought, like alchemical processes of the mind, become ways of entering the subtle domains. The inquirer starts to encounter and do energetic business with what he or she thinks about in this fashion. It is as if the experience emerges out of such transformations of thinking. The processes of reflection and experience converge upon each other.

*Declarative validity.* If other-world experience transcends and transforms the thought processes out of which it emerges, any subsequent reflection which is not at the same level of transcendence and transformation, is not going to be much use in generating

illuminating theory. So valid theory starts to merge into revelation. To put it crudely, you have to talk the language of the gods to show their existence. There is here a validity of declaration that has to be taken into account: a higher experience reveals its content validity through a transformation of the thought processes that led up to it. This idea has to be handled with care otherwise we get a return to archaic, traditional intuitionism, which was dogmatic and authoritarian. Yet it clearly has an important claim upon the inquirer who cannot depend solely on ordinary state notions of validity. Too much use of the declarative canon would become suspect and ungrounded, but no use of it at all would suggest that the inquirer is still earth-bound, plodding round the treadmill of falsification, corrective feedback and so on.

*Communion, declaration and communication.* Subtle presences contact humans primarily by communion. This is a felt intimacy of soul, a distinctive celebration of spiritual togetherness, mediated by a rush of refined energy that carries a strong, invigorating and exalting charge. Such communion *declares* the existence of an integrated group of presences inhabiting their own luminous domain, who manifest through fiery subtle energy which they can project as a transcendental embrace or inclusive field. It also declares that in some essential way I participate in their personhood and in their world, and that love is an ecstatic union without loss of personal distinction. The communion *declares* these basic ontological data, which I can translate into my own language, but it does not *communicate* anything. There is no use of any ordinary kind of language, any agreed set of symbols which convey information and which are transferred by signs or sounds from their minds to mine.

This distinction between declaration and communication is quite fundamental. Declaration, as I use the term, is the language of being. It is experienced through resonant communion with and participation in what there is in any dimension. It is grounded in the life of feeling. Declaration reveals a fundamental set of meanings about creation which is prior to and the foundation of any system of communication. And by communication I mean an exchange of symbols between persons by means of which they convey information to each other.

### 3. Visits to the other world

Among the most remarkable of two worlds phenomena are out of the body experiences (OOBEs), which have been widely reported in the literature on psychical research. A full-blown OOBE can scarcely be called ambiguous. It has too much the tang of action and intentionality about it to be properly classified as an *as if* experience. So I shall speak of it more directly.

#### 1. Going out

Years ago I lived in a remote cottage alone in the Isle of Man, and through the use of dietary control, ritual and meditation, I obtained for a period a measure of command over the process of going out of the physical body in the subtle body. I will describe the experience in the present tense, as if it is happening now.

I lie in bed, it does not matter in what position as long as I am very deeply relaxed both mentally and physically. I then imagine all the energy in my body being drawn to a central point around the area of the solar plexus: I consciously 'withdraw' energy from all the extremities and focus it, condense it, in this one place - which is really, of course, a subtle space within the physical body.

I must hold this conscious focus of energy in the subtle region of the solar plexus, without any distraction of attention to, or any 'leaking' back of energy to, the extremities. The challenge is to sustain the focus for a sufficient time, in a state that combines intense alertness with deep relaxation. The activity of consciousness is contracted to a central point, without drifting back to the limbs - which remain totally inert, dispossessed. Then, after a certain period of charging up, the process of going out begins.

Going out is a dramatic experience. There is a very powerful and very rapid spiral thrust of energy, an intense vortex of motion in subtle space, that hurtles my consciousness from the solar plexus region up to and out through my head. It is like being carried off in a rushing whirlwind.

There is no way this process can be confused with phantasy or delusion or anything of the sort. It is a vertiginous encounter with the profound reality of inner space. The potent vortex of subtle energy ruthlessly detaches me from the safe moorings of my physical body, and I surge into the world beyond.

Once this vortex has begun to whirl me out, the only thing that stops it is fear. If I fear the loss of control; if I am afraid of where I may go; if I am afraid that dubious powers and presences may be lurking about; then the vortex stops dead, instantly. To give way to any kind of fear is like throwing a switch that cuts the current in a trice, and I drop back immediately into ordinary physical awareness. See also Monroe (1972: 205).

The whole phenomenon occurs in subtle space which in some sense is within, interpenetrates, physical space. The subtle body loosens from its normal very close identification with the physical body and is whirled off into its own domain. It is not *as if* it is happening. It most very definitely is happening. Hence the considerable challenge of trusting the process, acceding to the drama, of not giving way to fear.

However, it is only on a small number of occasions that going out of the physical body has been under my voluntary control. On the greater number of occasions, it has just happened to me, always in bed on the borderline of sleep, with no conscious effort on my part at all. Quite unbidden, the whirling vortex suddenly starts to go: a remarkable phenomenon in which my only choice is whether or not to dissociate from fear and surrender to the process. I do not understand what factors precipitate this involuntary subtle travel. But I always welcome it - for the exhilaration and liberation it bestows.

## 2. Travelling to

Once I have transcended fear and surrendered to the powerful energy of the process, I am out of the physical body and start to travel. My experience of travelling to subtle domains has always been that of moving at very high speed, in something like a rushing energy wind, with all my subtle senses occluded so that I have no awareness of what sort of spaces I am travelling through. I only feel the presence, but have no perception, of those who are conducting me on the journey. While there is undoubtedly a sense of very rapid movement in another space, it is at the same time an experience of a subtle shift in consciousness.

Again, while there is a sense of the seriality of time, that is, of the flow of time from the past through the present to the future, it is a somewhat specious and contracted seriality. It is the polar opposite to the specious present of ordinary life. In everyday experience, the present moment seems to expand a bit to include some of the immediate past and future. In out of the body travel it's the opposite: the grand simultaneity of past, present and future seems to contract into an apparent bit of serial time - in order to accommodate the experience of travel. Well, that's about as close as I can get to it with words.

Nor, when travelling, is there any real sense of having a subtle body or vehicle. It is almost as if, for a brief time, I am doubly disembodied - no physical body, not much of a subtle body. I am definitely conducted, borne, carried almost, by persons unknown, in travelling to other domains. But I do not know why it occurs when my extrasensory awareness is so occluded; nor do I know how or why my guides, whose presence is unmistakable, nevertheless remain so totally imperceptible and unidentified.

In all instances of travel, I have had no control at all over where I go to. I am conducted in a direction chosen for me by beings veiled from me. This is a passive hierarchy of the *third* kind: it takes place entirely in subtle domains.

## 3. Subtle domains

The sense of arriving is that of reaching a certain level or grade of being. Extrasensory perception commences. My guides have entirely disappeared, and I have no idea where they have gone. I see an environment, and I am aware of my subtle body or vehicle. And I now become more cautious in my account.

It is *as if* my experience of the subtle domains is:

*Perceptual.* I see a whole range of things.

*Perspectival.* I have a viewpoint and see what I see from a certain position.

*Spatial.* What I see is distributed in space.

*Temporal.* Events in this space occur in temporal sequence.

*Objective.* What I see is out there in a world.

*Identifiable.* What I see are buildings, landscapes, vistas, persons.

*Intentional.* I can choose where I look and where I go - but only after I have arrived at the place to which I have been taken.

In all these respects, experience of a subtle domain is similar to experience of the physical world. But this list of similarities is a little misleading. For further exposure suggests that some of them, at any rate, are a contraction, a limiting case, of more expanded modes of encounter with the other world. In other words, you can choose to observe a subtle domain as you do this world, but that is not, as it were, the supernatural way to do it. For there are clearly critical respects in which the mode of apprehension is different:

*Manifold domains.* I have access to only one physical world set in just one constant band of energy frequencies, but I can access many different subtle domains, as if each has its own range of frequencies.

*Altered state domains.* Which subtle domain I enter is a function of my state of consciousness, so only when my awareness is altered to the energy frequency of a subtle domain can I enter it.

*Levity.* The subtle body appears to function more in the mode of levity, of lifting and lightness, than the physical body which functions in the mode of gravity, of sinking and heaviness; it is as if it is moved by expansive and centrifugal forces, rather than by contracting and centripetal forces.

*Inherent illumination.* It is as if phenomena perceived in a subtle domain are illuminated as much from within themselves, as if refracting internal light or as if compounded of light, as from without.

*Participation.* It is as if my consciousness participates much more fully with the energy that comprises a subtle domain than appears to be the case with my consciousness and the physical domain. I have liberating sense of my consciousness inhabiting, dwelling in, the subtle domain it perceives; or, to put it the other way, of the other world emerging out of and revealing the creativity of a consciousness of which I am part, but which is wider than the immediate focus of my awareness. So my consciousness participates with self-revealing exhilaration in the clarity, luminosity, various perceptual textures of what is perceived in a subtle domain.

It is as if I go where and when I think to go; as if thinking and intention as such can directly determine locomotion. Similarly, just concentrating and focussing my attention on something I see in the other world, will directly alter the structure and content of my perception of it - by bringing more of it and more perspectives of it into view.

More widely, it is as if my conceiving and imagining can directly influence, within limits that are not quite clear to me, the actual structure and content of my percepts. Subjective and objective, concepts and percepts, are much more overtly interwoven and interactive than is the case in physical perception, where the effect is largely limited to the perceptual constancies. In subtle domains, I *see* much more of what I *think*. I participate in a subjective-objective reality.

*Heterogeneity.* Perspectives on a subtle domain can become rapidly heterogeneous, with a quickly shifting, kaleidoscopic succession of different views, especially if the

seer's consciousness is undisciplined and untrained. If the *will* is inherently unstable, a subtle domain can tumble into awareness in a baffling array of variegated images.

In the undisciplined state, all sorts of different things appear. But the heterogeneity can manifest positively: when the will is disciplined and concentrating on one thing being perceived, then you may have a series of different perspectives of that same thing. It is as if the thing turns itself around for you, under the impact of your concentration; or as if your awareness is out there all around it, having simultaneous peripheral views that are somehow co-ordinated into a composite image. I discuss this more technically in section 4, chapter 7.

*Metamorphosis.* As I look at something in a subtle domain, it may change its form and appearance becoming a different shape. This, I think, reflects the more overt interaction between subjective and objective components of perception. In turn this generates a sort of perceptual *inconstancy*: the imagination of the seer is continuously varying the percept. So to look at something in the subtle mode is to participate in the continuous recreation of its mode of appearing. This does not mean there is nothing objectively there, but only that there is no set constancy in its mode of appearing to any subject. However, there may be deeper and subtler invariants that underlie all the differing modes of appearing. As in projective geometry: a figure retains certain invariant properties whatever the variations of projection and section. In chapters 7 and 10, I talk more about the geometry of inner space.

As with heterogeneity, there is both undisciplined and disciplined metamorphosis. If the seer's consciousness is untrained, then the changing percept may incorporate a lot of subjective distortion of the object. If the seer's consciousness is trained, then the seer's imaginative transformations of the percept may reveal more of the reality of the object. But this reality is a reality inseparable from its dialogue with that particular subject.

*Spatiotemporal extension.* In subtle domains, it looks as if there is no necessary restriction, as there apparently is in the physical world, to this point in space and time. In ordinary life, our perceptual experience is confined to here and here only in space, and now and now only in time. In psi perception in subtle domains, it is as if you can access both here and there at pretty well the same time. This follows from the heterogeneity of other world perspectives, getting different views of the same thing from different positions, and all this in the continuous present within which the same act of perception occurs. You are not dashing around looking at the thing from different angles in different acts of perception, but receiving different perspectives in one act of encompassing perception - as if the third eye can coordinate several simultaneous views from various points around the object, yielding many-faceted awareness of it. You don't have to psi-perceive in this way, because you can contract your vision into the single-perspective mode. But you can choose to do so. Also it can happen spontaneously and then be rather disorienting - if you are only familiar with physical unilateral perspectives.

I do not have enough experience to know whether in psi perception you can have access to all possible combinations of the basic spatiotemporal coordinates. For as well as being here now (the conventional physical coordinates), and being both here and there now, there is also: being here then (in the past or the future); being here now and here then; being here now and there then; being here then and there now; and so on and so on. The combinations are too numerous, and baffling, to list.

Philosophically, what seems clear enough is that our experience needs to be cast in spatiotemporal form for us to have a proper sense of encounter with subtle domains. What is not so clear is whether in principle there need be any restriction to only one or two coordinate sets for us to have a proper sense of this that or any other world. Maybe one reason we don't notice subtle domains is because we haven't practised thinking of a world out there beyond the restricted here-now focus of physical perception. In section 8 of chapter 11, I suggest a model of transcendental or subtle time whose expansive structure is the polar complement to the serial restriction of physical time.

The points I am less clear about above are those to do with heterogeneity, metamorphosis and spatiotemporal extension. I am much more sure about the previous five points - manifold domains, altered states, levity, inherent illumination, participation. And certainly as a beginner on early visits to subtle domains, I encountered a relatively constant environment, perceived in a relatively conventional mode.

So I have found myself kneeling on what seemed like sand, running the sand between my fingers and marvelling at the way it had what I can only call the texture of consciousness.

I have found myself passing a long, large building, then appearing suddenly in one of its rooms, which was a child's room, with unusually interesting sorts of toys on a table top. After a short period, a female figure in something like nurses' clothes came in, with an expression of surprise and pleasure on seeing me.

I once had an enormous sense of elevation in the travel, and a related shift of consciousness toward great subtlety of being, and found myself in a high frequency domain that also seemed to be a long way physically from the earth. I looked out over a vastly spacious and exalted perspective of 'water', 'sky', 'mountains' - an immense spread of 'landscape' echoing with ineffability.

*Interconnectedness.* I have written above of 'things' and 'objects' in subtle domains as if they had the discrete, separate and physically alienated status of material objects in everyday life. But this is misleading. The whole notion of a thing as we understand it is not quite right for characterising what is encountered in the other world. For there I am aware of the interconnectedness of phenomena: they are brilliant differentiations within a common field or ground of being and consciousness. And paradoxically, their distinctness and uniqueness of being is enhanced by their corporate resonance within the unifying field. Once again, this kind of account does not quite get to the heart of the matter, but it is as near as I can get.

#### **4. Between the worlds**

Sometimes when I am out of the body it is *as if* I am in the subtle space 'next' to the physical world, looking at it with psi vision. But this clairvoyant view of the everyday world is never quite like the ordinary view of it. Either psi vision gives a different account of physical phenomena than physical vision; or looking from a more rarefied medium into a more dense medium causes some distortion to objects in the latter - analogous to the laws of refraction in simple physics; or I'm looking at the subtle matrix or double of the scene.

Thus once in the Isle of Man, I was out of the body up above the cottage where my physical body was sleeping. I recognised the cottage and the fields behind it and the stone walls, yet the whole configuration looked too psi, too other-worldly, as if it had

been repainted or redesigned in a somewhat idealised form with much of the detail and the lay-out wrong.

So while there was nothing ambiguous about being out of the body, there was considerable ambiguity about the status of what I was looking at. Was it the physical world as such, even if distorted by my vision of it? Or was it a subtle double of the physical world? Or something else?

A year or two ago, I had a striking experience of this double ambiguity. My physical body was in bed in the early hours of the morning in London. It was *as if* I was out of the body in another kind of space but very like physical space. I was floating just above ground level, attending very precisely to the shifting perspective, noting on my right side how things nearer to me moved in relation to things further away from me as I went forward. I kept checking this, thinking at the time that the relative shifts were just like those which occur when moving in physical space, although I knew this wasn't physical space as ordinarily experienced.

I was in a kind of forecourt which I recognised as the forecourt of Redhill railway station, a few miles south of London, which I had not visited for many years. Now this recognition was baffling, because the forecourt was certainly not identical with the forecourt I remembered from my last physical visit. But the recognition was a real remembrance of the Redhill I had previously known. It was more than just being strongly reminded of Redhill while still knowing the place to be somewhere different.

I was *as if* I was moving south toward the exit of the forecourt, looking intently at the buildings on my right as I moved. They were one or two storey bric-a-brac-like buildings, crowded together, with chimney pots and other small structures cluttering their roofs. It was the changing spatial relations of these pots (further away) and structures (nearer) that I was studying as I moved along. It was quietly exhilarating to feel my effortless movement combined with the sense of spatial coherence and lucidity.

Some way ahead of me on the horizon in the middle distance and slightly to my right I saw two tall buildings like elegant high-rise apartment blocks, each about twenty storeys high. I remember thinking that to my recollection Redhill had no such buildings in that sort of location. A short way ahead of me, slightly to my left and inside the forecourt, was a small group of three or four people standing and talking. I then became aware of a presence seemingly following me at a constant few paces behind and slightly to the left. This made me feel nervous and I wondered whether the presence was benign or not. The anxiety made me turn round to have a look.

I saw a male figure and really only noticed the face. It was long and thin and had a pointed jaw. I noted particularly that the jaw and lips, which were smiling, appeared to be made of rough-cast concrete filled with sand-coloured small pebbles. This alarmed me, I felt frightened, and immediately switched back into ordinary consciousness, awake in my bed.

Now what sort of explanation is to be given of this experience? I will consider a number of possibilities.

*An ordinary dream.* What differentiated the experience from an ordinary dream was the sense of clarity, control and intentionality in perceiving the given environment, in moving through it and taking spatial bearings within it. It was simply that I was functioning as a fully purposive and intelligent person in an unusually lucid setting - which was both objective and yet more intimate to consciousness than the physical world appears to be. I was awarely encountering a place, not dreaming of it.



Only the pebble-dash concrete face at the very end was more like the stuff of dreams: indeed, like the nightmare image of a bad dream. And this could have been a projected image of my fear catching up with me. But for the most part the ordinary dream hypothesis I reject, for the reasons given.

*A lucid dream.* A lucid dream is a fully ambiguous experience: it hovers on the interface between an ordinary dream and an out of the body experience. The events, persons and story line have something of the bizarre quality of ordinary dreams - there is an improbability about what is going on. On the other hand, it is as if I the dreamer am conscious and purposive, as if my perceptions have the coherence and lucidity of an objective environment.

The dream-like improbability can stem from the fact that the unusual event going on in the dream - often to do with levitating, flying, floating in the air - seems to be going on in the physical world. So I am dreaming that my physical body is floating in a physical environment. Whereas in an out of the body experience, I am conscious of functioning purposefully in a non-physical vehicle, a subtle body, of some kind - and this was so in the Redhill out of the body experience.

My own view of a lucid dream is that it is what it seems to be, a mix up between dreaming and being out of the body, as if the waking recollection of being out of the body gets distorted by dream material and recast as a phantastic in-the-body event. This did not apply to the Redhill experience.

*A subtle domain.* The out of the body experience was nothing to do with Redhill or any other physical town. I was visiting an independent subtle domain and town which simply reminded me of Redhill. This is certainly possible. But I still want to discount it, for the experience seemed more authentically one of recognition than of mistaken identity. And this sense of recognition persisted even when what I saw didn't seem to match up properly with what I knew of Redhill - a baffling kind of recognition since it survived partial claims to mistaken identity.

You may say that this persistence of mine in seeing the town as Redhill was just a defence: a way of reducing my insecurity in the other world by assimilating a subtle town to a familiar physical town. But I have not noticed any such defensive tendency at work when I have clearly been in independent other world places. On the contrary, I am interested and fascinated rather than defensive. Also the way of looking, so clearly like the unilateral views of physical vision, suggests that my clairvoyance was contracting itself to the claims of a physical environment.

*A subtle counterpart.* I was visiting a subtle double of Redhill: Redhill as it is reflected in subtle form in the other world - not perhaps an identical reflection, but one with significant correlations of form and lay-out. And this subtle counterpart is somehow close to, overlays or interpenetrates, the physical town. Redhill is in physical space in physical form; and Redhill is manifest in subtle space, but in distinctively subtle form, which is in some respects similar to, and in other respects different from, the physical form.

This is plausible from the point of view of the actual out of the body experience. It explains the baffling kind of recognition; and at the same time, the feeling of being in subtle space and looking at another world environment with its special intimacy to consciousness. I am not sure it explains the contraction of my clairvoyance to the form of ordinary perception.

*A subtle view of physical space.* My final hypothesis is that I was in my subtle body in the subtle space interpenetrating the physical Redhill, but looking directly at or into the physical Redhill. And that this was like looking from a more refined medium at something in a more gross medium, with the result that the psi perception of the physical Redhill underwent certain characteristic distortions. In order to check on this, and compare exactly how my out of the body experience of Redhill fitted with the physical present-day Redhill, I took a train to Redhill the day after the experience.

I arrived at 2.15 pm. I hadn't visited the place for many years. A lot had changed. The old buildings on the edge of the forecourt opposite the station exit had been demolished and a new road put there. On the other side of that road there was a large construction site with a new shopping centre or some such just starting to appear in the middle of the site. I walked to the north end of the forecourt and into the car park behind it, and then moved south toward the exit of the forecourt, in a line like the one I took in my out of the body visit.

My out of the body view was somewhat confirmed. As I moved south and looked to my right, there immediately on the other side of the new road were a crowded mixture of one or two storey site cabins of the construction company. Behind them in my line of vision were the roofs and chimney pots of buildings on Station Road.

So the site cabins could have been the bric-a-brac-like buildings whose structures moved relative to the chimney pots behind them, and relative to my forward movement, as in the out of the body view. Furthermore, on rising ground in the middle distance was a high-rise twelve storey apartment block in two vertical parts divided by a deep, shaded recess. This could have readily been misperceived in my out of the body view as two separate blocks. However, this double block was not ahead of me and only slightly to my right as I had seen it in my out of the body experience: rather it was fully to my right, due west instead of south-west.

There were other features of the physical body view that seemed to disconfirm the subtle view. Next to the site cabins, beside the new construction work, was the old five storey, rather bulky Surrey Mirror building. This very obvious large structure had not appeared at all in my subtle view, yet it was physically in a place where it certainly should have done so. And there were six very tall cranes on the construction site; and two of these at least should have been right in the middle of the subtle view.

Then there is the problem of illumination. To my out of the body vision the scene had been clearly delineated as in full daylight. Yet my out of the body visit must have been during the night or at the very first hint of dawn. And the group of people in the subtle view were of the day rather than of the night.

The only way to save the hypothesis that in my out of the body visit I was getting clairvoyant perspectives of the physical Redhill - would be to suppose that when you take an out of the body look from subtle space into the physical world, certain systematic distortions of your clairvoyance can occur, as follows:

*Idealization.* Physical forms may appear to be rather more elegant and refined than they actually are when physically viewed: they undergo distortion in the direction of idealisation and simplification.

*Distortion of orientation.* Physical distance and direction are distorted: to subtle view, things in the physical foreground may seem nearer than they actually are, and things in the physical background may seem further away; and the physical direction of something can be out by several degrees of arc in the subtle view.

*Piecemeal perception.* The subtle view of physical space can be patchy and selective: some things are seen and others not at all. There is no comprehensive panoramic sweep as in physical vision. The subtle view is more blinkered, more tunnel-like. You get a restricted perspective on what you focus your attention on. The perceptions are piecemeal. Some things you simply don't notice.

*Temporal shift.* The subtle view of physical space may undergo a temporal shift: it may be displaced by several hours (or days or months?) from the clock time of ordinary physical life.

Such distortions could be a function of at least four things: difference of density between the subtle domain and the physical domain (similar to being in the air and looking at something submerged in water); difference of spatiotemporal gearing between the subtle domain and the physical domain; psychological interference from both emotional and cognitive material; lack of skill and practice in taking a subtle view of the physical.

And it also may be that when clairvoyance contracts into the single perspective mode typical of physical vision, in order to peer at physical environments from subtle space, it actually becomes less proficient than physical vision itself. I doubt that there is any real need for it to contract like this. And later on (section 13, chapter 7) I consider more expansive ways of taking a subtle view of the physical world.

I don't really know how to choose between the hypotheses of the subtle view of a subtle Redhill, and a subtle view of the physical Redhill - except to say that I find the first a bit odd, and temperamentally prefer the second, even though it seems to be more complicated intellectually to make it stand up.

## **5. A lucid dream**

I have mentioned the lucid dream experience in the previous section. I will now give an example of its systematic ambiguity, of how it seems to be an out of the body experience in dream disguise. The supposition of this account of a lucid dream is that the dreamer has had a real out of the body experience in the subtle body, but recollects it as a dream of, say, levitating or flying in the physical body. So it is *as if* I was dreaming - but really I wasn't, I was having an out of the body experience. A sort of reverse ambiguity.

The following lucid dream occurred about two years ago. I was, in the dream, with a waking life friend and colleague, William, in a men's consciousness raising group, in a large stone built room. There was a break in the proceedings, during which we were all seated on the floor around the sides of the room, leaning our backs against the walls. I invited William to stand and I placed my right cheek against his right cheek. He responded with warmth and we held each other in a light embrace. Then I started to move and we engaged in a slow, very elegant dance - to our own and everyone else's delight.

As we danced, we slowly levitated together above the heads of the other people. It was a tall room and we moved magically, floating just below the ceiling. With my left hand I reached up and touched the ceiling lightly, propelling us across the room. The men in the room were stunned. Two or three of them, especially one tall man, became very agitated, saying that we should stop immediately, that what we were doing was dangerous, alarming. I pacified them and asked them just to accept and

witness what was going on. They did so. My recollection of the dream fades with William and me still in the air, and the men looking on.

The criteria for this being a covert out of the body experience are: the clarity of awareness; the purposive and intentional nature of the action; the experience of levity and liberation in the movement. The criteria for this being a dream are: the experience was cast as if it all occurred in physical bodies in a physical setting; the bizarre and improbable 'event' of physical levitation; a certain wish-fulfilment flavour of the happenings.

Two questions remain. If it really was an out of the body experience, what was actually going on, what was the true event which was veiled by the disguise of the dream? Why does an out of the body experience get disguised as a dream ?

In relation to the first question, it could have been that William and I were actually meeting in our subtle bodies, engaging in some kind of work in the other world that reflected back on issues of men's liberation in this world, and finding the co-operative endeavour very harmonious and agreeable. In relation to the second question, this sort of subtle work might have stirred up a certain amount of psychological material about men's issues which wrapped itself as dream imagery around the out of the body recollection. But the possibility that real out of the body experiences can be veiled in this way suggests something more.

## **6. A double identity?**

If a conscious and purposive out of the body experience can be partially occluded by dream imagery, there is the possibility that it can be totally obscured by a dream in which the latent out of the body content is simply not noticed by the person recollecting the dream. Or the possibility that such an out of the body experience is not represented in any form, explicit or implicit, to the waking mind.

In which case, a person could have a double identity, being conscious and purposive in the physical world during ordinary waking life; being conscious and purposive in the subtle world while the physical body is asleep; but the existence and identity of the subtle self being quite occluded from the ordinary self, by some physiological and/or psychological mechanism. This is a curious possibility, but it could be the case.

## **7. Near death experience**

I have not had this experience since I have not been near death at any time in my life, but there is nowadays quite extensive literature and research on near death experiences (Moody, 1977; Noyes, 1980; Ring, 1984). People who have nearly died physically, but have revived or have been clinically resuscitated, have reported in detail on out of the body experiences. They find themselves in a subtle body in the other world.

There are certain common features of these experiences: the tunnel-like exit from the physical body and physical world; the review of life events; being received by some kind of mentor or counsellor; an assessment of learning from the life just lived; the feeling of levity and exhilaration in the new environment. People are more and more overcoming the cultural repression of owning and talking about experiences of the other world, and coming out into the open about such things.

## **8. Returning**

After an out of the body experience, I undergo the experience of returning to the physical body. This is like a falling away, a dropping out of subtle space, a draining and drawing back of energy into the physical body. It is also like coming back down a rather narrow cone. There are two minor hazards about this return.

Occasionally there is a slight fear about getting back. This is a fear that the return energy route might be blocked by someone or something; or even permanently severed thus precipitating a disturbing kind of premature death. But I have found this to be only a minor fear, one that is just noticed in passing. It never has had the effect of actually inhibiting or interrupting the return, in the way that the fear of going out can pull one instantly back into the physical body.

The other and more noticeable hazard which has occurred to me several times is that I get back into the body and find it paralytic - I am unable to move it. When this happens it seems to take some seconds before I can reassert command and infiltrate my will into the muscles and nerves. Sometimes a flicker of fear accompanies this experience, but I usually brush it aside and get on with the business of taking charge of the motor cortex again.

It is interesting that the body goes so totally cataleptic when one is out of it. But after I return to it, get up from the bed and go about my daily business, it invariably feels subtly refreshed, sweetly attuned, its tissues somehow liberated - as if it carries within it the levity of the subtle body. It seems that going out of the body is good for you, regenerating and invigorating at the level of subtle energy.

## **9. The subtle matrix and the subtle body**

At several points in this book I make a distinction between the subtle matrix and the subtle body (see especially section 6, chapter 7). It is clearly relevant to the mechanism of out of the body experiences. The subtle matrix, which is the generative and supportive field of the physical body, continues to sustain life while the subtle body is on its travels in the other world.

In order to practise going out of the body, the subtle body needs to become sufficiently developed to become an independent vehicle for consciousness, intention and perception. In the past I have done this by diet, ritual, meditation and by the use of those twin keys of the adept - imagination and will.

Once the subtle body is built up enough, then the practitioner needs to acquire the knack of creating a temporary separation of the subtle body from the subtle matrix - within which it is normally embedded. I described my simple but demanding technique in the opening section of this chapter. There are other techniques, and various manuals on the subject recount them.

Then I think you need some friends and helpers in the other world, who will generally supervise and facilitate the going out and the travel. It is a vast and multidimensional place out there, and competent presences who know the lay of the land are an invaluable resource.

## **10. Towards a science of consciousness**

Hegel called Descartes the father of modern philosophy. This is so, but he is rather more than that. He is the primary author of our ordinary everyday way of perceiving the world. He created the conceptual framework for the development of modern sci-

ence by dividing the world into the independent substances of matter and mind. Matter only has the property of extension in space, and has no mind; and mind only has the property of thinking, and has no extension.

Within this framework, science could get on with quantifying an external reality conceived only as a self-contained mechanical system of matter in motion in space. By the time science had dominated the world with its achievements, Cartesian duality had permeated general culture so that it became part and parcel of everybody's way of looking at things. While Cartesian philosophy has been long since abandoned as a philosophy, it stills lives powerfully today as a conceptual framework embedded in the very act of perceiving the world.

We see the world out there extended in a single universal space, a space which has nothing to do with mind or consciousness, and we as observers are private and limited centres of consciousness looking out on this space. Now let us turn this conceptual framework inside out and replace Cartesian duality with a non-Cartesian unity.

Let us suppose that instead of each of us being a limited consciousness in a non-mental universal space, each of us is a limited mental space in a universal spatial consciousness. So that, instead of there being one non-mental space and many different non-spatial consciousnesses, there are many mental spaces in one universal spatial consciousness. On this view, universal space is a form of universal consciousness, and each individual mind is a restricted spatial locus within it. The Cartesian duality between space and mind is overcome, and the individual mind is a spatial set within universal mind.

Individual experience is always spatial in form and as such is a local and limited aspect within the space of universal consciousness. And because there are several quite distinct modalities of human experience, a person is a set of interconnected classes of mental spaces of different sorts. There is the (1) class of sense perceptions, (2) the class of mental introspections, (3) the class of extrasensory perceptions, and (4) the class of dreams. These four classes of experience overlap, although not totally otherwise they would be identical. Each has a distinctive body or sheath, and each has a spatial form: the first has the form of physical space, the third the form of subtle space; the second and fourth are half-way houses, staging posts between the other two. I recount now an experience of moving between all these four spaces, and it includes a curious confusion at one stage between two of them.

I was lying bed after dawn, awake with my eyes closed and in introspective space within a background context of physical space. I was mentally intoning a mantra and kept it going for quite a long while. Then I fell asleep and was in dreaming space: I was in a house with a friend who was lying in bed waiting for me to serve a sweetmeat I was preparing in the kitchen. I realised the house belonged to someone else and we were borrowing it or renting it. I heard a neighbour come in with a child.

Next I suddenly found myself busy with extrasensory perception in subtle space. I was clearly out of the physical body in a subtle body and on a branch looking down onto an irregular pyramidal shaped mound or stone in an open stretch of sand in some subtle domain. I was about ten feet above the small mound which was only a few inches high and square, and willed myself to go onto the sand and examine the mound close up. I was then kneeling on the sand in front of the mound and I stretched out my arms to let my hands go through the sand and enjoy its subtle texture. I thought to

myself that I would not look up because the extent of the horizon might alarm me and interrupt the experience.

Then I started to fear, in introspective space, that I was getting so absorbed in this subtle environment that I was getting totally dissociated from my physical body. Strangely - and this is the curious error - I thought of it lying in the borrowed house *in the dream* and feared that someone might disturb or damage it. I was also afraid I would get so thoroughly dissociated from my physical body that I would never be able to find my way back to it. So I started to will myself back with a faint nervous uncertainty about being able to do it, but I managed it quite quickly and found myself in my actual bed in physical space.

Note that I go from introspective space within physical space to dream space to subtle space then back to physical space; and that introspective space is also present within both dream space and subtle space. In dream space, introspective space does not know it is within dream space; and in subtle space introspection mistakes the recently vacated dream space for physical space, but is quite clear that subtle space is what it is, that is, neither physical nor dream nor introspective space.

Figure 3.1 shows a possible route somewhat similar to mine. It goes from being awake in physical space to the introspective space in bed before sleep, thence into dream space. Next it assumes there is some sort of passage from the introspective space that is within dream space out into subtle space. And from the introspective space within subtle space there is a direct route back into physical space, as when I became anxious and willed myself back. The subtle space here is equivalent to the four dimensional matrix shown in Figure 10.1 at the end of Chapter 10.

The rogue space is dream space, since you don't know you are in it while you are in it, but only after you wake up in physical space. But 'waking up' in subtle space does not necessarily guarantee that you will realize that the dream space you have just come from was, in fact, dream space and not physical space. In section 5 above, I mentioned the reverse problem, in which you can't recall that you have been in subtle space and translate the experience into a recollected dream.

There is some important learning in all this. It suggests that there is an art, a skill, in moving between these four mental spaces; that there are different routes and journeys you can take, with different techniques of passage from one to the other; and that it needs some practice to know what you are about and not get confused. Since dream space is perhaps a central locus of confusion, one basic preparatory technique may be to learn to dream consciously, so you know you are in dream space while you are in it. A variety of methods are available for acquiring this competence (LaBerge, 1985).

The class of introspections is of special interest. It is a movable class. It interpenetrates whatever body a person is conscious in: the physical body, the dream body, the subtle body. To say that it interpenetrates one of these bodies, is to say that it is in a local field within and around that body and transcending it in terms of energy and frequency. In itself it includes different energies and frequencies: thus the introspections that interpenetrate the physical body include after-images and idio-retinal lights, desires, emotions, thoughts, images and intuitions.

The introspective body, if we may call it that, is the most subtle sheath despite its sometimes gross mental occupants. These occupants can alter their frequencies in order to operate within and transcend whatever other body it is within. The introspective body pure and simple, unsullied by gross mental occupants, is the soul

body. It talks naturally to its immanent divine source; and is open to indwell the many spatial forms of universal consciousness, each of which clothes the soul in an appropriate body or lens or viewpoint or knowing sheath. It then retains its distinctness of being while participating in the wider reaches of cosmic reality.

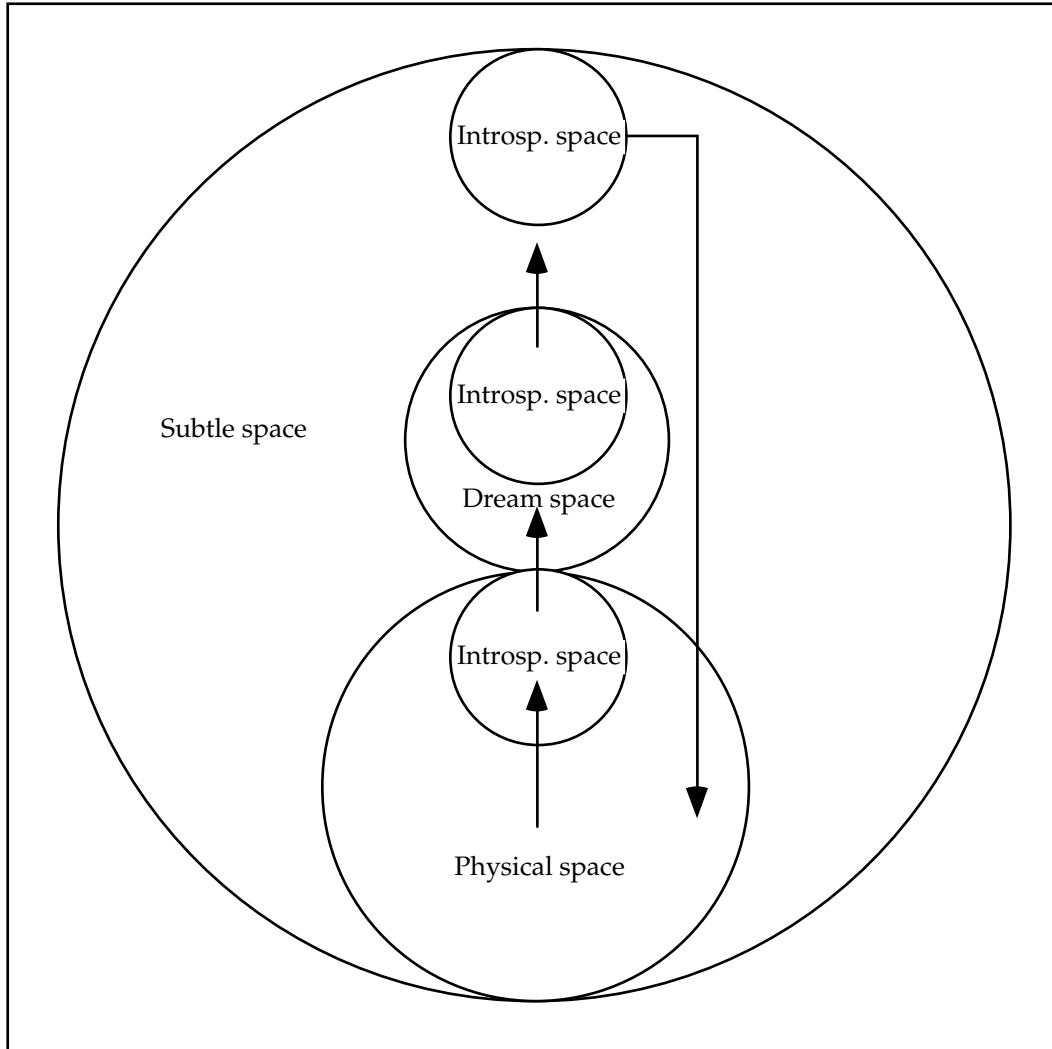


Figure 3.1 *A journey through the four spatial forms of consciousness*



## 4. Openings between the worlds

My experiences of openings between this world and the other are mixed: some are very ambiguous, very much *as if*; others much less so. By an opening I mean a situation in this world which seems to provide special access to the other.

### 1. The horizon

When I look at the physical horizon - the actual zone in my visual field between the earth and the sky - it is *as if* my awareness goes through that area of physical space and extends into far-reaching akasha, the other universe within and beyond this one. What I apprehend in this way is inchoate, unfocussed, vague, but unmistakable in its subtle expansive effect on consciousness.

I notice the effect anywhere, but especially on tropical or sub-tropical beaches - Sri Lanka, Bali, Yucatan - when I am standing at the water's edge looking out to the horizon between sea and sky. And sometimes in such a setting, the effect is particularly potent in one quite precise direction.

Thus standing once on the north coast of Yucatan, I could pivot round slowly on the same spot on the beach, with my right forearm and hand projecting out horizontally from my body, and locate precisely the compass bearing of the most potent other world opening on the horizon.

What opens up at such a point is the awareness of a vastly expansive inner space, a subtle universe porous to consciousness, that provides the backdrop, the ground, the potent support of the material universe. It is not simply a matter of looking out into physical space, but of finding a 'gap' at the horizon in which awareness encounters its own kind of luminous interior extension. 'Interior' not in the sense of being subjective and private, but in the sense of being within, behind and beyond the whole panorama of the visible world.

I do not know why tropical beaches favour this experience more than other places. It may be some romantic association that aids the effect. I may be more relaxed and open, and physically warm. It may be something to do with the actual structure of inner and outer space in these areas of the earth.

One hypothesis I have about this effect, whether it occurs in the tropics or anywhere else, is that when you look at the horizon, you are looking along a line and a plane tangential to the earth. Let us suppose that tangent planes in physical space correspond to zones of influence of formative fields in akashic space; and that such fields support physical forms. Thus when you look along a tangent plane to the earth, you can more readily access the earth's formative field and its remote origins in subtle space. This, of course, is pure speculation. It is the experience itself that is most interesting.

### 2. Between sleeping and waking

This is a well known gap between the worlds. It is a psychological and physiological aperture. The mind and body are relaxed, the autonomic nervous system in the parasympathetic mode. Between the normally unconscious state of sleep and the ordi-

nary conscious waking state there can be access to altered states and subtle domains, either by clairvoyance and clairaudience, or through out of the body experiences.

I have commented on out of the body experiences in the previous chapter. Here I will consider briefly the unbidden clairvoyance that can occur between sleeping and waking. It is *as if* a subtle kind of seeing temporarily breaks through into my ordinary consciousness and I glimpse a landscape or, more rarely, a face. Sudden vistas of the other world appear, scintillating with clarity. It is as though the brain can for a moment or two respond to a much higher frequency of perception than sense perception. Janus facing out, while dozing off, suddenly and surprisingly yields to Janus facing in. But the subtle seeing is usually rapidly lost, blotted out by the normal more gross processes of the nervous system.

The blotting out occurs by a quick defensive shock reaction from the neurones, as though a part of the brain itself is very rapidly flicking the psi switch to the off position. It is frustrating that I find this immediate shut-down quite uncontrollable. I stand helplessly by while some cortical tyrant goes about his repressive censorship, at the nub of which I feel there is a habitually congealed fear of being overwhelmed by psi.

It is odd to be so sundered; to be so clearly wanting the spontaneous subtle seeing to continue, and at the same time to be dominated by a sector of the psycho-physical system that finds it intolerable. I know of no internal conflict quite like it. The Janus-brain is caught out, divided against itself. Its constitutional imbalance is exposed. The part that faces out towards ordinary life has an oppressive intolerance of the part that faces inwards to the other world. But this reflex intolerance can, in other circumstances, be overcome.

For the neural censorship does not occur when, in a fully conscious waking state, I gently and gradually open up clairvoyant perception by specific exercise (section 5, chapter 5). Then I can often sustain the inner seeing for some time. Yet I must own that such carefully cultivated clairvoyance does not have the sharp clarity of the spontaneous episodes between sleeping and waking. It is the sheer brilliance of these episodes, their unbidden nature, and the fact that I am totally passive and unprepared when they occur, that puts me face to face with subtle repressive fear.

The source of the fear is not clear to me. I do not know whether it is some innate biologically programmed defence, built in to ensure that my brain attends to the issues of coping with this world and is not distracted by a bewildering mass of extrasensory perception from the beyond. In this case, Janus facing out is hedged around with automatic switches that immediately interrupt any relays from Janus facing in.

Or it may be a psychological defence mechanism I have acquired as a child - who learnt very early to repress psi because of its social unacceptability. Or it may simply be that learning a language causes a denial of psi, because the concepts and belief-systems that come with mastery of language have no room for it. Maybe the reflex fear comes from a mixture of all three of these. It would be good to be clearer about its origins, in order to get some control over it.

What I see at these breakthrough moments is usually very pleasing and exhilarating: often trees and treescapes, brilliant in clarity and colour, as if I am looking up at them in the near or middle distance, in some other space; sometimes trees in blossom; sometimes landscapes clearly etched against a bold horizon; sometimes flights of

birds winging in inner space way above me; occasionally a kindly face; and rarely an ugly face.

There is no ambiguity about having a spontaneous, clear and coloured visual image of an identifiable sort. The ambiguity attaches to the status of this image. Is it a very vivid bit of projected imagination, entirely subjective in origin? Is it an hallucination - conjured up by some mental and physical processes not yet understood, but again purely subjective? Is it clairvoyance having reference to a subtle domain that has objective content?

Is it an imparted visual symbol - popped into the mind by mentors in the other world in order to convey some message or meaning - but not an actual percept of anything? Or is it clairvoyance of an actual subtle scene, that is also doubling up as a symbolic message? Or is it an archetypal image, suddenly washed up on the shores of the conscious mind from the collective unconscious?

If I am true to the experience, I would simply say that I am seeing something out there in a real kind of space, akashic space. It is the shocking impact of this space and its contents on the Janus-out brain that clearly differentiates it from the subjective space of dreams and imagination - with which Janus facing out has no such difficulty.

The shock is not because of some powerful personal message being imparted to me symbolically. It is simply the shock of the suddenly realised fact, intrinsically conveyed by the experience, that there is a whole brilliant other world in, up or out, there. When I unexpectedly encounter this other world in all its fullness, my dominant neurones just cannot take it.

The sceptic may ask how I know it is a *world*. My simple answer is that worlds, like persons, are what we meet. We know of their existence through the relation of encounter. The reality is in this relation. The knowledge is experiential, by acquaintance.

The other possibility I have not mentioned is that the extrasensory perception is not of some scene in another dimension, but of a physical tree or landscape - I am seeing something in this world, but at a distance, without the use of the senses. This does not apply in my case because what I see meets all the distinctive criteria for extrasensory perception of the other world: the clarity and brilliance; the inherent illumination; the unusual and distinctive form of things (surprisingly not quite like their physical counterparts); the sense of intimacy to consciousness of the space combined with the essential otherness of its contents; the exhilarating expansion of awareness intrinsic to the space.

One final point. I can go out of the body and see a subtle realm by visiting it. Or I can see it simply while lying in bed on the conscious side of sleep. Since these are so very different, one must assume that the latter is clairvoyance at a subtle distance, analogous to clairvoyance of the physical world at a distance. In neither case does the experience as such give any obvious indication of the mechanism by which it occurs.

### **3. The sun**

It is painful for the physical eyes to look directly at the sun. Once I sat on the edge of a wood in Emmsland in West Germany, looking out over a field that rose gently toward a near horizon, above which shone the afternoon sun. I was sitting in the sunlight, facing the sun, and wearing a peaked cap pulled down to keep my eyes in

the shade. I turned my *eyes* down to look at the field in front of me and focussed my *attention* upwards on the sun in the sky.

Attending directly to the sun in this way, I notice how powerfully and immediately it provides my consciousness with an opening onto inner space. It is *as if* there is a subtle sun within the physical sun. The sun within is luminous in akashic space and this luminosity commands a vast area of the subtle universe. The inner sun is sounding all the time, giving off a note, a comprehensive tone. And it is itself emerging out of deeper layers of inner space, as if through it the consciousness of these domains is being converted into energy.

The prevailing world view of course has it that the sun is just a ball of fire moving around in the physical space of our galaxy. One way for anyone to challenge the 'just a ball of fire' view, is to do my Emmisland exercise on a day when the sun is out and it is warm but not excessively hot. As you focus your attention on the sun, go right into its fiery heart in your imagination. Then expand and magnify the contents of that imagery until you start to notice the *space within, beyond and behind the fire*.

The subtle sun teaches me that consciousness is one and omnipresent, informing manifold dimensions of space and energy. It is an illusory appearance only, that my consciousness is somehow restricted to my subjective experience, and to my physical perspective here and now where my body is. I can learn progressively to expand my awareness and to attune it more and more to the one consciousness everywhere and its diverse, subtle domains. And I can do this by a simple combination of will, attention and imagination. Imagination, correctly applied, is an organ of subtle perception. Never discount what at first appear to be only the rarefied and slight effects of its disciplined use.

Central American cultures were pre-occupied with the sun. The Maya in particular were sun-mad, spreading extraordinary pyramid complexes all over the sun-baked limestone plain of Yucatan. Here there is no tropical forest, only low-lying scrub that veils the poverty of the soil. And the sun beats relentlessly down.

In my view, the Maya were hooked on the subtle sun, its exhilarating power and energy, its potent impact on mind and body. It became a dangerous and catastrophic obsession, with endless hearts of sacrificial victims torn out, aristocratic tongues and penises pierced for yet more sacrificial blood. Maya pyramids today are all still murky with the psychic fall-out of this occult addiction.

I have wandered all over the many Maya sites of Yucatan, up and down and in and out of innumerable pyramids, and I only found one whose subtle space was clear and clean, luminous with subtle light. This is a pyramid at Dzibilchaltun, dating from the earliest Maya settlement of the area. Archaeologists uncovered it by stripping off the ruins of later pyramids that had been built over it. It remains a witness to what the early Maya knew and the later Maya perverted.

Yet even in the later period, despite the protracted spiritual corruption, and the autocratic oppression of the masses by an elite, there is something deeply impressive about a whole culture drawing its energy at the interface of the physical sun and the subtle sun. At Uxmal, Kabah, Sayil, Labna, Dzibilchaltun, Chichen Itza, Coba, Tulum, there was a remarkable aesthetic commitment to living in two worlds at once - and this in the most unpromising terrain. Baking on the physical limestone, the Maya lived at the same time in a world of akashic power - and put that power to work in remarkable ways.

#### **4. Any single star**

I remember sitting on a deserted tropical beach at midnight. It was at Trincomalee in Sri Lanka. There was no moon, but an absolutely clear revelation of stars. I lay back on the warm sand, and chose a promising star to concentrate on.

I held my attention on the star for a long time, and visited it in my imagination. It was like being hypnotised by distant emissaries from another world. I entered different concepts of space, time, reality and being, in terms of a language whose vocabulary and syntax was totally alien to me, deeply disturbing, and inescapably exhilarating. I knew and yet I did not know the world-view that tumbled over my brain.

I felt slightly insane, and stopped the exercise. I stood up, fell over, and burst into tears. I lay sobbing on the sand for an hour.

#### **5. Special locations**

Some places in the physical world seem to be more open to the subtle world than other places. It is *as if* just by being in a certain physical location you can readily expand your awareness into liberating inner spaces. The outer world is somehow porous, open to the other world, at that spot. There are several classes of such locations.

Firstly, there are natural openings. For me, they include (as well as those already mentioned in this chapter): groves of trees on hilltops; mountain tops with panoramas of distant peaks, as, for example, in Jasper National Park in the Canadian Rockies; certain wells, pools, streams surrounded by a grove of trees; some caverns and caves deep in the earth, for example, Carlsbad Caverns in Texas; the edge between a forest or wood and open land; the edge between land and water; any natural configuration that produces an effect like a network, trellis or fretwork - such as the marais in the Ile d'Olonne in the Vendee region of France.

I don't think this is just aesthetic preference at work, inclining my mind to attune to subtle spaces. It is more to do with the way in which the energies of the two worlds interact at these points. And at the same time it is something to do with the symbolism of the natural phenomena; although I do not think symbolism alone is enough to create a special location.

Secondly, there are cultural and social openings. These include: places made sacred by continuous human ritual and worship; places on the occasion, say, of some musical or dramatic performance; houses and rooms made porous by the modes of being of those who occupy them. Here it is as if human activity has altered the quality of physical space and energy at a certain place - as though it is less of a veil over, more of a window onto, subtle and liberating inner space.

Thirdly, there are geometric openings, to do with shape, size, angle and proportion. Thus it is as if certain architectural designs directly facilitate openness to the other world. Similarly with certain types of human gesture and posture, and of spatial relationships between people. What we are here concerned with, of course, are the abstract properties of space itself, a kind of occult geometry in which certain configurations can expand awareness from this world to the other world - simply by virtue of their geometric properties. I shall have more to say about this in Chapter 7, where I write about the doctrine of powers.

## **6. Openings in groups**

I have run many kinds of groups, in the fields of personal and professional development, in the last two decades. In these groups I use experiential methods, involving the whole thinking, feeling and choosing person in the learning process. This experiential approach does seem to create a special class of social opening between the worlds.

The typical opening usually occurs after the group has worked together for some hours: members have taken some risks, become receptive to each other through action-methods, self-disclosure and feedback. A real climate of togetherness has started to develop.

We are all seated together in a circle, and a moment of silence supervenes. It is then *as if* the social, psychological and indeed physical space of the group becomes open to presences in the other world; as if the group as a whole is in silent communion with those in the unseen. The mood is calm, the air is still. Subtle energy hovers around. The group is like a pool, reflecting faces and spaces in another dimension. It is as though the ancestors, with their vistas of expanded awareness, are amongst us.

Even when I grow Heron's beard on this ambiguous experience, it is not entirely clear what this two world togetherness is all about. I often think that the physical members of the twin groups both know and don't know of the presence of the non-physical members: it is a tacit and subliminal knowing while their minds overtly drift over mundane themes. They quietly feed on the communion without having the concepts fully to acknowledge that it is occurring.

And yet when I casually make one of my so-called 'transcendental process comments' and murmur that it feels as if the ancestors are gathering, no-one seems particularly surprised. The comment dissolves harmlessly into the general reverie.

What are the non-physical members doing? Enjoying the togetherness; affirming, supporting, offering energy and inspiration to, the physical members; observing, learning and noticing? All this seems likely. Perhaps they are also patiently waiting to be acknowledged, to be consciously included in some appropriate way in the activities of the physical members. This takes us back to the dimly felt presences mentioned in Chapter 2.

You may say: what are unsolicited non-physical participants doing hovering around an autonomous human group? But this begs an interesting question. Is any human group absolutely independent? For maybe every human group is at best only relatively so. That is, such a group is always set in the context of what in Chapter 2 I called 'a passive hierarchy of the second kind'.

Those in the unseen society may make critical decisions that influence the development of human society. We humans seem to choose independently to hold a group, unaware that unseen plans already set in motion have encouraged us to gather. And unaware too that when we meet we do so inescapably under the subtle auspices of those who have evoked our social creativity. This does not mean that we are mere puppets, our autonomy a total illusion. It means, rather, that it is relative to an unseen social context that has evocative and sustaining power over it.

The thesis that persons are only persons in relation to other persons has now a vertical as well as a horizontal axis of meaning: autonomous human encounters have as their necessary ground passive hierarchies of the second kind.

Social openings or windows onto presences in the other world seem to occur when the following conditions obtain at the human level. (1) The persons concerned are both autonomous and co-operative. (2) They can supportively confront each other as and when appropriate; so they do not collude in unreal relationships. (3) They can distinguish in action and awareness between authentic, intentional behaviour and compulsive, distress-driven behaviour. (4) They function as whole persons, as thinking, feeling and choosing beings.

When human beings start to express themselves according to these sorts of criteria, then it is as if inescapably their togetherness will have spaces in it that reveals its hidden social ground in the other world.

## 7. Between the breaths

Breathing is a very odd process. It is ambiguous: am I doing it or is it doing me? It is neither wholly voluntary, nor wholly involuntary. It is at the interface between my intentionality and some unknown power. It is also, of course, a spatial process, the thorax expanding and contracting in three dimensions.

I cannot stop the process of breathing, and I cannot start it, or rather, I did not in any obvious sense start it at my birth. All I can do is hold the breath in, or hold the breath out, for a short period of time until I just have to let it go on. If I hold the breath for a shorter period, within my limit of tolerance, then I can choose when to let it go on. But when I thus choose, I don't originate, cause or generate the process. I am only in the business of regulating, managing or controlling it.

As well as holding the breath, I can breathe fast or slow, deep or shallow; and when I breathe deep, I can expand different parts of the lung cavity either serially or simultaneously. I can breathe through my mouth or through my nose, silently or with a variety of different sounds. But what is the *source* of the process of breathing? Whence comes the in-breath, and whence comes the out-breath?

It's no good holding the breath, either in or out, to try to get an answer. That just temporarily halts the process. But there is a space between the worlds that gives a glimpse, a hint of origins. In normal breathing, it is found at the turn of the breath.

If I attend to the time between the out-breath and the in-breath, it is *as if* the energy of the in-breath wells up out of subtle or subtle space in the lower abdomen. And if I attend to the time between the in-breath and the out-breath, it is *as if* the energy of the out-breath comes from a subtle space in the mid or upper thorax. These subtle events are readily obscured by the more gross physical processes of breathing. But I can shift my consciousness so that it is as if I am breathing in two worlds at once.

In the physical breathing I am aware of the inhalation and exhalation of air, the expansion and contraction of the thorax and diaphragm. In the subtle breathing I am aware of a subtle double, pulsing in a subtle universe; as though this pulsing generates the physical breathing process, is the source of it, and sets the limits within which voluntary control operates.

The pulsing of my subtle double seems to have a wider planetary source, very much *as if* the subtle double of the earth expands and contracts. So my physical breathing is set in the generative context of the pulsing of my subtle body, which in turn is set within a wider rhythm. And it seems as though there is differential gearing between the three rhythms so that they can fluctuate in limited independence of each other.

Attending to the breathing thus takes me directly into the world of the subtle matrix of physical phenomena. The turning of the breath is an immediate opening onto this matrix of the body and of the planet. By a 'subtle matrix' I mean a field in inner space that is formative and generative in relation to physical events.

When I am immersed in the experience of subtle breathing, this whole account seems plausible enough. If I examine it intellectually, I am much more sceptical. The subtle experience is highly ambiguous. What physical correlates can be proposed for the so-called subtle breath of the planet? To explain the source of the physical breath in terms of subtle pulsing only shifts the problem - for whence arises the pulsing?

### **8. Breathing in**

There is a simpler and more accessible ambiguous experience to do with the breath, simpler, that is, than the one just described above. When I breathe in, expanding the abdomen and the whole thorax in one complete and simultaneous enlargement in all directions, it is *as if* I fill the whole subtle space of the body with subtle energy.

The effect is only noticeable when abdomen and thorax expand fully and together, as if a balloon is filling up. And there are two balloons, one gross, one subtle. Air fills the lungs, and free prana, akashic energy, fills the subtle body - all over, not just in the subtle space of the trunk but of the limbs also. Now is this effect just an elaboration of proprioceptive sensation, or is it registered by what I may call subtle-sense?

Perhaps all physical sensation is really a limiting case of a subtle, psi account of the nervous system. It is experienced in what I call the subtle matrix where the subtle body is most fully identified with the physical body. Suppose the subtle body is not totally identified with the physical body but partially transcends it. Then the psi-sense that reports the nervous system will have an ambiguous hinterland that leads over into the psi-sense which goes beyond the nervous system into pure akasha, but which can still be registered in the brain. So with the in-breath, sensation (psi-sense) of lung events is continuous with the psi-sense of purely subtle energy events.

It may be possible to awaken and train relatively unused parts of the cortex to register psi-sense that transcends the normal reach of physical sensation and perception. Maybe you can start to use the brain to reflect into ordinary consciousness a psi-sense of all sorts of transcendent processes - some of which generate physical phenomena, and some of which relate entirely to non-physical domains. Chapter 5 develops this idea and considers some examples of such transfiguration of ordinary perception.

### **9. At the edge of the visual field**

Let us suppose that this visible universe we know of in everyday life is embedded in another, invisible one which is its ground and origin. Then we might expect that the unseen universe would only be relatively unseen, that there might be all sorts of apertures between the worlds, affording glimpses and views from one into the other.

There is one possible opening which, precisely because it is so obvious, yields for me the most ambiguous of all two world experiences. I doubt whether some people ever attend to it at all. It is the edge of the visual field. And it is a place where interesting phenomena can occur.

By the edge of the visual field, I mean quite literally the place where, all around the border of physical vision, the perceptual images end. If you focus your eyes on whatever is in the middle of the visual field, then you can at the same time notice, attend



to, the edge of it: you can practise a kind of global awareness of its somewhat ellipsoid limit. Or you can, as it were, 'look' at the edge. Sit on a chair and hold your head upright. Without moving the head cast your eyes down as far as they will go: the image of your thighs will merge and disappear into a very blurred image of your lower eyelids. Now attend to the limit where *this* blurred image disappears. Can you find it, or notice it, or identify it? What is there? What is beyond the edge?

This final edge is not anywhere in the physical world, for it is just beyond blurred physical images in a zone where there is no physical space for it to be in. It is an experiential limit that has no physical locus. But it is a limit, and a limit is a spatial entity which has more space of its own kind beyond it. And the question is, not what is beyond the limit of the visual field in the physical world, but what is beyond the limit of the field as such, beyond the experiential edge, in this other experiential space that has no physical parameters to define it. For the edge of the visual field as such is not the same as the image of outer rim of the eye socket which in very blurred form appears just within the edge. The image of the rim of the eye socket is one phenomenon, and the experientially vacant edge of the visual field is quite another. It just so happens the former appears at the latter, but does not constitute it.

In my experience, it is *as if*, at this seemingly void edge of the visual field, outer space wraps round into inner space: there is an opening that can access all kinds of subtle domains. The only reason I don't notice this in an ordinary state of consciousness, is that I am so busy generating a sense of the lay-out of the everyday world immediately beyond the limits of my visual field. My mind is always active supplementing my very partial physical perspectives. While I am thus mentally engaged in constructing a more complete account of physical space than my visually perceived view of it, I simply don't notice, and *haven't acquired skills in attending to*, the wrap-round into inner space.

You can study this mental preoccupation with the lay-out of the physical world if you repeat the exercise mentioned just above and hold the head well up while turning the eyes to look down as far as possible. Now if you try attending to the edge of the visual field as such, your mind will continually throw you back into ordinary space and you will start to think of what is physically beyond the edge of the eye socket, so you become aware of the parts of the face, chest and so on that are beyond perceptual range. (In section 13, chapter 7, I shall suggest that this process itself is a very limited, tacit kind of clairvoyance of the immediate spatial matrix of the physical world.)

Now you can notice how the mind is habitually at work in everyday perception causing you to attend to the immediately adjacent bits of physical space that you can't actually see. Thus you become oblivious to the wrap-round opening onto the other world. Of course, this powerful habituation is very important for physical survival. It's no good wrapping round into another universe at the edge of the visual field, then falling over a cliff because you have lost your mental grip on the structure of physical space just outside the range of your eyes.

However, it is possible to interrupt this habituation somewhat and attend to what is beyond the edge of the visual field, not out there in the physical world, but experientially beyond the blurred imagery as such. I find the best way to do this is not to use the looking-down-at-the-edge exercise, but to *look* into the centre of the visual field, and then *attend* to the edge. Once I start to attend actively to experiential space beyond the edge of the visual field, I am busy with incipient clairvoyant structuring of subtle space. Figure 4.1 portrays some of these ideas.

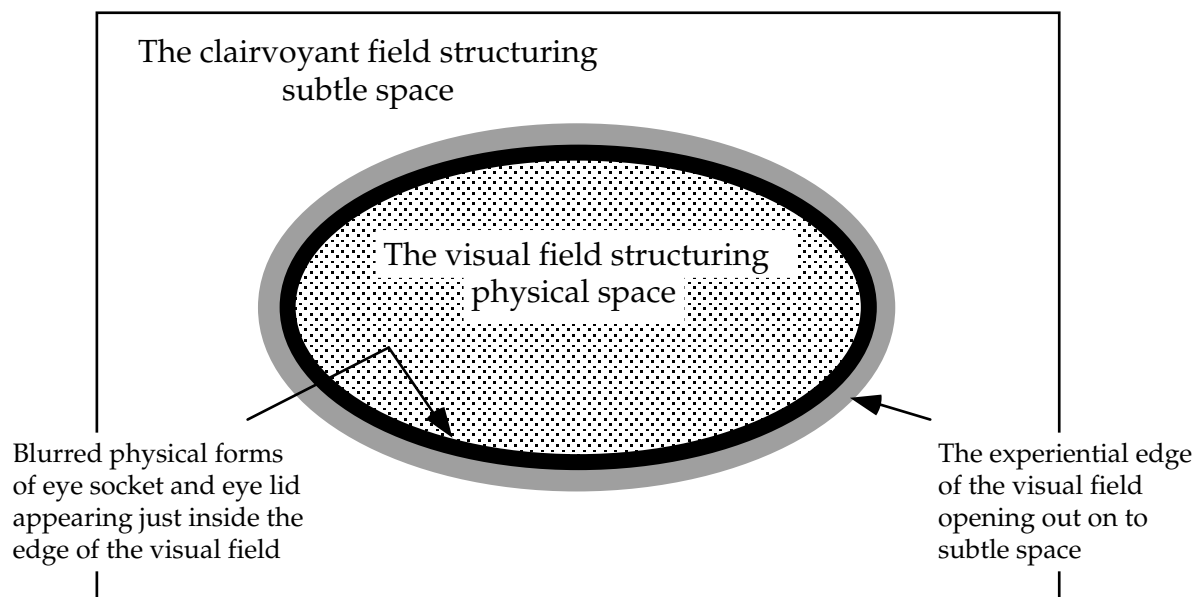


Figure 4.1 *The experiential edge of the visual field*

I am then, as it were, between the worlds. I am aware of the physical world out there as revealed in my visual field, although I am not giving it my full attention. For I am also aware of an ellipsoid rim or border, all around and just beyond the edge of the visual field, that is both in subtle space and is a clairvoyant opening into subtle space.

I can attend to this ellipsoid subtle rim as a whole, and get only the most vague and inchoate sense of I-don't-know-what other-worldly goings-on in I-don't-know-what subtle domains. Or I can attend to one part of the rim (my eyes are still focussed in the centre of their visual field) and have a clairvoyant look at that point: if I let my psi vision enter this more focussed experience and go with it, then it may start to acquire some degree of form. But it clearly needs a great deal of practice to make something of it.

And whether you go for the whole rim or only part of it, there are two possible directions for practice. Your clairvoyance can go 'outward' from the subtle rim into more 'remote' other-world domains; or it can wrap around 'inwards' so that it peers within and through the visual field at subtle realms interpenetrating the immediate physical environment.

Of course, the whole experience is ambiguous: it may be nothing more than vague physical sensations dressing themselves up as pseudo-psi. Have a 'look' and see what you think. The final warrant is experiential. Conceptually it is clear that the outer edge of the visual field is not a physical edge out there in the world, susceptible of physical demarcation, but it is also clear that it is an edge, that is, that it does have spatial properties. I say the edge wraps round into subtle space. Does it?

There is something else that happens when I am quite preoccupied with physical events, and not at all trying to practise clairvoyance. And it occurs at this mysteriously ambiguous edge of the visual field. It is *as if* I see some kind of entity flitting along it, or in and out of it, for a split second.

I am never physically looking in that part of the field where I seem to see the entity. The flitting occurs on the periphery well away from the central focus of my eyes. But did I physically see it, or did I 'see' it clairvoyantly? Did another world entity materialise from subtle space at the edge of my visual field, or did I suddenly and briefly 'see' into a bit of the other world interpenetrating physical space out there on the visual periphery?

Or was it simply a misperception of some simple physical phenomenon, like a moving shadow cast just within my field of vision by some physical thing moving quite outside my field of vision? Or a mirage, a hallucination, purely subjective imagery projected out as if I were perceiving it? I can often quite readily rule out the misperception explanation, much more rarely the hallucination account of the experience.

For what it is worth, two kinds of entity appear to flit in this way. One is like a person, in vaguely human shape. The other is like an animal, anywhere between the size of a small cat and a large deer. I return to this topic in section 6 of the next chapter.

## 5. Transfigurations

In this class of unusual experiences, physical perceptions temporarily and radically change their form, as if another reality is disclosing itself through the change. They are often highly ambiguous.

### 1. Dissolution into the subtle

I look with my physical eyes at another person's face for a long time, and it is *as if* the other's face slowly dissolves into a subtle mist. This appears as a cloud of fine grey-white energy that vibrates at a high frequency. Sometimes the physical image completely disappears for a second or two. Sometimes one eye, or part of the brow or a cheek, is still visible through the cloudy light.

It is as though I have quietly shifted my level of awareness into the subtle domain immediately within and around the physical world: a domain which, it seems, provides the generative matrix of the physical world. And it is *as if* any residual bit of the physical image that I can see is both suspended in and emerging out of this matrix. But it is the temporary dissolution of the physical image - into what appears as its originating energy - that is the most striking feature of the immediate experience.

The application of Occam's razor here would insist that there is nothing more at work than retinal fatigue and projected retinal lights or after-images. The perceived face disappears because the nerves in the retina give up the ghost for a bit through overuse. But they are still firing enough to yield unpatterned physical vision and to generate retinal light which is projected out so I seem to see it as a mist over there where the face was.

Heron's beard is not necessarily shaved off by this application of Occam's razor. For the combination of retinal fatigue and projected retinal light could be the mechanism whereby the brain suddenly has access to register subtle energy in the matrix domain. Psi could be released by the retinal fade. When ordinary seeing wanes, clairvoyance may wax.

Indeed, when we talk about retinal lights and after-images, what exactly are we talking about? Close your eyes and look at them (a curious instruction in itself). They have spatial properties but are clearly not in physical space. They have elegant, ethereal colours that echo but do not exactly replicate physical colours. They are critically related in some way to the working of the eyes, but you do not see them with your eyes, because they are not out there in the natural world to be seen. As experiential entities they are very much in a world of their own.

Well perhaps they are psi phenomena in inner space: psi lights in the subtle field around and within the physical space of the cortex - witnessed by the most rudimentary clairvoyance where the subtle matrix of the physical body interacts closely with the neural mechanisms of eyes and brain. And as such perhaps they can become vehicles for wider kinds of clairvoyance, like windows which normally reflect back processes in the brain, but can, if you choose, open out further into non-physical domains. This idea is portrayed in Figure 5.1, and developed in subsequent sections.

However much lights around my brain may or may not be the mediators, it is still *as if*, in this experience, my clairvoyance opens up to see the free energy of the subtle matrix of the other person's face. I seem to see the undifferentiated life-stuff within and behind the differentiated form: as the latter fades to ordinary vision, the former is revealed to subtle vision.

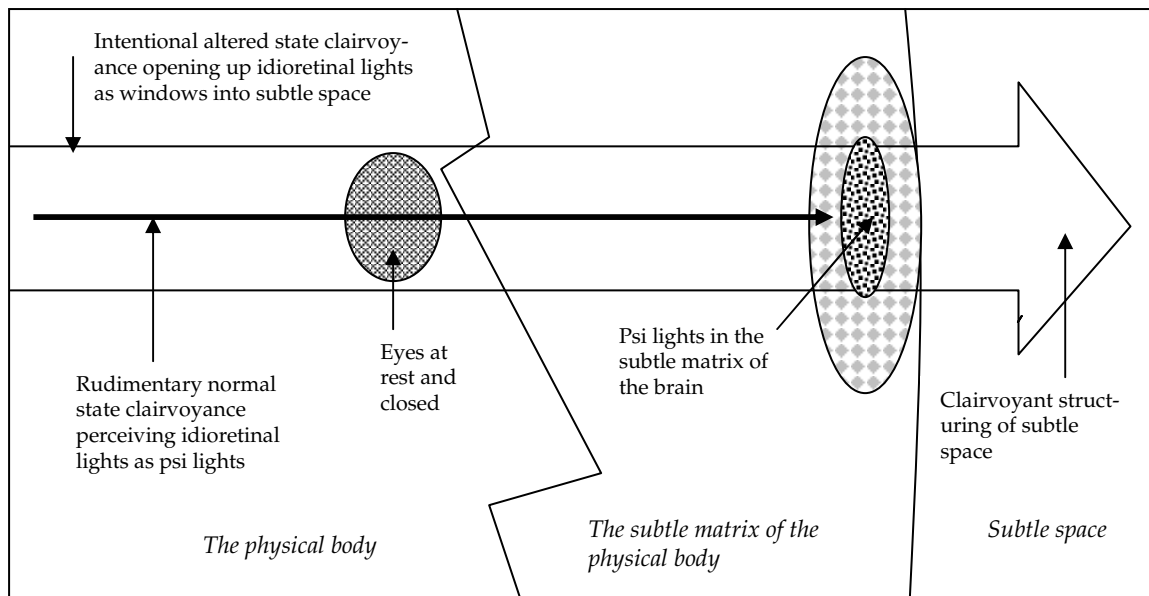


Figure 5.1 Idioretinal lights as potential clairvoyant windows

## 2. Suspension and emergence

This experience is really an extension of the previous one, taking it on a stage further. But whereas the previous experience has been quite common in my life, the one I now report is altogether more rare. For the extension is dramatic.

I remember being seated with a close friend in a ground floor flat in Fulham in London. It was a warm summer evening, still light, just after sunset. There was a third person present, known to both of us, but not intimately. The topic of conversation hinged lightly around human potential and its development.

As I gazed steadily at my friend, her form dissolved into the fine grey-white mist. Her physical image had almost totally disappeared from my perceptual field. For a long time there was nothing but *akasha*, as the Hindus call the subtle and pre-physical state of matter. Only fragments - a hand, a fold of the dress, an eyebrow - briefly reappeared, soon to be obscured by the milky cloud.

Gradually, the whole of her emerged again into my view, but in a way which I had never experienced before. Her form was slightly blurred, seemingly porous, translucent, letting through the light of its originating field. It was *as if* she was buoyant in and emanating from a haze of subtle energy. She no longer appeared exclusively physical, anchored by gravity to the chair. She came forth in her levitational mode - held in suspension by, and emerging out of, the luminous, subtle, potent akashic matrix.

This transfiguration of my perception lasted for some time. I remember feeling a great sense of release from the illusion of the seemingly exclusive materiality of this world. I remember wondering how on earth my ordinary perception could get so

locked in that illusion. And I remember realising that my whole perceptual frame of reference had undergone a major transformation. But how? And how could I sustain it? Or recover it when it was lost?

I was beholding her continuous, elegant coming into being from the living subtlety of a space within and beyond her. It was awesome, refreshing and liberating. And now I became immersed in my own coming into being, and that of the third person in the room. This corporate emergence moved me deeply. Our conversation was as if conducted on the footstool of a luminous creation reaching far and away behind us, yet intimate to every motion of a hand, flicker of an eyelid and re-arrangement of a thigh.

Gradually the visionary shift waned and was gone. My perceptions then felt like bric-a-brac washed up on the beach of ordinary seeing. I was disconsolate, deprived of the warmth of the luminous ocean. Like a stranded whale, the victim of my own gravity, I did not know how to get back to swim in the waters of continuous creation.

After dark, I wandered along the Fulham Road. The self-sufficiency of nocturnal London, lit up in its own mode on a warm evening, was re-assuring. Ordinary perception re-asserted its bizarre charm: its limits like gentle strokes for an insecure child.

### 3. Facial transfigurations

In this experience, after prolonged gazing at the eyes and face of another person, the physical image of the other's face does not disappear but starts to change. The physiognomy alters, mobility of form overtakes the normally fixed features; and it is *as if* other faces start to appear - in and through the physical face. They seem to emerge out of it and then merge back into it; or flicker briefly over it like a super-imposed image.

Sometimes just one other face hovers in view for a while. Sometimes there is a succession of two or three different faces. There is the curious sense of double perception, of physical seeing and clairvoyance going on together, in temporary tandem of awareness. It is difficult to get the right metaphor: the patterns of ordinary vision become malleable by, or permeable to, or perforated by the patterns of extrasensory perception.

It is also *as if* the faces that appear are the faces of persons in the other world who are somehow intimately associated historically and/or psychologically with the human being in front of me. The faces thus appearing out of their own world seem to be in present time, and also to echo with the ambience of past times and maybe distant places in this world. It is as if they are ancestors, not in any literal genetic sense, but in terms of some wider notion of psychic or spiritual affinity.

What is interesting here is the apparently seamless fusion of physical perception and clairvoyance. They merge into each other, without either losing their content, for the physical image does not totally change its form. There is an ambiguous double identity before me. And I can shift my awareness rapidly between the two overlapping faces, the physical one and the subtle one, noticing how they are similar and how they are different, both in form and soul.

Thus superimposed over a wide-eyed fresh white youthful face sitting before me in Guildford, Surrey, England, I have seen the shrewd hooded eyes of a tanned and wrinkled face like that of an Andean shepherd. And this has yielded to a fleeting but stern visage with the commercial grasp of a seventeenth century Dutch burgher. Then a hint of dark eyes simmering with unrequited passion.

And it is not only the eyes, cheekbones and brow that flicker with shifts of form. For as these features change, so too the lines of the mouth curl round different attributes of soul. Yet throughout the kaleidoscopic changes, there is a remarkable continuity of being, an unmistakable affinity. These are souls doing the collective business of their destiny in a state of deep rapport.

It is as though the young Englishman in front of me stands in a historical gallery full of echoes from the past. But the past figures with whom he resonates are also present now in their own mode and domain. And they seem to be intimately involved in the fluctuating dynamics of his psyche, as if a composite historical tale is being summated and taken forward by his own growth and development.

Now Occam's razor would argue for a more economic explanation: in terms of retinal fatigue and subjective imagination. When my eyes get tired with sustained gazing at the same face, then my imagination fills in the retinal gaps with interesting variations on the other person's features. But all that is going on is my own projected phantasy - perhaps charged also with some of my own emotional material.

Well, it is the subtle sense of perceiving on two different levels at once which, when it is strong, defies this reduction to the purely imaginary. But again, the explanations are not mutually exclusive, for one process may lead over into the other. Thus retinal fatigue may let my subjective imagination loose, but this in turn may lead over into objective clairvoyance.

This sort of progression takes us into the heart of ambiguous experience. And it is where Heron's beard truly comes into its own. For I may look at the face of another person, and at first be fascinated by shifts in their features which are entirely the product of my own imagination. But because I continue to attend to, and to elaborate, this imaginative process - rather than sceptically dismiss it - it *turns into* clairvoyance of a whole web of interpersonal relations between the worlds, and between the present and the past.

If you use the principle of Heron's beard, you will often find that imagination has been the chrysalis, in an ordinary state of consciousness, of fully-fledged and radiant clairvoyance in an altered state of consciousness.

There is also a small practical tip. I have sometimes found that if I tilt my head backwards, narrow my eyes to a small aperture, and peer with great intensity into the eyes and face of the other person, then this greatly facilitates the occurrence of the dual mode of seeing.

#### **4. Windows in the eyes**

Sometimes in sustained and silent mutual gazing with another person, there is a very subtle transfiguration: the eyes of the other become windows that open onto vistas of inner space. It is *as if* I can see through the other's eyes into subtle domains.

When two human beings open themselves to mutual gazing, they can enter a timeless zone of spacing out. But first, of course, they have to let go of all the emotional agitation and embarrassment that can obscure the gaze. Once this is done, and a pathway is cleared for inner and outer vision to interfuse, then the result is so deep and entrancing, it sometimes difficult to know how to come out of it - as if to disengage into ordinary consciousness is an affront to cosmic togetherness.

The Stoics, in the third century B.C., regarded themselves as citizens of cosmopolis - the cosmic state - and in mutual gazing the cosmopolitan status of every human being

can be seen and acknowledged. Our participation in the one society of the subtle, formative universe is revealed.

The human gaze itself is not a physical phenomenon. It is supervening upon the eyes, but is not the same as the eyes. It is a highly personal psi beam mediated by the eyes, like a ray of presence. The light of the gaze is the energy of consciousness. If I attend to this light in the other's gaze, and trace it to its origins, then I enter the vastness of inner space indeed.

For the other's consciousness is not just his or hers. It is continuous with universal consciousness, which - as the Hindu Vedanta affirms - is everywhere at one with the subtle space of *akasha*. So through the gaze-light of the other you can roam the inner universe at large.

I remember being seated opposite a man of my own age in a workshop I was running at the University of Surrey. The workshop was on transpersonal psychology, and the exercise we were busy with was this exploration of mutual gazing. As I journeyed backwards along his gaze-light to its remote inward origins, I wheeled among galaxies and contemplated the genesis of stars.

His eyes were like monitor screens in a space-ship that journeyed beyond the material universe to that inward space-consciousness-energy that is full of archetypal creative power. I emerged from the experience drenched with transcendence.

Now there is a rather more mundane way of entering this sort of experience, to do with the areas of the brain ordinary states of consciousness do not use. I look into the eyes of the other person, rather than contemplate their gaze-light. And in my imagination, I set their eyes into reverse vision.

Normally, for the other person, images of the outer world register through their eyes on their brain. That is their Janus-brain facing outwards. But I seek out their Janus-brain facing inwards. I look for images of the inner worlds registering through their brain into their eyes. Or to put it another way, it is *as if* through their eyes I can access the way in which the inner universe is coded in their brain. I can engage with their status as a Janus-brain, whether they are aware of this status or not.

I look into the eyes of the other and imagine I am scanning the parts of the brain their normal perception and thought processes do not reach. I then picture this area of their brain as a screen revealing vistas on subtle space. It is not clear to me whether this is simply an imaginative device for opening up my own clairvoyance. In which case, I am really setting my own brain into reverse vision, under the guise of a procedure in the other person. Or whether I am traversing an actual psi route in the brain matrix of the other, which opens up a similar route in me. Whichever it is, the impact can be quite liberating, yielding a noticeable shift of consciousness, with glimmerings of extrasensory perception.

We can say of a Janus-brain that the subtle universe is coded and enfolded in unused parts of the brain. And we can say that there are unused parts of the brain that can be awakened and trained to register impacts from the subtle universe. The two statements are compatible: it is those parts of the cortex that carry the subtle code that can be awakened to decipher akashic reality.

Well, is all this windows-in-the-eyes talk just an account of poetic inter-personal imagination at work? It is the potent shift of consciousness into a liberated, inward and intensive spatial mode that makes me reject the idea that it is nothing but subjective phantasy. Yet again, what starts out as private imagination may, with the



application of Heron's beard, transcend itself in the continuous creation of cosmic imagination.

### 5. The transfiguration of retinal lights

There is one simple, basic and very accessible type of ambiguous experience that is available to anyone who cares to devote a few minutes to it. It is to sit with the eyes closed and attend fully, without distraction, to what appears before them. The art of the exercise is to be calm, to watch and to continue to watch in an unhurried way whatever it is that shows up. Just keep giving attention to the subtle inner light and colour, and to slight blurred configurations that may emerge and shift and change.

At the level of ordinary, and readily accessible, experience, there appear to be at least four kinds of phenomena. First, assuming the exercise is done during the day, there is the diffuse, unpatterned daylight penetrating through the eyelids, and coloured in part at any rate by their flesh and blood. Second, there are some small greyish blurred blobs that move and drift around, and are to do with the liquids of the eye. Third, there will initially be after-images, coloured negatives of the physical shapes you have been looking at - and they undergo various metamorphoses of colour and form as you attend to them. And fourth, after the after-images fade away, you will notice idio-retinal configurations and colours which appear to be involved in the spontaneous activity of the neural structures of physical vision.

It is these idio-retinal lights that interest me the most. So I sit here in front of the window and close my eyes. For a time I watch the brilliant, ethereal colours of the after-images of the window-panes and cross-bars glow and fluctuate - until eventually they fade away. Then I just attend to the orange coloured diffuse light. There now appears in the middle of this a blurred yellowish disk with a darker hole in the middle of it. This disk with the hole I take to be related in some way to the retina or optic nerve or visual centres in the brain.

As I gently feed my attention into the hole in the disk, nurture it with my consciousness, a transfiguration occurs. The hole turns into the form of an eye. As I attend to the eye it comes more into focus, into relief. Then spontaneously the perspective changes, and I get a view of the eye from the side, in profile.

I am not in any sense imagining this eye. As I focus my awareness on the hole in the disk, the eye reveals itself to my inspection. I am looking at it: certainly not with my physical eyes, for they are closed. And it is not the after-image of an eye: there has been no eye of another person around for some hours. Nor have I recently been looking in a mirror.

This transfiguration of a small dark circle or hole in the middle of the closed-eyes coloured field into an eye is quite a common experience, whenever I spend long enough gently attending in an unhurried way to this field. And up this point there is nothing ambiguous about the experience. There is no doubt about it, I am simply looking with inner vision at an eye. It is not as if I am looking at an eye. I am looking at an eye.

There are two versions of this eye, and it is at this stage that some ambiguity enters in. Sometimes it is *as if* the eye is the eye of a person in subtle space near me, and I catch a glimpse of both eyes and something of the person's face although never quite all of it and never for very long. At other times it is *as if* the eye is, well, just an organ of inner vision: if I focus my attention on it, and direct my awareness into it, then it

opens up and dissolves into vistas of subtle landscapes, buildings, and so on. I look out through it into the other world.

There is another quite common kind of transfiguration that occurs when I notice what goes on with my eyes closed. After a while the darker patch or circle in the middle of the coloured field appears - and this, as I say, I take to be some image associated with the nervous system. If I attend to it very fully, it starts to develop form and to change in scale and sense of direction.

It is *as if* I am looking up a quite wide cylindrical opening into subtle space, like a dry well about fifteen feet across. Not far above me the circular top of the well opens out into some subtle domain. And all around the top I can just make out indistinct forms of figures standing round the edge and peering down at me. Sometimes they appear to be leaning over a circular parapet looking into the well.

On some occasions, this whole picture, although I am clearly 'seeing' it and not just conjuring it up in my imagination, will be quite indistinct and will fade back into the idio-retinal disk before I can do any business with it. The transfiguring effect is lost. What was starting to be an altered state of consciousness reverts to an ordinary state. This is because I lack, or cannot sustain, a subtle and very intense focus of attention on the developing image - a focus that honours what I am starting to see without in any way seeking to interfere with it.

At other times, I can focus with sustained attention on just one portion of the rim of the well, where it leads over and out into the subtle domain, and as I do so I start to see details of the rim more clearly and to rise up toward it, my inner vision eventually going up and over it, spreading out to take in extended vistas of buildings and/or landscapes. I rarely see figures once my inner sight is over the rim.

This kind of clairvoyance of subtle domains is often highly metamorphic. Buildings and features of landscapes change their shapes, with great mobility and plasticity, as I look at them. On the one hand it is *as if* my consciousness is a creative cornucopia, generating an abundance of forms in inner space. On the other hand, it is *as if* there is a subtle world out there pouring innumerable views of itself into my awareness. It seems as though both these processes are at work; and that the rapidly fluctuating, almost chaotic profusion of psi percepts is something to do with the untrained, unskilled nature of my seeing.

This abundant kind of psi is greatly facilitated, I find, if I am out of doors on a hot day of bright sunlight. I sit in the shade, lying back relaxed in some kind of reclining chair on which the back of the head, too, can rest. With eyes closed, sooner or later the darker central disk appears, and the transfiguration I have just described commences, often with great clarity, subtle vigour and brilliance. The relaxation, the heat, the reflection of sunlight onto the shaded and closed eyes: all this seems to be conducive to the release of inner vision.

Thus I remember sitting in the shade of a parasol beside a swimming pool in the grounds of the Mission Inn near Uxmal in Yucatan, Mexico. It was December and very hot. The Maya pyramids of Uxmal emerged from the low-lying scrub in the middle distance. I lay back and closed my eyes. That day I was the only guest in the hotel.

Nurtured by the heat, my closed-eye field resplendent with the luminous energy of reflected sunlight, the transfiguration of the ordinary disc into the image of a well occurred. My inner vision flowered. It spread over the rim of the well, and was cast into a world of immense creative brilliance.

Buildings of impressive scale loomed before me. As I ranged my vision up their great height of arches, parapets, deep recesses and towering ornament, they reformed their perspective to yield new reaches of proportion and design. This subtle architectural regeneration and change of structure was a shocking delight to my clairvoyance - which yet participated so intimately in it.

Now there was an elevation of cathedral status. It rose up from one dimension of inner space to another, unfurling its forms vertically into more refined states of extension and awareness. It lifted my vision up with it to behold immense vistas of high-raised akasha. It was an extraordinary combination of great architecture and great exaltation.

These visions, of course, are very like psychedelic visions - but without the use of psychedelic drugs. I have taken mescaline and LSD a few times: they seem to have the effect of unfurling the subtle world code locked up in the nervous system, as if deep parts of the cortex spin out an abundance of psi visions enfolded in them.

The difference between LSD-induced visions and those that occur out of doors in the shade on a sunny, hot day, is subtle. It seems as though the former are being spun out of the deep recesses of the brain. The latter have more the sense of pouring all over the nervous system from another dimension. But each also partakes of something of the nature of the other. For in both there may be an interaction between code and impact, the difference being only one of emphasis and focus.

The sceptic, wielding Occam's razor, can make an important point about this claim to clairvoyance. He cannot of course explain away the visions as such. A vision is a vision is a vision. But he can resist the explanation in terms of perception of another world. He can insist there is nothing at work but unfettered mental imagery; and that this does not involve perception of anything. The visions are no more than elaborate day-dreams, sustained hallucinations.

Well, in relation to ordinary perception, there is no proof that I know of that establishes beyond doubt the existence of an external world. In this matter, some philosophers have made an appeal to common sense. So they simply avow that it is internal to our common sense that in everyday perception we encounter a *world*. There is an analogous, even more potent, appeal that can be made in relation to psi capacity. The akashic worlds make a very strong claim indeed on the common sense of all true seers. The reality of these worlds is in the relation of encounter with them. A world is what we meet, engage in dialogue with - and embrace with our subjectivity only to find that it is intriguingly other.

Finally, there is the status of so-called retinal lights to consider. I suggested earlier in this chapter that they are psi lights, seen clairvoyantly where the subtle matrix informs the optic nerve and visual centres of the brain. And that they can, with appropriate attention, open out into wider forms of clairvoyance. The experiences set forth in this section confirm such a view.

## 6. Misperception as clairvoyance

The claim that this experience makes is, from the ordinary point of view, so implausible that Occam's razor strikes out with great impatience. Let me give an example. A friend of mine was walking in the country and was all of a sudden greatly surprised to find himself looking at a peacock perching high up in the branches of a tree. He did a double take, looked again, and saw nothing but a plastic bag that the wind had blown into the tree, and that was now suspended on the twigs.

He reported the experience *as if* it was not just ordinary misperception, but rather a startling glimpse of something from another reality suddenly breaking through the veil of physical phenomena. What led him to this account was the sheer impact of the experience, and the great disparity of form between the peacock that he 'saw', and the paper bag that he next saw. It was as if an ambiguous physical percept became for a moment clairvoyantly transfigured.

Now of course all our everyday seeing is seeing-as: we see this physical image as a cup, or a cow, or a cupid. We interpret, we fit a concept to the percept. And sometimes the image is so ambiguous at first take that we fit the wrong concept, and only closer inspection shows that we need to reclassify the image under a different concept.

Most times there is nothing remotely clairvoyant about such misperception. Sometimes, however, it may be that the conceptual gap, the confusion at the level of seeing-as, permits the striking appearance of an other-worldly image in the middle of the everyday perceptual field. But such an image is very transient and only endures for a brief moment until the conceptual gap is closed and a correct identification of the physical percept is established.

Now we do know that concepts can radically affect percepts. Thus the native islanders could not see the first white man's ship anchored in the bay because they did not have the concept for such a thing. The limited conceptual framework that came with the use of their language made them *unable to see a sailing ship*.

Similarly, the limited conceptual framework that comes with our modern use of language may make us unable to 'see' in the psi mode. It may contract our awareness around purely physical modes of perceiving so that we simply do not notice what is going on in the great subtle matrix out of which the material world appears. And it is only very occasionally when this framework loses its tight hold - such as moments of misperception - that we can receive impacts from the subtle domain.

Misperception as clairvoyance may also occur at the very edge of the ordinary visual field. I am in the kitchen looking at the kettle. I suddenly become aware of something like a cat moving swiftly for a split second over by the broom-cupboard, which is on the extreme periphery of my field of vision. Yet I know that there is no physical cat in the kitchen, for I do not have a cat. I then re-classify my percept and realise it was the shadow of a bird flying past the kitchen window.

Now maybe it was both. Maybe it really was the shadow of a bird flying past the window. But until I grasped this, the unclassified percept created an opening for brief clairvoyance of a subtle cat - a creature for whom the ancient Egyptians would have had some respect. Of course, I have no idea why it was flitting around my kitchen. Was it seeking out the broom in the broom-cupboard, or in foolish pursuit of the shadow of a bird, or bestowing power on the culinary arts?

Misperception as clairvoyance may occur, too, in dimly lit physical environments. I am lying awake in bed at midnight, with the curtains a little open. A faint light from the night sky penetrates the room. The dark space becomes ambiguous with bulging forms. They are not the forms of things in the room, for I know the exact shape of each item of furniture and where it is.

They are some kind of retinal response to minimal light. But because I am busy perceiving nothing as vague masses which I cannot classify, they yield to sudden and impromptu clairvoyance of subtle shapes - but only for fractions of a second. And since

I never succeed in classifying the masses - for they are pure perceptual illusion and there is nothing there to classify - I keep oscillating in and out of fractional moments of clairvoyance. It is no wonder some children are afraid of the dark if they are subject to these visionary oscillations, with no guidance as to what they are and how to cope with them.

As I have already said, many misperceptions are nothing to do with clairvoyance. I simply misidentify something, apply the wrong concept to it and imagine it to be something it is not. This can apply in the dark too: my imagination can run riot with vague masses, and there is no psi vision involved at all. The art of the Janus-brain is to discriminate between this purely subjective kind of misperception, and the kind of misperception that yields brief but authentic episodes of psi encounter with the subtle world.

### **7. Systematically ambiguous percepts**

I refer here to a very common experience of looking at a relatively formless physical pattern - the configuration of a cloud, of stains on an old wall, of the grain of polished wood, of tea leaves at the bottom of a cup, of glowing embers in the hearth - and seeing it *as if* it has some determinate shape, such as the shape of a human face, an animal, a building, or a household object. Now the transfiguration here is purely conceptual and subjective. The physical pattern does not change. It is only what I see it as that changes. But is this always true?

I have looked into a low burning fire and seen a face, but the face has a form that is more extensive than the form of that part of the fire out of which it emerges. So it is *as if* I see a face that has more pattern in it than the associated bit of the fire has: the change is not only conceptual, but also perceptual. And sometimes it is *as if* the perceptual change has a psi shift on it, as if there is a clairvoyant image within the physical perceptual field.

There are multiple ambiguities here. Firstly, the physical pattern is ambiguous: it can be seen as bearing this, that or the other determinate image. Secondly, is the transfiguration purely conceptual, only a matter of seeing-as, or is it also perceptual, to do with the actual pattern itself? And thirdly, if the transfiguration is both conceptual and perceptual, is it just a hallucinatory distortion of ordinary perception, or is it clairvoyance of an actual subtle entity through a briefly open window in the everyday visual field? Only rigorous noticing, with the growth of Heron's beard, can resolve the last two questions.

### **8. The conceptual transfiguration of perception**

Perception is a cultural phenomenon. We perceive the world our culture believes in. As children, we learn to see things in terms of the concepts and categories that come with the mastery of language. And these in turn are organised by the belief-systems that prevail in the culture of which we are a part.

So animists in ancient and so-called primitive societies perceived a different world to those living in mediaeval times. The former saw a world suffused with supernatural fluid, occult powers and ancestral presences. The latter saw a world that was the lowest realm, the footstool, of a theocratic universe, with god in his heaven beyond the sphere of the stars. The beliefs, we may surmise, were *part of the way of perceiving*.

And today, seeing the world is not separate from having beliefs about it. For there is a restrictive belief-system built into the very process of perception. In our culture, we perceive a world that is mechanistic, materialistic, and atheistic. When we see things, we see them as incorporating that sort of world-view. It is the 400 year old heritage of our modern culture, which possesses our childhood brains as we learn to talk and act socially.

Indeed, the cultural belief-system that is deeply embedded in the structure of everyday perception, may be at odds with ideologies acquired later in life through education, experience and reflection. Thus a person may inwardly have come to believe in a systems view of the world, in other non-physical levels of being, in a divine presence - and yet still sees the garden, the high street, the living room, the surrounding hills, in Cartesian-Newtonian terms as purely physical entities subject to mechanical laws operating in empty space.

There is a way of countering all this. It is to construe actively while looking. To rethink the world in the very act of seeing it. To restructure the belief-system that is built into the process of perceiving.

This belief-system that possesses perception is not just abstract in nature. It is fuelled by imaginative, creative power. It is an active, dynamic shaping of the meaning and impact of the world by the mind. And so to rethink the world in the act of seeing it means putting out a deep re-appraisal of what we see. Then we start to experience the world as *being different*.

We have to rethink the world with the whole of the nervous system, with our nervous centres in the belly as well as, if not more so than, in the cortex. I find that the presence of trees is a teacher in this matter. So if I walk in the woods, in the ambience provided by stately trees, I become more and more able imaginatively to re-appraise the being of the world in the very act of perceiving it. The belief-systems impregnated into perception by the culture lose their hold.

I think-perceive the world anew. And it is *as if* the trees themselves generate the creative thoughts that reconstruct the world within my eyes. Of course my mind provides the unspoken words implicit in the thoughts, but the trees assist with the underlying conceptual pattern.

I found a wood near Nutteln in Emmsland in West Germany. I walked through it for two hours or more on many days in the middle of a sun-clad September. The trees were great teachers, like members of a distinguished philosophical arboretum. I relay here their teaching in terms of my perceptions.

I see the physical world as porous, as open everywhere to the energy fields in the matrix space that sustains it. There is the immediate matrix space of the earth and the solar system. And there is the vast matrix space of the galaxy, a space that is deeply inward, extensive, subtle, potent; and out of which the physical galaxy emerges.

I see the earth as an energy structure floating in the matrix space of the galaxy, interpenetrated by the subtler energies of that immense inner space. I am also aware that the earth is a conceptual artefact; and that I am participating in creating this artefact as I see it. I do not quite know *how* I am doing this, but I do know that I am doing it.

And as I see, I hear creation singing its own song. Cast into English, the refrain becomes something like: 'I perceive as I think as I choose to exist'. There is an act of being. This act, this ecstatic choice, is a choice of being. And what is chosen is the

value of being, its joy. I realise that, as part of creation, I too choose to exist, choose my belief-systems and choose my perceptual frameworks.

Looking again at the earth suspended in, porous with, inner space, light and power, I start to notice the more specific energy structures in and around things: trees, stones, crops in the field beside the wood, a tractor and a man working on it, farmhouses on the other side of the field. Also persons or presences in the other world related to the energy structures of the houses in particular.

I came out of the woods and realised what had been happening. As I transfigured the concepts that were built into the very process of perceiving the world, the process itself became extended and inclusive. It started to integrate physical perception and clairvoyance into one seamless whole: I saw the two worlds interacting in a total system - both on the grand scale, and in the bush beside the path.

I found it curious that when I had finished my walk, drove off in my car and re-entered the city where I was staying, I reverted to my ordinary, culture-bound way of perceiving the world. But then a modern city is very Cartesian-Newtonian in concept. Perhaps it is better to think-perceive it that way. It is no good being too porous in New York, London, or any other metropolis. The conventional perceptual framework is good armour in the alien world it creates.

Now there is another way of transfiguring ordinary perception of the world, and that is by exercising and developing the tacit clairvoyance that is normally in servitude to it. This done through a grasp of the geometry of vision in two worlds, and a realisation of the archetypal spatial powers of point, line and plane. This is dealt with in sections 4 and 13 of Chapter 7 - on the doctrine of powers.

## 9. Transfigurations of personal appearance

Human beings can undergo quite remarkable transfigurations of appearance, so much so that in the realm of interpersonal perception, one doubts the validity of any real separation between physical perception and clairvoyance. Let me explain what I mean.

The same person's face can at one time appear confused, mean, shrunk, vacuous and stupid. Yet at another time it can appear luminous, potent, full of intelligent authority and generosity. Do we just physically perceive changes in the shape of their face, and then mentally infer corresponding changes in their state of soul? I hardly think so.

Suppose each person has a physical body, a subtle body, and a soul undergoing varying changes of state, mental and emotional. Suppose too that the subtle body in its most dense mode is a matrix for the form and processes of the physical body. And that in its least dense mode it mediates states of soul and shapes their physical appearance in facial expression, gesture and posture. Of course, such a view is hardly new. It is a bit like Aristotle's doctrine of *pneuma*: a subtle, active, near-material principle that acts as an intermediary between body and soul. And *pneuma* is analogous to his *aether* which I mentioned at the start of chapter 1.

Suppose now that when I physically perceive the physical form of the person's face, at one and the same time I clairvoyantly perceive the subtle configuration of the person's state of soul. I don't properly notice this is going on, because the culture does not provide me with the concepts. The belief-system culturally induced into my perception of people cuts short my full awareness of what I am about. And nature

obscures it too with the demanding impact of physical vision. The clairvoyance is tacit, underdeveloped.

If you doubt this, take up another person's gaze. Now the gaze, as I said earlier in this chapter, is not the same as the physical eyes. It is one thing to look at someone's eyes as purely physical objects; and quite another to take up the gaze that is mediated by those eyes. It is *as if* the gaze is the subtle light of a person's consciousness, supervening upon and shining through the physical eyes. And the gaze itself can have many different meanings or qualities: intelligent, loving, spiritual, commanding, erotic.

Nor does it seem to me that I infer the gaze and its meanings. Rather I directly apprehend it: not by physical perception, for it is not part of the physical eyes of the other person; but by clairvoyant perception. I am seeing the other's eyes in physical space, and I am 'seeing' the other's gaze in subtle space, simultaneously. There is a dual perception going on, in two worlds, in two spaces, at once.

Of course, mental and emotional states of soul are not just manifest through the gaze, but also by the whole facial expression, by gesture, posture and movement. Here, too, in my experience, facial expression is a psychic configuration revealed in physical features. I see the physical shapes of the face, and I 'see' the psi-delineated mood. In the days when I painted portraits, it seemed to me that I painted the sitter's face as much out of subtle perception as out of physical perception.

On this sort of view, we always interact with others in a state of dual incarnation and dual perception. The culture would have us believe that it is somehow all taking place in terms of the physical dimension only. And nature supports this cultural error. For physical perception of other persons has a strong claim on our attention and hypnotises us into not noticing the subtle perception that always accompanies it. This visual claim is reinforced by the emotional pre-occupations that so often engage us as we relate to another person.

There is a common experience in favour of the dual incarnation thesis. You cover up your real mood by arranging your physical features and posture to portray a quite different one. But along comes a perceptive observer who notices immediately the disparity between the physical appearance and the hidden feeling. This observer does not - in this instance at any rate - guess, or infer, or hypothesise your real emotional state. Rather she or he perceives your external face and posture, and all at the same time directly *senses* your mood. This direct sensing, I suggest, is tacit clairvoyance - a knowing by psi of your real emotional form in subtle space.

Where there is a loving bond between two people this tacit clairvoyance often works with great ease and fluency. Perception of physical cues and direct sensing of state go hand in hand. This dual intimacy of access to the being of another is one of the primary fascinations of a close relationship. It is usually wrecked when anxiety, fear and suspicion arise.

Tacit clairvoyance yields psi to psi knowledge of the other's mental and emotional states of soul. I say it is going on all the time in interpersonal interaction. But because it is tacit - not fully identified, exercised and developed - there are often ambiguities afoot in our reading of other people, especially where the relationship is not close. Am I sensing his state, or just seeing his face?

So far I have only spoken of changes of external appearance revealing different mental and emotional states. And I have suggested that these are transfigurations of



physical form by subtle configurations of soul; and as such involve, in the person perceiving them, both explicit physical vision and tacit clairvoyance. But there is something more. This is the phenomenon of *presence*.

### 10. Presence and double incarnation

We say that a person has great physical presence; or that an actor has stage presence; or that the speaker on the podium has presence. What do we mean by the word 'presence' used in this kind of context?

Consider the Bolshoi ballet company in Moscow. The principal male dancer in, say, Spartacus, has remarkable presence. On stage he has formidable impact, whether he is immobile in dramatic posture, or bounding through space. Part of it is to do with bearing: how he is spreading his chest broad, commanding physical space with his head, neck and shoulders - and with the flourish of his arms and hands. Part of it is to do with conscious intent and commitment of soul: he seeks to infuse the role with passion of being. Part of it is to do with sheer charisma: a subtle energy that strikes the audience directly at a subliminal level, a powerful effect in subtle space.

These three things - commitment of soul, charisma and bearing - all go together to make up presence. The result is a transfiguration of human expression in this world by potency in another world. It is *as if* the person is living, breathing, being and moving in two worlds at once; is in conscious command of their expression in physical space and in subtle space at the same time. Hence the sense of a visitor, an entrant from the other world into this.

Presence is the most potent form of personal expression. You can cultivate this kind of transfiguration by practising conscious use of the physical body in all its expressive modes simultaneously, and by doing this through *command of the subtle body*.

So you integrate your posture, gesture, movement, facial expression, use of eyes, tone and use of voice, in one comprehensive act of conscious bearing. And this alert unity of bearing in physical space emerges out of subtle-body command in subtle space. It is this command that generates the unmistakable impact of charismatic energy upon those around. And within it all is the soul's commitment and intention to manifest in the fullness of being.

This, of course, is analogous to the Aikido practice of moving the physical body through command of chi energy from the hara chakra. The temporary transfigurations that can be attained in Aikido are remarkable, as skilled devotees will attest. Physical movements in physical space become extraordinarily deft, with great charismatic impact, because they are supercharged with chi energy in subtle space. Your opponents are thrown when you have greater command of chi than they do. And though the formal exercises in Aikido are restricted to the domain of a martial art, there is a widespread effect on the bearing of practitioners in other aspects of their daily life.

Similarly, when actors and actresses have stage presence it is as if they command the whole subtle space within the physical space of the auditorium. They have acquired the knack of managing their physical bearing and expression in this world out of the immanent energies of the other world. Hence they rivet the attention of the spectators: by arousing their inner alertness, enthralling their tacit clairvoyance. And this ability - through charismatic bearing - to attract attention may continue even when they stand silently on the edge of the stage out of the action of the immediate scene.

When someone with presence walks into a room, heads turn as if there is an immediate impact on the subtle bodies of those already in the room. It seems that command of subtle energy in physical bearing also dominates subtle space at a distance.

Similarly, the gaze is a psi phenomenon that can turn heads at a distance. It is a common experience to find you have unwittingly turned round in response to an intense gaze focussed upon you by another person. This also, I believe, is primarily an effect from one subtle body to another.

You may say that actors and others who in certain circumstances have presence have no knowledge of psi. But I believe you can acquire the knack of being doubly incarnated, of directing the physical out of command of the subtle, without necessarily having the concepts. As with many other skills, you know how to do it without quite knowing what it is you are doing. What the knowledge adds, is increased depth and range of command.

The thesis of double incarnation is an important one. It propounds that a person is manifesting simultaneously in a subtle vehicle and a physical body. And that the subtle form is the first, most intimate and potent mode of personal expression, and mediates between a person's intentions and their physical embodiment. In our culture the subtle body is not acknowledged, even where its intimate potency is most evident, as in mutual gazing, transfigurations of appearance and apprehension of personal presence.

The result of this lack of acknowledgment is the persistent delusion of physicality. At its most crude, this delusion consists of the belief that when we move about, one bit of the body, the brain, is moving other bits of the body such as the limbs. Less crudely, it is the belief that the mind through the brain is somehow moving the limbs around.

Either way round, we get *leaden living*: people thinking they are shunting heavy parcels of animated matter around - their bodies. Hence the zombie like aspect of people walking along the streets of any town or city: they collude with gravity at the expense of the inherent levity of their subtle power - which is held in check, grossly underused, by the restricted beliefs which dominate their minds. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how people will move around on the surface of the earth, when they realise that it is through the levity of the other world that they move the physical body in the domain of gravity.

Meanwhile the realisation is kept alive by ballet dancers - who celebrate the command of gravity by levity - by practitioners of other expressive arts, and by devotees of some of the martial arts.

## 11. Auditory transfigurations

I remember once driving through Holland from west to east. It was in the late autumn, just after sunset. The window beside me was open an inch or two. The noise made by the forward movement of the car assailed my ears. It was mainly wind noise, with an addition of noise from the tyres on the road.

I suddenly noticed that this noise had become transfigured by barely audible sounds. It was *as if*, supervening upon the physical noise, I could hear ethereal voices in concert. The more I opened my imagination to this sound, the more sustained the choral revelation became - a rarefied, elevated, potent, extremely subtle kind of singing from a large number of voices at a great distance.

I also noticed I could switch this subtle singing off and on, attending at one moment only to the physical noise as such, then letting it open up to carry the transcendental sound. The rarefied choir was carried by the physical noise, as though the former were transforming and transfiguring the overtones of the latter.

The use of my imagination aided the process of opening up to the choir of voices from inner space, but clearly did not generate it. My imagination was the listening organ of clairaudience. Occam's razor, of course, must insist that auditory phantasy is the sole explanation of such celestial sounds. Heron's beard, by contrast, uses imagination to aid the process of inquiry into their status.

I had a similar kind of experience sitting in the back of a large car being driven by friends through the state of Connecticut in the USA. This was in the middle of spring, but also just after sunset. On this occasion, however, I had previously smoked some cannabis at the home of a leading TV character actor.

Again, the wind and tyre noise of the car became the carrier for inner sounds: this time extraordinarily subtle music. It was a vastly more sophisticated version of the music played by a band of the time, Pink Floyd. But this time, partly because of the derivative nature of the music, partly because I knew it was cannabis induced, I was more prone to regard the sound as the product of my own imagination, chemically liberated into refined creativity.

But a doubt remained. Did the cannabis release my imagination to tap in to the music of subtle domains? The music was unbidden and exhilarating, my state passive and appreciative. Was I a chemically awakened psi listener, rather than a chemically liberated musical phantasiist? The beard sprouts despite the razor.

Now the obvious sceptical thesis about all this is that I am simply sensitive to purely physical overtones of physical sounds, and these overtones get worked up by my imagination into 'music' I am 'hearing'. But this is not what it seems like. It is much more *as if* my auditory imagination is the bridge between physical overtones and a genuine clairaudience of the sound of subtle voices or subtle music. But the experience is still only 'as if' - and so a haunting ambiguity remains.

One way to explore the clairaudient transfiguration of overtones, is for a group of people to become proficient in overtone chanting. This consists in producing a basic somewhat nasal chant resonating in the bones of the face, then arranging the tongue and/or lips in such a way as to release overtones sounding out over the basic chant.

Once a group has learned the skill and can generate overtones readily, it can start a co-operative experiential inquiry into the possibility of clairaudient transfiguration. As the overtones produced by the group merge and mingle, do they for any significant number of people become carriers of subtle sounds that transcend them? And if so, how do the different accounts of these subtle sounds compare with each other? What criteria do people use to differentiate between the products of auditory imagination and clairaudience? How can you tell when one leads over into the other?

## 12. Vocal and musical transfigurations

When I was 16 years old, I attended at Rugby School a concert by Kathleen Ferrier, the extraordinary contralto. It was when she let loose the remarkable timbre of her voice in Orpheus' lament for Eurydice, by Gluck, that I became utterly alert. Her vocal power was transfigured by a numinous quality of tone. In that sound, the two worlds fused: the deeply human, and the profoundly sacramental. I shall never forget

sitting on the edge of my chair suffused by a cascade of glory. My physical listening was entirely subsumed within my clairaudient listening to I knew not what resonances from the universe beyond.

But there is a much more hum-drum 'transfiguration' going on all the time at the heart of everyday conversation. For just as in mutual gazing, clairvoyance of the other's gaze is tacit within physical perception of the other's eyes, so when I listen to anyone speaking, my clairaudience of their emotional tone of voice is tacit within my physical listening to the timbre or physical quality of their voice.

And just as the physical eyes are not the same as the gaze they carry, so too the physical tone of a person's voice is not the same as the emotional or personal tone which that physical tone carries. I listen to the physical tone, and at the same time I 'listen' directly (but do not infer) the emotional tone. This emotional tone is psi or subtle tone.

And so, too, just as the eyes are intrinsically transfigured, when open, by the subtle gaze, the physical tone of voice is intrinsically transfigured by the subtle tone. The transfiguring in each case may be low level, and not up to much in the way of quality and impact, but transfiguring it nevertheless is.

The subtle power of the physical voice can be stepped up a lot. You can enhance its frequency and impact. But this is not the same as simply improving the resonance and range of the physical voice. An actor can develop physical voice, yet its subtle power may remain relatively unused. Richard Burton, at his early Shakespearean best, had developed subtle tone as well as physical voice. Even in the later decay of the Hollywood years, he never quite lost the resonance of a priest manqué.

You can practice intensifying subtle power of voice by chanting or by reciting poetry in sonorous tones: that is, tones that resonate from within the soul. You can feel in this exercise the totality of double incarnation, especially if you have that sense of a deep commitment to the fullness of being. For you are at one and the same time dealing with both physical tone and subtle resonance: they become deeply interfused. This charged voice has a powerful effect on inner space and its subtle energies. Hence the importance of invocation in esoteric ritual.

The human voice is one of the most intimate and flexible zones for manifold transfigurations by inner power. Charismatic speakers have developed the knack of talking fully out of an inward domain of potency, that rivets the inner listener, commanding attention of soul. Mastery of language is not a necessary condition for such charismatic speech, which can manifest through the simplest statements. But it can greatly enhance the effect. For imaginative command of the choice, the meaning and the sound of words, putting them together in combinations of magical persuasion, already seems born out of another domain.

But it is time to bring out Occam's razor. The sceptic might well say: 'All this talk of a subtle tone that is somehow another kind of reality interwoven with the physical tone of the voice, is nonsense. Consider a famous violinist who can make his violin sing with remarkably soulful tone. Are you going to say that the violin strings produce a subtle tone as well as a physical tone? Surely not. The violin is producing a purely physical sound that affects us emotionally. Similarly, there is no extra tone above and beyond the purely physical tone of the human voice.'

On the two worlds view, the answer to this objection is simple. For a physical violin, just as the human voice box, is embedded in the subtle matrix, the subtle universe.

And the violinist can so manage fingers and bow upon the violin strings as to produce physical tones and overtones that reveal subtle tones in and through them. The finest human music creates through its physical sound an auditory opening for the subtle music of inner space, and calls forth an attentive clairaudience at the very centre of physical listening.

So we enter a basic domain of magic, the magic of musical transfiguration, in which the 'shape' of physical sound produced by one or more instruments is transfigured by subtle sound from an inner world. The musical instrument is an inert piece of matter until the musician makes it and/or the air in and around it vibrate. The art and magic of musicianship is to generate a physical vibration that is transformed for the attuned listener by the psi frequencies that it invokes.

Of course, the structure of the music, the pattern of the sound, helps to generate the appropriate quality of the sound. When a great performer plays the work of a great composer, and quality and pattern of sound enhance each other, there is a musical aperture into another world, and we are listening to two kinds of music at once.

Once again we find what for our culture is this unacknowledged duality of perception and awareness. We do not fully grasp that we are simultaneously hearing in two different modes and in two different worlds, that are both interfused and also distinct. Yet tacit clairaudience, I believe, is indispensable to musical appreciation.

## 6. Paradoxes of the arbitrary

I now come to one of the most baffling and bizarre of two worlds phenomena. It is the entry into a totally new world of meaning through chance, or by the adoption of what seem to be quite arbitrary decision principles. It is *as if* everything looks the same, but speaks of a different order of reality - whose frame of reference from beyond is invoked by irrational activity here below.

### 1. A Tantric window

What I mean by a 'Tantric window' is not an opening into the other world of the kind I discussed in Chapter 4. The window is onto this world as if suddenly seen in terms of the *meaning* of another kind of world. The paradox is that things are unaltered in appearance, while being contained within some fundamentally different parameters of intelligibility. They make sense, but the sense is no longer common. A mantle of magic has transformed the ordinary view. The further paradox is that this happens out of some relatively meaningless choices. Let me give an example.

I was on a summer holiday in the Vendee region on the west coast of France with a close friend. We had decided to devote some portion of each day to meditation and ritual, exploration of altered states of consciousness, and of the relation between the two worlds. Our rented cottage was about a mile from the coast on the Ile d'Olonne. This is not a real island, but a strip of land fully joined to the main coastline north and south, and separated for some kilometres in the middle from the mainland by the 'marais' - an irregular network of narrow waterways separated by small fields.

One day - and I have no idea how - we conceived the following plan. We would try to find a place, a particular spot, within a few miles radius of the cottage, that was specially open to the other world (see Chapter 4, section 5). And we would try to find this place by choosing a starting point somewhere near at hand, and then, by car, *taking every sixth left turn*.

I can't remember why we decided to adopt such an arbitrary decision-procedure. But I do remember that we agreed it was so rigid and unpromising that either of us could propose, when the journey was underway, to break out of the sixth-left-turn rule and take any other turning, if we felt a sufficiently strong hunch about doing so.

We had some shopping to do in the next village, including a visit to the drugstore. My friend then proposed that our starting point should be the road immediately beside the drugstore. I agreed and we drove off, meticulously counting the lanes and roads on the left hand side, and taking every sixth left turn. The rule became fascinating, and we lost any wish to abandon it.

The sixth time we took the sixth left turn we entered a narrow lane that had no more turnings off it and that came to an end after a quarter of a mile or so in an open space beside a small river. We parked near a footbridge which led over the river straight into the marais, about a further mile inland from our cottage. Then indeed we saw that the marais, with its curious lattice-work of fields and waterways, had an uninhabited openness to inner space.

It was *as if* the whole extended, intricate pattern of edges between water and earth made physical space more porous to the other world. And we thought it very odd that such an arbitrary decision-rule should have such a precise outcome: the *sixth* sixth left turn being a dead-end and on target. We decided to conduct a further experiment the next day. But first some sceptical thoughts were in order.

We had been studying a map of the area on and off for some days before this first sixth-left-turn experiment. We could have unconsciously noticed the lay-out of roads and lanes; and on the basis of this subliminal knowledge we could have chosen both the starting point on the road beside the drugstore, and the sixth-left-turn rule, in order to end up on the other side of the marais.

But this account, even if plausible, doesn't explain anything away. On the contrary, it just adds an extra layer of the bizarre and the unusual. For how come we soaked up this pattern of roads and lanes from the map? And how come it was there on the map, and in the world, in the first place?

A better, if more cavalier, sceptical attack on the whole fanciful business is to say that anyone turning always to the left at regular intervals is going sooner or later to end up in a dead end. The fact that this occurred on the sixth, sixth left turn was pure coincidence. And since we started out to the south of the marais, faced east and then took left turns, it was predictable that sooner or later we would turn into a lane that ended at the east side of the marais. And so far as the marais was concerned, we were simply having occult phantasies about a physically unusual area.

Curiously, none of this obviously healthy, rational analysis, made much difference to the feeling that it was *as if* the arbitrary became a precise key to the intelligible; as if we had stumbled into a paradoxical and magical dimension of meaning in the world; as if it had patterns written into it according to the logic of a totally different order of reality.

The next day we decided to test the sixth-left-turn rule again. We set out in the late afternoon and chose a starting point nearer to the cottage, to the south, and on the west side of the marais. After the sixth, sixth left turn, we found ourselves in front of the church in the village of Ile d'Olonne, and the hands on the clock on the church tower stood at exactly six minutes past six. We went into the church. The service book on the lectern was open at the marriage service.

The paradox of the arbitrary as magical meaning now became quite compelling. It was the exhilarating sense of entering an unusual luminous pattern, ordering events in space and time in a way that cast off the expectations of ordinary life like an old skin. A new world glistened, exciting and liberating. All talk of mere coincidence became foolish. I wondered what it would be like to live in the world all the time in this mode.

Nor was the excitement just in the mind. Being in the world felt different. Its perceptual texture was closer to the heart. Events spoke with intimate authority. As I looked at the village shining in the evening sunlight, I saw it coded with new values, telling me a story I had never heard before. All we had to do was get the angle of action right, and we would encounter the world under new auspices. The sixth-left-turn practice was only a start, a kindergarten exercise to get us going. A bold new way of life beckoned.

How long would the magic last? We made a third expedition, choosing as our starting point a sign bearing the image of a woman and a man that was on a gate

leading into some school or college in a nearby town. Again we took every sixth left turn. The first two sixth left turns took us into church courtyards; and on each occasion the church bell was tolling. The third sixth left turn took us down to the edge of a long lake, whose shape and lay-out were porous to inner space. The fourth and fifth sixth left turns took us again into church courtyards while the bells were chiming. We were impressed.

By now we were tired and pushing it, and also losing it. But we persisted. The sixth sixth left turn took us into a cul-de-sac of dull suburban houses. And this was definitely a place that was more closed to inner space than open to it. It was a psi dead end, a subtle no go area. The power had gone, the magical paradox of the arbitrary had evaporated. We were back in the ordinary, everyday pattern of events with a glum thud. The Tantric window had quite decisively slammed shut. But with precision, according to its own bizarre six by six logic.

I have no real idea what made this particular Tantric window open - if indeed there was such a window and it was open. Perhaps it was something to do with the nature of our relationship; with the sustained commitment over several days to ritual, invocation and meditation; with the location itself.

But a haunting and inescapable sense remains: that there had been mysteriously reflected into this world the magical order of another kind of world altogether. And that this world becomes inherently revelatory of the values of the other world if you are bold enough to adopt rules of action that radically change your perceptual framework. This thought certainly gives the sceptic within a hard time.

## 2. Synchronicity

Jung and the Jungians have given this concept a lot of publicity. The experience is one in which I suddenly find that the without reflects the within. It is *as if* an external event symbolically mirrors an internal mental event, or symbolically dialogues with, comments upon, a psychological state. There is a colloquium of meaning between the psyche and its immediate physical environment.

The synchronous event out there in the world appears to crop up by mere happenstance. I never seek it out. As I stumble upon it, it unexpectedly lights up with a message. An open door, an open window, an open book, may suddenly *mean* a concurrent state of soul. On the minatory side, a road sign stating 'Danger, men at work' reports imminent psychological hazard on the inner journey. A chance perceptual encounter is paradoxically charged with significance.

For me, a genuinely synchronous experience is attended by a small but noticeable shift from an ordinary to an altered state of consciousness; as if a little bit of seership has enhanced ordinary perception. And the reason I include it as a two worlds phenomenon is because the resonance between the psyche and its environment is more typical of the other world. It is as if the meaning of that world is suddenly reflected into this: synchronous events seem to have the frame of reference of another order of reality.

Belief in synchronicity can clearly be overdone. It then degenerates into a superstitious reading of spurious psychological meanings into all kinds of everyday events. I knew a Jungian psychotherapist who slipped too readily into this pseudo-resonance with the external world. Every trip to the supermarket became an excursion around the soul, every stroll through an airport fraught with archetypal material.



The charm of the physical world is that it seems to resist any excessive assimilation to what is going on in the psyche. At a deep level this may be an illusion, since what we experience as the physical world may in part be the result of belief-systems which earlier in life we learnt to choose. But at a more superficial level of immediate subjective experience, the relative separation of self and world provides for the development of a good deal of healthy psychological autonomy - unencumbered by the constraints of too much synchronicity.

### **3. Divination procedures**

With synchronicity you just happen to stumble on the paradox of arbitrary significance. With divination procedures you quite intentionally set out to generate it.

So the I Ching, the Tarot, tea leaves at the bottom of an emptied cup, cracks in the baked collar bone of an ox, are all ways of deliberately choosing to read meaning into apparently arbitrary patterns. And there are two basic sorts of such divination procedures.

There are those in which the arbitrary pattern is related to symbols already accorded meaning by the divination system - as in the I Ching, and the Tarot. And there are those in which neither the pattern nor its elements are already symbols, as with the use of tea leaves, or cracks in a bone.

The former sorts of procedure have to have some rules about generating an arbitrary pattern. So in the I Ching you throw three coins six times to generate your hexagram, which is interpreted according to the traditional meaning of that hexagram. The fact that you get this hexagram rather than that, out of the 64 possible hexagrams, is the result of the arbitrary fall of the coins. The paradox, of course, is that how they fall is not regarded as arbitrary, but as highly significant in relation to the question you asked and your state of mind when throwing them.

Similarly with the Tarot. You select blind a certain number of cards from the pack and arrange them blind in a certain pattern; so you don't know which cards you have selected or what card is where in the pattern. This gives you an arbitrary arrangement of basic symbols, which is then disclosed, and, paradoxically, regarded as highly pertinent to your question and state of mind. The pattern and the symbols are interpreted according to their traditional meanings.

With tea leaves, of course, you just drain your cup to get at your arbitrary pattern of leaves; and with the collar bone of an ox, just pop it in the fire for a bit to get your arbitrary pattern of cracks. Then it's a free-for-all in finding significance in the result.

### **4. After dinner divination**

I have experimented quite a lot with divination procedures, take none of them with total seriousness, yet nevertheless find that something quite interesting is going on. I have certainly found a paradox-of-the-arbitrary effect. I will describe my most extreme experiment first.

I was running an experiential week-end on altered states of consciousness at a growth centre in a country house in Cornwall. The house is on the site of an old iron-age settlement and has a fogou in the garden. The workshop was residential. On the Saturday evening about 12 of us were still seated around the long wooden table in the kitchen, after dinner. The table was littered with the aftermath of the meal.

We had been talking about divination procedures, and I proposed that there was simply no need for elaborate rules and classic symbols. The shift from the arbitrary to the meaningful could be achieved anywhere, at any time, with appropriate mood and intent. To demonstrate this I suggested that someone take a turn in selecting any small number of items from anywhere on the table, and arrange them in any kind of pattern on the part of the table just in front of her or him. I would then find meaning in the apparently arbitrary pattern.

A woman in her forties was too intrigued to hold on to her scepticism. She chose a dirty plate with remnants of food and a fork on it, a banana, a salt cellar, a sprig of leaves from the table decoration. I then gave a prescient reading of how the arrangement of these items symbolised her current psychological state and life situation. My first sitter was amazed.

Now my seership bloomed. Person after person took their turn and became enthralled with synchronous revelations leaping up from bits of kleenex, cigarette butts, pieces of cucumber, fragments of wax from the candle base. Time and again quite arbitrary patterns of bizarre items sprang into significance.

The eight year old daughter of the owner of the house wanted a turn, her eyes alive with fascination. She spotted the cat prowling around the kitchen. With typical resourcefulness, she picked it up and put it on the edge of the table in front of her, along with other sundry inanimate items. Untouched by the girl, the cat stood silent and obligingly still throughout my reading, a true familiar, at home in the warlock's craft at last. As soon as I had finished speaking, it jumped back onto the floor to continue its prowl.

Of course, it was all a game, and a wonderful game too. And yet it was also *as if* brooding over that intense concentration, that strangely elevated mood of magical meanings, there was the subtle ambience of another order of reality. The game seemed to thrive on the ambiguity. Take the presence of another world too seriously, then our game would die the death of excessive credulity. But dismiss that possible presence totally, and the game would lose all heart, all warmth, all vigour, and die the death of excessive scepticism.

I have frequently experimented with more formal divination procedures, simply to show that there is nothing particularly sacrosanct, or unusually effective, about the ancient, classic ones. So here is another good 'game' for a dinner party evening.

The first thing is to devise a small pack of 8 to 12 basic symbols. Sometimes I improvise such a pack on the spot, or invite the assembled group of 'sitters' to do that. The selection of symbols can be quite arbitrary, although usually I put in one or two that are a bit ambiguous, such as mud; and one or two that appear more sinister or threatening, such as a knife with blood dripping off it. Each symbol is drawn as a picture on a card. A typical pack of symbols might include: the sun, a road, a woman, a man, mud, a coffin, a flower, a tiger, a knife with blood dripping off it, a cathedral, the moon.

The sitter is invited to formulate an important question about their personal development or life situation. Or simply to present their psyche for whatever synchronous revelation about it that is thrown up by the draw. The cards are turned upside down on a table and the sitter moves them about until they are 'just so', that is, in a properly arbitrary array. The sitter then chooses, again in a quite haphazard manner, five cards,

and without looking at them, places them upside down in form of a cross - one card in the middle, the other four cards forming the arms of the cross.

The cards are now turned over, and I commence my interpretation. I explain that the card in the middle represents the sitter's present state or status, the card on the left of it relevant influences from the past, the card below it relevant current psychological, internal factors, the card above it relevant current circumstantial, external factors, and the card to the right of it relevant future possibilities. My interpretation cashes the symbols out in terms of these five categories and their interactions.

Once again, my mood and intent is pitched in that ambiguous zone *as if* what is going in is caught up in the rationale of another order of reality - which casts meaning from beyond into the arbitrary here below. Then provided none of us take them too sceptically or too seriously, excellent and luminous readings will flow, generating the brooding, ambiguous conviction that something important is happening that should be taken with a grain of salt.

### 5. Oracles and the logic of ambiguity

Oracles are notoriously ambiguous in their genesis - do they come from this world or the next, or from some mish mash of the two? And in their content - do they mean this or that or something entirely different? Divination procedures yield one class of oracle, and have the same kinds of ambiguity. But such ambiguity is our protection. It means we should never take oracles too seriously.

So a proper response to them is to embrace the logic of ambiguity. This new logic requires us to transcend the law of contradiction in Aristotelian logic - which asserts that something cannot be both A and not-A. For we need to say of a divination procedure that it is both only a game and more than a game. And we need to say of the oracle it yields that we will both not take it seriously and take it seriously: we will conduct our affairs as if we had not heard it, although we know we have.

This tantalising irresolution of thought is often characteristic of living at the interface of the two worlds. However, it is in the ambiguity of the divide that we sometimes find the luminosity of the source. As we face two different directions at once, we are illuminated in the blind area that unites them.

### 6. The guru game

I have discovered an interesting way in which a person's oracular power can be released by a quite arbitrary procedure, and also by the allocation to them by others of special status and function. The person's *presence* too can be greatly enhanced by this method, and I could equally well have included this item in the previous chapter, where I discussed the phenomenon of presence.

I have used this exercise several times in workshops on altered states of consciousness so that participants can explore the dynamics of oracular power and presence. And I invite them to engage in the whole process while embracing the logic of ambiguity.

We are seated in a circle on cushions on the floor, without shoes. I ask everyone to remove their left sock. On all the occasions I have done this, everyone in the group has been wearing socks. Had they not been, I would simply have chosen some other common item everyone had in their possession.

All the left socks are put in a bag or other container and then stirred or shaken. The bag is slowly passed around the group. Each member picks out, blind, without looking into the bag, one sock. The last sock to be picked out identifies the group member who is to become the guru. So if the last sock belongs to you, this arbitrary effect appoints you as the guru to the group.

The guru now sits on top of a throne made of a large pile of cushions. Any group member who is moved to do so is invited to go and sit in front of the guru and ask her or him any basic question that comes to mind. It may be about the nature of reality, about personal destiny or some personal problem, about inner development, or whatever. And the guru answers.

What is interesting about this piece of theatre with its arbitrary election procedure is how much oracular power it bestows upon the person in the guru-role. Of course, you must not take what the person says seriously. But equally, you must not dismiss it as irrelevant and unimportant. You must embrace it and discard it all at once.

I remember an elderly retired solicitor, thin and stooped and short of height, engaging in manner, but extremely diffident about his capacity to participate in group activities of this sort. Needless to say, his sock was the last to come out of the bag. Our arbitrary procedure had elected as our guru the most improbable member of the group - or so it seemed at first.

With great reluctance he accepted the guru role. But once active within it, he became transformed. He spoke with spiritual authority and insight; his bearing became potent with charisma. His modesty was the vehicle for great oracular power. So much so that it was difficult to retain a hold on the logic of ambiguity. Even more extraordinary, after the whole exercise was over and we were all back to normal, his archetypal self disappeared effortlessly back into the chrysalis of his diffidence - as if it had never been born.

What is arbitrary in the guru game, of course, is the election procedure, with the added improbability that it is used to cast someone into the guru role. And it is *as if* this bizarre combination reveals non-ordinary meanings in what an ordinary person chooses to say.

## 7. New symbols for old

Now for Occam's razor, and the application of a little healthy scepticism. A divination procedure is nothing but the exercise of a fertile imagination by a charlatan in the presence of credulous dupes. You can read anything into anything: a coffin and a tiger can be read as imminent death from aggression, or as the birth of the noble id from the death of the superego, or as mourning for the loss of physical vigour, and so on and so on.

Furthermore, the symbols used in all divination procedures are so general, that anyone can identify with any combination of them, and with almost any interpretation of any combination of them. The credulity of the listeners will make them search out and magnify precisely those aspects of their experience which support the interpretation. And in any case, the clever diviner can get enough information from the physical appearance of a sitter to avoid making obviously stupid statements about him or her.

Still wielding Occam's razor, let me give an example of how the generality of divination symbols can cause a fickle transfer of allegiance among them. This story tells

how easy it is for people who identify with one basic symbol to identify with a quite different one, when given a sufficiently esoteric reason for doing so.

Many years ago I used to cast horoscopes, and had a circle of friends all of whom believed in astrology, without having any very deep knowledge of its technicalities. One evening five of these friends were gathered in my living room, and I decided to conduct a most interesting experiment. It was to do with personal allegiance to that sign of the zodiac known as the sun sign. This is the sign the sun is in on the person's birth date, and the sign which is considered to make a major psychological statement about the person. Everyone in the room knew what their sun sign was.

I started to talk technically about astrology. I explained that western astrologers used the signs of the zodiac determined by the vernal equinox: that these signs are 30 degree segments of the ecliptic, measured from the point of the vernal equinox, starting with the sign Aries. I also explained that owing to the very slow conical rotation of the earth's axis occurring once every 24,000 years, there is the phenomenon of precession of the equinoxes. This means that the point of the vernal equinox moves very slowly in relation to the fixed constellations of stars.

I then came to the crunch of the matter: because of this precession, the signs of the zodiac as determined from the point of the vernal equinox are now displaced from the fixed constellations bearing the same names by over 24 degrees of arc. But Hindu astrologers use the zodiac of the fixed constellations.

So we have two quite different zodiacs, each using the same twelve names, but displaced from each other by over 24 degrees, that is, by almost one whole sign. There is the fixed zodiac of the constellations, of the actual star groups named Aries, Taurus and so on - used by Hindu astrologers. And there is the moving zodiac of 30 degree segments measured from the point of the vernal equinox - used by western astrologers, and also called Aries, Taurus, etc.

I told my friends that for most people - only excluding those who fell into the 6 degrees of overlap between the fixed and moving zodiacs - their sun sign as calculated by Hindu astrologers would be different from their sun sign as determined by western astrologers. The fixed zodiac sun sign would in fact be the sign before the moving zodiac sun sign. The sun in Aries on a western chart would turn up, for the same person, as the sun in Pisces on a Hindu chart. And so on round the zodiac.

So far, so good. The analysis was quite correct. Now I introduced the spurious bit, unbeknown to my friends. I drummed up all sorts of plausible reasons (none of which I really believed) why it is better to use the fixed zodiac as the Hindu astrologers do to this day, and as indeed all the astrologers of the ancient world, east and west, did. And when my friends seemed to be persuaded by these arguments, I pointed out that all their sun signs had been derived from the moving zodiac of western astrologers, and that from the 'proper' fixed zodiac point of view, each person's sun sign was the one previous to the one they currently had allegiance to.

I went round the room, telling my Taurus friend she was really Aries, my Libra friend he was really Virgo, my Cancer friend she was really Gemini, and so on. What was astonishing was the way in which each person so readily identified with their new sun sign. Not only did they switch their allegiance to the new sign instantly, they did so with evident relief, liberation and enlightenment - as if at last they were getting at the real truth about themselves. I have never forgotten this telling demonstration of categorical fickleness.

Finally, I confessed to what I had been doing, and a furious discussion was let loose about the implications of my experiment. I also said that in reality I could not find any good reasons for adopting one zodiac rather than the other, and hence no good reasons for adopting either. I have long since given up casting horoscopes, because of the incoherence of the technical assumptions of astrology.

### **8. Categorical addiction**

The credulous soul will very rapidly do business with any set of basic symbols, especially when they are presented within the theatre of authority. And once inside the set, the believer will quite happily shift allegiances around in order to save the basic addiction. Like they used to say of the Quabalah: 'Once inside it, it is difficult to get out of it'.

For centuries, the Chinese were locked inside their five element law, classifying everything under fire, air, water, wood or metal. They crammed all experience into the system, not looking to see what was actually going on. And there is no doubt that human beings have, in many cultures and in many epochs, preferred categorical dogmatism to the risk and uncertainty of genuine inquiry.

Divination procedures, too, can rapidly become the domain of those who match credulity with arbitrary dogmatism, who collude with superstition as a defence against the challenge of real autonomy of thought and choice. People can surrender their souls in inappropriate ways to sets of symbols. But I do not think this sceptical account is the end of the matter.

### **9. The paradox retained**

Provided we grasp the logic of ambiguity and apply it to divination procedures in the way I suggested earlier, then they are a fruitful area for studying what seems to be a real paradox-of-the-arbitrary effect. One way of partially demystifying the paradox, is to argue that the arbitrary pattern of symbols, or tea leaves, or astrological elements, does two things.

First, it distracts the rational, practical mind - disarms and deposes it, so that an intuitive, even extrasensory faculty can tune in directly to the psyche and situation of the sitter. Secondly, it provides a systematically ambiguous framework - capable of receiving innumerable different interpretations - on which this faculty can project its findings.

The real function of the elaborate system of symbols and rules is to occupy the distracted mind. It thinks it is engaging with some ancient wisdom that portrays the world as it really is at a deep level, without realising that the system is fundamentally incoherent.

And the while the rational mind is thus busily deluded, the divinatory faculty can get to the heart of the matter quite outside the constraints of the system. Once the direct divination has done its work, it is not too difficult to fit its findings into the symbols and rules. This analysis applies particularly well to astrology, which has so many interacting elements to interpret.

While I accept this argument as a highly plausible, positive account of what really goes on in the best use of divination procedures, it is still *as if* there is a paradox-of-the-arbitrary effect that transcends it. And this effect is something to do with the fact that what is a genuinely arbitrary pattern from the point of view of this world,

becomes *as a pattern* significant when caught up in the perspective of another world. And this becoming significant as another world sort of pattern, while it does not exclude the factor of projected psi insight, *cannot be reduced to it*.

In other words, when you arrange the items on the table into an arbitrary pattern, and I give you a reading, it is not only that I project onto that pattern my psi hunches about your state of life and soul. There is something else going on. The tacit universe is decoding its values in the explicit universe. The other world declares the logic of its forms in this world.

The implications of all this for daily living are interesting. If you live in this world from the point of view of this world, there is good deal of the arbitrary going on. And this means there is plenty of scope for real choice and autonomy. If there is no genuine chance in everyday life, there is no genuine choice.

If you live in this world from the point of view of the other world, there is a good deal of the significant going on: events in this world become subsumed within a logic that precludes real chance and so real choice. The moral of all this seems to be: healthy human autonomy depends on a proper separation of the perspectives of the two worlds most of the time. But if you do adopt the other world perspective on arbitrary patterns in this world, protect yourself with practising what I have called the logic of ambiguity.

Perhaps, after all, opening Tantric windows is not an all weather activity.

## 7. The doctrine of powers

The assumption behind the doctrine of powers is that this physical reality emerges out of the other reality, and that entities in this reality have their matrix, their eidolon, and their ally in the other reality.

What I mean by 'matrix' is the subtle formative field that underlies the genesis, development and maintenance of a physical entity. The subtle field is assumed to be the primary locus for the blueprint of the structure of the physical entity, and for the programme of the processes that go on in the physical entity. The secondary locus for the blueprint and the programme will, of course, be in the physical entity itself, for example, in the bio-chemical code in the genes.

What I mean by 'eidolon' is the idea, archetype, living image, that is the source of the species type, the identity, of the physical entity. And what I mean by 'ally' is the manifestation of the eidolon exclusively in subtle reality, in the other world. So we have the eidolon, the subtle ally, the subtle matrix, and the physical entity: for example, the generative idea of a tiger, the subtle tiger, the subtle matrix of the physical tiger, the physical tiger.

Now the doctrine of powers asserts that we can deal with the physical world not only by means of explicit physical interventions and transactions - which include work done by the physical body and by machines that harness various kinds of physical energy; but also by means of implicit interventions in relation to eidolons, allies and matrices.

Many cultures and occult traditions have been interested in subtle allies of an animal kind: the subtle cat, the subtle jaguar, the subtle eagle - encountered solely in the other world. It is *as if* animal allies in the psi universe, when suitably invoked, become forces for enhancing human mastery of the physical world, and of social events in that world. See section 14 for more on allies.

Well, so much for the theory. What evidence, if any, lends any kind of support for such a view? There's not much, but there is some, although it does not go very far. I am referring, of course, only to my own personal experience - which is the limited scope of this book.

### 1. Cat power

I was spending the night in a deserted hotel in Mexico on the north coast of Yucatan, just to the west of Progreso. In the very early morning, between sleeping and waking, I saw, clairvoyantly, a large subtle cat in akashic space, poised in its subtle world and looking 'down' at me as I lay on my back in the hotel bed.

I decided that this cat ally or cat power might be beneficent and helpful to me, so I opened my being to receive it. No sooner had I done this, than the subtle cat pounced, and seemed to disappear into the vulnerable left side of my subtle body, leaving me feeling invaded and bruised by a disturbing, disruptive kind of energy. It was as if the cat power had dissolved into me. I was restless, disoriented, and unable to sleep.



I got out of bed, cursing my naiveté and ignorance of how to handle 'powers', and did some energy exercises to try to clean up and close my subtle body. Then I climbed back into the bed and managed to get to sleep for another two hours or more. When I finally woke up I still felt a bit psychically bruised and uneasy.

After breakfast, I sat upright on a chair in the hotel bedroom meditating on the space between the worlds. At *was as if* some power or presence gave me a clear prompting to go to the next village to the west, Chelem. I did so.

Wandering around Chelem, I soon met an American Korean war veteran sitting in his garden. He told me his life story, and I told him I was looking for a villa to rent. His Mexican wife took me to meet a German-born Canadian from Vancouver, who wintered every year for three months in Progreso, who knew everybody in town, and walked the streets with a small parrot on his wrist. His name was Hermann.

Hermann introduced me to a retired Mexican bar-owner, who agreed to rent me his two-bedroomed villa on the coast at Chicxulub, just east of Progreso, for ten pounds a week. I felt vaguely uneasy during my negotiations with the ex-bar-owner, but nevertheless settled terms and arranged to occupy the villa later in the day after he had cleaned it up. I drove my hired Volkswagen beetle back into Progreso and took a table in El Cordes, the best coffee shop in town.

I was sitting there reading a book on the Maya, and making notes, when I spotted a woman in khaki shorts and jacket standing near me and looking sometimes at me and sometimes at the chalked-up menu on the wall. I invited her to join me. It turned out she had just emerged from a ten day solitary Buddhist retreat in her rented wooden hut in Chelem, and was in need of social contact. Hermann, who was at the other end of the coffee shop with his wife, had sent her over to check me out.

I asked her to tell me her name. She said, 'Cat'. I raised my eyebrows. She said, 'Yes, that's my name. I'm called Cat, as in 'cat'. It's short for Catherine.' She was American by birth.

We sat at the table and talked for several hours, drank coffee, later had a meal. I learnt she was forty years old and had been a drop-out since the age of thirty. After leaving school in California, she had done a degree and postgraduate work, had taught during her twenties in colleges in the USA and England. Then she gave it all up and hit the Katmandu and cannabis trail, wandering the physical world and drug-induced states of mind. Still a wanderer, she was now on the spiritual path, having given up drugs two years previously, and having shifted her allegiance to regular meditation in the Buddhist tradition.

She moved around the physical world on the basis of psi promptings and hunches, consciously adopted, and always landed on her feet, with true cat power. I was intrigued. But the more she talked the more I felt subtly oppressed and dragged down by her energy, which seemed to have a weight of unresolved negativity in tow.

By now it was time for me to move into my villa. She asked to see it. We drove out to Chicxulub, I showed her round the rooms and the spacious courtyard. Then I drove her home to her hut in Chelem. We arranged to meet again a few days later, when I would pick her up at dawn and we would spend the day together visiting a nearby Mayan site. We parted, uneasy with each other, glad to be separate, yet committed to meet at least once again.

I returned to my villa to settle in. It was dark. Part of the dining/living area was separated from the courtyard by a wall of perforated concrete blocks, forming a trellis

work of openings from floor to ceiling - an architectural gesture between the worlds. While unpacking, I was suddenly disturbed by a sound on this trellis work, and looked up to see a cat halfway up the outside of the wall, peering in at me through one of the apertures. We eyeballed each other for half a minute, both of us absolutely still. The cat then swiftly continued its climb and disappeared over the villa roof.

The next morning I discovered that this cat was resident with its kittens in one of the outhouses on the west side of the courtyard of the villa. It was clear too that it had normally gone through the empty villa to get from the courtyard to the street. Now because of my occupation it had to go over the roof.

In the space of twenty four hours, I had encountered a subtle cat that had invaded my psychic space, I had met a human called Cat who had oppressed my interpersonal space, and an ordinary village cat who was occupying part of my rented physical space. I had no real idea of what to make of all this, but it was certainly interesting. Coincidence and happenstance it was not. It was *as if* I was undergoing some very elementary lesson about the nature of powers; and as if I was a bit too dim to grasp it.

I met the human Cat a few days later and we took a picnic lunch to the Maya site at Dzibilchaltun, halfway between Progreso and Merida. Here, in the limestone that is the bedrock of the Yucatan plain, there is a very large circular well. It is a beautiful pool, a true opening between the worlds. We sat on its edge in the shade of trees, and talked for a long time. It was for me an instructive talk.

I learnt a lot from Cat about the art of wandering the world, about tuning in to the tacit dimension of the flux of physical and social events. You have an inner ear tuned to the other world while moving around this world, so that you always do land on your feet and find your way. I surmised that she was indeed resonating to cat power, to the subtle ally, identifying with it in her roaming, almost taken over by it.

And by surrendering to a cat ally myself, I had quickly tuned in to the subtle flux of social events, which found me a villa (occupied by a cat) in very short order. But I also learnt from Cat that the price I felt she paid for a total life-style organised by attunement to cat power was for me unacceptable. For it seemed to lead to isolation and social alienation, giving birth to psychic and spiritual experiences in out of the way places, like the cat giving birth to kittens in the outhouse of my villa.

The price, too, seemed to be one of psychological dissociation and buried negativity: a studied unawareness of what was piling up in the soul behind the scenes of the cat-powered focus on the life of the wanderer.

What seemed clear, however, was that there was a cat power to tap in the other reality. And whether it was wise to do so or not, such power could be harnessed as a psychic aid to organising events in everyday life in this world. Perhaps I should say that it was *as if* all this seemed clear. At any rate, by the end of the day, I did feel I had grasped an important lesson.

The doctrine of animal powers as allies is an old one, found in many occult traditions of those who live close to nature. Personally, I do not find it very congenial, since in practice it seems to involve too much a feeling of the subtle body being invaded. But then my experience, apart from its ambiguity, is extremely limited; and I may just be airing my ignorance.

However, I did once find myself quite unexpectedly using the doctrine of animal powers in a way that for me at any rate had none of this invasive feeling. So it may all be a matter of motive, use and context. But this next experience is very ambiguous in

terms of possible explanations, and is slender evidence indeed for a subtle animal ally effect.

## 2. Mouse power

I had returned from Mexico to fulfil a contract to run some five day workshops at the University of Surrey in England. The first one was on interpersonal skills training, with 19 participants from all branches of the helping professions. It ran from Monday to Friday inclusive.

Some time during the weekend immediately before the workshop, I found a small black rubber mouse on the floor in the front of my car. I still have no idea where it came from. I have checked with all the people who were passengers the previous week, and all disclaim owning a black rubber mouse much less dropping one on the floor of my car. Perhaps some child on the street threw it through the open door or window when I was not looking.

I put the mouse in my briefcase and decided to take it to the workshop. At some point on the first day, I placed the mouse in the middle of the floor, in the centre of the circle of chairs. I said nothing; the participants were perplexed, intrigued, amused. I left the mouse there throughout the whole of the day. I put it there again for the whole of the second day; and each day for the rest of the week.

By the third day, people were starting to do business with the mouse, querying its role, its relevance and its meaning. I asked what projections were being put upon the mouse; what people were seeing it as, symbolically. A considerable consensus emerged: the mouse stood for the exposure of vulnerability, for risk-taking in areas where one feels timid and insecure and without power. It became a paradoxical focus, empowering the acceptance of powerlessness, hurt and fear.

On the fourth day, there was enormous cathartic release in the workshop, many people working simultaneously on the discharge of pent-up distress, with tears and sobbing. Of course, this was because we had reached the part of the programme dealing with cathartic interventions, following a progressive build-up on confronting interventions; and because the whole group had together just practised radical breathing and body-work techniques. But it was also *as if* mouse power was afoot, as if the subtle trembling energy of timorousness, the mouse ally, was a subtle catalyst behind the psychological scenes.

I mislaid the black rubber mouse not longer after the five day workshop. After two months or so, it turned up briefly somewhere among my things. I then mislaid it again, and only came across it when packing on the day I was to fly abroad to run another five day workshop of exactly the same kind and title. I decided to take it with me.

Again I put it in the middle of the circle of participants half way through the first day and for every day thereafter. And again on the fourth day there was a spontaneous release of distress among several members. The sudden catharsis started with deeply denied and intense pain of bereavement erupting in one person in the middle of a general discussion on psychodynamic theory. And while I was working with this person, others were triggered off. It was two hours before all the cathartic work was done.

In this group, I had dealt much more intentionally with mouse power, explaining to the group that I was working with the energy of 'tacit symbolic projection'. For every-

one it was a bit of fun, an unusual and slightly bizarre game, to leaven the concentrated content of the workshop. Some did a little imaginative business with the mouse, seeing it as this or that. Some retained a friendly intellectual scepticism about its role and status - for them, it was just a rubber mouse and nothing more. At a subtler and deeper level, all were intrigued, engaged.

Now of course some kind of catharsis would almost certainly have occurred at some point in the workshop without any invocation of mouse power. All I can say, once again, is that it was *as if* the focal symbolism of the mouse added an extra dimension of facilitation below, beyond, outside the explicit level at which people were coping with the mouse in their conscious minds. And that extra dimension, that tacit power, was truly potent in its own mode.

There is a footnote to this strange tale. There was a young man at the first workshop who was much intrigued by my use of the rubber mouse, by the way it became a focus for such ardent speculation and projection. He came to another five day workshop with a different title which I ran shortly after the first one. He inquired where the mouse was, and I explained that I had lost it. He clearly missed a surrogate for animal power in the middle of the room, and so turned up on the third morning with a decoy duck that he had bought at a shop selling sporting goods. It was in the middle of the room for three days, but it yielded little power.

### **3. Angles as powers**

I had rented a small apartment from a surgeon in Veracruz. It had two bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom and living/dining room. It was in the back streets well away from the sea, tucked behind another apartment, which the surgeon had rented out to a handsome young Italian who ran a downtown discotheque. And behind my apartment was the surgeon's private operating room. 'I only do minor operations here', he said, as he flung open the door to let me peer in. The equipment looked rickety and primitive. I felt anxious for his patients. But I liked his warmth and friendliness a great deal.

I had come to Veracruz because I had stood at the edge of a wood in Emmsland in West Germany, and had put out mentally a general rhetorical enquiry as to where to go next to explore the interaction of the two worlds, of inner and outer space. The name 'Veracruz' came unexpectedly into my mind. I could not even remember where it was: Spain, Venezuela, my mind groped with basic geography.

I went to the local library and reminded myself that Veracruz was on the east coast of Mexico, and its principal port. Of course. It all came back to me. Thirty years before I had been driving through central Mexico and had wanted to go to Yucatan - to visit the great centres of the ancient Maya, and to find their residual power still alive in the land.

The peninsula of Yucatan is remote from Mexico City, far to the east, and projecting north into the Gulf of Mexico. In those days there were no paved roads to it, only dirt roads. I had a small English car, and was strongly advised to ship it by boat from Veracruz to Progreso, the main port on the north coast of Yucatan. But I did not have the money or the time to make that trip. Since then my wish to visit Yucatan had become a haunting piece of unfinished business.

Immediately Veracruz became once again in my mind the gateway to Yucatan. So I decided to visit both. I flew to Mexico City and hired a brand new Volkswagen beetle - they are still being manufactured by Volkswagen in a factory south-east of the capital.

I left Mexico City rather late in the day and drove east toward Veracruz, spending the first night in Orizaba. I set off early the next morning. When I had gone through Cordoba and was within 70 kilometres of Veracruz, I felt a strong impulse to turn right at a major fork in the road. I stopped the car and consulted Baedeker's map of Mexico. The right fork would take me south-east past Palenque, the first great Maya site and the most westerly one, then on round the southern sweep of the Gulf of Mexico to Yucatan. After considerable doubt and resistance, I yielded to the impulse and headed south-east, unsure of what I was about.

The beetle surged forward for long hours. By mid-afternoon, I was driving in a leisurely way along the side road that leads to Palenque off highway 186, when my mind was suddenly hit with the force of a revelation about the doctrine of powers. I stopped the car, my brain overcome by the energy upon it. This was not mere conjecture or speculation. It was an opening up of consciousness to the inner universe, an opening in which archetypal thoughts themselves were liberating powers. The reality of the doctrine was evident in the thinking of it. I sat there, reeling with insight.

Palenque was the first great site of Maya culture that I was to visit. I climbed up temple pyramids, pored over reliefs and carvings, my mind suffused with the notion of powers. Here immediately I saw a culture living in two worlds at once, attuned to subtle allies through ritual, symbol, hierarchy, social structure and architecture. I did not like all that I saw: a lot of it was oppressive, rigid, superstitious and abusive. But the imprint of the inner world of powers on the outer forms of the culture was unmistakable.

I continued to explore the Mayan account of the doctrine of powers at the sites of Kabah, Sayil, Labna, intensively at Uxmal; at Chichen Itza, Tulum, Coba; and at Dzibilchaltun. I reflected that just as the developed nations today abuse their grasp of technological power in war and nuclear arms and other excesses, such as the expropriation of profits from the third world; so too the ancient Maya abused their grasp of subtle powers, of subtle allies and matrices, in keeping the masses oppressed, in the use of human sacrifice. And I reflected too, on what a proper use of subtle allies and matrices might involve.

Some weeks, some adventures and 6000 kilometres later I returned to Veracruz to keep my appointment with that city. It was difficult to be certain exactly what I was doing in the friendly surgeon's small apartment. Every day I devoted myself to painting with acrylic paints I had bought in Germany. In the afternoon I would wander on the beach, sunbathe and swim. But was Veracruz just a symbol in my mind, because of past associations, for an entry into Yucatan? Or did it have some call upon me as a place in its own right?

One day about noon I was lying on my back on the bed. I opened my inner sight to three beings in front of me and above me in the other world. They were impressive and austere, had a great deal of presence, seemed benign, and wanted to communicate with me. One of them said, 'One hundred and twenty'.

Then I lost them. My psychophysical system couldn't handle the subtle energy, couldn't stay open to it. The doors of the brain ajar to the other world snapped shut, as if on steel springs that were released by exposure to too much light. I went shopping and had a meal.

I speculated a good deal on the meaning of 'One hundred and twenty'. Did this number refer to days, hours, minutes, years, page numbers in a book (Baedekers guide to

Mexico had information about the towns of Cuautla and Cuernavaca on page 120), degrees of longitude (longitude 120 degrees west of Greenwich is out in the Pacific Ocean at the latitudes of Mexico)? Or was it degrees of arc in some astronomical measurement? None of these hypotheses seemed to lead anywhere, and I became irritated with the beings who had slipped a number into my head without giving any kind of clue as to its reference or relevance. I went out again into the hot sun and drove to the beach for a swim.

The next day during the morning I once again lay on my back on the bed. I decided that 'One hundred and twenty' referred to an angle for opening awareness. So with my arms stretched out to the side and my legs splayed, I opened my awareness upwards at an angle of 120 degrees.

I imagined a straight line, a tangent to the earth's surface, running through my brain and at right angles to my spine. Again in my imagination, from a point on this line in the centre of my brain, I measured on a vertical plane upwards from the line two 30 degree angles, one on each side of my brain. Thus was thus a 120 degree angle facing vertically upwards from the centre of my brain - and I held my awareness within it, letting my mind open up and expand into inner space at this angle.

Suddenly it as *if* a big subtle engine, rather like an internal combustion engine, drove through the left side of my chest and out the back. Then with inner sight I saw a coloured ring of open light above me. I attended fully to this open ring, and through it a whole sequence of signs unfolded and tumbled into my clairvoyant eye. These visions culminated in a very concentrated, illuminated energy coming down onto my head from above.

I was looking up into something like an elongated narrow pyramid of power. There was no direct perception of any presence; only the reception of this intensely subtle, exhilarating light. It was *as if* not only the subtle body, but the physical brain itself was being impregnated with enhanced awareness - which at the same time involved energetic and spatial phenomena - of the other reality. After the experience faded, I relaxed for a bit, then got up to take some food.

While eating, I speculated on the notion of angles as powers. I got out my Baedekers map of Mexico. I noted that my strong impulse, after leaving Mexico City, to turn right off the Cordoba-Veracruz road and drive south-east, had taken me through an angle of 120 degrees. And then it seemed no mere coincidence that this change of direction culminated in a sudden illumination about the doctrine of powers on the side road leading to Palenque, the first great Mayan site I was to visit.

I remember I had resisted the change of direction, and drove on past the turning where the impulse had overcome me. But as I went on, the pull of the angle became more and more irresistible. Despite the apparent irrationality of the urge, I yielded to it, drove back to the fork in the road and headed south-east. And it was only after I had made the turning, gone through the angle and driven all the way to Palenque, that I started to feel secure about the change of direction.

Now I made a big 'as if' story out of the whole business. I had originally intended to go straight from Mexico City to Veracruz. Instead I had taken a 120 degree turn to the south-east. This had led me into the doctrine of powers and a long journey, inner and outer, through Yucatan. When finally at the conclusion of my travels, I visited Veracruz, the city of the true cross, I was initiated by three presences into the notion

of angles as powers, in particular the notion of 120 degrees as a critical angle for opening awareness to the other reality.

Then I thought of the trine aspect in the astrology I had rejected - the 120 degree benign influence of one planet upon another. I thought of myself leading a group standing at an angle of 120 degrees with the persons on either side of me in the open circle of participants. I thought of the three times 120 degrees of the three legged symbol of the Isle of Man, where I had lived as a hermit for a period, going into altered states. I thought of...

The sceptic in me interrupted such reflections, scandalised by the naiveté and credulity of such angle-mongering.

#### 4. Lines as powers of vision

The whole idea of geometrical entities as powers is an odd one: it supposes that such spatial abstractions can have a dynamic influence upon human consciousness and behaviour. But from the standpoint of the doctrine of powers, four aspects of reality deeply interpenetrate: archetypes, space, energy and consciousness. The archetypal forms of space itself will have a profoundly energetic effect upon shifts of consciousness. This, at any rate, is the theory. Let me elaborate it further.

The archetypal forms of space comprise, at least, point, line and plane. Physical reality is very much the world of the point: things with centres of gravity move from point to point. The other, subtle reality is the domain of the plane: beings with circumferences of levity move from plane to plane.

In physical vision, there is only one perspective from the point of perception. In psi vision, there can be multiple perspectives from the plane of perception.

In this world, the line is a point-to-point connection. And the line of vision is from the eye to the centre of the visual field; we always look along a line that goes straight to what we look at. In the other world, the line is a plane-to-plane intersection. Here the line of vision, which is at the intersection between the moving plane of the third eye and the plane of its perceived field, circles the periphery of that field. We are out there participating in what we look at, with variegated views of it.

Psi vision, being the more inclusive, subsumes the point-to-point mode. But the point-to-point psi perspectives are not just from where I am but from any point on the primary *peripheral* line of my psi sight. Psi vision can contract itself to look out exclusively from the centre where I stand, and thus become like physical vision; but its supernatural tendency is to function at and from the periphery, using the centre point as a coordinating reference for its diverse views from out there.

In physical vision, while the central line of sight is from the eye to the focal point in the visual field, subsidiary lines of sight go from the eye in an extended cone to the rest of the visual field. In psi vision, while the main line of sight is along the intersection of the main moving plane of the third eye and the main plane of its subtle field, different but concomitant lines of sight are along the intersections of different planes through the third eye and different planes of its subtle field. Hence the initially baffling, tumbling overlap of diverse perspectives, from many points on many *different* peripheral lines of sight. Hence, too, the strong sense of participating in the creative generation of what is being perceived.

You may say that it is the structure of the physical eyes that determines the perspectives of ordinary vision, so how can a perspective be generated from a point

out there on the periphery of the clairvoyant field, where there is no kind of structured organ of sight of any sort. One highly speculative answer is that all views are aspects of the spatial form of universal consciousness: the diversity of the imagination of the divine in entertaining innumerable vistas of its creation.

The third eye, the 'organ' of clairvoyant sight, is a centre of reference that coordinates a peripheral selection of these perspectives and views that are inherent in the structure of universal consciousness. And it makes this selection by pitching its vision at a certain planes of interaction with its chosen field of view. The physical eyes, by contrast, materialise a very limited bit of the inherent spatial structure of universal consciousness, providing a kindergarten of visual grasp entirely in the point-to-point, exclusively unilinear mode.

So perception, the basic form of consciousness, whether at the physical or subtle levels, is bound up dynamically with the archetypal forms of space - point, line and plane. And the simple notion of lines as intersections of planes leads over into a consideration of somatic attunement to subtle power lines.

### 5. Lines as powers between the worlds

It is *as if* there are lines of power at intersections between the worlds, between the physical plane and the subtle planes. Certain lines seem to have power to liberate consciousness into attunement with the subtle matrix of the physical body and/or with the wider akashic universe. Hence the importance of *alignment*.

The most accessible alignments are to do with the physical body. And the simplest of these is to do with the spine. F. M. Alexander got on to this with his formula 'head forward and up'. There is a way of elongating the spine, head and neck, of procuring a subtle vertical alignment of them, that attunes consciousness *as if* to a very fine, central current of subtle energy. This subtle energy line is at the interface between the physical body and its subtle matrix. It ascends vertically within the subtle space of the spine: when entered it gives an unmistakable lift. In Chapter 9, I call it the levity line.

The work of M. Noro in Paris extends and refines this simple practice. He calls his art *kinomichi*, and trains his students to acquire skill in a whole range of very subtle elongations and stretchings, involving the hands, feet, limbs, trunk, head and neck. When the alignment of felt physical tension is right, it is *as if* physical sensation shifts over into awareness of fine lines of chi (subtle) energy. Consciousness of the physical body becomes transformed by, subsumed within, consciousness of its subtle matrix.

The sensation of physical stretching in the domain of gravity shifts over to the subtler sense of elongation and flow in the domain of levity. One starts to experience directly the reality of dual incarnation in a physical body and in a subtle matrix body, and to sensitise and refine the former by conscious attunement to the latter. And all this is done by muscular alignment to the lines of power at the intersection of the subtle matrix and the physical body.

Ritual and meditative posture and gesture are concerned with the same phenomenon: getting the physical body aligned to subtle power lines at its interface with the other world. In this case, it is *as if* these power lines reach out beyond the matrix field of the physical body into the wider reaches of the unseen universe. Angles as powers may be involved here too.

Both these procedures - the elongation of parts of the physical body into lines of power at the interface with its matrix, and the ritual alignment of the body to power



lines that reach deeper into inner space - can be practised quite informally and experimentally. It is just a matter of very fine adjustment of the parts of the muscular and skeletal system, until it is *as if* sensation of bodily tension shifts over into a psi-sense of fine lines of subtle potency. I could equally well have entered this experience in the chapter on transfigurations.

Although this work is at the subtle matrix level, it inevitably starts to wake up the subtle body proper, and thus initiate a person into becoming their own ally. In the next section, I will briefly clarify these different notions.

## 6. Powers and the person

At the outset of this chapter, I mentioned the view that entities in this reality have their eidolon, their ally and their matrix in the other reality. How does this doctrine of powers apply to the human being?

The eidolon of a person is rather like Jung's archetype of the self, or the transpersonal self in Assagioli's psychosynthesis, or Kant's 'intellectus archetypus', or Blake's 'emanation far within'. Its the original form of the soul, the archetypal primus of the developing person, the distinctive transcendental identity within, behind and beyond the everyday self.

The subtle matrix of the human being is the formative field that generates and sustains the physical body. It's the subtle field that contains the blueprint and programme for bodily form and process. It's not the same as the subtle body.

The subtle body proper is dormant, semi-functional, within the subtle matrix in most people. It is involved in everyday life in perception, in touch, in speech, but tacitly - it goes unnoticed. It is the potential vehicle for the person in the other world. With conscious development it can temporarily depart from the subtle matrix and physical body, as in out of the body experiences.

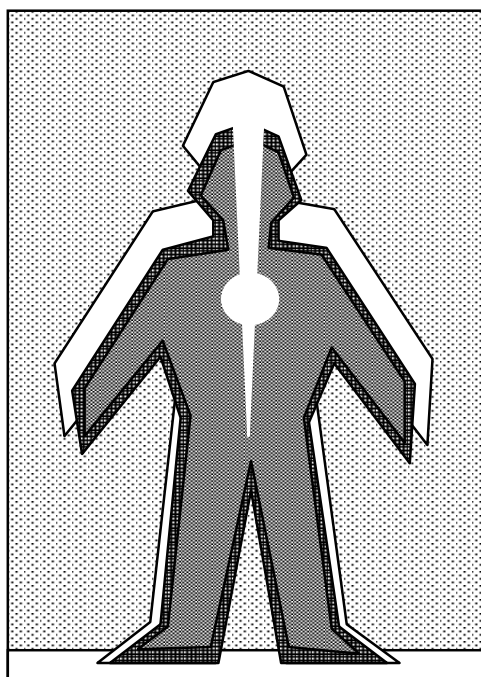


Figure 7.1 *The physical body within the subtle matrix, and the subtle body developed with heart*

The subtle ally of a person is that person's subtle body in conscious use. If the person's subtle body is dormant, and functions only in the tacit, unnoticed mode, then he or she is 'sleeping on their ally'. Each person, through cultivating out of the body experiences, has the potential to become their own ally in the other world. Similarly, each person, by developing conscious command of the subtle body in everyday situations, can become their own ally in this world. And, through ritual and related activities, be their own ally between the worlds. Figure 7.1 shows the physical body within the matrix body, and the subtle body developed with heart.

As persons we are souls, individual centres of reference, with basic capacities for understanding, feeling and choosing. We receive and impart, and are distinguished by our ability to learn and change, develop and grow. We are also notorious for our refusal to bother.

In the next few sections, I relate some experiences that bear on the powers of the person. And see section 14 below for more on the concept of the ally.

### **7. Eidolon encounter**

A medical friend of mine once gave me a phial of very pure LSD in clear liquid form, left over from the days when its medical use was officially sanctioned in the UK. I took it one week-end in my flat in Hampstead in London. Two hours or so after ingestion, I was sitting in my living room, and my daughter, who was in her early twenties and who had a room in the flat at the time, came in. We talked for a short period and then she left to go out. During this talk, my brain registered very extraordinary clairvoyance indeed. For I saw us both clad in transcendental garments, and bespangled with jewels of great beauty, which were suspended on the skin of the face and arms, as well as embroidered into the clothing. But the jewels and the garments were not mere decoration. They resonated with awareness, with places of origin and spiritual acclaim. In this vision, the encounter was archetypal, eidolon to eidolon. I saw us as if on high, in the first place and in the first time.

### **8. Subtle matrix meditation**

This is one of the simplest uses of the doctrine of powers. There are two versions of it, one to do with the subtle matrix blueprint of the physical body, the other to do with the subtle matrix programme of physiological processes.

To do the subtle matrix blueprint meditation, simply lie down on your back on a comfortable surface, relax all the muscle groups, calm and open the breathing, then empower the physical body by systematically visualising every aspect of its structure.

Mentally scan over all the parts of the skeleton, then all the muscle groups, then the skin, then the cardiovascular system, then the nervous system, then the alimentary canal and its associated organs, then the lungs, then the kidneys and bladder, then the endocrine glands, and so on. All you need is a modest general grasp of basic anatomy: it's the broad configurations you visualize, not detailed structures.

When I do this, it is frequently *as if* I am scanning over the systems of the physical body from a position in subtle space just a few inches above it. The perspectives I get are as if I am looking down from a double that is a little outside and above the physical body, facing it. It is as if, then, my consciousness is in the subtle matrix field, empowering both it and the physical body it coheres and informs. And I go on to scan the structures exclusive to the subtle matrix itself: its energy centres, channels and power lines.

Sometimes when I do this exercise, it fades out into deep sleep before I have got half way through it. And this sleep is usually very refreshing. The exercise has been one of my primary forms of health care for years.

To do the subtle matrix programme meditation, lie down and relax as before. This time you entertain in your awareness all the temporal rhythms of your body. Two of these you can immediately hold in mind: your heart beat and your breathing. Become aware of these two rhythms simultaneously. Now let your temporal imagination reach out to include much higher frequency metabolic, cellular and molecular rhythms. Then extend it to include the low frequency rhythms of eating and excreting, waking and sleeping, sexual arousal and repose. Expand your consciousness to embrace all these different frequencies at the same time, sensing their concurrence, vibrating together from birth to death.

### 9. Running in two worlds at once

There is a well-known exercise for developing conscious use of the subtle body in this world. I practised it once in Jasper National Park in the Canadian Rockies. I was vacationing there with a friend in the late summer, and we had rented a small cabin overlooking Pyramid Lake - which was set in commanding scenery a mile outside the town of Jasper itself. Behind the cabin, the forest stretched away, slowly rising toward the sudden ascent of towering mountain faces.

I got in the habit of going out into the forest in order to run through the matrix space of the forest, with my awareness centred in my subtle body. This meant, of course, that my physical body was also running through the physical forest. But that was incidental, at any rate to start with.

The main task was at the subtle body level, the physical running being the fall-out from that level. So I closed my physical eyes, relying on subtle sense or clairvoyance to grasp the physical lay-out of the forest, and put my energy forth at the subtle level. Then it became my subtle body 'running' through the matrix space of the wood, with my physical body following along in its wake, as in Figure 7.2. I should say that it was *as if* this was going on.

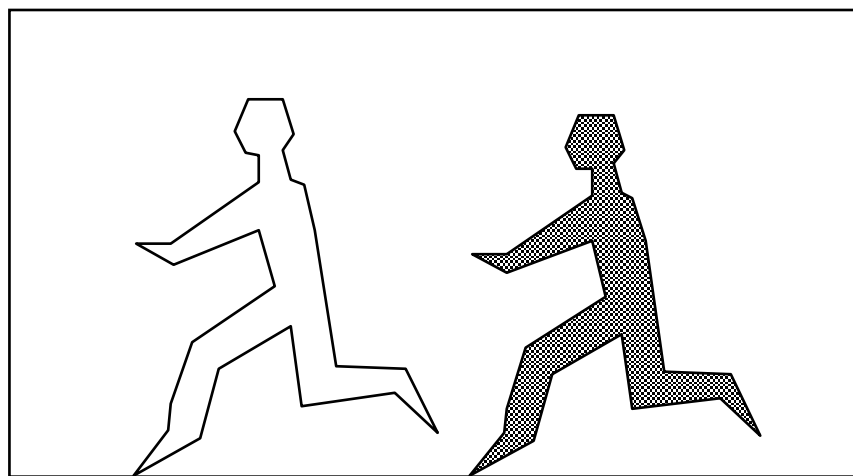


Figure 7.2 *Following in the wake of the subtle body*

The reason it was very much an *as if* experience was because my fear was too great for me to close my eyes for more than a few seconds when running. If I had been able to run at reasonable speed in that rather cluttered forest for a full minute with my eyes closed, there would, I am sure, have been much less ambiguity around. For then psi power could more securely be said to have been guiding my physical body around trees, rocks and thickets. As it was, the experience was exhilarating and great fun, and I could keep my fear at bay, and my eyes closed for just long enough, for me to feel I was on to something.

The exhilaration became even greater when I decided to forget about the challenge of closed eyes. With my psi awareness pitched at a plane just above me to get an overview of the matrix space of the wood, I let my physical body follow my subtle body around, effortlessly empowered by its stream of subtle energy. My eyes were open, but their vision, too, was caught up in a psi sense of the wood that was much more extensive than my physical perspectives. I was now running fully and unashamedly in two worlds at once, each enhancing the vigour and reality of the other; and this was really living. I forgot to remind myself that it was still only an *as if* experience.

There were brown bears around in the forest. And they were known to be sometimes unfriendly and dangerous, if you suddenly came upon one behind a tree. My fear of meeting a bear was noticeable when I just ran in the ordinary physical way. It was also one of the factors that made it difficult for me to run with closed eyes for more than a few seconds, when practising two-worlds running. But when I did two-worlds running full blast with open eyes, my fear of meeting a brown bear disappeared. I am not sure what to make of this, except to say I find it interesting.

Another interesting point is that I never fell over, never banged into anything, acquired no cuts, scratches or bruises - and, of course, never met a bear.

### **10. Being your own ally**

Stand alone in a quiet room well placed with feet apart. Align your posture at least with the power lines of your body's subtle matrix, and if possible beyond that with power lines leading off into inner space.

With elbows somewhat bent, hold your hands out, palms upward. Keeping the arms and hands so, rotate them both in sweeping circles, going in opposite directions to each other. So the hands come toward each other, sweep upwards together, then swing outwards away from each other, round and down, coming back towards each other, then up and out again; and so on.

But do these movements in and with the subtle body, in subtle space, simultaneously, so that the primary intent is in the subtle world surrounding and interpenetrating and upholding the physical world in which you stand.

Now you become your own ally, and it is *as if* the subtle gestures in subtle space weave and concentrate together an empowering, vitalising and scintillating cloud of subtle energy that charges up your subtle body, your subtle matrix and thence your physical body. Vary the gestures, their rhythm, their shape, their speed. Note how you can vary the intensity with which the subtle energy weaves together around you. Feel the fluctuations in its uplifting and electrifying force.

In my experience there is a supernatural limit to the amount of subtle energy you can activate and concentrate around you in inner space, by the use of this method. When I

have reached a certain level of charge, the effect dies down. Continued activity of the arms becomes counter-productive and seems to negate the positive charge already acquired.

The opposite of consciously being your own ally in this way, is unwarily being your own enemy. This means you lose a subtle charge. You let it get drained off you by a combination of psychological inertia and negative thinking. Also by social interference, when other people blindly yet inconsiderately tap it, feeding tacitly off its unidentified essence. Worse still you may compulsively initiate social situations in which you become disadvantaged, a psi victim. You go out of your way to give away your power.

The seer needs to resist this propensity for lack of assertiveness, for inappropriate social submission. It comes from a high degree of what Keats called 'negative capability', by which he meant the poet's ability to be out there totally absorbed in the object of his visual contemplation. The seer understandably longs to meet someone who has the same high degree of negative capability, for when two people exercise it lovingly and awarably in relation to each other, they can experience deep harmony and spiritual release.

But it is no good going forlornly around acting out the grief of not finding people of this sort, by unwarily submitting to subtle-energy-devourers. Put your negative capability on an active social parasite, and you get what you deserve for such lack of prescience and command.

Being your own ally in social situations, having appropriate command of subtle when interacting with other human beings, is, of course, the same as the practise of *presence*, which I discussed in section 10, Chapter 5. It means, as I explained there, manifesting the subtle body and its command of energy in inner space, through all the physical channels of communication: eye contact, touch, posture and gesture, facial expression, relative position, tone of voice. This gives a massive inner boost to social interactions.

What we need are more charismatic interpersonal training courses, where people can learn to overcome their repression of psi and their psi shyness, and practise interacting as doubly incarnate beings. At present, almost all of this practice is cast in the form of the martial arts, such as Aikido. But the martial arts, or some of them, are at best the backyard of love, the rearguard arm of care - where your command of subtle enables you to topple your opponent in a way that has regard for his enlightenment. I describe some basic forms of charismatic training in Chapter 9.

Finally, there is being your own ally in erotic situations, when making love. I shall discuss this more fully in the next chapter. Making love is primarily a subtle body and subtle energy phenomenon, and only secondarily a physical body experience. But few sex manuals take account of this fundamental truth, or give any report on the many psi dimensions of the erotic.

## **11. Subtle knack**

The word 'knack' means 'acquired or intuitive faculty of doing a thing adroitly' (COD), and originally meant, in Middle English, 'sharp blow or sound'. By 'subtle knack' I mean 'acquired or intuitive faculty of doing a thing adroitly through command of subtle energy'. This overlaps with several of the experiences already mentioned, such as being your own ally, running in two worlds at once, the practice of presence, the practice of alignment.

It is the same as projecting chi energy in and with physical movement in order to throw your opponent, as practised in Aikido. Some ballet dancers, perhaps, intuitively develop subtle knack in doing their leaps and bounds, in their ability to appear to 'hover' for a split second up in the air. Similarly with some ice skaters. It is *as if* they command their physical bodies out of a prior command of their subtle energy and subtle body in matrix space. In general, the ability of a human being to appear to function in the mode of levity has, in my view, something to do with subtle knack.

Another application of subtle knack is in aligning the body with subtle power lines and angles, in order to facilitate lifting, levering, manipulating and carrying physical objects. This may extend on occasion to having some effect on mechanical parts at a distance: subtle knack exercised in relation to some external part of a machine, such as a lever or button or key, may produce effects - which cannot be explained mechanically - on internal parts.

Some applications of subtle knack are to do with projecting threads, filaments cords or lines of subtle energy, or of partially projecting the subtle body itself. One of my favourite exercises for exploring the use of such projection is as follows. I stand under a tree with a horizontal branch well above me which will take my weight. The height of the branch is at the very limit of my ability to grasp it with one leap upwards from where I stand. Before I leap I project subtle filaments to hook round the branch. Then I leap along the filaments. This makes the leaping much more elegant, successful and effortless than if I do it in the ordinary way.

A more all-purpose application of projection is to project the subtle body just in front of you, and then let it carry you along in its wake, as I described in running through the forest. This is useful for dealing with gravity, as when ascending a great height of steps. There are 97 steps in the spiral staircase at Regents Park underground station in London. When the lift is out of use, it is interesting to compare making the ascent in the wake of my subtle body projected a couple of steps up ahead of me, to making it by direct physical effort.

## **12. Elements as powers**

It's an old occult doctrine that the four elements of earth, water, air and fire, are, in their subtle mode, powers - that can be called upon to enhance human activity whether in this world, in the other world, or at the interface between the two. I will relate two experiences that bear modestly on this doctrine.

Some years ago, a colleague of mine sold me four microdots of LSD, procured from a heavyweight boxer in Berlin. I carried one of them with me on a visit with a friend to Sri Lanka. I wondered whether I might feel moved to swallow it at some Buddhist shrine. But no.

My companion and I hired a chauffeur driven car in Colombo, and crossed the island, first to Kandy, then on to Trincomalee in the north-east. On the way, we visited the great rock plateau of Sigiriya, which sticks up boldly out of the surrounding plain, and on the top of which one of the ancient Buddhist kings had built a palace and a citadel. Standing on this massive rock, high up in the sky, in the hot afternoon sun, with a light wind striking across my face and arms, I was poised for take-off into the other world. But this too was not to be.

After some time in Sri Lanka, we flew via Singapore and Jakarta to Bali. One day, after we had been in Bali for some time, I made a solitary trip to the town of Besaki,

the religious centre of the island. It stands, with its numerous temples and temple courtyards, at the foot of the sacred mountain Agung-agung, which is a sleeping volcano.

I reached Besaki at noon. Sitting in the shade of a food stall on the main street, I swallowed my microdot with a lunch of Nasi Goreng, the popular Indonesian rice dish. I reckoned the LSD would release slowly and come through into my nervous system in about one hour. Meanwhile, I would walk slowly up the slopes of Agung-agung.

I got beyond the first reaches, rising out of the rice fields, and was well up the lower slopes, with commanding views, and with the main mass of the mountain towering above me. A few yards to the left of the pathway, I spotted a ruined and deserted temple courtyard. As I rested here, the LSD came through.

From the edge of the temple courtyard, I could look down far across the island, I could look up at the rim of Agung-agung's volcanic cone, and I could look straight out into the sky, face to face with clouds tumbling around the sun. Now the elements became interfused, combinatorial: the fire and heat and light of the sun, the warm wind and my breath blowing in and out, the water of my blood and the sap and juice of the swaying plants, the footstool of the earth and its surging configuration from mountain-top to far horizon.

I started to dance in the ruined courtyard of that ancient temple. And I danced a Balinese dance, knees bent and thighs pointed out, arms angled and wrists upturned, fingers elegantly articulating the rhythm of the elements - as they swayed and swung and rocked together in the syncopated beat of all creation. What exhilaration: the matrix world of earth, air, fire and water, dancing in my soul, dancing in the physical world and in my perception of it.

My dance embodied the continuous creation of what I saw and felt and heard and smelt, its intertwined mobility of being. Yet the moving world had also a gem-like prescience in being what it was, every second, as it pirouetted into form. The dance of the jewel, I thought; that most stable of substances - the diamond, the ruby, the amethyst - fraught with the discreet, ecstatic passion of its generative minuet.

I started to dance down the mountain-side. As my arms, wrists and fingers continued to move with spontaneous precision in the Balinese manner, I noticed how their gestures were at one with the gestures of form and movement in the plants and grasses alongside the mountain path. I danced with exact abandon, revelling in the unity of all morphogenesis.

Now I danced standing on one spot on the edge of the path, looking up at Agung-agung's volcanic rim. The rim was in the shade from passing cloud. I wanted to see the mountain top sublime in sunlight. So I danced a dance to move the cloud away from the sun. In immediate and felt response the cloud dissolved to let the sun irradiate the peak. I knew I was in matrix command of elemental powers.

I was caught up in the sacred dance of creation for a long time. Then I noticed dusk was falling, and I started to get anxious about finding my way down the mountain to Besaki before it was completely dark. By the time I reached the rice fields it was black. I got lost where the path turned into a narrow ravine between the banks of the fields. I couldn't see where to go or which turning to take.

My fear was just starting to do disturbing things to my LSD-induced clairvoyance, when I heard two boys talking nearby. I called out. They shone a torch to find me,

and escorted me back to Besaki. They took me to a small eating place, owned by one of the leading officials of the temple complex. This man took my order of chicken and rice and went off behind a screen to instruct his wife.

The LSD was winding down its influence, but it was still active. I sat alone at the wooden table, alive with inner grace. Then, one by one, from behind the screen, the small daughters of my host and hostess emerged - dancing. Each came out, without a word, beaming with delight, performing classic Balinese dance with exquisite innocence and charm, until four of them were dancing before me. The youngest was not more than five years old, the oldest perhaps twelve.

Their mother came out to shoo them away, embarrassed that they had presumed to dance for me. I restrained her and asked her to allow them to continue. Now legitimate, they really took off. They seemed to sense my mood, my state of being. They swung through the ancient repertoire as if they knew they were in my heart and the heart of all things.

And indeed they were. I have never witnessed, either before or since, such an unqualified account of the universal process. Like a magic mirror they shone back to me, in enhanced form, the truths of the dance I had discovered in myself on the slopes of Agung-agung. I like to think that to this day their aesthetic command of elemental power is still at work in the temples of Besaki, stunning the soul of every worshipper with unprecedented grace.

My second experience of the elements as powers was altogether more sedate, more static, more immersed. I was sunbathing with a friend beside a small lake in Emmsland in Germany. It was a weekday morning in late autumn. The sun was hot. The only other people around were a couple lying out on the opposite side of the lake, some distance away.

I waded into the water to swim. After swimming about ten 'lengths' out from the bank to a log and back, I came to a halt where the water was deep enough for my head only to be out of it, with my feet resting lightly on the soft mud at the bottom of the lake. I stood upright with my arms out to the side, just below the surface. There was no wind: the water was still. I was facing the sun.

I now took my awareness *inside* the heat and fire of the sun, the cool, wet pressure of the water in the lake, the ooze of the mud around my feet, the air refreshing my lungs. I tuned in to the harmony of these elements in their subtle mode. It was *as if* I was suspended in the internal, elemental psi matrix of the external world, at the same time as being suspended intimately in the physical elements themselves. In my imagination, I shifted over into feeling like a water-lily - in the physical world, in the subtle matrix world, and at the interface between the two.

If I take Occam's razor to these two experiences, I should, I suppose, not leave much growth upon them. In the first, I am just undergoing the effects of an hallucinogenic drug. And in the second, I am, well, just standing quietly up to my neck in a lake.

But from a two worlds point of view, in particular from a doctrine of powers point of view, LSD itself will have its ally, its subtle form, in the other world. And the subtle ally of LSD is a power indeed in its transformative effects on consciousness. Hence when taking physical LSD, it wise to invoke and get in a healthy, positive relationship with its subtle ally - otherwise disorientation and disturbance of mind may follow. Personally, on the five occasions I have taken LSD or mescaline, I have always done a



little ritual of ingestion, to face my consciousness in the right direction. Treated with respect, the ally will offer an impeccable education in altered states of consciousness.

Again, from a doctrine of powers point of view, each element - earth, air, fire and water - has its ally, its subtle form. The test is really one of noticing, of discrimination. Every time you use water, tune in to subtle water. Is it there, do you subtle-encounter it? More to the point, every time you breathe, as well as breathing in air, can you notice also the prana, the subtle air? If not, why not? Perhaps because it is so obvious to consciousness that you missed the blatancy of its presence.

There is a paradox about the subtle universe: the refined way it infuses our everyday experience in this world makes it too obvious to notice. It is a necessary experiential condition of so much about ordinary states of consciousness, that we take it for granted to such an extreme degree that we cease to attend it. The main problem with the use of Occam's razor as an epistemological tool, is that it can become the victim of this restrictive delusion. It rests so securely on the forgotten obviousness of the subtle, that it slashes away happily denying that it is there.

### 13. Matrix space

I have referred several times already to the notion of matrix space and I devote the remainder of this chapter to saying more about it. In terms of the doctrine of powers, to enter that form of awareness that is the matrix space of the physical world, is to start to exercise a special command over that world.

By 'matrix space' I mean the space *of* which physical perspectives give their distorted view. It is the space which defines the real shape of a material object, the shape which the geometry of Euclid describes - the geometry we all study at school. The real, Euclidean shape we can never perceive with our eyes, we can only grasp it with the imaginative awareness that helps to make sense of physical perception. So when I look at a wooden cube, I always perceive it in perspectival form: my visual image of it is a distortion of its true Euclidean cube shape - which is only present in my awareness.

Physical space is matrix space seen always from one point of view. You can move your point of view here and there, but you still only have one point of view. Such a view reveals only the physical object. The very first degree of subtle space - when I am as it were *inside* physical space - is matrix space seen from more than one point of view, by peripheral or clairvoyant vision. Then the third eye organises many different and simultaneous views from out there, as I discussed in section 4 earlier in this chapter. And such vision reveals not only the physical object, but its subtle matrix as well.

So if you want to see the subtle formative double of a tree, look at the tree physically from one point of view, and in imagination 'see' the tree simultaneously from several points of view. This imaginative act liberates the tacit clairvoyance normally constrained within physical vision.

Earlier in this section I suggested that matrix space is the space of which Euclid's geometry gives an account. This is all right for everyday earthly life on the surface of this planet. But geometries other than Euclid's may better describe matrix space in the wider reaches of the physical universe. Matrix space is first and foremost what we experience - as a form or structure of consciousness. The geometrical descriptions come second. It is important not to identify any one geometry with the protean nature of matrix space. I address these issues in Chapter 10.

Matrix space, the space of the real or true shape of physical things, is the most accessible form of subtle space. It is that subtle space that is the womb of physical forms and of our one-pointed perspective on them. It is the immediate subtle framework of the everyday material domain. And the third eye can give us access to it independent of visual perception, by organising a selection of viewpoints inherent in space-and-universal consciousness.

Normally, of course, I only get access to matrix space in and with the use of my eyes. Thus when I look out of this window across the valley to the distant hills, my mind is busy making matrix sense of the foreshortened perspective presented by my physical vision. My awareness is out there in the matrix space of the landscape correcting and compensating for the distortions of my physical view. This tacit clairvoyance goes unnoticed since it is so bound to physical vision.

But there is no necessity for my awareness of matrix space to be thus restricted to complementing the perspectives of ordinary perception. I can set it free. And I can do this in two stages.

The first step to freedom is practised together with everyday sight. While looking down from this upstairs window, I actively move my mind around the matrix form of the garden, extending my awareness throughout its complete spatial gesture, in and with my physical view of it. It is *as if* my imagination is out there, getting all kinds of heterogeneous views which interweave and overlap to create a grasp of the garden's real shape in space.

So I 'see' the garden from the far corner, from above, from this angle, from that angle. And this alongside my ordinary looking, buttressing it with many-faceted 'views'. These subtle 'views' are yielded by my tacit clairvoyance once it is released from servitude to physical eyesight, and can organise subtle perspectives from diverse points in the local matrix space.

This mental activity is rather close to what Goethe called 'exakte sinnliche Phantasie', which he recommended - in his study of the metamorphosis of plants as an essential adjunct to the observation of nature. It is an activity which liberates the imaginative awareness that is always present supplementing perception, acknowledged by Kant as productive imagination, by Coleridge as primary imagination.

Such imagination tends to function in a minimal mode when caught up in ordinary looking. It yields just enough grasp of matrix space to make sense of the physical view, then goes to sleep, doesn't bother any more. My belief is that this imagination is not just 'imagination'. It is, as I have suggested, a mode of tacit clairvoyance in the subtle matrix domain.

Sit in a chair and look at any object. With your physical point-centred vision thus anchored to just one perspective, now let your mind complement this physical view with all sorts of different views from various parts of the room. Note the pull of subtle, planar vision: how the mind is drawn rapidly to switch from view to view, now from this angle, now from that. Tacit clairvoyance, once authorised to function as an independent complement to physical sight, will quickly assert peripheral command.

But it can be liberated from any necessary association with immediate physical perception at all. So the second step to freedom is to explore the matrix space of the garden when I am not looking at it with my physical eyes, but sitting with my back to the window, eyes closed. Now of course in order to do this I use my memory images

of the garden. I remember how it looks and use these remembered perspectives for launching my imagination off into all sorts of other non-remembered views.

I 'scan' the garden from many different vantage points I have never physically been in, up in the sky, from the rooftop of the house, from below ground level. In this way I grasp the real shape, the matrix form, of the garden.

This imaginative roaming through the matrix space of the garden is the same as the imaginative exercise, described above, when actually physically looking at it. The difference is that when I launch my imagination off from remembered perspectives, I notice much more fully that it is not 'just imagination' at work. For when I move from a remembered view to a non-remembered view, up in the sky, say, over a tree on the side of the garden, it is *as if* there is that unmistakable tang of reality in the shift: I *encounter* the garden, I don't just recall it as in the remembered view.

This is the start of explicit, not just tacit, clairvoyant access to the matrix space of the garden. Of course, it needs a lot of practise, a lot of training. Remembered physical perspectives are a good basis from which to conduct this kind of training. The seer has a lot to learn about how to interpret the cues in this kind of psi viewing of matrix space, and it helps to have a familiar foundation.

But there is something deeper going on. Behind all the heterogeneous clairvoyant scanning of matrix space, there is the luminous fact that matrix space itself is a form of awareness: not your awareness or my awareness, but awareness-as-such. Which is why, sometimes, you can get beyond clairvoyant scanning, and enter that ecstatic awareness which alone encompasses, as it is, the full true shape and gesture of the garden in space.

There is, however, a much more accessible version of being in the matrix shape of something all at once, without having a physical view or clairvoyant 'views' of it. This is simply entering with full awareness the subtle matrix of your physical body as a whole. You have a four-dimensional grasp of the complete three-dimensional gesture of your physical body. You apprehend its matrix shape all at once. This is an essential part of charismatic training, and I deal with it in Chapter 9.

#### **14. More on the concept of an ally**

I have used the term 'ally' so far in this chapter in two related senses. First, there is the subtle form in the other world of the archetype of something, organic or inorganic, in this world. Second, there is the consciously functioning subtle body of the human being, whether that subtle body is at work in and through the physical body, or whether it is busy with travel in the other world.

This rendering of the term 'ally' is different from that sometimes used in necromancy - where 'ally' may refer to a nonpersonal, quasi-intelligent centre of subtle force or energy. Such a centre of force may assume - or may be commanded to assume - any one of a wide variety of different forms, either in the other world or on occasion in this. 'Elemental' has been another term used for this kind of entity. The sorcerer seeks power over and through elemental entities of this sort.

Then again, 'ally' could also be used to refer simply to a personal presence in the other world - a discarnate or subtle soul, an ancestor - who has friendly and supportive intent in relation to a human being.

It does not matter very much what terms we use, as long as we are clear about the difference between the various sorts of being: the subtle form of the archetype of some-

thing organic or inorganic; the consciously used subtle body of a human being; a non-personal centre of subtle force; a subtle soul or personal presence in the other world. Of course, for the cautious inquirer, it is only *as if* there is a difference among these things. More to the point, it is only *as if* any of these things exist at all.

## 8. Intimacy in two worlds

### 1. Basic encounter

The relation between sex and psi needs to be set in the wider context of intimacy. In its basic form, human intimacy is you meeting me meeting you, which also means, of course, that at the same time I am meeting you meeting me. It is full reciprocity; we encounter each other encountering each other. And there are only two ways, in this world, that this occurs: through mutual gazing and through reciprocal touching.

When we look into each other's eyes, I project my gaze while receiving yours, you project yours while receiving mine, and these four events occur simultaneously. When we clasp each other's hands, I give my touch as I feel yours. You do likewise - and it all happens at the same time and in the one shared deed. For us embodied human beings, there are just these two basic forms of encounter, of radical meeting - when each person gives and receives in the same act. Each person simultaneously receives what the other person gives, which is impossible in the alternating exchanges of conversation.

The bedrock of human encounter is thus two persons gazing into each other's gaze at the same time as embracing each other. A classic celebration of such intimacy is found in John Donne's poem 'The Ecstasy':

Our hands were firmly cemented  
By a fast balm which thence did spring;  
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread  
Our eyes upon one double string.

### 2. Intimacy needs

My belief is that human beings have at least three basic intimacy needs: soul needs, nurturance needs, and sexual needs. Needs of the soul are for the subtle interpenetration of soul energies, for a direct exchange of presence, for reciprocal sharing of the qualities of personhood. Mutual gazing, above all, though not exclusively, fulfils the consummation of such needs. They are also met by the enjoyment of common interests and values through dialogue and shared activity.

Nurturance needs are for the exchange of love and affection through physical contact, through holding, caressing, kissing and touching. There is no necessary connection between nurturance and sex. Naked embraces may consummate nurturance needs without any sexual arousal. Sexual needs are for erotic arousal and consummation centrally through genital communion and peripherally through pleasure for all the erogenous zones of the body.

There is a kind of healthy and normal progression in the meeting of these needs. The satisfaction of soul needs can lead over into the satisfaction of nurturance needs, which in turn provides the context for the satisfaction of sexual needs. And sexual pleasure always seems to reach true fulfilment when set in the wider, more ambient pastures of nurturance and soul. So new lovers go through the classic stages of

gazing into each other's eyes, then holding each other tenderly and caressing each other, then making love.

Intimacy itself is to do with a certain kind of loving: the kind that wants to give and receive in a relation of closeness with one other person, or a small number of persons. Such loving is a celebration of both identity and difference: rejoicing in feeling at one with the other, while at the same time delighting in the other's difference, their uniqueness and distinctness of being. And the three sorts of intimacy I have mentioned all in their special ways partake of the complementary pleasures of identity and difference. They are also, in my experience, essentially mediated by subtle energy - at the subtle matrix and subtle body level - interfusing physical activity.

### **3. Mutual gazing**

I have already discussed mutual gazing in sections 4 and 10 of Chapter 5. When two persons truly open themselves to the process of intimate gazing, without speech, and without anxiety or embarrassment, then they are in the domain of mutual clairvoyance, tacit in their eye contact.

The other's gaze is not the same thing as their eyes, is not inferred from their eyes, and is not seen by one's own eyes - but by one's gaze using one's eyes. Gazing is subtle seeing focussed through physical eyes. When we look at physical things we tend to lose awareness of the subtle nature of the gaze as such: we identify with the physical content of visual experience at the expense of noticing properly the process of seeing. But when we look into someone else's gaze, we are not peering at their eyes just as physical objects, we are gazing at the gaze-light shining through their eyes. Then we discover the doubly incarnate nature of everyday perception.

So if two people let this mutual gazing continue to deepen, let go of egocentric distress and perturbed emotion, then they can exchange immediacy of soul - in the way that the rest of Donne's poem so elegantly describes. The clear-seeing of the gaze-light is truly intimate to soul, and beams forth the qualities of personhood - its modes of intelligence and feeling and choosing.

It is also intimate to that subtle, inner space that is the form and expression of consciousness in the other world, the first world of human incarnation. Hence two people can space out on the shared consciousness of mutual gazing. They can expand their awareness into akashic domains through the shared mediation of the gaze-light (section 4, Chapter 5). Try it and see.

Mutual gazing is ruled by the triple fork of Neptune. The basic staff is a celebration of soul, of the mutuality of personhood, as in Donne's poem. This can branch into shared nurturance, into shared eroticism, and into a shared journey through the domains of inner space. Celebration of soul is the central stem from which the other three spring. But all four experiences are not mutually exclusive, and can interpenetrate and enhance each other.

### **4. Mutual touching**

You can touch the skin of another person and you can touch their touch - which is not the same as their skin, or their flesh, or the warmth of their body. Their touch is a subtle energy full of their intent of soul. It is mediated by their skin, flesh and muscle, but cannot be identified with these bodily components. Again, you do not infer the quality of another person's touch. You encounter it directly in and through your own touch. There is a subtle body to subtle body contact that goes along with the purely

physical sensations. The tactile sense mediates a subtle energy - and a psi sense that is responsive not only to physical textures of skin and flesh but also to the subtle energy of the other.

And not only hands and fingers can manifest this 'balm'; any part of the body can be moved by, and express, the subtle energy of touch. The intent of this energy, at its own level, is to touch a person, never just a body.

So in mutual touching, the physical bodies of two persons are in contact, but also and primarily their subtle bodies, their subtle energies and subtle sensitivities. A naked embrace is a poignant intimacy between doubly incarnate beings, and is especially, therefore, the home of shared tenderness, care and loving affection: it is touching in the other sense.

From this central ground of shared affection, touching, too, can move in one of two directions. It can mediate transcendence, affiliation with inner space, an attunement to subtle dimensions of being: two persons are in physical and subtle contact and their shared awareness goes a long way back into the other world.

Or it can mediate sexual arousal and sexual activity. And sometimes it can mediate both these together, so that sexual experience is combined with an expansion of consciousness in subtle space. At other times sexual experience may lead over into transcendence: then the post-orgasmic state is one of great openness to the other world. I develop these themes in the next two sections.

## **5. Spacing out and visions through the skin**

The skin with its supporting flesh is a window on the other world, like a great eye of vision spread out over the surface of the body. More literally, it is a boundary zone, an edge, the horizon of the body, and like the horizon of the planet has tangent planes that access inner space.

You can think of your skin, in the ordinary way, as the outer edge of the animated matter that fills up the physical space of your body. Or you can expand your awareness into matrix space and think of manifold interacting tangent planes that encompass the skin from without, forming it from the other world. You then feel your body suspended in the matrix universe, shaped by its subtle planar forces. With the eye of inner vision you see your physical form as materialising out of far reaching spaces and powers.

When two skins mingle, as when two people are in a naked embrace or are caressing, then there is a double charge on tangent planes; and each partner can lead the other out into inner space. This can occur in a deeply relaxed and meditative way in nurturing, non-sexual skin contact. The partners expand awareness together on tangent planes, being both very near in physical space and subtle space and also very far away in subtle space all at once.

When there is a sexual charge on tangent planes the spacing out effect can sometimes be very dramatic. You may have the experience of falling way back into inner space, of being de-egoised in a spatial nirvana that is deeply within and beyond and behind the physical space of the body. Or the experience of orgasm may throw you out climactically along a tangent plane, as if shooting into an ecstatic orbit in the other world.

These effects are important, enjoyable, valuable - and illuminating. They inaugurate the yoga of intimacy, sexuality and togetherness. And they undermine once and for

all the conspiracy theory of the skin and its flesh: the theory that the skin conspires to seduce you away from the light. On the contrary, the skin is, to inner vision, a luminous membrane between the worlds. Live in the tangential reality that shapes it - and at the immediate limit of your physicality you have instant access to the other universe. The skin is a veil and a trap only if you insist on remaining exclusively inside it.

The yoga of intimacy also affirms the spatial value of pleasure: sensory pleasure, sensual pleasure and sexual pleasure. These satisfactions between two people are the very caress of inner space, shared tangential delights.

Of course, if humans are made to feel bad about the pleasures of the skin, then their guilt contracts their awareness *inside* the body so they become prisoners of it. Their longing to expand into that matrix space that shapes the contours of the skin from without is frustrated and denied. This subtle frustration is then displaced into compulsive lust - which drives them into the very behaviour that seems to explain their guilt. And so the whole vicious circle is locked upon its irrational course.

The antidote to all this improper guilt is spatially expansive pleasure.

Another effect of the sexual charge on tangent planes is the release of inner vision. The post-orgasmic person may be suffused with symbolic images, clairvoyance of other worlds, of presences and powers. I remember such a vision in which I had a vivid picture of being one of a large party of persons being conducted by a civic dignitary among the collapsed walls of Jericho, a city famous for its palms and gardens of balsam.

## **6. Sexual ecstasy and continuous creation**

Human intimacy, I believe, is primarily about attunement of soul and nurturing affection. Sexual activity is the celebration of this prior intimacy. But it can add something else: adoration at the frontier between flesh and spirit, worship at that place where the person emerges into physical form.

There is an ecstasy in the dance of creation, where the manifest physical universe appears out of its subtle matrix. I found that interface of blissful coming into being on the slopes of Agung-agung in Bali, as I described in the last chapter. And that same exhilarating verge is found between the physical body and its generative subtle matrix. Sex in the subtle energy mode is a shared dance of delight in this exuberant zone of the emergence of the flesh.

Sexual energy, mediated by the whole body as well as genitally, is a pure subtle energy which can communicate intimately with the person of the other in that ineffable, inner space where their flesh first appears in form. And in that space in the other, each partner finds the mirror of the joyful generation of their own flesh from its subtle matrix.

Each thus worships the other in a sacred zone between body and soul - subtle matrix space. They celebrate person-to-person intimacy, Janus-faced at the congress plane of flesh and spirit, whose mysterious unity they enjoy with such ecstatic bafflement. And each adores the profound context of the other. For the physical dance and energy dance of sexual activity joins the cosmic dance forever afoot within their bodies. Sexual excitement becomes at one with the subtle surge of more universal pleasure and delight. It participates in the wider reaches of continuous creation, the one



seamless whole coming into being. And sometimes, of course, it may have procreative power.

This is each person making love with two bodies at once, the physical body and the subtle body. And it is making love in two spaces at once, physical space and inner space. But it is the subtle activity, subtle awareness and subtle joy that deeply mediates and consummates the intimacy.

The practitioners of Tantra, of course, have known all about the fusion of sexual congress with the cosmic congress of spirit and matter, of inner and outer universes. And they have known that sexual activity conducted with subtle awareness gives very direct and immediate access to the ecstasy of continuous creation (Mookerjee, 1982). But they have also fallen foul of the problems of transcendental sexual alienation.

Actually, the Tantrikas made a virtue of it. Such alienation occurs when the purpose of sexual union is *not* to celebrate person-to-person intimacy - attunement of soul and nurturing affection - but simply to participate in the bliss of cosmic creativity. Hence the Tantrikas were not concerned with any kind of personal relationship with their partners, but deliberately chose a succession of relative strangers, who however were equally proficient in the sexual disciplines and meditative rituals of the cult.

It could, of course, be argued that there is a reverse kind of alienation: when two people make love to celebrate their person-to-person intimacy always to the exclusion of any more extensive sacramental ecstasy. Because of a permanent closure in their awareness they never include divinity in the congress.

My own view is that the primary pleasure of making love is the celebration of person-to-person intimacy, and that one way of doing this can be shared worship at the joint internal shrine of continuous creation. But it is only one way. For the charm of human life is that it can properly affirm its autonomy, its relative independence of the subtle worlds: sexual union can be a celebration of human passion and affection, of delight in personhood, of the elegance and ease of the human animal, of physical beauty, of dance and movement, of sheer desire, of the comic and the absurd - and this without any conscious reference to a transcendental context. Living awarely in two worlds means sometimes living in one, sometimes in the other, and sometimes in both.

## **7. The energy orgasm**

For a woman, orgasm is independent of the working of the gonads, the ovaries. Her sexual climax is, as such, nothing to do with reproduction. The cycle of ovulation and menstruation is geared to a monthly rhythm, and the physiological mechanisms of orgasm are quite separate from it. Levels of sexual arousal may vary with the monthly rhythm, but the climax of arousal does not involve the gonads. Orgasms can be multiple without the need for a refractory period.

In man, sexual climax is everything to do with reproduction at the physiological level. Every orgasm involves an emptying of the gonads, the testes, of their accumulated sperm. Excess of sperm can precipitate spontaneous orgasm as in nocturnal emission. Orgasms are single and need a refractory period.

These simple physical differences spell out certain psychological and spiritual differences in sexual attitudes. Female orgasm is more celebratory, abundant, joyful, to do with pleasure for pleasure's sake: free from direct pressure from the gonads, it has

more space to well up from attunement of soul, from the satisfactions of affection and togetherness.

Male orgasm is more performance and production oriented, more to do with control and measure and pacing of the release of the gonads. And if it is not this, then it becomes tense, urgent and evacuatory or precipitate. Attitudes get caught up in the hydraulics - of straight pipes and pressure on valves.

Furthermore, emptying the gonads can be followed by temporary depression. In a woman, pre-menstrual (i.e. post-ovulation) tension is not a product of sexual intimacy. But in a man, post-coital depression can occur in the immediate context of such intimacy and wreak havoc with its emotionality.

Women can ejaculate fluids copiously, have great sexual potency for orgasm, and have procreative power in their wombs. Men cannot ejaculate semen as copiously, have less sexual potency for orgasm, have no procreative power in their bodies to make babies, although of course great power to make semen.

The lower physiological status of men - in terms of sexual and procreative potency - has been, in my view, a deep source of anxiety to them. And this anxiety is usually repressed, denied and then displaced into a whole range of distorted and compensatory behaviours, often involving the oppression of women.

One way, among many, for men to relate to the greater orgasmic abundance of women is to cultivate the energy orgasm. As the tide of his excitement rises toward ejaculation, the man transfers the energy of that excitement into sound. The result is uninhibited and sustained vocal ejaculation, the experience of a subtle and potent energy orgasm, and no seminal ejaculation. The energy orgasm is found just below the peak that would otherwise lead over into physical discharge. As he hovers below the peak, the man effects the subtle transmutation through vocal power used with subtle intent.

The use of a crescendo of sound (not words) can shift the man's sexual charge from physical release into a subtle suffusion of pleasure at the subtle matrix level. The sound itself may enhance the arousal and orgasm of the woman, which is already more at the subtle level because of its functional separation from the release of the gonads.

In this way a man can have repeated and multiple energy orgasms, to fuse and harmonise with the coming of his partner, while retaining a high level of continuous physical excitation. For it is only the final ejaculatory charge that is transferred by the power of erotic sound to the subtle level.

Ordinary language, of course, hints at this possibility. The word 'ejaculate' means not only 'to eject semen from the body', but also 'to utter suddenly words especially of prayer or other emotion' (Concise Oxford Dictionary). Now the vocal ejaculation of which I am writing does not use words, but pure sound only. And this sound, while powerfully erotic, does have something of the quality of both prayer and praise.

The prayer is a prayer to effect the shift - from physical to subtle orgasm. And the praise is praise for the joy of sexual union with the surge of continuous creation: a woman and a man lifted up to that exalted frontier where flesh and spirit tumble into each other with unmitigated delight.

Of course this is only one way of celebrating the interesting differences in physiological and energy status between women and men. There are many others, and

I just pick this one out since it bears on the two worlds theme of this book. When it is being used, there is still the question for the man of the ratio between energy orgasms and physical orgasms: how many of the former in relation to the latter. In China, the ancient Taoist sex manuals recommended that the younger the man the greater the frequency of physical release; while the older man would make love many times, celebrating subtle intimacy, with only the occasional physical orgasm. However, I doubt whether any formula has relevance in such matters. It is a matter of art and preference.

### **8. The manifold of intimate transactions**

When two human beings lie naked together in bed, there are many kinds of intimacy they can share, as described in this chapter so far.

*Attunement of soul.* They enjoy each other's presence, which may not involve any physical contact at all, only the exchange of subtle energy through mutual gazing or simply lying side by side.

*Shared nurturance.* They enjoy tenderness and affection through embracing, caressing, kissing.

*Spacing out.* They enjoy a deeply relaxed, non-sexual, going out into subtle space: mediated either by mutual gazing, or by tangent planes at points and lines of mutual touch, or by both these at the same time.

*Erotic celebration of soul.* They enjoy sexual intimacy to delight in attunement of soul and nurturing affection.

*Erotic celebration of body.* They enjoy sexual intimacy to delight in physical form, desire and movement.

*Erotic celebration of spacing out.* They enjoy sexual intimacy to delight in spacing out on tangent planes, falling into inner space.

*Erotic celebration of continuous creation.* They enjoy transcendental sexual intimacy in the ecstatic context of continuous creation.

And there are all the various possible combinations of these. Our culture does not alert us to this enjoyable range of possibilities, does not prepare us for them, nor help us with mismatches of need and state that can obviously occur. So intimate partners need to grasp the repertoire, to learn the cues in themselves and in each other that indicate which sort of choice is on top, and to communicate and negotiate openly when a mismatch is afoot.

Men in our culture may confuse sexual arousal with non-sexual spacing out, entirely within their own being. This is because there are two qualitatively different kinds of erection: one mediates sexual excitation, the other expresses deep relaxation and readiness to space out. If a man doesn't have these two concepts, he may drive every erection along the sexual highway, and thus frustrate the dual propensity of his nervous system, and his subtle needs. Sometimes, of course, both kinds of experience may combine.

I once knew an Australian psychiatrist who came to England to explore both the Christian and Judaic roots of his culture. For some months he was celibate and resident in a strict orthodox Jewish community in Golders Green in London. One summer evening he lay naked on his back on the top of his bed, engaging in sustained

high prayer. This transcendental activity drew out of him a powerful erection and an intense ejaculation. He was still astonished when he told me the story.

### **9. The shekinah**

The word 'shekinah' comes from the Hebrew verb 'sakan' which means 'to rest, to dwell'. In Judaism, the shekinah was the visible glory of God, specially thought to dwell over the mercy-seat of the ark in the temple at Jerusalem; or seen in other natural or supernatural phenomena. Its form of a cloud of light was suggested by Exodus 40:34.

Where the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament talks of God dwelling in a place, the later Aramaic translation or paraphrase talks of God causing His shekinah to dwell there: the shekinah being some kind of luminous intermediary between God and man. But let me take this notion of the shekinah and set it in the context of a change of theological gender.

For when there is talk of the divine dwelling in the world, resting within phenomena and everyday human experience, then in my universe such immanent divinity is of feminine gender, the Goddess - the great womb, the cornucopia of being out of whom matter, time, life and soul emerge. And the shekinah is the subtle light, scintillating and effulgent, that attests to this inward residence of the Goddess.

When making love with intensity and love, and with a continuity of passion lifted up beyond itself into things holy and sacramental, yet empowered by that very encounter to plunge into new depths of imaginative desire, lovers may find the shekinah, the power of iridescence that bears witness to the indwelling presence of the divine. They may see *with their flesh* the coruscating, glittering lights, like a treasure trove of jewels, that are the very spirit of the very body of their union.

## 9. Charismatic training

The purpose of charismatic training is the cultivation of *presence* in interaction with other persons. I referred to the idea of such training in Chapter 7, section 10, and now wish to take it up in more detail. It is relevant for living generally, and in particular for training group facilitators - who need to acquire distress-free authority, and to emanate a quality which liberates those who are seeking to learn within its ambience.

Charismatic training simply involves learning to live consciously and intentionally in two worlds at once. It means manifesting personhood simultaneously in subtle space and physical space. The subtle body wakes up within the subtle matrix of the physical body. A person starts to become their own ally in this world, as I mentioned in section 6 of Chapter 7.

Since subtle space is a form of the energy of consciousness, when I enter it I command the attention of other human beings within it: I set going a current of invisible energy that embraces and nourishes them at a subliminal level. For I am active where they are passive in a universal medium of energetic awareness. When we are all asleep together in conventional ignorance of this medium, we lack presence for each other. When one person is awake within it, the others will notice that a presence is stirring their slumber. And when we are all awake within it, we share presence with each other.

I will now refer to a series of training exercises. I describe them separately, but they are not mutually exclusive in practice, and can be used in a variety of combinations. I invite people to use them, in training workshops, in a spirit of inquiry and experiment. So you do the exercises *as if* they are doing what they claim to do, in order to find out through experience if they do seem to be doing it. And you adopt the belief-system on which the exercises are based *as if* it is valid, in order to see whether it holds up in the context of its application. The approach is non-dogmatic, the exploration of working hypotheses.

In actual training, the ambiguity of two worlds experience is owned and faced, and indeed used as a tool of inquiry and learning. And this prevents us all from getting improperly earnest about the enterprise. However, I shall present the exercises here assertively, dropping the use of the parenthetical *as if*.

### 1. Entering the levity line

Stand up and align the spine, head and neck in such a way that you find the secret current of energy drawing you upward and inward into subtle space. This is the levity line. The spine is upright and vertical but not rigid, the head and neck are forward and up in an unobtrusive lift-off position. As you gently adjust the alignment, you will find *within* the physical sensations the liberating uplift of the levity line - subtle, sustaining, and unmistakable. I introduced this notion in Chapter 7, section 5.

The levity line is a line of power between the physical body and its subtle matrix, and it gives immediate conscious access to matrix space - out of which physical space emerges, as I discussed in Chapter 7, section 13.

Once you enter the levity line, you boost your own awareness with the awareness inherent in that line, and your presence to those around you is subtly increased. Remember that in the subtle domain, energy, space and consciousness all go together. If you are asleep to that domain, the energetic awareness of its space rolls off you or minimally dribbles through you. When you are awake to it, it charges your presence to others with charisma.

The levity line becomes your line of reference for instant entry into the other world, an entry which, at the same moment, enhances your presence and standing in this world. At any time you can choose to live in it and act out of it. The challenge in daily life is to stay awake within it, not fall asleep around it; to maintain inner alertness rather than drift into forgetfulness.

It is also like the upright trunk of an energy tree. Its branches reach up and out into inner space in all directions, offering potential connection with manifold domains. It is rooted in the awareness of gravity, with the energy of the legs well grounded through the soles of the feet. This grounding of feet and legs can be achieved most readily if the knees are very slightly bent.

Indeed, the subtle uplift of levity in your posture is most exhilarating in the context of feeling the polarity of gravity and levity. Once you are aware of your feet firmly planted on the earth by gravity, then you can more easily find the contrasting lift of levity. Grounded in one world you are raised up by the subtle energies of another.

## **2. Entering the subtle body: bearing**

You can be aware of your physical body in physical space simply by looking down at it, so that you get a foreshortened view of your trunk, arms and legs. Or, of course, you can look at yourself in a mirror. You can also be aware of your physical body by proprioception, that is, by internal sensations coming from your muscles and ligaments, telling you what is going on in them, whence and whither and at what speed your limbs are moving.

But there is also something that includes this proprioception but is wider than it. This is an awareness of the total gesture of your form in matrix space. It is a comprehensive internal grasp of your body image. Now there is nothing at all perspectival about such grasp. You are not having a view of your form from this, that or the other perspective. Rather you are inside the Euclidean or matrix space of your body. You inhabit its whole three dimensional gesture in all directions all at the same time. Your awareness and your spatial form are one. You awaken your subtle body.

You are not perceiving in physical space, but being and moving in matrix space. And a ready mode of access to this being in matrix space is via the levity line. So stand up, ground the feet and legs thoroughly with the energy of gravity, then enter the levity line through those subtle adjustments of spine, head and neck. And now from within the levity line, expand your awareness to include all at the same time your whole posture in space. This establishes your conscious bearing. Then start to move.

At first, keep the feet stationary and apart. Let the knees bend a little, the pelvis roll, the trunk gyrate, the arms and forearms move around in all directions, the head and neck turn and stretch. Let the movements be born out of the levity line. Now let the feet and legs carry you round the room. And all the while, practise being alert to the total dynamic gesture of your form in matrix space.

In this movement, feel the air on your back and try moving back to back with another person without touching - so that you extend consciousness to the rear. Otherwise you may have frontal bias in your awareness of your form in matrix space.

What is this form? Strictly speaking, of course, it is your subtle body moving in matrix space in and with your physical body moving in physical space. Looked at from within, the subtle body in matrix space carries the physical body which emerges, when looked at from without, into various shifting perspectives in physical space.

What this movement does is to give you a sense of the effortless dance of generative form in matrix space. But there is no need to move around to get the effect. So the facilitator standing in front of a group - indeed anyone anywhere - can enhance their presence in this world by first entering the levity line from a well-grounded stance, and thence encompassing *as a whole* the subtle matrix form of their physical posture.

It's just a question of being in all the space within the body all at once, and knowing how your form is everywhere awarely coming out of it. Then you have conscious bearing, you energise and command subtle space around you - and have presence. The subtle body becomes determinate within the subtle matrix of the physical body. It shifts from tacit to explicit functioning.

### 3. Following the subtle body

Let us suppose that the subtle body, with the subtle matrix of the physical body, is not only in matrix space but also in matrix time. I shall say more about matrix time later in this chapter. It is the time in which sequences in physical or clock time occur all at once. What is serial in clock time is concurrent in matrix time. It is womb-like, a subtle NOW in an inner time embracing outer time, giving birth to developing form and rhythm in the physical world.

So if your physical body is walking, running, climbing, leaping or jumping, pitch your intention into matrix time. Then you are aware at each physical moment of the whole subtle temporal form which embraces past and future movements in your physical sequence. Such awareness can be put to fruitful work. And in a way that intensifies your presence.

When, for example, you are running up a hill, you feel your subtle form a few paces ahead of you - *and follow in its wake*. Your psi grasp of your future steps empowers your present steps. Matrix time awareness of the immediate future has a sort of turbo-charging effect on your physical motion now.

In any physical activity, then, you can simply imagine your subtle body doing the next part of the sequence, in order to enhance and facilitate the current part of the sequence. This is easiest to do with forward motion of the physical body because what is next in time is also in front of you in space. As a training exercise, compare walking on the street, or climbing stairs, in the ordinary way with doing the same in the wake of the subtle body.

Conversely, when running down a very steep hill try holding your awareness in matrix time at the moment just before you start the descent. This image of yourself at the top of the hill acts like a brake as you descend, and helps to prevent you from going helter-skelter. In general, casting your awareness well back in a sequence helps to slow down movement in the physical present.

In any complex series of physical movements, cast you awareness into matrix time and grasp the whole sequence all-at-once in order to empower your physical mastery.

This knack is exercised intuitively by dancers, divers, gymnasts, ice-skaters and others who engage in elaborate combinations of movement.

#### **4. Expanding into matrix space**

Habitual car drivers know all about expanding the spatial matrix of the physical body - at any rate at the level of knowing how, of the knack of doing it. When you drive a car through a narrow alley, or reverse it to park in a limited space between two other parked cars, you have simultaneous awareness of the total form of the car. So when you are craning your head back as you reverse to get a perspectival view, you also have matrix grasp.

This grasp is a sense of where all the car's extremities are in non-perspectival space. The driver has thus expanded his awareness of the matrix space out of which his body appears to the matrix space out of which his car appears. And this expansion is born out of an important need for accuracy of manoeuvre in physical space.

This does give car drivers an odd and rather limited kind of presence, especially when they handle their vehicle confidently out of matrix awareness. By contrast, when through anxiety they lose such awareness and try to manoeuvre entirely from their limited physical perspectives, they become frenetic, diminished and phobic.

Dancers and skaters who fling themselves around within the limited space of a stage or skating rink, also need to expand their grasp of the matrix space within which their bodily gyrations occur, to include the matrix space of the whole stage or rink. When they dance or skate out of this total integrated consciousness, then they have the most elegance, impact and sheer presence. This is also because they are giving birth to their movements out of matrix time.

However, all this can be put to the immediate experiential test. When in a social situation indoors, enter your levity line, open out to your matrix body, and then expand your awareness beyond the matrix space out of which your body appears to the matrix space out of which the room, its furniture and all those in it appear. Embrace all this in one global act of spatial realisation, while continuing to interact socially.

Your subtle body now commands the matrix space of the room. Notice your own increased sense of presence, and notice how others notice it too. Their noticing is not necessarily made explicit by them - although on occasion it may be - it is more often a tacit shift in their level of response to you. This heightened reaction may be a good thing, leading to richer learning and loving.

Sometimes it may be a bad thing, leading to interference and intrusion. Then it is better to practise subtle absence rather than subtle presence. So there is an important caveat: it is not always wise or prudent to become a being of expansive levity among people of contracted gravity. A lot depends on the social context, and what your role is.

To practise subtle absence, don't project any subtle energy outside yourself. Adopt movements and postures that keep it veiled and contained within you. Retreat awarely into an inner centre and be passive there, so that your physical presence becomes unremarkable, unnoticeable. You achieve a sort of psychological invisibility.

When, however, it is appropriate to emerge again, there are various devices to sustain the practice of presence through an extended awareness of matrix space, and to prevent oneself falling back to sleep within perspectival, physical space. I will mention them in the next few numbered items.



## 5. The eight corners

One simple way of expanding your awareness into the matrix space of a crowded room is to extend your consciousness *simultaneously* into its eight corners, four at the ceiling, four at the floor - assuming the room is rectangular. You can never stand inside a room and physically perceive its eight corners directly in one and the same perspective. You could get them all into one view with specially placed mirrors. But even then, in terms of actual eye focus, you would still have rapidly to scan the eight corners, so that in effect you would perceive them serially.

Now the eight corners in matrix space are grasped in one and the same act of awareness, all at the same time, wherever you are inside the room. Such awareness transcends yet includes any limited physical perspective of the room. This practice can lock your mind onto the matrix space of the room in a way that does not let you get too distracted by the shifting perspectives of so many views of people and things.

A useful training exercise with the eight corners, is to move slowly in a room and circle around yourself turning with elevated steps and sweeping gestures of the arms. During these gradual gyrations, you practise holding your attention on the eight corners. The challenge is to integrate static matrix grasp of the room as a whole, with dynamic matrix grasp of your circling movements within it.

## 6. The parasol

The parasol is a simple exercise that puts the spatial archetypes of point, line and plane to alert, experiential work. The parasol is erected on your centre of gravity in the lower abdomen, on the reference point that grounds your mass through your legs and feet upon the earth. The stem of the parasol is your levity line, the subtle uplift of energy you can find by adjustments of the spine, head and neck, explained above.

The umbrella of your parasol is a plane of inner vision at right angles to your levity line and above your head, spreading out and away on all sides. From this *plane* of vision, you survey the matrix space of the room in which your physical body is present. You can explore the effects of pitching the parasol at different distances above your head, from a few inches to a few feet.

Of course, this is just a device, but an interesting one. It is intriguing to look simultaneously - both upwards and downwards *and* from all points of the plane - into the matrix space of a room where you are socially active. More accessibly, at the peripheral line where the plane intersects the walls of the room, there are innumerable complementary viewpoints of what is going on inside it.

As a training exercise, try rotating your physical body slowly under the parasol once you have set it up in your extended consciousness. As your physical perspectives of the room change with your turning, keep your attention primarily spread out on the plane of the parasol, looking down on the room from the plane as a whole. I find this easier if the parasol is some distance above the head.

## 7. The matrix of the immediate other

One of the most socially intimate ways in which to expand into matrix space is to dwell in the matrix form of the other person you are talking to. So your awareness inhabits the matrix space of the two of you. This is particularly pertinent for a

facilitator doing one-to-one counselling or working intensively with one person in front of a group.

This non-perspectival awareness of the matrix space out of which we are both emerging, in which our forms are suspended, is a simple foundation for entering the duality experience. In this experience, we are one, I am you and you are me, yet I have a distinct identity and you have a distinct identity; and we celebrate our differences, our otherness, at the same time as we celebrate our unity.

Less mystically, my being aware in the matrix space of the other is a good ground for the practice of active empathy, especially when I am working as a facilitator in a personal development session. So it heightens my ability to attend not just to the meaning of what you are saying, but also to how you are saying it - your tone of voice, emotional emphases and inflections, redundancies and slips of the tongue. And it enables me to notice all your bodily cues - your rate and depth of breathing, your use of eye contact, your facial expression, your rigidities or labilities of gesture and posture.

Such holistic grasp of what you are saying, how you are saying it, and above all of how you are being and doing while you are saying it, is enormously aided by my awareness dwelling in your matrix form - both in matrix space and matrix time.

## **8. Relative position**

A general purpose exercise, for all kinds of social interaction, is simply to extend your awareness to include a full grasp, in matrix space, of the relative positions of yourself and the other persons you are now interacting with face to face. For this immediate social group become aware of how you are all standing, your respective gestures and postures, whether you are close or not so close, opposite or beside, above or below (standing or seated). And get the feel of this spatial arrangement as a whole, not just from any one viewpoint. And keep this awareness going when you or others in the group move round within it.

There are a variety of simple training exercises here. One is for two people to move slowly around each other: each becomes conscious in the matrix space that includes the total forms and relative positions of both of them. And they practise sustaining this matrix grasp while facing and looking at the other, while side by side and catching only a glimpse of the other in the corner of the visual field, and while they are back to back and cannot see each other.

Another exercise is for two people to approach each other, shake hands and say 'Hello', all the while having matrix grasp of the whole two person interaction. Often the handshake and the 'Hello' will throw them out of matrix space awareness. So they keep practising until their consciousness is no longer distracted and contracted by the social convention.

An extension of this is for three people to have a conversation on some topic of common interest, perhaps while drinking tea, and at the same time practise matrix awareness of the spatial configuration of the whole grouping and of each person in it. These exercises are important, because ordinary social interaction has built into it hidden norms of contracted spatial awareness. And these norms severely limit what it is that people say and do together.

## **9. Further afield**

Another way of expanding into matrix space is simply to enlarge your awareness to include the matrix space of the whole locality in which the house you are in is set. And you can go on to include the matrix space of the planet: in which case you are standing and talking with spatial awareness of this room and of the earth as a whole. Matrix awareness of the locality, or of the planet, is tacit, its content somewhat sketchy, in parts vague and unfocussed; but it is none the less real for that.

The exercises so far considered are about overall physical presence. They seek holistically to increase the subtle charge of the way in which you are present in some social context. The next set of exercises are for the occult gymnasium: by building up awareness of the subtle matrix of the physical body, they also at the same time start to awaken and strengthen the subtle body as a focus of conscious intent.

## 10. Exploring subtle power lines

There are various simple ways of overcoming the illusion of exclusive physicality, and of becoming aware of the subtle potency of the matrix on which the physical body depends and out of which it emerges. The following exercises build up matrix awareness and subtle body competence. Note that each exercise shifts you over into matrix space and matrix time.

10.1 Hold your arms out in front of you with the elbows somewhat bent, fingers splayed and palms facing inwards. Now move both arms in an expansive opening out gesture *as slowly as you can*. This very, very slow movement will reveal the pleasing elegant energy lines and filaments of the subtle matrix, the form that is your primary incarnation - within, embracing, containing and upholding the secondary incarnation of your physical body. Any *sustained*, almost imperceptible, opening out movement will effect this subtle shift of awareness.

10.2 Conversely, although less accessible for many people, rapid leaps, tumbles, somersaults, complex juggling acts, manifold rotations in the air, shift attention into the matrix form. They can only really be done when command is centred in matrix space and matrix time. Hence the exhilaration of watching them, as well as doing them, because we sense the power of a doubly incarnate being at liberating work in the matrix space-time manifold.

10.3 Elongation will shift you over into the subtle matrix. And it is not the same as stretching. Lift your arms to the side well above shoulder level so you reach up to the heavens with an open angle. Now if you *stretch* you arms at this angle, you will try to extend them out in a straight line as far as they will go. But to *elongate* them, let the shoulders drop, keep the elbows a little bent throughout the exercise, the wrists and fingers too, then from deep within the torso draw out and lengthen the back, shoulders, arms and hands by a continuous unfolding in an almost imperceptible spiral movement, sustained indefinitely without any forcing or thrusting.

Notice how your awareness finds its subtle home in the subtle matrix of the arms and torso. Any *sustained* and unforced very gradual, slightly spiral elongation along the length of any muscle will transfer attention from felt physical tension to awareness of fine lines of subtle energy within the muscle fibres. You can explore this further with a tall, stout staff. Standing or kneeling, hold on to the staff with your hands, placing it in relation to your body so that some particular length of muscle can be elongated gently and continuously to reveal its subtle matrix.

10.4 A related exercise combines slow movement with alternation and small increments. Rest a long staff across your shoulders behind your neck, and raise your out-

stretched arms so that your hands take hold of the staff from behind. Now very slowly move the staff with the left hand a tiny distance toward the front, then do the same with the right hand. Continue the alternation, each time moving the staff a little bit further forward than the previous time on that side. Watch for the shift into subtle matrix awareness.

10.5 Command of subtle energy in the matrix body can dramatically alter muscle tonus and sense of mass in the physical body. Here are some simple exercises well known in the martial arts.

(i) Hold one arm up horizontally with the elbow minimally bent. Invite a friend to pull the arm down against your resistance under two different conditions. In one case, you hold the arm up in the ordinary physical way. In the other case, you project subtle energy along it to the horizon. Notice the greatly superior resistance to downward pressure in the second case. Another version of this exercise is to try to resist your friend pushing your forearm up - under the same two conditions.

(ii) Stand upright with your knees minimally bent, your feet side by side and a little apart. Invite your friend to push against your chest in order to topple you against your resistance, and this also under two different conditions. In the first, you stand in the ordinary physical way, and put your attention on your forehead. In the second, you direct your subtle energy down through your legs and feet to the centre of the earth. Again, notice how in this second condition you have much greater resistance to being toppled.

(iii) Lie on your back on the floor with legs closed and arms to your sides. Invite a group of friends to lift you up off the floor under two different conditions. In one you lie there in the everyday physical way. In the other you focus all your subtle energy at your centre of gravity in the abdomen and direct it down to the centre of the earth. In the latter case you are more difficult to lift. Another version of this exercise is to stand and have two friends lift you by your arms held firmly at your sides, firstly when you just stand there; and secondly, when you project subtle energy from your abdomen down through your legs toward the centre of the earth.

10.6 Practise mudras, that is, ritual postures. Create gestures of the arms, fingers, head, trunk and legs that cast your consciousness into the matrix mode. Hold the total posture and notice whether it takes you out beyond your subtle body into the further reaches of subtle space. If it doesn't, then rearrange it until it does. Enjoy the liberating effect.

## **11. Entering the gaze-light**

I have referred to the gaze in several earlier chapters. To enter the gaze-light, meet the gaze of the other, let go of emotional agitation and anxiety, then disclose in your own gaze the energetic light of consciousness - a consciousness that includes, but is not distracted or deflected by, whatever you are both saying or doing. This consciousness that you are disclosing appears to be yours, but is not really yours. It has a universal backdrop. It is supercharged with a subtle force that unites you to the other in a potent way - a way that liberates and empowers, and does not bind and block, the other. You notice that you participate with the other in an awareness that is greater than both of you.

The charismatic potency of a gaze that has this unrestricted awareness within it is central in facilitative work with people. In co-counselling we train the counsellor in the practise of 'free attention', by which we mean a deep and wide awareness focussed on

the other, free from the counsellor's own distress, sensitive to all that is going on in the other but never getting lost in it. It is a sustained, buoyant affirmation of the client. Entering the gaze-light is a potent way of mediating such free attention.

Of course, in everyday life, the gaze gets hijacked in all sorts of ways. It can't shine out fully because the use of the eyes is taken over by the social protocol of conversation, by the content of what is being said, by distracting inner thoughts and feelings. But a person can practise to rescue the archetypal potency of the gaze-light from being obscured by all these busy shadows. Then you invite the other to join you in the subtle space of an expanded consciousness.

## **12. Projecting subtle touch**

In Aikido, the trainee learns to project chi energy - or subtle energy, as I call it. By projecting this energy and then, as it were, letting the physical body follow after it, the trainee becomes much more potent in throwing his opponent.

In the last chapter, I suggested that human touch always involves the subtle energy of the subtle body. If a person is unaware of this dimension of touch, then it will be put to very limited use, blindly servicing a preoccupation with physical touch. If a person is aware of it, then it can be intentionally projected out, as in Aikido.

For while the physical body cannot extend itself, once it is fully grown, beyond its set limits, the subtle body appears to have no such restriction. It can expand and contract itself, project itself and extend beams, filaments and cords of energy from itself. And the energy which you can project from the subtle body can have qualitatively different impacts on the other person - depending on the sort of concentrated intention with which you project it (Gunther, 1983).

So the projected touch can be healing, affirming, enlightening, reassuring, or comforting in its intention and its impact. You can practise an affirming projection, by shaking the hand of someone as a form of greeting, while imaging, feeling and intending a flow of subtle energy from your hand into theirs and thence into their heart, a flow that affirms their worth and excellence.

Then you can go on to practise all kinds of qualitatively different projections of subtle energy as you have appropriate occasion to touch or hold other people in different social contexts. In training workshops, we also practise identifying the impact of a projected touch: the recipient divines what sort of dynamic quality the subtle energy carries as it reaches them from someone else.

## **13. Subtle gesture**

Physical gestures can be used to project subtle energy with different kinds of intent. The hand that beckons, invites, applauds, affirms, restrains, reprovokes, silences, commands, draws out, can consciously send out a subtle beam or signal that empowers the meaning of the physical gesture.

A simple facilitative application of this is where the group leader needs to manage verbal contribution rates. This can be done by subtle gesture with the hands, drawing a speaker out, drawing a new speaker in, shutting out someone who is talking too much.

My view, of course, is that there is a subtle component in any and every gesture made by us as doubly incarnate beings. But when that component is tacit only, that is, not

fully owned or noticed by the person gesturing, then it is underpowered. Charismatic potential is latent, dormant, buried in unawareness.

In training workshops, we have people send and receive subtle signals through gestures, noticing whether it is *as if* they are giving them out or taking them in. Then they start to actualise the latent potential. Some of the exercises are modestly stringent. Thus a row of people stand with their backs to a person who is making a strong subtle gesture of beckoning to one of them. Those in the row try to sense which of them is being beckoned; and that one turns around. Or a person is blindfolded, stands in the middle of the room, and moves toward the one person, among all those around the walls, who is beckoning with subtle energy.

Subtle beckoning - the psi gesture of invitation and drawing someone in - is wave-like, free and flexible; it is not grasping, possessing, demanding or controlling in its motion of hand and arm. And when beckoning someone, let your subtle energy reach out beyond where they are, so your gesture puts them in the *middle* of an energy stream, rather than at the end of it.

#### 14. Pulsing in two worlds

Suppose your consciousness oscillates between the worlds continually, but the effect is subliminal. You don't really notice it because ordinary perception is so dominant: you remain unaware of the intermittent subtle and fractional shift to and fro between the physical foreground and its subtle background. But you can bring this effect fully above the threshold of your conscious attention. Then you intentionally come and go between the physical and the subtle. You oscillate in and out of subtle awareness. And so a natural process becomes a training aid.

You can shift to and fro with a steady pulsing: from ordinary body posture to awareness of the levity line and the subtle body; from physical perspectives to all-at-once awareness of matrix space; from present physical movement to the whole or to part of the sequence in matrix time; from ordinary physical effort to effortlessness when projecting subtle energy; from looking at the other's eyes to taking up the other's gaze; from physical touch to subtle touch; from physical gesture to subtle gesture; from being absent-from-subtle-energy to being present-with-subtle-energy; from awareness of the physical world to awareness of the subtle worlds within and beyond. Thus you go in and out, in and out, from one state of awareness to the other and back again.

Sometimes you may try combining this oscillation with the breath. The exercise is similar to the *soham* breath in Siddha yoga. Shift to subtle awareness on the in-breath, and to physical awareness on the out-breath.

#### 15. Tacit invocations

Tacit invocations are ordinary greetings, farewells, pleasantries, appreciations, congratulations, which are spoken with charismatic intent - that is, with conscious subtle tone. The energy of speech resonates in subtle space as well as in physical space. The utterance is from the inner world as well as from the outer. I wrote of this effect in section 12, Chapter 5.

The concern here is not so much what you are saying, which is part of normal social intercourse, but with how you are saying it, specifically with the tone and intent. And it is not the physical tone of voice that is at issue, although of course this needs to be

clear and audible. It is the emotional or soul tone and what might be called its spiritual resonance. There is a powerful projection of subtle energy too.

At the external social level, a certain convention is being observed. At a deeper level, there is a loving charge of energy going from one doubly incarnate being to another. I worked with a group of doctors in London a few years ago, who practised tacit invocations in relating to their patients, when greeting them as they entered the surgery, and in other quite normal utterances. It was one part of a plan discreetly to affirm the spiritual principle in the practice of medicine in the context of the National Health Service.

## **16. Explicit invocations**

With explicit invocations, as with tacit, there is the same commitment to the use of subtle tone of voice, but what is said is now a quite overt invocation. The content and grammatical structure of the statement take it out of the range of ordinary discourse. Such statements include benedictions, commands and affirmations. And each of these may be implicitly or explicitly spiritual. I will give some examples of the six possible forms.

'May you be whole' (an implicitly spiritual benediction: it implies whole in spirit). 'May the spirit make you whole' (an explicitly spiritual benediction). 'Be whole' (an implicitly spiritual command: it implies whole in spirit). 'Be whole in spirit' (an explicitly spiritual command). 'You are whole' (an implicitly spiritual affirmation: it implies whole in spirit). 'You are whole in spirit' (an explicitly spiritual affirmation).

Statements of this sort have, of course, been part of traditional religious ritual for centuries. In the past their use has been beset by unctuousness, a false and modish piety, which makes them extremely offensive. But they can be used in the midst of everyday life, personal and professional, when the social context provides an opening for them, and when they are uttered with simplicity of heart.

Invocations, whether tacit or explicit, can also be spoken out of matrix time, and into matrix time.

## **17. Speaking out of matrix time**

In section 3 of this chapter I describe a way of enhancing presence by consciously entering matrix time when doing a sequence of physical movements. I wish now to say more about matrix time, especially in relation to the use of the voice.

Physical time is clock time - based on the regular recurrence of natural phenomena. The primary time unit is the period of the earth's rotation, employed to measure our perception of the succession of physical events, of matter in motion in the physical world. Matrix time is the time within which sequences in physical time occur. It might also be called programme time: the time in which the composition of events in clock time is manifest. Then again it could be referred to as morphogenetic time, or inclusive time.

So if I am watching a dancer on the stage, I apprehend the total sequence of steps. And my appreciation of the dance rests on this grasp of the whole temporal form of it. Now this grasp of temporal form is itself in time, but in a time that is necessarily more inclusive and extensive than the time whose serial form is being grasped. My

awareness is necessarily to some degree in matrix time in order to encompass an unfolding sequence in physical time.

You may say that it is just memory at work: I grasp the sequence of dance movements because while I see this movement now, I remember the past movements that have occurred. But the critical word here is 'while'. This 'while' is in matrix time. I have sufficient awareness in matrix time to make sequential sense of remembered past movements, perceived present movements, and intended future movements.

This business of having sufficient awareness in matrix time is the same as what psychologists have called the specious present: that unmistakable sense of the present moment overflowing its boundaries to encompass some of the immediate past, and a bit of the immediate future. It is equivalent, in spatial awareness, to being aware of the real shape of the whole object while having only a limited and distorting perspectival view of it.

And just as our awareness of matrix space is underdeveloped and sufficient only to make sense of visual perspectives by correcting for shape, size and relative position; so too our awareness of matrix time is underdeveloped and sufficient only to make sense of relatively short temporal sequences. And, unless we are trained, we can only produce rather limited sets of physical movements.

There are many sorts of entry into matrix time, and the one I want to consider here is through speech. This brings us into the domain of 'timing' - fundamental in charismatic training, and in the cultivation of presence. It is fundamental, too, in the expressive arts.

In the theatre, and in the work of the comedian, timing is to do with the control of what is said and how it is said in such a way as to make maximum impact upon the audience. How it is said includes: the placing of inflection or emphasis; fluctuations of emotional tone; variations of volume, pitch and speed; the use of pauses and their length. Putting all these things together effectively is related to what is being said, and to the context in which it is being said.

But it is also a function of command in matrix time. The actor or comedian is speaking out of matrix time: their awareness is laid back in that psi time in which whole sequences in physical time are compounded, marshalled and organised. Once the actor knows his lines and what he has to say is secure, then he can attend fully to *how* he says it out of matrix time mastery.

You can practise to attain this mastery. Take some of your favourite stanzas, say from the English romantic poets - Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Keats. Choose one stanza and make sure you know the lines thoroughly, by heart. Now declaim it aloud, and let the whole manner of your delivery be formulated in matrix time. This means you have a sense or feel for the whole sequence or temporal pattern of your delivery while (the matrix time 'while') you are engaged with any one part of it in physical time.

Another way of saying all this is in terms of soul. The soul is at home in matrix time. It deals in wholes, in patterns, in temporal sequences, in dramatic unfoldment. The passion of the soul, its creativity, its engagement with destiny, is formulated in matrix time. So when reciting the stanza, recite it with heart and soul. Then we can equally talk of inner time or soul time, the womb-like enlarged and extended present, in which passion of being is modulated to rise and fall and rise again in a whole temporal form of expression. In workshops I also call it charismatic time.



Such expression of soul in speech is also to do with emotional tone, or subtle tone, which I have already discussed. Subtle tone is intensified when you speak out of matrix time. Soul speech also organises the use of pauses, variations of volume, pitch and speed, the placing of inflection and emphasis. The result is the drama of presence in and through the voice.

The use of pauses is a noticeable component of charismatic speech. The pauses are non-anxious, pregnant with inner time; and the speaker sustains eye contact which is also soul contact - with the listener. Speakers who are shy of their charismatic potential rattle on in clock time, without pauses, without significant variations in volume or speed, and without fluctuations in emotional tone. And their eye contact with their listeners is insecure.

The enemy of presence is anxiety. Actors often have a lot of fear before going onto the stage. It usually goes once they are out front, with the secure content of rehearsed lines which they can fill with presence. But extempore speech in everyday life may often generate a lot of subtle anxiety. Can I express properly what I need to say? Will I be understood? How will the other respond? And so on. On the stage of life we are writing the script as we go along.

This anxiety drags speech over into physical or clock time, making it more mechanical, like a fast metronome. When training facilitators, through role-play and other techniques of practice, you can see their fear reduce their speech to the repetitiveness of matter in motion. They talk with the frequency of agitated neurones, rather than with resonance of soul. The tendency of anxiety to cast speech into rapid clock time is unmistakable; and it debar access to charismatic time.

One way of dealing with all this interpersonal tension is to centre yourself and enter the levity line and the subtle body, in the ways I described earlier. Breathe easily, and open up your gaze-light with relaxed attention. In this state, there is perfectly valid continuum of speech rhythms between physical time and matrix or soul time. This is the speech mastery of a doubly incarnate being. For some content of speech and some social contexts, it is appropriate to talk more in clock time, be less soulful. In other situations, moving in and out of clock time and matrix time may be fitting. And then again, there are occasions when all speech is best expressed out of charismatic, matrix time.

### **18. Expanding into matrix time**

Presence is enhanced when you talk out of matrix time, in the sense of talking out of an awareness of the whole temporal form of what you are saying - its past, present and future content and manner of delivery. But this degree of realisation in matrix time is relatively limited. It covers only a short sequence in clock time.

You can expand your awareness into matrix time beyond this short sequence and talk out of a sense of the whole temporal form of the social occasion, or of the day, or the month or the year. And there is one extension that is particularly potent: speaking out of a cognizance of your life as a whole, from birth to death.

Of course, these expansions yield only a tacit grasp of the greater temporal form. It is a feeling, an intuitive sense: the details of the sequence are inchoate and vague. And such extensions are not manifest in the content of what you are saying, but they subtly affect its manner of delivery and your presence.

So we have two degrees of matrix time awareness. The first encompasses the temporal form of what you are saying and how you are saying it. The second encompasses some larger sequence of your life, or even your whole life - which enhances in a subtle way the social impact of the first.

The whole is present in the part in a tacit mode. The whole temporal form of a person's life is tacit in each moment of it. Why not extend your awareness into the tacit dimension, in order to enhance your expression in the explicit dimension of daily life?

To make a spatial analogy, physical time gives a limiting and distorting perspective on matrix time. In physical time we apprehend in succession what in matrix time is present as a total sequence, as the temporal form of our everyday life. When we are present in matrix time we can master our sequencing of external behaviour.

But as well as speaking *out* of matrix time, we can also speak *into* it, as I mentioned at the very end of the two sections on invocations above. When speaking into matrix time, you feel that what you are saying at this moment in clock time is resonating simultaneously both in the past and in the future.

### **19. Speaking and making space**

Further on, in Chapter 12, I suggest that space itself is an expression of the archetypal speech of the Logos, of the creative Word of universal consciousness. Human speech, too, with the conceptual framework embedded in its use, creates our version of physical space. And the internal monologue of ordinary consciousness - the restless, inner, tacit speech of the everyday mind - sustains this version. By consciously rewriting the monologue, we can recreate and extend our grasp of space and spaces (see section 8 of Chapter 5).

Speaking out loud, from matrix time and with subtle tone, with content that reshapes the belief-systems embedded in ordinary perception, will remould physical space around the speaker, and generate an opening between the worlds, so that matrix space and vistas of the other world unfold in the awareness of both the speaker and any listener who is fully attentive.

### **20. Direction, content and manner of speech**

The conventional assumption is that how you say something is a function of who you want to say it to and of what you want to say. In other words, manner of speech is determined by the direction and the content of speech. The social context determines the content, and both together determine the manner.

Charismatic training is concerned to affirm an influence in the reverse direction; so that the manner of speech influences the content of speech and its social context. But first let's get clear what these three things include.

The social context of speech defines who is speaking to whom, what their roles are, what norms and expectations defines these roles, and what the purposes of the verbal interaction are. The content of speech refers to the meaning the speaker intends to convey, to what it is he wants to say.

The manner of speech includes linguistic manner, vocal manner, and behavioural manner. Linguistic manner is to do with diction and grammar or syntax: what sorts of words we use, and how we string them together to make statements. The same basic

content or intent to convey a certain thought can be expressed in several different linguistic forms. Words can be short or long, Anglo-Saxon or romance; sentences can be short or more elaborate. There are many different verbal ways of stating the same idea.

Vocal manner includes the use of emphasis and inflection, variations of emotional or subtle tone, changes in speed and volume and pitch, the use of pauses and their length. Behavioural manner includes eye contact, facial expression, use of hand and arm gesture, posture, movement and position relative to the other or others - how near or far, whether above or below or at the same level, whether opposite or beside or behind.

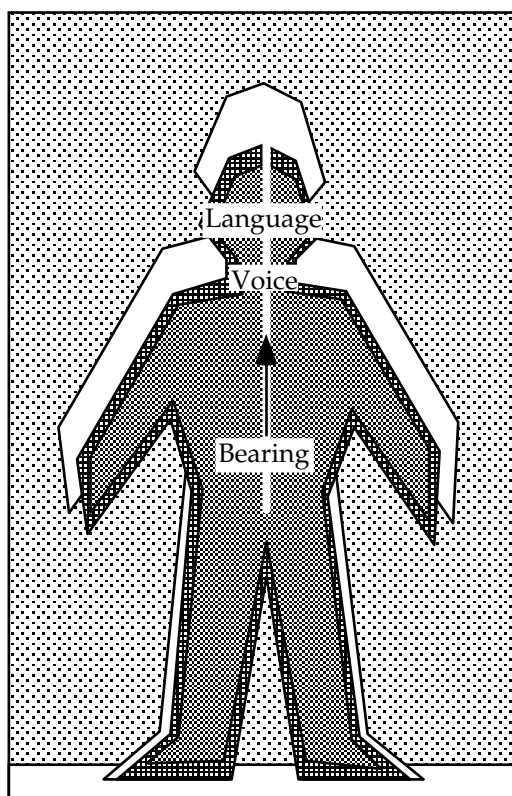


Figure 9.1 *Subtle command from bearing to voice to language*

In Chapter 5, section 10, I suggested that to have total presence these elements of vocal and behavioural manner are generated out of command of the subtle body. In this chapter I have suggested how such command can be more fully understood in terms of matrix space, matrix time, and subtle energy. Now I think there is a certain order of influence in exercising this command. First organise your behavioural manner (posture, gesture, etc.) out of matrix space - by entering the levity line and the subtle body, by expanding into matrix space, and so on. Second, organise your vocal manner (tone, inflection, pauses, etc.) out of matrix time. Third, let these two kinds of subtle command work their influence on your linguistic manner, that is, your choice of words and the grammatical organisation of what it is you want to say. Figure 9.1 illustrates the up-hierarchy from bearing to voice to language.

It is noticeable in charismatic training how people simplify their language, get down to basic utterance, when they start to manifest physical, then vocal presence. And this then can start to influence what they say, the content; and the whole social context, the way they relate to the other person or persons involved, the nature of the relationship.

So there is an up-hierarchy at work here, in which influence proceeds from postural presence and bearing, to vocal presence, to linguistic selection, to ideas conveyed and thence to the dynamic of relating to the other. This is a powerful antidote to the cultural bias which seeks to work in the reverse direction. Using this up-hierarchy in training facilitators in my workshops has been immensely liberating for them.

## 21. The use of intermental fields

The concept of an intermental field is a useful working hypothesis, especially in the charismatic training of facilitators. What I mean by such a field is the shared awareness between two or more persons. Such shared awareness is often tacit, a kind of penumbra of togetherness, an undertow of mutual participation. At a subtle level it involves a real interpenetration of minds: each of us is an idiosyncratic eddy in the totality of universal consciousness.

But the intermental field is behind the scenes: we cannot normally access it to communicate mentally or read each other's thoughts or engage in concerted and unspoken mental endeavour. It seems as though the brain keeps us focussed on personal thoughts, and tends to shut out the full influence and impact of the intermental field. This is probably a biologically necessary condition of developing human individuality and competence at the physical level.

But it isn't shut out fully. It is *as if* all sorts of flotsam and jetsam drift into the ordinary, brain-restricted mind, from many different (and ultimately interpenetrating) intermental fields, both in this world and in the other world.

Now creative generation of the content of speech, of what it is you want to say, is greatly enabled by tuning in awarely to the intermental field of the group you are talking to or working with. If you are a facilitator addressing your group, scan the circle, make eye contact and enter the gaze-light, be inwardly relaxed, expand into the matrix space of the room. Then tune in to that subtle background field of shared awareness, which is tacit, not fully noticed or acknowledged by those who are in it, because they are preoccupied with the surface texture of their apparently isolated everyday selves.

Let the content of your thought and speech be formulated out of this intermental field in which you too participate. Of course, you may have prepared the gist of what you want to say and do before arriving at your group. Nevertheless, directly organise and express your thought and action out of the immediate intermental field in which you and your group are immersed.

This helps to give the *content* of what you say and do presence. It becomes geared to the souls of those who are receiving it. It goes through the back door of the mind at the same time as it is going through the front door. What you say acquires a subtle intellectual and personal resonance that defies analysis but bestows synthesis. You speak to the incarnate condition of souls at one and the same time from within that condition and from a state of unity around and beyond it.

Now you may notice that the more you tune in to the intermental aura of your human group, it is *as if* there is another intermental field interacting with it that is to do with presences in the other world. Of course, you can ignore or sceptically reject such premonitions of the beyond. Or you can use it to generate extra dimensions of creativity, human relevance and awareness in what you are about.

This oracular use of both human and other-worldly intermental fields is a powerful aid to the cultivation of presence. Creativity in the context of other-world intermental fields is another way of talking about creative passive hierarchies of the second kind (Chapter 2, sections 2, 3 and 4).

The intermental field of a group provides a potent context for re-thinking the whole body of thought and practice which is being shared with that group. I have many times most fruitfully extended, amended, revised, added to, basic workshop material in the context of an intermental field to whose members I have been presenting that material. On two or three occasions, I have generated the whole first draft of a

comprehensive manual in that highly productive setting. There is a tacit dimension of co-authorship in what is written in this way.

## **22. Putting it all together**

When a person is practising the fullness of presence in a social situation, what is going on? Without putting in everything that I have covered above, a reasonably comprehensive answer is provided by the following.

Their subtle body awareness and projection of subtle energy are manifest through: their conscious postural bearing in matrix space, their awareness of the matrix space of the immediate environment, their awareness of the matrix of the immediate other, their matrix grasp of relative positions within the group of which they are a part, their conscious use of gaze and gesture, their conscious use of personal tone of voice and other aspects of voice, their mastery of matrix time in sequencing speech and other behaviour, their participation in the local intermental field.

Spelling it out like this makes it sound cumbersome. But it is not so in practice. For all human beings by the time they are adult have impressive skills in integrating simultaneously many different modes of awareness - sensory, perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and conative. And within each of these there are several different sub-modalities.

So the ordinary consciousness of human beings is already multi-modal to a most sophisticated degree. And the soul, it seems, yearns to extend its multi-modal range. For human consciousness is intrinsically holistic, thriving on the integration of comprehensive sets of interconnections and relations. The more it subsumes in the synthesis the more it feels exhilarated and empowered.

Nevertheless, it is still the case that being aware and alert to this degree is not everybody's cup of tea. Nor is it appropriate in many contexts. Nor is it desirable in any context unless it is an extension of authentic person-to-person relationships founded on mutual respect.

But many people have found it liberating to have the option, when they choose, to live more fully and awarely in two worlds at once, and this in the heart of human society. Charismatic training alerts people to this option and to what is involved in taking it up.

## 10. Manifold spaces

I wish now to talk about space in geometrical terms to complement the more experiential account given in preceding chapters.

I have defined matrix space as the space of the real or Euclidean shape of physical things; the space out of which the perspectives of ordinary perception emerge. It is the space of the true cube or cylinder or any other solid, as distinct from perspectival space which distorts the true shape of things. And I have proposed that matrix space can be directly apprehended by psi awareness; and that this apprehension is restricted, in ordinary consciousness, to correcting the distortions of immediate physical perception - with respect to shape, size and relative position. With further training, you can extend your psi awareness of matrix space beyond the limits of what is being looked at with the eyes - as I proposed in section 13 of Chapter 7.

The geometry of Euclid seems to define accurately enough the spatial matrix of our immediate physical perception of the world, but it would be wrong to identify matrix space exclusively with Euclidean space.

### 1. Non-Euclidean geometry

It was centuries before human beings realised the distinction between mathematical space and actual space. In 300 BC, Euclid martialled the results of the Greek mathematicians of the classical period into his celebrated *Elements*. And for over 2000 years - until the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry by Bolyai, Gauss and Lobachevsky in the 1820s - it was assumed that to talk about the properties of space as such, was to talk in terms of Euclidean geometry. Geometry meant the geometry of physical space, and that geometry was Euclid's. It was taken as self-evident that the consistency and elegance of Euclid's system represented the final and absolute word about space.

The emergence of non-Euclidean geometry was an epoch-making event in the history of thought. A simple and liberating inspiration reached three men almost simultaneously, but quite separately. And it marked the turning point from an era of mental absolutism to an era of mental relativity. Euclid's parallel postulate - that there can only be one line parallel to a given line through a point external to it - had always seemed less intuitively secure than his other postulates. Bolyai, Gauss and Lobachevsky decided to give it special status no longer.

They and their followers showed that by replacing it by one or other of its two contradictory forms - there can be no line parallel to a given line through a point external to it, and there can be many lines parallel to a given line through a point external to it - perfectly consistent geometries could be built up with many theorems that are quite inconsistent with the equivalent Euclidean theorems. And it was later found that both the Euclidean and the two non-Euclidean geometries were relative to a specialised treatment of certain aspects of the more general space of projective geometry.

The mathematical notions of certainty and absolute truth were shaken. The relativity of postulate systems was asserted: the truth of Euclidean geometry is not absolutely

but only relatively true. The realisation of this by scientists, mathematicians and philosophers has had an immense influence on the mental climate of our age.

## **2. Projective geometry as the source of metric geometries**

Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries deal with metric properties. They state systematically the relations between sizes of angles, lengths of lines, areas, as these relations appear in different figures.

Projective geometry, founded by Desargues in 1639, is concerned solely with the non-metric properties of figures, when these figures undergo projection and section. Project the same circle from many different angles upon a screen, then projective geometry will ask what properties are common to all these different projections. The common properties will not be metric ones, for there will be no constancy of width, of area, of subtended angles, and so on.

Projective geometry emerged into a fully developed science during its revival in the nineteenth century. This was because mathematicians had greatly increased their ability to handle the notion of geometrical infinity. The infinite is taken actively into account in the shaping of projective space.

So think of an archetypal projective space, free of any specific metric properties, in which our only concern is with those properties of figures that are invariant under any number of projective transformations. We are not concerned with any exact measurement relations as such, but only with ratios and relative proportions. This is a mobile, metamorphic kind of space.

The deepest law of this projective space is the polarity of point and plane, the locus of no extension and the locus of infinite extension. And out of the universal forms of projective space, different geometric spaces with different metric properties can be developed and differentiated. It all depends on what element in non-metric, projective space we select and fix or freeze into a unique entity - a given absolute - which then determines a sub-space with certain definite metric properties.

Each metric geometry, in fact, is simply projective geometry with special relation to an absolute conic. Each arises from the different geometric character we ascribe to the absolute or infinite region.

If we take as our absolute in projective space an infinite plane bearing an imaginary circle, then this invariant form will determine the metric properties of Euclidean (parabolic) space. This, of course, is the space we identify with the space of everyday objects. And in this space there can only be one line parallel to a given line through a point external to it, the angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees, and so on.

If we make our invariant absolute an imaginary quadric, this governs and determines the metric properties of the non-Euclidean space known as Riemannian (elliptic) space. In this space there are no other lines parallel to a given line through a point external to it; and the angles of a triangle always add up to more than 180 degrees.

A concrete representation of this kind of space is provided by the surface of a sphere. On a sphere, a straight line - defined as the shortest distance between two points - becomes a 'great circle', which is the shortest distance between two points on a spherical surface. On a sphere there are no parallel lines of the Euclidean sort, for each great circle intersects every other at two points. And when any three great circles intersect to form a triangle, the sum of its angles is always greater than 180 degrees.

Finally, if we make invariant in projective space a real non-ruled quadric, this determines the metric properties of the non-Euclidean space known as Lobachevskian (hyperbolic) space. Here there is more than one line parallel to a given line through a point external to it; and the angles of a triangle always add up to less than 180 degrees. A concrete representation of this kind of geometric space is provided by the concave surface of a pseudosphere.

To everyday objects we ascribe the geometrical properties of Euclidean space, because this is the simplest of logically possible forms, and seems to make sense of our immediate perceptual experience. But the logical simplicity of Euclid fails to do justice to the inherent complexity of the physical universe at large.

So attempts to conceptualise the space which astronomical telescopes probe, as in the general theory of relativity, led to the view that a non-Euclidean geometrical space of the Riemannian type might have greater relevance. What type of geometrical representation - Euclidean, non-Euclidean or pseudo-Euclidean - is best suited to symbolise the wider view of the physical universe is still under discussion.

The significance of Einstein's idea of applying a non-Euclidean geometry to the universe at large was that it made fully explicit the relativity of spatial concepts. It broke up the idea of one absolute, universal and homogeneous space exhibiting everywhere Euclidean properties. It suggested, rather, that the geometrical properties of space are relative to the standpoint of the observer, his assumptions, the range of his vision, and the purposes he has in mind. Different spaces can have different properties as a function of different intentions and beliefs. Or to put it another way, the properties of any space are inseparable from the structures of the consciousness that embraces it.

This account starts to echo the doctrine of powers view - that different spaces are different forms of the archetypal creative energy of universal consciousness.

### **3. Matrix within matrix**

I said in the introduction to this chapter that it would be wrong to identify matrix space exclusively with Euclidean space. I can now say why. When my awareness embraces the matrix space of this room, say, by being simultaneously in all its eight corners, the structure of my awareness is informed by the logic of Euclidean metric geometry.

But, as we have seen in the previous section, this Euclidean matrix space is itself a limited and limiting 'perspective' of consciousness on a subtler, deeper and richer matrix space: the non-metric, mobile, metamorphic, projective space of ratios and relative proportions. And here the structure of my awareness is informed by the logical polarity of point and plane.

Let's see now if we can relate this geometrical account of space to the experiential account of the expansion of consciousness given in earlier chapters, especially the section 13 of Chapter 7.

I can liberate my awareness spatially in two distinct steps. I can expand it from limited perspectives in physical space to a more extensive awareness in Euclidean space - of the 'fixed' subtle matrix of physical forms. And then I can expand it beyond that to the archetypal, projective matrix of the Euclidean matrix - to the subtler, mobile subtle matrix of the fixed subtle matrix of physical forms.



Indeed, clairvoyant exploration of the Euclidean matrix of, say, a room already seems to be done from the projective matrix, with many viewpoints from the lines of interacting planes. So we view the first step from the standpoint of the second.

However, we have to be cautious about this geometricising of experience. We must be careful not to identify experiential space with geometrical space. Geometrical knowledge develops and changes. It can inform and illuminate our experience of different kinds of space. Yet we may have spatial experiences that transcend the limits of geometrical advance. And we can have misfits: we may apply the wrong kind of geometry to certain kinds of spatial experience.

#### **4. The fourth dimension**

In the case of four dimensional space, imagination and analytic thought seem on their first encounter to be incompatible. It is easy to define a space of four dimensions in terms of coordinate or analytical geometry. It has four independent directions or dimensions at right angles to each other; and four coordinates will be needed to identify spatial entities in it. But it is difficult to imagine or visualise it.

The line, the surface and the volume are respectively spaces of one, two and three dimensions. We see at once that two points bound one line, four lines bound one square, six squares bound one cube. But if we continue this sequence and say that eight cubes bound one four-dimensional figure which will have a symmetrical eight-sided aspect to four independent directions - then the imagination gives out. Any attempt to visualise such a figure flounders in chaotic incoherence.

But there is another, more experiential, approach with which the imagination can do some business. We know that from our three-dimensional point of view we can look inside, grasp fully the total form of, a two-dimensional figure such as a circle or square. If our line of vision is at right angles to the central point of any such plane figure, then for all practical purposes we see it as it really is: we see its true Euclidean shape, inside and out, all at once. But a two-dimensional being could only get a limited, partial and distorted view of a bit of the inside, or a bit of the outside.

By analogy, we can imagine that an intelligence in four-dimensional space can look inside, grasp fully the total form of, any three-dimensional volume such as a cube or a sphere. Whereas our three-dimensional perspective of a cube is only a limited and distorted view of part of the outside of it, every part of its contents could be seen from a four-dimensional standpoint. The whole thing could be seen, inside and out, as it really is, all at once. But this is what is involved in entering matrix space, as described in section 13, Chapter 7; and in entering fully one's own matrix body as described in section 2, Chapter 9: embracing a three-dimensional volume fully, inside and out, all parts being simultaneously entertained in awareness.

So we can say that four-dimensional space is a non-perspectival awareness, all at once, of the total spatial gesture of a three-dimensional figure. On this account, the fourth dimension of space is a certain holistic state of awareness. In the fourth dimension, space and consciousness are coterminous.

The fourth dimension - a direction at right angles to the three directions of physical space - is an inclusive and encompassing way of being aware of these three directions: it is a spatial form of consciousness. Now the account of four-dimensional space given by analytical geometry is such that an equation with four variables could represent a three-dimensional stretch in a space of four dimensions. In other words, equations with four variables give an algebraic account of consciousness of matrix

space. This launches us into the mathematics of altered states of consciousness. But I am not competent to proceed further.

### 5. Modes of spatial experience

There is one basic question I have not so far considered. What is the relation between this holistic four-dimensional grasp, all at once, of a three-dimensional shape and the multiple clairvoyant views of such a shape from peripheral lines on the clairvoyant plane of vision?

It is equivalent, at the physical level, to the difference between feeling one's body shape from within by sensation from its tissues, and looking at its shape with one's eyes. In my physical body I have these two complementary modes of spatial experience: feeling or sensing my place in space, and seeing where I am. And mediating between them is moving through space. I can be in space, see in space and move in space.

The same modes of spatial experience seem to apply at the subtle level, but each in a much more emancipated form. For subtle awareness, it seems that I can *be* in space, in the holistic four-dimensional all-at-once sense, not just here where my subtle body is, but there where some other entity is. And I can *see* in subtle space not just from one central viewpoint, but also from many peripheral viewpoints. And may subtle body movement in subtle space can at times seem as rapid as thought itself, and can negotiate different spaces that express different forms of consciousness and energy.

### 6. The fifth and sixth dimensions

Suppose you have a four dimensional grasp of a three dimensional figure. This means, according to section 4 just above, that your awareness grasps the true shape of the figure all at once, inside and out, as it really is. What does it mean if your awareness then expands into a further and fifth dimension of space? What is it to have a five dimensional grasp of a four dimensional figure? Or, to put it another way, what is it to know all-at-once your knowing all-at-once of a three dimensional figure?

One thing it could mean is that you shift into a space *within* four-dimensional space. The word 'within' here is used by analogy. I don't mean 'within' in the sense of within the house or within the box - that is ordinary three-dimensional talk. It is more akin to what I mean when I say that the gaze is within the eyes, a person is within his body, or life is within the leaf. But is also a bit more rigorous than these examples indicate.

When I go out of my body into the other world (not just having an ectosomatic view of this world) I am in a quite distinct domain which is not located 'in' physical space, in the ordinary sense of this word 'in'. It is not in it like an orange is in it, or the moon is in it. But the other world domain I visit clearly does have some kind of spatial relationship to this world: for going out of the body to that domain is itself a spatial transition.

It is, I suppose, logically possible for there to be two distinct spaces that are not themselves spatially related. Indeed, one contemporary theologian, John Hick, has conceived the after-life in this way: as a kind of instantaneous resurrection at the moment of death in a space of which it makes no sense to ask where it is in relation to the space of this life. But my experience is different, not I hasten to add of dying, but of going from this world to the other: as I say, this 'going' is a spatial business.

It seems to me that the other world is within, in the sense of interpenetrating, this world: an interpenetration that somehow supports this world and provides the framework or matrix for it; and also an interpenetration that in other respects is quite independent, functionally, of this world - in the sense that many things can go on in the other world without having any obvious effect on what is going on in this world.

Interpenetration also means that you can in some sense say *where* some independent other-world domain is in relation to the space of this universe. This 'where' may be fixed or mobile. So I may say there is a domain of subtle space *within* the physical area between the earth and its moon: this would be a fixed kind of co-location of the two worlds. Or I may say that there are domains of inner space that 'move through' the physical area, say, of the solar system: here the co-location shifts around.

As well as other-world domains interpenetrating the space of this universe, they also, of course, have more inclusive logical or geometrical parameters than physical space. And the energy frequencies of events within them are also different: usually, it seems, much higher.

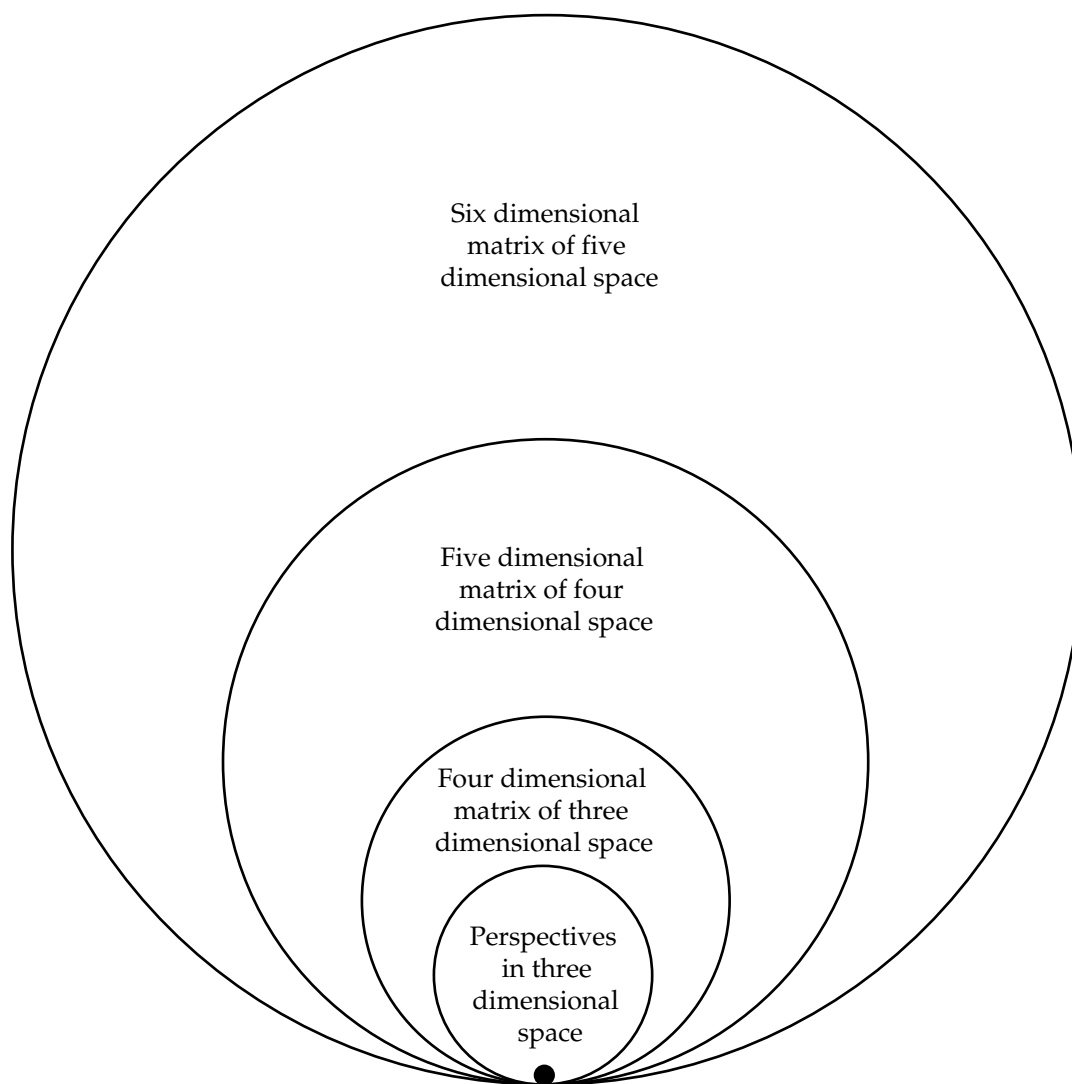


Figure 10.1 *The hierarchy of spaces*

By extending this notion of the interpenetration of spaces, we may say that we enter a six dimensional space when we are conscious in and of a first other-world domain that interpenetrates a distinct and second other-world domain, which in turn interpenetrates the all-at-once four dimensional matrix of the physical realm. Each more comprehensive space is a matrix of the space it transcends. And just as in the four dimensional matrix of physical space you can know any three dimensional volume both within and without all at once; so also in the fifth dimensional matrix you can know any four dimensional space simultaneously from the 'inside' and the 'outside'; and so on in the sixth. Figure 10.1 gives simple portrayal of the hierarchy of spaces, grounded in *mahabindu*, the Great Point.

This hierarchy of spaces is, on the doctrine of powers view, also a hierarchy of the structures and energies of universal consciousness. Each higher dimension comprehends all the other dimensions within it, is more intense in its degree of consciousness, and manifests higher frequencies of energies.

So we get a conjectural model of a universe of manifold spaces: there is the first subtle realm which transcends yet interpenetrates the second subtle realm, which in turn transcends yet interpenetrates the four-dimensional subtle matrix of the physical world. And all this structured diversification is of consciousness itself, of which my consciousness and your consciousness are illusorily restricted parts. We can break out of the illusion, and get going on the wider reaches of spatial reality.

Roughly speaking, the first and second subtle realms mentioned here correspond to the *higher subtle level*, and the interaction between the second subtle realm and the subtle matrix to the *lower subtle level*, of Grof's cartography of transpersonal states (Grof, 1988: 39).

## 7. Dimensional clusters

We grasp the first three dimensions of space in one go. We don't first learn to master one dimension, the line, then two dimensions, the plane, then three dimensions, the solid and the enclosed or open space. We take them on board in a cluster. They come in our ordinary consciousness together.

I believe it is essentially the same with the second three dimensions of space, the fourth, fifth and sixth. When I enter my levity line and thence into all-at-once four dimensional awareness of the subtle matrix of my physical body, at the same time I have five dimensional awareness of the way in which my subtle body proper interpenetrates my subtle matrix and thence my physical body. Also at the same time I have at least incipient six dimensional awareness of subtle domains within and beyond my subtle body frequencies: because I can choose to open myself up to these higher frequencies and make my six dimensional awareness explicit.

There is nothing particularly mysterious, problematic or esoteric about this experiential cluster of the fourth, fifth and sixth spatial dimensions. It's just a matter of doing the exercises that open up your awareness at the matrix level, and noticing how the cluster comes. At any rate, it is not really any more mysterious than how the first three dimensions of line, plane and solid all come together.

The first cluster initiates us into spatial *extension* - the without of space. The second cluster initiates us into spatial *intension* - the within of space. I give the word 'intension' here a new technical meaning. In relation to any domain of subtle space, it refers to three things: the degree or intensity of consciousness of which that space is the form; the degree or frequency of its energies; and the degree to which it includes,

by virtue of its multi-dimensional structure, other spaces which it interpenetrates and yet transcends.

Physical birth launches us into the first cluster, physical death into the second cluster - when our consciousness starts to function explicitly in the subtle body. But we need not wait to be born into the subtle body at death. We can start to become our own ally now, awakening ourselves to explicit subtle action in the midst of earthly life.

# 11. Extraordinary times

This chapter is partly experiential, partly conceptual - as with many of the earlier chapters prior to Chapter 10 - but the conceptual component is rather more pronounced. In and among, I report some unusual experiences that seem to go beyond our ordinary notion of time.

## 1. Can the future shape the present?

Our culture has one primary concept of causation, that of efficient causation, in which one event earlier in time causes the occurrence of another event later on. Not only does the cause precede its effect, but it is also linked to it by some detectable transmission of physical energy through physical space.

Now there are certain experiences where it is *as if* this is not the case, where it seems that the effect precedes its cause, and that there is no physical transmission from cause to effect. In the next two sections, I give some examples - from the arena of creativity.

## 2. Recording the future

Several years ago, I rented a studio over a barber's shop, just opposite King's Cross Station in London. I spent two or three days a week there doing oil paintings. The canvasses I bought from a firm in the Old Kent Road: they were made up from awnings left over from stands that had lined the coronation procession route through London in 1951. On this material that had witnessed a royal event I did much creative work.

Standing before the easel, with the rumble of traffic outside, and faint echoes of conversation from the barber's shop below, I would get this unmistakable sense of creative foreboding, although not of anything sinister. Rather it was the presentiment of a painting, the detail and content of which I could not grasp - but I knew that it was already complete. All I had to do was let my hand and heart and arm follow the creative dictates of the premonition - and there would emerge before me a total painting, integrated in form and colour, striking, surprising and satisfying.

It reminded me of the old Aristotelian notion of *entelechy*. This is the idea that a seed, for example, contains its end state of a flowering plant as a dynamic potential within it, and that this causes the seed to develop into the plant. I thought, too, of how Driesch revived the idea of *entelechy* in twentieth century biology to explain the development of form in organisms. But it was a bit more than this.

It was as if the painting was already done, and I was copying its future form. I was busy peering at my own achievement in time to come, in order to copy it in the present. I was encountering myself later on in order to realise myself now. I was engaged in a sort of creative precognition.

I wondered whether it would develop into a full-blown *doppelganger* effect. This is the experience, sometimes called *autoscopy*, in which a person encounters their double. Many creative writers have reported this event. Goethe met himself on the road riding a horse. Shelley was approached by a hooded figure who pulled back the hood to reveal himself. Dostoyevsky encountered himself, so too de Maupassant, and

several others. I wondered whether such writers are so busy with creative precognition, with reproducing their future achievements, that they create a mental set suddenly to meet themselves.

You may say that my having a creative presentiment of a painting is scarcely the same as my copying now my painting in the future. But this germinal state was not like ordinary planning, or like thinking out a design, or like visualising an effect to be achieved. It was like knowing where things - lines, colours, spaces - are to go because they are already there in time to come. The art of painting became closely aligned to precognitive skill.

Time became circular, curling back on itself, as if the future created the present. You may then ask how the painting that already exists in the future was painted: was it copied too? But this misses the point. There can be no infinite regress here. It is not the case that the future painting is a copy of itself further in the future, and so on.

There is only one act of painting. But this creative act extends the specious present, enlarges my grasp of matrix time, so that I apprehend the whole sequence of events from conceiving the painting to completing it, and this while going through the sequence. In this state of mind, I am aware of the actual end state while I am busy realising it. And so I can depict what will be.

I refer the reader back to sections 3 and 17 in Chapter 9 where I introduced the idea of matrix time. This is the time in which a whole sequence in clock time co-exists. What is serial in clock time becomes concurrent in matrix time, but it is a concurrence in which we can still distinguish between before and after. In other words, in matrix time we know what is earlier and what is later in serial time, but we apprehend them in the same matrix moment.

Matrix time is rather like a well from which you can draw up buckets of clock time. To use another metaphor, it is womb-like, generative. It gives birth to whole sequences, and to batches of sequences.

### **3. The spawning womb**

I was staying in the city of Munster in West Germany. It was late August and I was lying in bed in the early morning, examining three chakras. The abdominal chakra yielded spontaneous dream-like imagery, the spleen chakra was for formal projection and reception, and from the brow chakra visions of inner space unfolded.

Quite unexpectedly, in the area of the spleen chakra, I received the word 'Vega'. I knew it was the name of a star, but I didn't know to which constellation it belonged. At the end of the day, when I went back to bed, I focussed my mind on the star Vega wondering what *its* name is: the name it gives itself, or is given to it by those close to it. I felt the quality of energy of a luminous orb and fell into a deep sleep.

The next few days I was busy with other inquiries, mostly out in the woods, but a lingering curiosity about Vega haunted me, like a phantom pregnancy of the mind. After five days I felt I must take some practical initiative. I went to the local reference library and looked up everything that included the name Vega.

There was, of course, the star - in the constellation of Lyra, the lyre. There were some Spanish poets; and two towns in Puerto Rico. The Spanish poets intrigued me; and the trail took me to lyric poetry and the 'Lyrical Ballads' of Coleridge and Wordsworth. There I let the matter rest - and returned again to the woods.

But after another three days, I had come to full term with my Vega pregnancy. I had to give birth. I started to write poetry. It poured out, as from an inner well whose hidden waters were rising up to burble over the rim. The welling up continued throughout the whole of a second day and into a third. By the time the well had emptied itself, I had written forty four poems.

It was a curious mixture, much of it lyric verse of many different styles. Some stanzas had compelling, original force. Some were like pastiches of Blake, Swinburne, Housman, Osbert Sitwell, and others. Whether pastiches or not, some were good and others not so good. Some were slight and some were silly. But the whole batch as a batch impressed me with its power and its delivery.

In the act of writing words and lines were 'coming' from inner space, on my right side, quite close. But more fundamentally, I was suspended between clock time and matrix time. I was at the mouth of the womb of inner time which had already creatively spawned its batch of poems, and I was *recording myself having recorded them*. A sort of autoscopy, to be sure.

Several of the poems were about Apollo, sun-god of the Greeks and Romans, the patron of poetry and music, who said at his birth 'Dear to me shall be the lyre and bow'. Here is one of them, which appealed to me:

Apollo again, again,  
again  
thundering words across chasms  
of righteous disorder,  
sundering thought  
with the cleavage of aspirated vowels,  
ravaging the mind  
with the howl of nouns  
gone mad with their first birth  
upon chaos.  
What forms arise,  
what empires and sepulchres  
of images deranged,  
disoriented in the extremes  
of shouting from the poles.  
Hail, madman of the word,  
ravage the heart  
with your sweet pronunciation.

It is interesting, too, that many of the poems were about the destiny of the soul, the drama of its sequence in physical time.

#### 4. Primal events

It was the summer of 1971. I was attending the annual conference of the British Association of Social Psychiatry in Oxford. It was the second year of the arrival of the human potential movement in England. This conference had boldly decided to provide a forum for several of the movement's American practitioners. As well as more formal presentations, there were a number of experiential groups in the programme, several of them improvised on the spot.

On evening I participated in one of these impromptu groups. It was to be about encounter, or body work, or psychodrama, or some mixture of all these - I forget



precisely what. What I do most vividly recall was finding myself, as a result of one of the group exercises, suddenly precipitated into deep regression. I was reliving and releasing a profound fear, pain and horror of my infancy, with trembling and screaming and much agitation of the body.

I also recall that while this deep distress was radically shaking its way out of my system, part of my attention was poised in a luminous zone in subtle space a little above and forward of my cathartic release in physical space. Poised in that subtle light, I was also in matrix time, comprehending the whole sequence from birth to that moment and beyond. This comprehension was both a total temporal grasp of the sequence, and also a bundle of insights into it.

As the catharsis subsided and I came back into present physical time from the regression, a deep layer of my attention was still centred in matrix time. I went out alone into the quadrangle of the Oxford college where the conference was based - to rejoice in this temporal emancipation, this insightful grasp of past, present and future, this unitive delight in the configuration of my personal destiny.

I remember, too, that while this inner rejoicing was afoot, there was a slight uneasiness in the lower reaches of my awareness that I would sooner or later slip out of matrix time - and back into the anxious seriality of clock time. And this indeed did happen. The claims of succession, of before and after, are inescapable.

Primal events - that is, regression to very early traumatic experiences - often open up awareness of matrix time, and in interesting sorts of ways. Once at a Co-counselling International workshop based in the Royal Veterinary College north of London, just before disappearing under pile of cushions to re-run my birth tapes, my awareness suddenly opened up to embrace the temporal form of my life as a whole, and this before it had begun. It was *as if* I was poised at an entry point into clock time just before my conception, and my plunge into incarnation.

So there are peculiar interrelations of physical time and matrix time. You may comprehend matrix time from different nodal points in clock time. To use a visual and spatial metaphor, your matrix perspective on a whole temporal sequence in everyday time can be from this or that particular viewpoint in the sequence. In the experience just mentioned, I saw my life ahead of me from a quite precise vantage point in clock time before I had been conceived - and this with the whole emotional tone of that moment included. Access to matrix time can be heterogeneous, selective. You can cut into it in many different chunky ways.

On another occasion, this time of LSD-induced regression, I was spread-eagled on the king-sized waterbed which I had in those days in my flat in Hampstead, London. The undulations of the water in the bed threw me back into the primal mode. My arms, legs and head spontaneously reproduced neo-natal, followed by pre-natal movements and postures. I then went back beyond conception, before physical incarnation. In this regression, there were three quite distinct matrix time vistas.

One matrix-time view of my life-sequence was from the standpoint of the moment of birth, with its critical question - which was 'Can I trust you to care?' So here again, there was a highly selective grasp of the sequence from a nodal point within it. The sequence was taken in and understood from the standpoint of the birth query.

The next comprehension of my life-sequence was altogether different. It was *as if* from a point in another order of time: a point at which it was *as if* I became separated from beings in some other spatial dimension, beings with whom I had and have a

profound affinity. My life-sequence was now grasped and understood from the standpoint of what was involved in *this* separation.

Now you could say that this transcendental separation also occurred in everyday time, that is, at some time before my physical conception. And in a limited sense this is correct. But in a wider sense it misses the point. You cannot make any obvious one-to-one correlation between happenings in transcendental time, and succession in ordinary time. For it seemed that the *moment* of separation in transcendental time coincided with the whole of my life in clock time. I can't get clearer about it than that.

The third experience of my life-sequence was *as if* from a point in transcendental time when my physical life was over. In the company of those beings I knew so well, I was in a remarkable state of exultation and uninhibited celebration, contemplating the completion of my life. Yet this vantage point in transcendental time was also somehow concurrent with the unfolding of my life in everyday time.

Matrix time grasp can occur, then, either from a point in clock time, or from a 'point' in transcendental time. But now I think a little speculative clarification is appropriate - in order to sort these three concepts out. So the next three sections try to make sense of what seemed to be implicit in my understanding of the above sorts of experience as they occurred.

### **5. Physical time, matrix time and transcendental time**

Physical time is clock time, which as I said in section 17 of Chapter 9, is based on the period of the earth's rotation, and is used to measure our perception of the succession of physical events. Matrix time is the time in which we grasp whole sequences - temporal forms - in clock time. It is also generative: the time of entelechy, morphogenesis and human creativity. It formulates the destiny that is spread out in clock time. Transcendental time is the time-framework for the perception of events in subtle domains.

Our grasp of matrix time is tacit - in ordinary states of consciousness. But in order to grasp temporal succession in clock time, we need some of our awareness extended into matrix time. Usually this extension is only sufficient to give us a modest grasp of the *form* of successive events in clock time.

In altered states of consciousness, we can extend our awareness of matrix time and get a larger grasp of it, not just the immediate pattern of events around the present physical moment. And we can apprehend all-at-once these larger temporal forms from the 'perspective' of any one of a great number of different clock-time points within them. And this 'perspective' is not only a perspective of apprehension or perception, it is also a perspective of comprehension - we understand the temporal form from a certain interpretative viewpoint (as when I grasp my life-sequence construed from the viewpoint of the birth-query, as described above).

We can also grasp matrix time, whole sequences in clock time, from different vantage points in the transcendental time of subtle domains. And this gives another kind of comprehension of temporal forms in clock time: we understand them at a different level of destiny, in terms of a different order of values, norms and 'facts'.

### **6. Destiny and pre-destination**

What this all brings out is that there is no one proper or objective account of the matrix grasp of a temporal form, a sequence in clock time. There are innumerable,

heterogeneous accounts, from different points in clock time or in transcendental time, each viewpoint yielding a different understanding of the sequence as a whole. Each person has no single destiny, but innumerable destinies. Destiny - the pattern of one's life as a whole - is not a single line. It is a concatenated web. It is an anastomosis of veins of understanding: a whole network of interacting themes in different temporal dimensions.

And some of these themes may stand in startling and dramatic contrast to each other. Thus the theme of my life from the clock time vantage point of the birth-moment and the birth-query - with its uncertainty, insecurity and lack of trust - is very different from the theme of my life from the exultant transcendental vantage point overarching the completion of my earthly existence. The mystery and drama of personal destiny derives from its multi-levelled and multi-stranded nature.

This means also that any notion of unilateral predestination is a total distortion and misrepresentation of the richness of our immersion in the manifold of interacting times. There is only multilateral, heterogeneous predestination. There are many predestinations for each person's life, each one the pattern of a different theme. And since there can be an endless number of themes of varied content, it scarcely makes sense to talk of predestination at all.

In an important sense, there is not just one set or series of successive events in a person's life. For there is no such thing as a single occasion. Each daily episode - such as my getting up this morning - is embedded in the manifold of interacting times. It is in clock time, in matrix time and within transcendental time. It is itself a collective and multitudinous happening, in which its status as an episode is a function of innumerable different possible temporal perspectives. Hence my life as a whole is a multitudinous bundle of *sets* of successive events.

Another way of saying all this is that an event is a *temporal meaning*. And a temporal meaning is a function of a temporal perspective. Once our consciousness launches itself into the manifold of interacting times, we realise the heterogeneity of temporal perspectives. There is no one meaning to any one occasion. Rather each happening is defined in terms of a family of overlapping meanings arising from overlapping temporal perspectives.

You may say that surely there is just one destiny for a person: the composite destiny of all the themes of their life taken together. And that surely just as I can grasp the matrix space of the room as a whole - with a four-dimensional grasp of its total three-dimensional reality - so too I can grasp the temporal form of the day (or my life) as a whole, without that grasp being from the vantage point of a particular time within it, before it, after it (or beyond it in transcendental time).

I don't think this is so, and because of a fundamental difference between space and time. Time fills space with content and meaning. It is always telling a story. And a story always has a line, a perspective of meaning, whether it is unfolded serially in clock time; or grasped all at once in matrix time. So when I grasp the complex story of the multiple themes of my life, I will still do so from some selected combination of vantage points. As such it will only be one version of the complex story.

When you go to the theatre to see a play, you can get a four dimensional grasp on the matrix shape of the stage as a whole; but you grasp of the temporal form of the play as a whole will consist of overlapping perspectives from various nodal points within it. Time, in matrix mode, will always tell a story: whose meaning is articulated and

spread out from critical incidents within it, and is therefore always relative to the selection of those incidents. Space, in matrix mode, can be apprehended in undifferentiated unities of shape, which are absolute in themselves and relative only to the logical parameters that define the space as a whole. Time is inherently and selectively dramatic, space not so.

Once an architect has drawn up plans for a theatre, there is only one shape in which it can appear, whoever builds it. Once a dramatist has written a play, there are innumerable ways of presenting and acting it. The womb of matrix time spawns a protean abundance of alternative scenarios.

Another way of putting all this, albeit somewhat crudely, is to say that space is the home of consciousness, ultimately universal consciousness; while time is the home of the soul, the individual centre of reference, always distinct, idiosyncratic. Through space we enter the generality of cosmic awareness; through time the particularity and polymorphous relativity of personal destiny, both individual and corporate.

And while the soul may transcend the illusory state of separateness of being, and enter unitive reality, this does not mean loss of distinctness and uniqueness of being - a point the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta* fails to grasp. There is a better metaphor than that of the dewdrop disappearing into the shining sea. It is that of the individual note whose resonance is enhanced by the harmony within an orchestrated whole.

## 7. Responsibility and freedom

A traditional argument about responsibility and freedom goes something like this. I am not responsible for my actions and cannot properly be held accountable for them unless they are the product of my freedom of choice. And I only have real freedom if, on any occasion of exercising it, I could have chosen other than I did: to be truly free to choose, I must have genuine options, genuine alternative futures ahead of me. So if the universe is such that it is in principle possible for me to have precognition, before I choose, of what I will have chosen, then I am not really a free or responsible being.

This argument is based on a strong allegiance to the serial experience of time as the succession of present moments which become past and which can determine what the future will be. But we could have an alternative view of responsibility and freedom, derived from an allegiance to matrix time awareness in which the expanded present includes past and future in its encompassing simultaneity.

On this view, choice itself is born out of matrix time. When I freely choose to do something, it is always in the context of some minimal matrix grasp of the past-present-future sequence of events in relation to which the choice is made. And I experience the greatest freedom of choice when I choose on the basis of a tacit precognition of what I will have chosen. The freedom is not so much in the act of choice but in the experience of being chosen, as it were, by my own ends.

My ends come out of deeper, more archetypal levels of being, and I apprehend what they will have been - by the tacit entry of my awareness into matrix time. Such apprehension is my guide to choice in physical time. My freedom is my election by my ends. My responsibility is the claim such election has upon me. A bizarre doctrine, to be sure.

Another approach to freedom is to say that any occasion which occurs through my choice is itself a multitudinous happening: it can be construed in terms of many different temporal perspectives, as I proposed in the previous section. And although

when I chose it, I did so in terms of only one such perspective, my freedom consists in the fact that I could have chosen it in the light of a different perspective. Therefore, I am responsible for construing it the way I did. On this view, freedom and responsibility are to do with the options I have in organising my consciousness within the manifold of interacting times - the manifold that makes any event of choice itself a variegated collective.

## 8. Transcendental time

Transcendental time and matrix time come together. It is similar to being tacitly in five-dimensional space as soon as you enter the four-dimensional matrix of a three-dimensional object. So when, in matrix time, I am grasping a sequence in physical time as a whole, I am also tacitly laid back in transcendental time.

I defined transcendental time in an earlier section in this chapter, as the time-framework within which events in subtle domains are perceived. It provides those temporal properties of the other world, which, along with its spatial and energetic properties, entitle us to say that it is a world.

Now you can talk of subtle space in terms of interpenetrating *planes* in contrast to the mutual exclusivity of *point*-centred objects in physical space. In the same way you can bring out a polar contrast between transcendental or subtle time, and physical or clock time. So here follows a highly speculative model.

The archetypal forms of time are succession, duration and simultaneity. Succession is to do with events coming before and after each other. Duration is to do with how long an event lasts before the next event comes after it. And simultaneity is to do with events - whether before, now or after - occurring at the same time, alongside each other, as it were.

In physical time, succession is primary. But is not just that events are permanently linked by the relation of before and after. We are also in the serial flux of change: what was after is continually absorbed by the present and becomes before. The future comes into the present and leaves it as the past. Duration is next in significance: we are inescapably pre-occupied with how much time there is for this or that, how long we have got, how long an occasion will last before the flux of change throws up another occasion. Simultaneity, in physical time, seems only a necessary buttress to succession and duration. It provides, so to speak, the lateral spread of events that makes it possible to experience the first two dimensions of time.

In transcendental time, by contrast, simultaneity is primary. We are in a total pattern of occasions occurring at the same time. And within this whole configuration we can distinguish differences of duration among events, and differences of before and after. Such differences of before and after simply help, in an ancillary way, to make sense of differences of duration within the total simultaneous pattern. Both sets of differences, in transcendental time, are aspects of the *same* time. They are distinct yet interpenetrate co-temporaneously.

Before and after, in subtle time, constitute a pattern of meaning apprehended simultaneously - not a succession or series grasped at different times. When we understand a whole drama - say Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' - before and after within that drama are elements of a temporal pattern in our understanding which we realise all at once. They are not serial mental events. This analogy affords some insight into my model of subtle time.

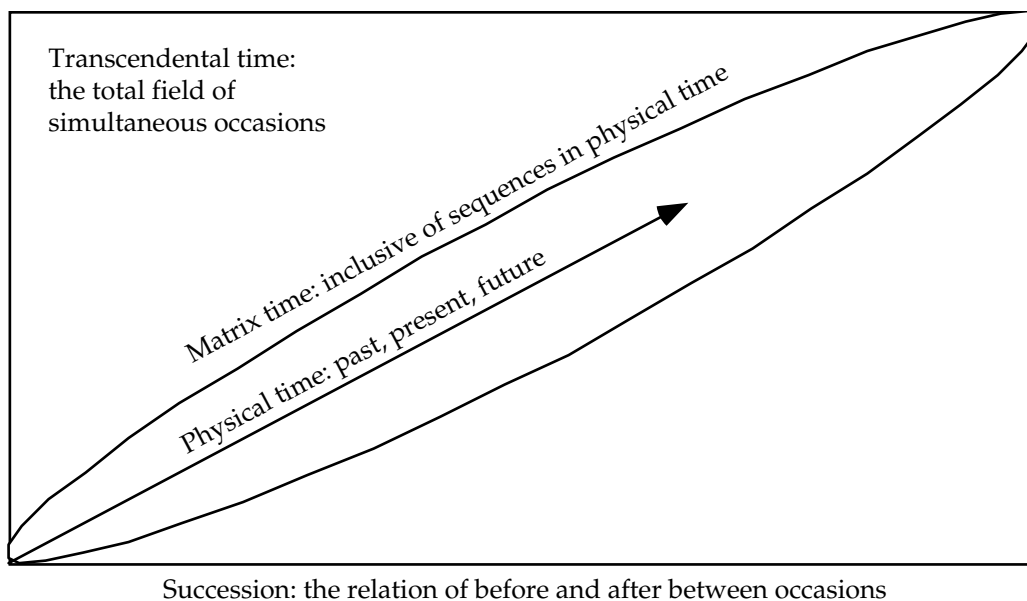


Figure 11.1 *Transcendental time, matrix time and physical time*

In physical time, the time now is reduced to a point moving from the past through the present to the future, in relation to the two dimensions of succession and duration. In transcendental time, the time Now is comprehensively expansive, including all relations of succession and duration, which are thus different kinds of meaningful experience within the total field of simultaneous occasions. Matrix time is a half-way house, in which larger or smaller sequences in physical time can be grasped as a concurrent whole. Figure 11.1 illustrates these three sorts of time.

But just as, in physical time, with its primary dimension of succession, there is an experience of the specious present - the sense that the present already includes bits of the past and of the future adjacent to it - so in subtle time, with its primary dimension of simultaneity, there is an experience of specious succession, which is the sense that the field of simultaneity has contracted to exclude some before occasions and some after occasions. Rather than calling these two complementary experiences 'the specious present' and 'specious succession', it is better perhaps to call them, respectively, 'the expanded now' and 'the contracted Now', where 'now' with a small 'n' is the present moment of ordinary consciousness, and 'Now' with the big 'N' is the field of simultaneity in transcendental time.

And just as a human person immersed in the serial flow of physical time can learn to extend their awareness into matrix time beyond the ordinary narrow limits of the everyday 'expanded now', so a subtle being in the simultaneous spread of transcendental time may be able further to contract their awareness into a prolonged serial flow of events, beyond what may be only a brief serial flow in their normal 'contracted Now'.

When a subtle domain is co-located with, interpenetrating in a fixed mode (in the sense defined in the previous chapter), a physical area, then presumably its time framework is also interrelated to the physical time involved. The presences in that domain have many options for temporal experience.

(1) They may choose to experience their own subtle domain in its fundamental temporal format of a simultaneous spread that includes before-and-after and duration as dimensions of its meaning, and with only a brief serial flow in their 'contracted Now'.

But this will always be done from one or more nodal simultaneous events within the total spread. So it will always be an interpretation, a perspective of meaning on the drama of their destiny in their domain. Since there is no limit to the number of possible perspectives of meaning, there is no limit to the ever-present ways in which the subtle beings can have temporal experience of their world. An extraordinary life.

(2) They may decide to contract their normal 'contracted Now' even further and experience their own subtle domain in terms of whatever duration of serial temporal flow they choose. So they could opt to live in a subtle domain with the kind of temporal experience of succession that we have in the physical world.

(3) They could choose to live in their world in terms of a point to point correlation between their chosen serial flow of subtle events and our serial flow of physical events. Perhaps these correlations could be made in all sorts of different ways, with the subtle flow fitted, or staggered or geared. to the physical flow of time in many configurations, each with different dynamic effects.

(4) They could choose to experience physical events in our world either serially as we do, or in matrix mode, with varying degrees of simultaneous spread over past, present and future, from different standpoints and levels.

## **9. The four causes**

In a world of simultaneous events, causation is synchronous - a kind of mutuality of resonance. Various metaphors can be invoked here: events echo within each other, shine off each other, enhance each other's declaration of intent - and so on. It is the mutual impact of tone upon tone in a harmony, colour upon colour in a painting, gaze upon gaze in a moment of personal intimacy.

Such synchronous or resonant causation is the primary kind of causation in the other world. It is a matter of affinity: it is something to do with similarity of form. Differences of resonance, I surmise, are due to differences of form.

In a world of serial events, causation is efficient, mechanical, as we know it in this world. The cause precedes its effect in time, and produces its effect by some energetic transmission through space.

And for human beings, who live in both worlds at once, there is an intermediate and third kind of causation: formal causation - making ends actual by choice and action. Or perhaps we should say: ends making themselves actual through choice and action.

The fourth kind of causation is formative causation: whereby physical organisms develop, sustain and regenerate their physical forms. In my view, such causation operates into the physical body from its subtle matrix. Formative causation is closely connected with rhythm, with periodicity. An organism is a whole interdependent set of oscillations, frequencies, rhythmic patterns - from the vibrating structure of the molecule, through the periodicities of cellular function, the rhythmic contractions of involuntary muscle, the heartbeat, breathing, eating and defecating, sleeping and waking.

A human being is at the cross-over point of these four causes, integrating and interrelating them all in the process of living. It is my own view that synchronous causation, as yet little understood in our culture, can have a profound effect on mechanical causation, an effect which constitutes a whole new technology. Similarly formal causation - the impact of human intention - can have a profound effect on formative causation, thus inaugurating a whole new science of self-healing in medicine.

## 12. Speculative metaphysics

In this chapter I move beyond ambiguous experience, the *as if* perspective, into pure speculation. What follows is conjecture: I sketch out a pattern of basic concepts to give an intelligible overview of the whole system within which we live. Such a pattern is entirely relative to the context - personal, cultural and historical - of its utterance. There are innumerable, different forms for such patterns. The assertive mode below is to aid clarity, not dogmatism.

The justification for this kind of speculation is found in the doctrine of the continuity of individual consciousness with universal consciousness and its archetypal content. But each individual view of such content is fraught with the inherent limits of its relativity, thus making for a healthy kind of fallibility.

### 1. The manifest and the unmanifest

Let us first make a classic distinction between the divine as manifest and the divine as unmanifest. The manifest divine is this universe, the other universe and all kinds and modes of differentiated being involved in them. The unmanifest divine is prior to any kind of differentiation of any sort. The manifest divine can also be called 'creation'; and this in the two senses of the word - the process of creation, and the product that is created.

From a standpoint *within* creation, the unmanifest divine can be conceived as bipolar: as immanent and as transcendent. As immanent, the unmanifest divine is within all creation: the infinitude within all experience and all phenomena, the indwelling mystery, the void, at the heart of everything. As transcendent, the unmanifest divine is beyond all creation: the infinitude without, beyond all name and form, all-encompassing, boundless, ineffable.

In terms of Grof's cartography of transpersonal states, what I call the unmanifest divine is what he names the *higher causal realm*. He reports two basic kinds of experience that fall within this realm. One is 'the experience of the Void' which underlies the phenomenal universe: it is an emptiness that is pregnant with all existence (Grof, 1988: 147). This corresponds to what I call the immanent unmanifest divine.

The other is 'the experience of formless consciousness transcending all dualities', a state of boundless ineffability beyond all differentiation (Grof, 1988: 44, 144). This corresponds to what I call the transcendent unmanifest divine. While the two kinds of experience are there in Grof's account, his conceptual map does not bring out fully this polarity of immanent and transcendent within the unmanifest divine.

### 2. Eros, Cosmos and Logos

The process of creation can also be conceived as bipolar: there is the *emergence* of the creative process from the immanent, unmanifest divine; and there is the *emanation* of the creative process from the transcendent, unmanifest divine. Emergence from the unmanifest within, and emanation from the unmanifest beyond, are the underlying bipolar modes of the process of creation, the basic complementary ways in which the unmanifest becomes manifest.



I will call these primal modes of creation, respectively, Eros and Logos. I use these two names to refer to creative principles of different gender: manifest Goddess and manifest God. This echoes, but theologically goes beyond, C.G.Jung's usage. No reference is intended to the Greek god Eros, whose name is here given a new meaning.

In terms of Grof's cartography of transpersonal states, what I call Eros and Logos constitute what he names the *lower causal realm*. Experiences he reports in this realm are of the divine as Demiurge, as Creator of the universe, 'the supreme force of existence'. Again, however, both the accounts he gives and his analysis do not bring out the polarity of the Demiurge state, the complementarity of Eros and Logos, of emergence and emanation, of creatrix and creator. Although he does say that some subjects 'reported experiences in which there was a male-female dyad of creators similar to the cosmologies of some non-Western cultures' (Grof, 1988:142-3).

Spanned between Eros and Logos is the whole universal system of which we are a part, and which I will call Cosmos. In terms of a crude geometrical analogy, Cosmos is the radial system between Eros the centre, and Logos the circumference. Eros, Cosmos and Logos constitute the manifest divine. Eros is within Cosmos; Logos is beyond Cosmos. And as such Eros and Logos are the first and complementary forms of the process of manifestation. Cosmos is the fullness of manifestation, the universe, both physical and subtle. It corresponds, in Grof's scheme, to the *higher subtle level*, the *lower subtle level* and the *gross experiential realm* (Grof, 1988: 39).

We have then here a basic triad of being: immanent emergence, actual existence and transcendent emanation; the Womb, the World and the Word. The World is not less than the Womb or the Word. Manifest fullness is of equal status as the emergent and the emanate. If we take the Womb, the World, and the Word, that is, Eros, Cosmos and Logos, we may expect to find this triadic interdependence echoed in the more detailed structure of experience. So we can organise within it different triadic sets of ideas. Each set consists of concepts whose interdependence is central to our understanding of the field of discourse to which they apply.

<i>Eros</i>	<i>Cosmos</i>	<i>Logos</i>
Feeling	Willing	Thinking
Persons	Things	Ideas
Presence	Existence	Essence
Qualities	Substances	Relations
Values	Facts	Norms
Sensation	Percept	Concept
Simultaneity	Seriality	Duration
Synchronicity	Causality	Necessity
Potentiality	Actuality	Possibility
Communion	Encounter	Understanding

Table 12.1 *Triadic sets of concepts*

I don't propose that we take this kind of thing too seriously, otherwise we become afflicted with categorial dogmatism and rigidity. Just occasionally it may illuminate our thinking in some domain. So if I put together a couple of triads from the above list, I find it fruitful to think that I encounter the existence of something, commune with its presence, and understand its essence (its intelligible features). And that while all these three processes are interdependent, they are also nevertheless distinct and cannot be confused or identified with each other.

### **3. Autonomy, parity and hierarchy**

In the great world-system of Cosmos, there are three fundamental values that define the status and influence of any particular being or mode of being. They are autonomy, parity and hierarchy. And they are essential to the proper understanding of the manifest system, or any part of it.

To the extent that any entity is autonomous it has a unique status, an idiosyncratic identity and is self-determining, an influence upon itself. Power is self-generated. The entity is self-administering and self-organising. Entities in a relation of parity - or, simply, peer entities - have equal status, and have reciprocal influence upon each other, neither having the greater sway. Power is shared. Entities in a hierarchical relation have different status - one has less status and one has more - and the one with less is subject to the influence of the one with more. Power is exercised by one being in relation to another.

The word 'hierarchy' derives from two Greek words meaning 'sacred' and 'rule'. Now in the domain of Cosmos - the physical and subtle worlds - sacred rule operates in two ways, in two directions: up and down. There is the sacred rule of Eros, upwards, from below as it were: the immanent creatrix, spawning influence from the fundament and ground of being, from within it. Power is exercised in the direction of ascent, from the roots upwards, from what is under to what is over. The seed is potent in relation to the impacted soil above it, breaking it up and pushing through it.

This upward direction of sacred rule, of hierarchy, has been repressed and denied in patriarchal systems of theology, of knowledge, and of politics and social order. These systems have improperly emphasised the sacred rule of Logos, downwards, from above: the transcendent creator emanating power and influence from the heights, beyond the earthly vale, beyond the subtle mountain peaks. Power descends from what is over to what is under. Sunlight is potent in relation to the leafy branches below it.

Now I believe that up-hierarchies and down-hierarchies are themselves of equal status, are in a relation of parity. The sacred rule of Eros and the sacred rule of Logos are equipotent. They interact with reciprocal influence, neither dominant under or over the other. They are polar complements equally vital in the ordering of Cosmos. On this view, parity is more fundamental in the scheme of things than hierarchy, for neither an up-hierarchy nor a down-hierarchy is properly exercised or understood save in a reciprocal peer relation with its complement. This basic principle is important also for human politics. For I believe enlightened social systems need to establish parity relations between up- and down-hierarchies.

Parity is a relation that holds not only between up-hierarchies and down-hierarchies, but between entities on the same level in either kind of hierarchy. In this case, in relation to any one hierarchy, up or down, the peer relation is subordinate to the hierarchical relation.

What of autonomy? In the great system of Cosmos, with its up- and down-hierarchies, any entity has only relative autonomy. This autonomy is limited by the reciprocal web of relations with peer entities on its own level, and by the influence exerted over it by levels that are more potent in the hierarchy of which it is a part. Thus an entity that is in some respects self-regulating, will in other respects be in relations of reciprocal regulation with its peers; and all these respects will be set within limits determined by hierarchical influence from above and below.

So there are four parameters that define the function and status of any entity in the universal system: self-control, mutual peer control, up-control (or control from below), and down-control (or control from above). There are innumerable combinations of these four factors, depending on variations of the degree of each of them. The fluctuations and interweavings of these four kinds of power characterise the universal process.

#### 4. The up-hierarchy of Eros

Up-hierarchies are very evident in physical organisms, such as the human body, in which bio-chemical factors have a massive control over human experience and behaviour. But what about the wider scheme of things? Here is one conjectural model. Remember that on this model, the following up-hierarchy has to be considered as dove-tailing with the down-hierarchy of Logos - given later.

'There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered' (Shakespeare: Othello). Time is the original, creative womb of Eros. Out of time emerges matter; out of matter emerges life; and out of life emerges soul.

From the minute to the astronomic scale, time is the controlling ground of matter. Probability waves, vibrating motion, rhythmic patterns: the very dance of time determines what constitutes the dynamic nature of matter at its intimate, submicroscopic heart. At the macroscopic level, the controlling dance is measured out in the great rhythms and cyclic recurrences of the solar system. In our new understanding of the universe, there is a shift from concern with underlying structure to a concern with underlying rhythmic process. The cosmic process whirls with a multitude of beating steps out of the womb of time.

Matter, once set dancing to time, is the controlling ground of life. The material ecosystem of the planet sets the temperature, determines the constitution of atmospheric gases, provides the nutrients - that allow and control the development of living organisms. And this earthly ecosystem is in turn set in the wider solar ecosystem. All living things need to bear witness to the dance of the physical ecosystems that sustain them.

Living organisms elaborate the dance of time; and are compounded of a whole range of different and interpenetrating rhythms - metabolic, neural, cardiac, respiratory, sleeping and waking, and all the others. And they provide the controlling ground for the emergence and expression of soul.

Now by the human soul I mean an idiosyncratic, individual centre of reference that has the potential to receive and impart information, and *to learn from experience*, by virtue of its distinctive capacities for understanding, feeling and choosing. The soul becomes a self-aware person in the cosmos when touched by universal consciousness. The human soul's capacity for learning is grounded on and controlled by the rhythmic patterns of its living body, and below that by the earthly and solar ecosystems. But

the soul also further elaborates the dance of time at its own level: it has its own cycles and periodic recurrences for learning, change and growth.

So Eros, the womb of time, spins matter out of time, life out of matter and soul out of life, elaborating new forms of temporal dance at each stage. No wonder that *shakti*, the creatrix in Hindu thought, is symbolised at times by a dancing woman. The soul, emerging at the top of this up-hierarchy, needs to acknowledge not only its own intrinsic rhythms, but also the controlling potency of the manifold frequencies below it in the hierarchy.

### **5. The down-hierarchy of Logos**

Continuing this speculative theological model, let us suppose that the first emanation, the first moment of the transcendent manifest, is the great word of consciousness, I AM: the Logos, the Word and universal consciousness are one. From consciousness-as-such proceed the archetypal ideas of creation, the principles of intelligibility and form for Cosmos. From the archetypal ideas of creation emanate manifold kinds of energy, from which in turn proceed the different interpenetrating domains of space.

The first emanation is the Logos itself, the Word, the original declaration that is universal consciousness: the one and everywhere awareness, the crystal mirror in which all things are reflected and contained. The second emanation is the speech of Logos, its declaration of intent to create an intelligible Cosmos, its announcement of universal ideas and formal principles - the archetypal blueprint and programme for creation.

Such a view echoes that of Philo of Alexandria (30BC - 40AD), the most thoroughly hellenized of all the Jews of the Dispersion. For Philo, the Logos is the instrument by which the transcendent divine makes the world. And he identifies it too with the Platonic world of forms, or eternal ideas.

The theme is repeated by Plotinus (205 - 270AD), the founder of Neo-Platonism. Nous, the divine mind, is the first emanation from the One (the transcendent unity-absolute). And the divine mind is the world of forms because it thinks them. The world of forms contains the archetypes of all things that are. But these great down-hierarchy mystical philosophers of the Hellenistic age had simply no notion of a correlative up-hierarchy, of sacred rule from below.

The third emanation in the down-hierarchy is the manifold of energies. It is interesting that the early use (1599) of 'energy' in English had the meaning 'force or vigour of expression'. The manifold of cosmic energies is the vigour of expression in the archetypal speech of the Logos. The divine archetypes are dynamic, sounding forms that create energy. And out of such energy proceeds the fourth emanation of the down-hierarchy, the diverse dimensions and domains of space.

In a nutshell, space emanates from the energy of the resonating archetypes of the Logos. Of course, this is not a series of emanations in temporal succession, one following after the other. The emanations are grades of hierarchical potency. Universal consciousness is potent over archetypal reality; archetypes control different energies; and energies determine the lay-out and distribution of spaces.

This is all much more obvious in out of the body travel in the other world: by adopting specific forms of thought you access the energy frequencies that open up the subtle spaces you wish to visit.

**6. Cosmos: the dove-tailing of Eros and Logos**

On this speculative model, the up-hierarchy and the down-hierarchy dove-tail and closely interact, generating the existents of Cosmos. It is all one seamless whole of entwined processes and modes of being.

Figure 12.1 sets out the interdependence. It shows, simplistically, the two hierarchies interacting laterally to manifest twelve basic components of Cosmos. At each level, there is a marriage of Eros and Logos. Time and space interact to provide the spatiotemporal fields within which the processes of interchange between matter and energy occur.

Life and archetypal ideas are in continuous exchange in the world of organisms. In biology, questions about the form of living organisms has led to current theories of the morphogenetic field, the chreode, entelechy - all in their different ways models for the influence of the archetypal realm on living things.

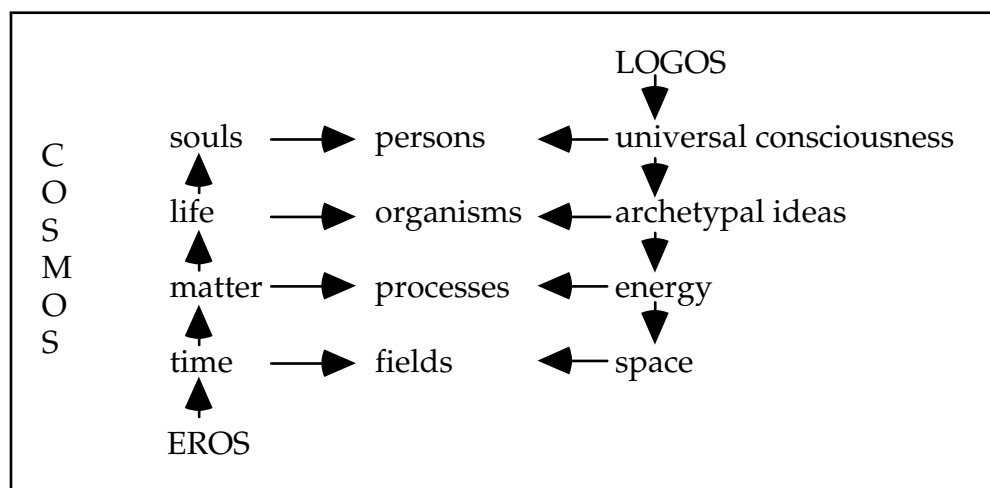


Figure 12.1 *Cosmos: the dove-tailing of Eros and Logos*

Individual souls interact with universal consciousness and find their identity as self-aware persons thereby. Mystics of diverse schools have propounded, experientially, the view that personal consciousness is but an eddy in a vastly extended field of awareness.

**7. The illusions of Eros and of Logos**

The great illusion in the domain of Eros is that of exclusion, of separateness. Thus time seems quite separate from space, matter from energy, living organisms from any involvement with archetypal forms, and, above all, the experience of an individual from the vast reaches of universal consciousness. These naturalistic fallacies are very much part and parcel of everyday unreflective experience. They are the product of lack of development.

The counterpartal illusion in the domain of Logos is that of inclusion, of consuming unity. It stems from unbalanced development. When human beings get caught up in this, then universal consciousness seems to devour personal identity. This is the great mystical error: the illusion that the fullness of encounter with divinity dissolves the

individual soul. In truth what such encounter does, I believe, is to remove the soul's illusion of *separateness* from the rest of being, while enhancing its *distinctness* of individualized and differentiated being.

For another Logos illusion, watch archetypal ideas eat up the phenomenal world, as in theories of absolute idealism - the dominant school of philosophy in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century and in Britain at the end of that century. Again, matter may be construed as nothing but energy. And time may be thought of in linear, spatial terms - which devours its independent generative power.

These illusions of Eros and of Logos - the excluding womb and the devouring word - seem to stem from the addiction of the soul to monopolar bias: a tendency to reduce anxiety before the grand complexity of the universal scheme by understanding it in terms of only one of its poles. But the interdependence of Eros and Logos at every level means that each pole interacts profoundly with its opposite without loss of identity.

### 8. The multiple Cosmos

Another way of mapping the twelve components of Cosmos set out in the diagram in section 6 above is in terms of three interlocking triangles, like a yantra in the tradition of Tantra. At the end of Chapter 10 I suggested a conjectural model of a three-fold spatial universe: a six-dimensional space interpenetrating a five-dimensional space in turn interpenetrating the four-dimensional matrix of the physical world. These are symbolized in Figure 12.2, respectively, by the upward triangle, the higher downward triangle, then the lower downward triangle.

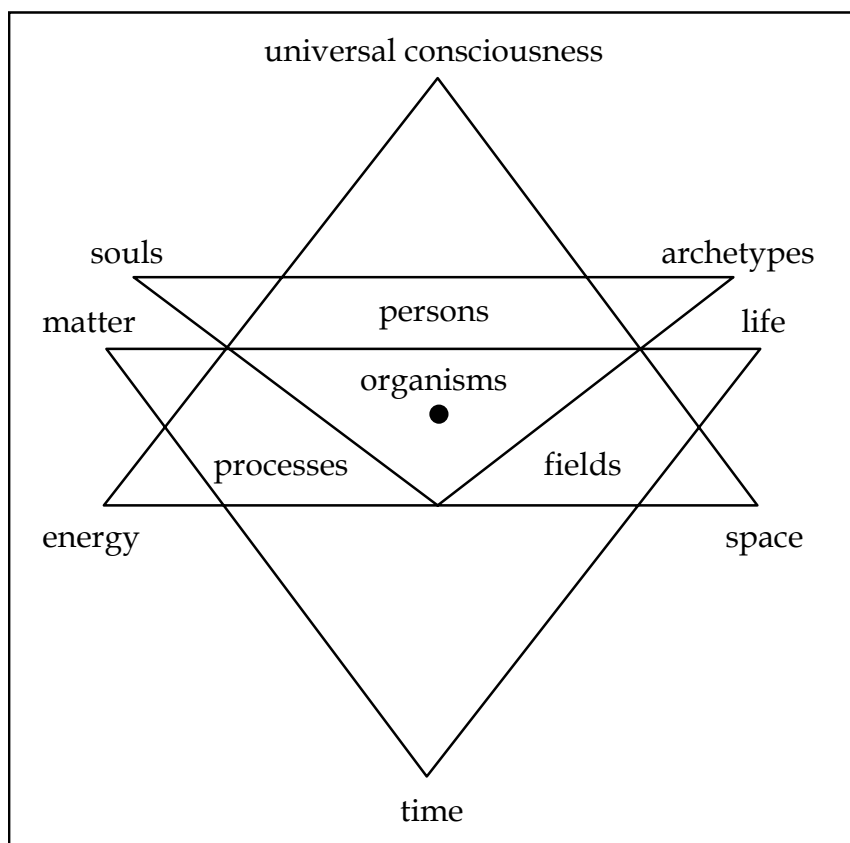


Figure 12.2 *Yantra of the multiple Cosmos*

In Chapter 11 I defined three kinds of time, transcendental, matrix and clock time. These too can be mapped on the yantra. The eight outer triangles represent transcendental time, the three inner polygons matrix time, and the inmost triangle clock time. The dot in the centre is *mahabindu*, the Great Point, which stands for the creatrix, the Supreme Shakti in the Tantric tradition. It is the first womb of Eros, the timeless moment whence all forms of time emerge.

Each of the twelve cosmic components is allocated one of the twelve areas within the total figure. The terms around the outside apply to the projecting triangular spaces to which they are adjacent. There is no way such two-dimensional mapping of complex and multi-dimensional concepts can be logically immaculate, so while a case can be made for the diagrammatic allocations, there is also an element of the arbitrary about the whole exercise. However, this version does provide a convenient yantra for contemplative meditation, bearing mind the different forms of space and time it also includes. When contemplating it, the higher intuitive mind can compensate for the limitations of its graphic form.

### 9. The divine name

In the Qabalah, the ancient occult tradition of the Hebrews, the sacred four-lettered name of the divine, the tetragrammaton, was a matter of revelation. It consists of letters from the Hebrew alphabet, Yod, He, Vau, He, and was held by devout Jews to be too sacred to be pronounced or written down for general use.

I give in Figure 12.3 a purely speculative rendering of this sacred name. It closes this chapter by restating the contents of its first two sections. Read it clockwise from the bottom.

In terms of Grof's cartography of transpersonal states, we have the following correspondences, with Grof's terms in italics.

Divine altogether, embracing all aspects of both the unmanifest and manifest divine:  
*Absolute.*

Unmanifest divine, immanent and transcendent: *higher causal realm.*

Manifest divine, Eros and Logos: *lower causal realm.*

Manifest divine, Cosmos: *higher subtle level, lower subtle level, gross experiential realm* (Grof, 1988: 39-40).

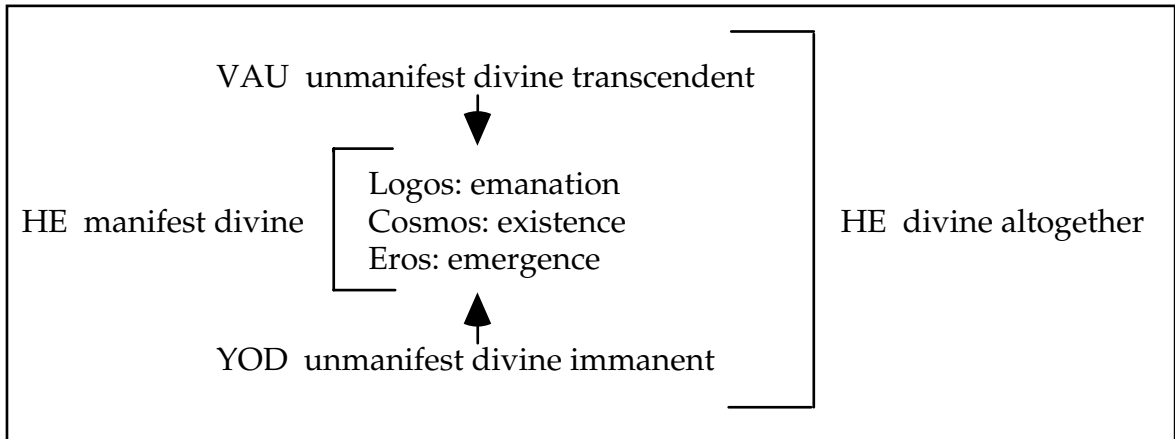


Figure 12.3 *Metaphysical account of the sacred name*



## 13. Into the future

I was driving alone in a hired car from Auckland to Wellington in the north island of New Zealand. It was in late August, approaching spring, and surprisingly warm. I had taken a road somewhat to the west of the main route, and I was touring through small valleys, low hills and undulating farmland - well over half way on my journey. The landscape combined English sensibility with Polynesian mysticism: a hybrid ambience that intrigued my imagination.

The car drew to the top of an extended rise. I parked on the edge of the road and climbed into a field to bask in the late winter sun. As I ranged my vision over those composite hills above the Mangawhero River, I became absorbed in a deep intellectual reverie about the kind of society in which I wished to live. I realised I wanted to participate in a self-generating culture.

I was in New Zealand as a guest of the McKenzie Educational Foundation, running a series of courses and workshops for doctors and other members of the helping professions. With these alert, intelligent and committed persons, I explored a whole range of radical social and professional practices.

Beforehand, I had immersed myself for some weeks in the Agama-Hindu culture still extant and practised in Bali. And between workshops in New Zealand, I took in what I could of the Polynesian culture of the Maoris, of which only vestigial fragments are still manifest today.

Sitting on a large stone, shielded by a hillock from Route 4, somewhere between Raetihi and Wanganui, all these elements of social order and cohesion, past and present, fed my reflections. I became aware that I desired something entirely new: a mode of social life which had not hitherto existed on this planet - or so at least I surmised. And since my vision is still alive, I will present it now in the present tense.

### 1. Cultural forms, hierarchies of the second kind and archetypal power

I want to live with other persons in a society some, and only some, of whose cultural forms are *as if* they participate consciously in hierarchies of the second kind and have archetypal power. What I mean by 'cultural forms' are rituals and social practices that find meaning in and give meaning to various aspects of the human condition. And what I mean by 'archetypal power' is the dynamic energy that streams from eidolon, ally and matrix in the other reality (see the opening paragraphs of Chapter 7). Hierarchies of the second kind I discussed in Chapter 2: they involve relations between social groups in this world and social groups in the other world.

This conscious involvement of human culture *as if* with presences and powers in the other world differs from the other-world preoccupation of ancient cultures which were frequently over-identified with their gods and ancestors. As a result, many of these societies became elitist and oppressive politically; and dogmatic, superstitious and confused in their occult beliefs. And their occultism was often corrupted with the gross aggression of war and human sacrifice.

By contrast, the *as if* perspective gives a healthy separation and distance from the other world, while at the same time working creatively with it. The result is a highly discriminating participation which has three prime features.

## **2. Politics, inquiry and art**

Firstly, the human beings involved have a full working grasp of the political values of autonomy, parity and hierarchy - that is, of self-direction, of cooperation, and of direction by others (in terms of both up- and down-hierarchies). They have this mastery within their own society, interweaving these values in a whole variety of ways in its different forms of association.

And they also have such competence between social groups in this world and social groups in the other world. Thus some social groups in human society are autonomous; some are in co-operative relations with groups in the other world; and yet others are in hierarchies of the second kind. In down-hierarchies, the human beings are passive; and in up-hierarchies, the human beings are active.

What this means, of course, is that the human beings have a fully developed political process working between the worlds, a process that fully acknowledges the autonomous rights and liberties of humans, as well as their duties and constraints, in a two (or more) worlds universe. And this political process is one that the human beings themselves have evolved - in the context of other world influence, but not by other world direction.

Secondly, the human beings involved have a whole canon of inquiry appropriate to exploring the other world and the interface between the worlds. They need this because of the ambiguities of the whole business of living in two worlds at once, of differentiating between what merely seems to be so, and what really is so. They need to inquire into the dynamics of interactions between the worlds; and into the channels of communication between them. They need to understand the technology of working in this world with the powers of the other world. Here the *as if* perspective comes fully into its own.

Such inquiry includes the development of appropriate political process mentioned above, and indeed the generation of cultural forms generally, for many of these will themselves be ways of inquiring into the relations between the worlds.

Thirdly, the human beings have acquired the *art* of living in two worlds: some of their cultural forms are living theatre. They have style, drama, and expressive charge: they present the two worlds experience with aesthetic power. There are two aspects to such art. There is the art of enjoying diverse features of the two worlds condition. And there is the art of suffering certain other experiences of it.

The politics, the inquiry and the art all support each other in some respects, and in other respects may well be in tension with each other. They are rooted in the human self-determination of the *as if* perspective. Together they comprise the basic three dimensions of a self-generating culture.

## **3. A self-generating culture**

To say that a culture is self-generating is to say that the people in it generate their own cultural forms out of political awareness, a spirit of inquiry and creative artistry. They may do this *as if* in the context of creative passive hierarchies of the second kind. But the forms of the culture do not proceed from the gods or ancestors, from the directions

of the shaman, priest or guru, from ecclesiastical authority, from high status or high caste chiefs of protocol, or from statutory, approved authorities of any kind.

The forms of the culture are generated and sanctioned by peer groups in this world, not by any hierarchical authority, whether in this world or the next. On the one hand - at any rate so far as rituals are concerned - they can be construed as art forms that expressively symbolise the human condition *as if* in two worlds. On the other hand - whether rituals or social practices - they can be seen as forms of inquiry into this condition.

As forms of inquiry, they are in principle open to review and modification as part of a programme of action research. The whole culture thus becomes a network of groups practising co-operative inquiry into the human condition, as well as giving dramatic, aesthetic expression to it. And we now know enough about co-operative inquiry for such an approach to be feasible.

I have been involved in several pieces of research using this format, in which all those concerned are both co-researchers and co-subjects, who together move round the cycle from creative reflection to action, then back to a review of the action and more creative reflection, and so on. Of course, not all networking groups in the culture would engage in fully fledged co-operative inquiry: the model is likely to be used in a more flexible and informal way.

Whether as art or research, do the forms of the culture confer meaning on the human condition, or reveal meaning inherent in it? Are they symbolic constructs that reveal no more than the fruitfulness of human imagination; or do they resonate with archetypal significance and power from the universe beyond? Or do they mix autonomous imagination and archetypal meaning in varying measure?

This polarity of significance - of meaning given or found, conferred or revealed, imagined only or archetypal also - provides a fruitful, creative tension at the heart of cultural forms both as art and as inquiry. For there is always an open question, an ambiguity seeking resolution: Is meaning bestowed by the forms, or is it revealed by them, or a bit of both? The endless openness and relevance of this question provides permanent protection against pseudo-archetypal dogmatism, conservatism and rigidity on the one hand, and unstable, shifting, arbitrary conventionalism on the other.

A self-generating culture is a step beyond personal growth - as it has been called by the many methods of body-mind development coming out of humanistic psychology. Such growth deals with the liberation of human autonomy. It enables a person to realise real degrees of freedom in choosing how to live. The various methods used dismantle the debris of early interference and conditioning, so that the individual is no longer compulsively and unwarily acting out the pain and scripting of the past. One result, as well as the affirmation of authentic autonomy in this world, is a greater openness to the other world, to wider reaches of awareness and altered states of consciousness.

But once a person has achieved a real measure of inner freedom in choosing how to live earthly life and to expand awareness into other domains of being, current society offers impoverished cultural forms for the celebration of that freedom, and for inquiry into its implications. Our contemporary culture has lost its grasp on the great realities of the human condition. It has no imaginal and archetypal sweep, style or range.

Its rituals are few in number, and either carry the limited sanction of outdated traditionalism, or are bureaucratic formulae with minimal significance. At some critical

moments, such as being born and dying, there is no ritual of meaning at all, only technical procedures that have no more than medical or 'scientific' relevance. By contrast, ancient societies showed an astonishing richness of cultural forms.

#### **4. Rituals**

In any self-generating culture, a simple distinction must be made between two basic kinds of cultural form: rituals and social practices. By a ritual I mean an agreed set of symbolic acts and interactions, occurring at an agreed time and place, to celebrate the meaning of some typically human event or some basic recurring feature of the human condition. In a ritual, human life is elaborated into expressive form to symbolise itself.

This celebration will be aesthetic/expressive, or inquiry oriented, or both. Such a ritual is imaginatively devised in relevant peer groups. It is open to review and modification; and to extempore improvisation in practice. It is used lightly and elegantly, not ponderously and compulsively. It is a piece of living theatre, highlighting the joy, the suffering, the comedy and the drama of existence.

In relation to the two worlds thesis, the ritual will mark the human condition in this world only, or *as if* in both worlds at once, or *as if* in passage either way between the worlds, or *as if* in bearing witness to the other world only. From the purely human point of view, here are some candidates for the application of ritual:

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#### *This world ritual occasions*

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Approaching death

Birth

Collective commitment, contract making

Coming of age, stages of the educational process, phases of development

Concluding projects

Dying

Ending relationships, partnerships

Ending the day

Farewell, departure, separation

Greeting, arrival, return

Initiating projects

Marking eclipses, passing comets

Marking the phases of the moon

Marking the seasons of the year, the solstices, the equinoxes

Moving into a home, moving out of a home

Music, song, dance, movement, poetry, drama

Relations with plants, animals, the environment

Relaxation, recreation, pleasure

Self-renewal, corporate renewal  
 Sharing food, hospitality  
 Soul intimacy, nurturing intimacy, sexual intimacy  
 Starting relationships, partnerships  
 Starting the day  
 Valediction and mourning

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Table 13.1 *This world ritual occasions*

Any of the above can also, of course, be considered *as if* involving some interaction with the other world and so occurring in two worlds at once. The following candidates for the use of ritual deal quite explicitly with believing *as if* there is another world

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*Two world ritual occasions*

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Communion with presences in the other world  
 Conjoint social planning in two worlds  
 Dialogue with presences in the other world  
 Healing and regeneration from the other world  
 Invocation and integration of powers from the other world  
 Journeys to the other world  
 Materialisation from the other world  
 Prayer, praise and worship in two worlds  
 Visions of the other world

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Table 13.2 *Two world ritual occasions*

There is an important final point. Too much ritual, whether a matter of art, inquiry or both together, would make a self-generating culture too affected, too overloaded with endless gestures of significance and meaning. But too little ritual would make it impoverished and unawakened, relapsing into relatively meaningless habit. There is some proper balance between simply living human life - and symbolising the living of human life. And this whether one is attending to the physical world only, or to both worlds at once.

## 5. Social practices

In contrast to a ritual, a social practice is much more obviously functional: it is a procedure whereby people maintain and develop social effectiveness and cohesion. It is a technique of human association and development. It is part of the everyday process of social living, whether a ritual is applied to it or not. It is the daily bread of life, whereas a ritual is the butter and the jam. The concern is with social and organisational skill, rather than with the expressive style of living theatre.

Nevertheless, the functionalism of a social practice in no way excludes the element of artistry both in its conception and in its execution.

Social practices are very much the stuff of action research and co-operative inquiry. And as such they can also take into account the two worlds hypothesis, integrating into their form the possible influence of powers and presences in the other world.

They are more obviously dealing, in this world at any rate, with the political dimension of a self-generating culture: that is, with appropriate ways of balancing autonomy, co-operation and direction by others - in different social contexts. Witness the following list of candidates.

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*Social practices*

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- Child raising and the socialisation of children
  - Democracy, up-hierarchy and down-hierarchy
  - Forms for the social expression of gender
  - Forms of decision-making in groups
  - Forms of marriage and intimacy
  - Forms of organisational and political structure
  - Forms of urban planning and renewal
  - Methods for handling information and communication
  - Methods for the social control of crime
  - Methods of allocating the roles of owner, manager and worker
  - Methods of assessment and accreditation
  - Methods of conflict-resolution
  - Methods of discussion in groups
  - Methods of education and training
  - Methods of inquiry and research
  - Methods of ongoing professional development
  - Methods of professional practice
  - Methods of relating the economy, ecology and politics
  - Methods of work planning and work management
  - Styles of leadership
- 

Table 13.3 *Social practices*

The distinction I have made between rituals and social practices is, of course, not absolute; for they can overlap and lead over into each other. A ritual is symbolic, and a social practice is functional. But a symbolic activity can have a powerful impact on social functioning; and a functional arrangement can be charged with archetypal symbolism.

Again a ritual is more to do with the artistic dimension of cultural forms, a social practice more to do with the political and moral dimension. But there is nothing mutually exclusive about this emphasis. And both rituals and social practices have elements of both dimensions. Both, of course, can be fully subsumed within the method of co-operative inquiry.

## **6. The genesis and development of cultural forms**

In a self-generating culture, as I have suggested, the primary source of its cultural forms will be the imagination and resource of human peer groups in devising them; and also in revising them in the light of what is learnt through their use. But of course there are other and important secondary sources.

Anthropology, ethnology and sociology are disciplines that have laid bare a mass of data about the rituals and social practices of diverse cultures in all epochs all over the world. Such information can feed the imagination of those devising new cultural forms. Some of the old cultural forms were spiritually and politically corrupt, or enshrined outmoded beliefs, norms and values. But others still have a powerful claim on those concerned with evolving a new world-view and a new social order.

The hugely varied cultural history of mankind is a sort of unconscious co-operative inquiry by the human race as a whole into the human condition within a universe of many dimensions of being. And there is a vast repository of learning still to be unearthed from this enormous racial experiment in living. A self-generating culture would want to dig away at this and build on it.

Again, there is the ambience provided by creative passive hierarchies of the second kind: the sort of inspiration fed into the autonomous deliberation of human beings by presences attentive in the other world. Occasionally, there may be quite explicit proposals made by persons in the other world; although this kind of direct communication raises many issues of validity and reliability - apart from the moral, political and psychological issues involved.

A society of networking groups or communities concerned with the artistic, political and inquiry dimensions of their cultural forms comprises a social world of multiple realities. Each community consists of co-creators - the citizens of that community - who generate a shared form of consciousness that interrelates the diverse parameters of the two-world universe in a unique way. There is no one account of the reality of this universe. For how the members of a community choose to live together in the universe constitutes for them its reality. The traveller moving from one community to another, and staying long enough in each to participate fully in it, would in relative truth move from one reality to another.

## 14. Postscript - refraction between the worlds

By way of variety, my final chapter offers a different model to that of the Janus-brain with its inner and outer codes, and its possible ambiguities. So I present another way of thinking about communication between this world and the subtle world. I don't know whether the model is correct or not, but it does seem quite promising. I use the simple phenomenon of refraction in physics as a *metaphor* for what may go on when persons in this world communicate with those in the other.

### 1. Physical refraction

Refraction in physics is about the bending of a ray of light as it passes obliquely from one medium, such as air, into another medium of different optical density, such as water.

If you are submerged in a dense medium such as water, and look up to a source of light above you in the more rarefied medium of air, then if the light rays strike the surface of the water at an oblique angle their source will appear to be higher than it really is. The rays are bent down, more towards the vertical as they enter the water. So you seem to be looking more steeply up than is actually the case.

Or, to make the same point in another way, if you are submerged in water and shine a ray of light from a torch upwards at an oblique angle to the surface of the water, the ray will incline back toward the horizontal when it enters the air, so what the ray illuminates in the air will seem to be higher than it actually is. Your apparent line of sight is not the real line of sight.

Similarly, if you are in the air and look obliquely into water at a source of light below the surface, it will appear to be higher than it really is.

There is an important corollary to this simple law of the refraction of light. It is to do with the notion of the critical angle. If a ray of light, shining obliquely upwards through water, has an angle of more than 48.5 degrees with the vertical, then it won't enter the air, but will be reflected back into the water as it strikes the surface. So the critical angle (for water 48.5 degrees) is the limiting angle - between the vertical and a ray in a dense medium - beyond which the ray won't pass out of that medium.

Generally, if you are in a dense medium and shine a light obliquely upwards to a boundary with a more rarefied medium, then if your light ray exceeds the critical angle, it will simply be reflected back into the medium you are in. In optics, this is referred to as the principle of total reflection.

There is one other principle drawn from physics which is also of interest: the principle of diffusion of light. When light falls on a rough, irregular surface, it will be scattered or diffused, that is, reflected in many different directions. Thus the sun's rays are scattered by dust particles in the atmosphere - otherwise there would be near total darkness in the shade and dazzling glare in the light.

Diffusion can be increased by transmitting light through semi-transparent substances such as frosted glass, semi-transparent paper, glass blocks, and so on. This prevents glare.



Now I propose that these simple physical phenomena can be developed as metaphors for what perhaps goes on in communication between the worlds.

## **2. False elevation from below**

Let us suppose that the other world is a more rarefied medium than this world - which is the more dense medium. And let us suppose, too, that communications from persons in the other world, directed at human beings, are like rays of illumination proceeding from their subtle world into our dense world. And this whether the communication is by direct thought transmission and creative inspiration, or transmitted through trance mediumship or by materialisation, or received by some person in this world who claims to be clairaudient or clairvoyant.

Then the law of refraction, metaphorically applied, will suggest that these rays of illumination coming from the subtle world will be experienced by human beings receiving them as having a higher source than in fact is the case. This supposes, of course, that the rays enter the 'surface' between the worlds 'obliquely'. I will deal in a later section with the metaphorical implications of this notion of obliquity; and also of the notion of the critical angle.

Let me now develop the metaphor of a 'higher source than in fact is the case'. The human recipients of illumination from the beyond will, unless they make allowance for refraction between the worlds, falsely elevate the source of that illumination in one or more interrelated ways.

They may believe that it comes from a higher, more exalted domain in the other world than it really does; or from beings who have more knowledge, arcane power, moral integrity and spiritual status than in fact they do.

The receivers may ascribe to the content of the illumination such remoteness from earthly experience that they exempt it from discriminating analysis, from appropriate canons of credibility, reliability or validity. They may inflate its content with more significance than it actually merits, may embrace it with an attitude of psychological conviction and intuitive certitude, and become lost in illusions of insight.

Now there appears to be some evidence of this false elevation by human beings of the source and content of illumination from the beyond. Many psychics, sensitives and seers do seem to be too identified, too impressed, too convinced by their visions, messages and visitations from the other world. Their followers and believers, who are not overt psychics, show the same tendencies. Those who believe anything in this field are inclined to believe too much, to invest it with too much authority and status, and to abandon critical rigour and discrimination.

Spiritualists may accord too much status and significance to unseen guides, teachers and healers; and may be over-impressed by an inspirational rhetoric whose actual substance is very slight, confused or contradictory.

Beings in the other world who understand the refraction effect could readily exploit human beings who are ignorant of it. They know humans will falsely elevate both them and their doctrines; and so they can set about to exploit such credulity for their own purposes - perhaps to build up zones of influence on the earth and in their own domain.

All the following may well have had communications from beings in the other world, while at the same time falling foul of the refraction effect, and the sort of exploitation I have just referred to.

Swedenborg (1688 - 1772) and his followers regarded his illumination as proceeding from *the* central heaven presided over by 'the Lord', 'the God-man'. The doctrines he claimed to receive, and may well have received, from the other world, were a strange mixture of some interesting and plausible occultism with a very dogmatic, limited and highly implausible version of esoteric Christianity. He was surely duped.

Joseph Smith (1805 - 1844), the Mormon prophet, and his followers regarded his visionary guidance and the doctrines he received as imparted by exalted and unimpeachable angel authority. Imparted they may have been, but only by one or more power-hungry beings in the other world, who put forward a bizarre version of Christ's ministry in the new world.

Madame Blavatsky (1831 - 1891), the founder of Theosophy, claimed that her elaborate occult teachings were received by her from 'masters of wisdom' in the other world - of great attainment and moral stature. Did she herself elaborate theosophical doctrines from her own extensive studies and travels? Or were they imparted to her from the beyond? If the latter is true, then she certainly fell foul of the refraction effect. So too, I imagine, did Rudolf Steiner, who put forward yet another odd and improbable account of esoteric Christianity - among other occult doctrines, some plausible, some less so.

Of course, the refraction effect between the worlds and the various distortions of belief that stem from it, will be exacerbated by emotional pain, anxiety and insecurity at the human level. So false elevation will not only be a product of the different densities of the two worlds, but also because people try unconsciously to compensate for feelings of inadequacy in this world, by inflated ideas of their association with the other world.

If anything like this is correct, then the message is clear. If you want to get in touch with beings in subtle domains, allow for the refraction effect, and do some emotional housecleaning to make sure your distress does not make you collude with those in the beyond who have a vested interest in deluding you.

And even if they have no interest at all in duping you, and are genuinely committed to your welfare, make sure you don't invest them with such superior status that you abandon all critical discrimination and human autonomy - and thus become dependent upon them in ways that they do not wish.

### **3. False reduction from below**

The false elevation which I have just considered occurs, I have supposed, when illumination from the other world is received by people in this world. I now suggest that the opposite effect - false reduction - happens when human beings try to shine the light of their understanding from their world into the other.

For in terms of the refraction metaphor, human understanding passing from the density of the physical realm into the more rarefied universe beyond will incline back toward this world. So it will tend to construe other world realities too much in terms of material phenomena.

The states and processes of subtle domains will be understood inappropriately in terms of patterns of thought belonging to the visible universe and earthly life. Occult doctrines may include a lot of false reduction - explanation that inclines back to the material. There are several possible candidates that may be examples of this refraction effect.

Thus astrology may be a system that takes the valid idea of influences streaming into the earth from the subtle universe, and materialises it into the idea of planetary and zodiacal influences construed entirely as simple astronomical patterns in physical space. It is not difficult to expose the inconsistencies and geocentric preoccupations of astrology. But it may be the false reduction of a deeper truth.

The theory of reincarnation may be another example. Suppose that there are deep links of destiny between beings in the other world and people in this world, in the sense that those living now resonate to the history of those living in earlier epochs who are now in the beyond. Suppose too that those in the other universe undergo a series of transitions or 'embodiments' in different subtle domains as part of their overall development. Then reincarnation theory simply reduces all this very comprehensive eschatology into the materialistic doctrine of the development of the same soul by successive incarnations in the physical world. Again it is not difficult to show that reincarnation is a relatively crude, inefficient and uneconomic concept of soul-learning.

A more gross example is the doctrine of eternal recurrence - the idea that every physical event will be repeated in exactly the same form and an infinite number of times. This has been advanced in modern times by the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky school. It overcame Nietzsche with the force of an obsessive revelation. And of course it dates back to the doctrine of *apokatastasis* of the Stoics in the third century BC. This too may be the false reduction of the notion of the grand simultaneity of transcendental time into an eternally repetitive seriality in physical time.

Yet another example may be the doctrine of planetary rounds in theosophy and anthroposophy. And in the field of spiritualism there is the well-known tendency of believers and followers to seek an unwarranted personal reference in intimations from the beyond: here the false reduction operates as a delusion of reference.

#### **4. False elevation from above**

Continuing the refraction metaphor, now consider the case of beings in the other world who are looking down at a person on earth who is directing the light of his or her attention up at them. Unless they allow for the refraction effect, they will construe the human being concerned as more elevated and as less physically embedded than is appropriate.

So they may regard the one on earth as having greater spiritual and psychic capacity than is the case. Or they may overestimate the person's motivation, intelligence, commitment. They may fail to appreciate the peculiar practical, psychological and social problems of physical existence. And they may make inadequate allowance for human autonomy, trial and error. They may overlook, too, the value of the most earthly kinds of human experience and action. In short, they may tend to see human beings too much as potential discarnates and so fail to accord physical experience its proper worth.

Of course this tendency to false elevation of the human condition should be reduced if the beings beyond were once themselves in earthly life. Yet it is notorious how parents can forget their own past childhood status and have unrealistic expectations of the capabilities of their children. And how those who have risen in social status occlude their own difficult past, and tend to see the disadvantaged in unrealistic terms. Something of the same may happen to those who pass from this world into the next.

There is nowadays a very considerable body of writing that claims to have been 'channelled' through some human intermediary from beings in the other world (Klimo, 1987). There is even a 'Journal of Discarnate Intelligence'. And very frequently when this writing from the beyond is about earthly life, it seems to me to show a rather sententious *lack of grasp* of the realities of the human condition. I think this may be due to the sort of refraction effect I have outlined in this section.

### **5. False reduction from above**

Paradoxically, there is also the opposite effect. For when persons in the other world, unaware of the refraction effect, cast the light of their understanding into this world, it will bend more steeply down into this world than they realise. In terms of our metaphor, there are two possible results.

Firstly, they may over-dramatise the restrictions, limitations and materiality of physical existence. This complements the false elevation: it is a negative version of not having a realistic understanding of the human condition. Secondly, their teachings about their own reality may get unwittingly distorted into patterns of thought more appropriate to this world than their own. And this, of course, dovetails precisely with what happens to human understanding looking upwards - with false reduction from below.

Traditional Christianity, if we regard it as an inspiration from the other world, is a good example of these two effects. On the one hand, it tends to exaggerate human limitation in terms of sin theory - the inherent corruptibility of the human will, forever doomed without divine sacrifice. And on the other hand, it distorts the notion of the ongoing regenerative and redemptive influence of presences in the other world, into the doctrine of the divine incarnation and atonement at one particular point in physical space and time.

### **6. Fourfold distortion**

Now let us consider these four refraction effects interacting together: the false elevation from below, the false elevation from above, the false reduction from below, and the false reduction from above. The literal, physical equivalent is that of a being in water and a being in air looking at each other.

The water being will have a line of sight which as it enters the air inclines back to the water. But it will think its line of sight is straight, and so will see the air being higher than it really is. And the air being will have a line of sight which as it enters the water will dip more steeply into it. It too will think its line of sight is straight, and will also see the water being higher than it really is.

The metaphorical equivalent is that of a person in this world engaging in some kind of communication with a being in the other world. If both of them make no kind of allowance for refraction between the worlds, then we would get the following interacting effects.

They would both see each other with an elevated status which neither properly merited. They would thus unwarily collude in mutual perceptions of grandeur, which would get in the way of any realistic or practically effective communication between them.

The human being would tend uncritically to attach far too much significance and import to the transactions between them. And the discarnate would show a tendency not

to have an adequate grasp of the realities of the human condition. I think this happens a lot in spiritualistic and mediumistic contact between the worlds.

If beings in the other world are fully aware of the refraction effect, but human beings are not, then attempts by those beyond to make realistic communication would be subverted by the distorted perceptions and attitudes of the humans. This is rather like a good psychotherapist, who has dealt with his own projections onto his client, but cannot get an authentic relationship going with the client because of the projections which the client puts on him.

Again, if both parties are unaware of the refraction effect, then the human being will construe the ideas of the discarnate being, who will reciprocally project them, too much in earthly terms. They will unawaresly collude in giving an account of occult teachings that are distorted by categories of thought that belong too much to this world. And if the discarnate is free of this, what is imparted may still be subject to materialistic distortion by the unaware receiving human.

Finally, the unaware discarnate, while falsely elevating the human communicator will at the same time give an excessively severe account of the human condition which is the negative aspect of not having a realistic grasp of it. The credulous human is thus given a debilitating double message, which, somewhat caricatured, reads 'You are remarkable, but you are caught up in an impossible morass'. One version of this is in terms of reincarnation: 'You are an advanced soul with important and prestigious incarnations behind you. But you just have another million lives on earth to go.'

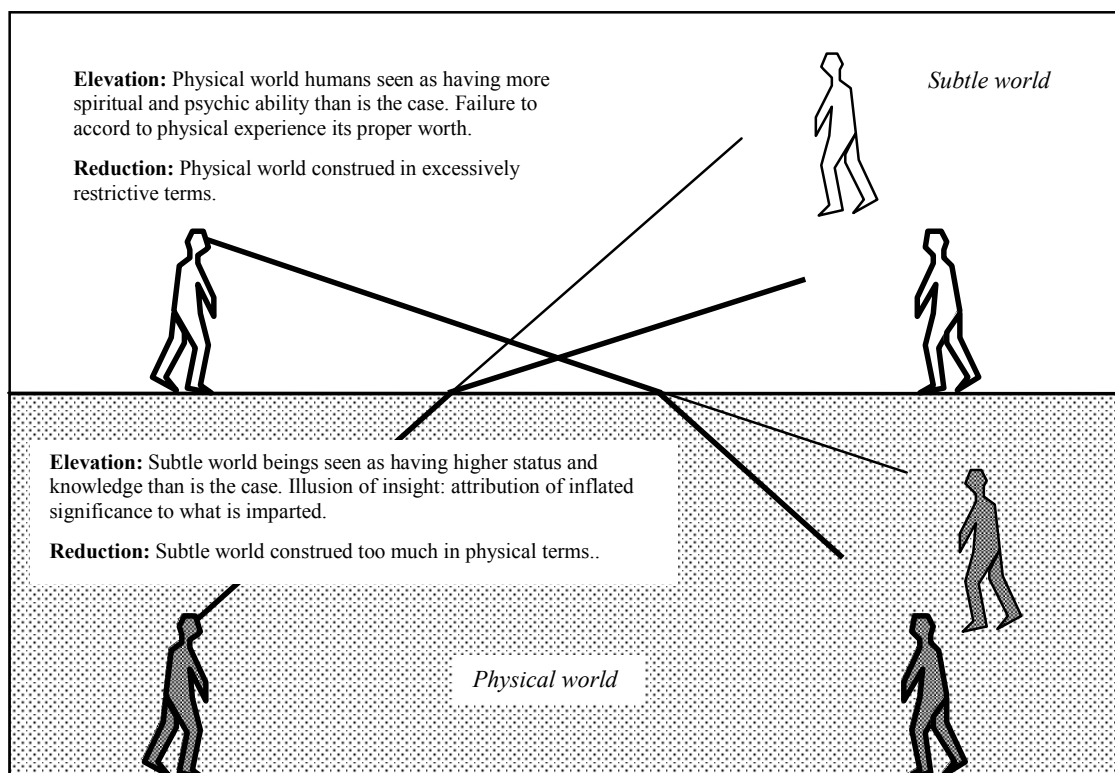


Figure 14.1 Refraction effects between the worlds

A clear distinction must be made between a naive being in the other world who falls foul of the refraction effect through ignorance; an unscrupulous being who knowingly uses it to exploit and manipulate humans; and a decent being who knows about the effect and yet has difficulty because humans have not been able to grasp it.

The various refraction effects between the worlds are illustrated in Figure 14.1.

## **7. Obliquity of vision**

In the literal, physical case, refraction only occurs when a ray of light strikes the surface between water and air at an oblique angle. And if the angle between the ray and the vertical is greater than the critical angle (see section 1 above), then the light won't pass into the other medium and will simply be reflected back into the medium in which it originates.

The notions of obliquity and of the critical angle can be used as fruitful metaphors. If a person in this world tries to understand or look into the other world in terms of concepts that are too earthly, then their vision will just be reflected back into the physical world - and will not enter the other world at all. The principle of total visionary reflection is at work. The ray of insight directed upward is too shallow, it has 'too great an angle with the vertical'.

Such a person will have to lift their imagination out of its preoccupation with physical categories - and project it more steeply up, well within the 'critical angle'. And even when they do this, and penetrate the other world with their understanding, they still have to allow for the various refraction effects.

For many people in our culture the capacity for upward vision is set at an angle of incidence well beyond the critical angle. As they look up mentally, their understanding is reflected back to earth: they see, feel and hear nothing of a subtle kind. For others their upward vision is orientated so that it is refracted *at* the critical angle: it skims, as it were, along the boundary between the worlds, gleaning intimations of the other world in experiences of this world - to do with music, art, nature, human encounter, and so on.

Then there are those whose understanding is well within the critical angle, their vision cast steeply upwards so that it is refracted into the other world. But it is not clear to me how many of these people make allowance for the possible refraction effects I have outlined. There is the ever-present hazard of falling foul of illusions of insight.

There may be some people whose line of upward vision is not oblique at all. They see and understand the other world without refraction effects and illusions of insight. They look, as it were, straight up and get a clear view.

This range of individual differences is presumably to do with the interaction of many factors: some kind of psychic resonance with beings in the other world; relative density of physical embodiment; early socialisation and education; cultural influences; the prevailing world-view and belief-systems that dominate perception; imaginative capacity; and so on. However, it seems reasonable to suppose that whatever a person's current visionary angle of incidence, it can be altered by application and practice. To go back to my original model, all human brains, in my view, are inherently Janus-brains: the codes of both universes are enfolded in them.

### **8. Illuminative diffusion**

A final metaphor is based on the physical principle of diffusion of light. Light is scattered or diffused - reflected in many different directions - when it falls on an irregular surface. Illumination proceeding from the subtle world into this world may likewise be diffused when it enters the human brain.

This may prevent uncomfortable occult glare, yet too much scattering of thought at the receiving end in this world may lead to all-over-the-place presentation, with incoherence, confusion and ambiguity - a chaotic profusion of concepts.

To prevent this you need a certain degree of conceptual coherence. But if the conceptual framework is too rigid, the mesh of ideas too tight, the illumination will be occluded. The ideal is for some kind of controlled diffusion by means of appropriate canons of judgment and criteria of discrimination, and by organic, open mesh conceptual systems

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