

POINT OMEGA
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POINT ΩMEGA

THE SINGULARITY
AT THE END OF TIME

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INTRODUCTION: VOICES IN BABYLON

Everything you've heard is true.

Contemporary popular saying.

The Land Of Two Streams

In the realm of ideas there are two significant and exciting trends which inform our present age. One is the resurgence of what I shall call the *esoteric paradigm* – broadly speaking, that body of archaic and traditional belief which comprises the worldview of magic and mysticism. The other is the emergence of a pervasive new paradigm in the natural sciences, characterised by holistic concepts and the inclusion of *consciousness* as essential in any description of the natural world. Both are the subject of intense popular interest, and both, in their respective way, appear to portend a comprehensive new vision for humanity. There are further parallels, as we shall see, between these respective currents, which suggests that their coincidence in our time is not a matter of mere intellectual fashion, but represents a meaningful synchronistic development in the depth of the human psyche.

My aim is to explore the dynamics of this remarkable synergy in the context of collective initiation – the process of human becoming – which is giving rise to our emerging view of the universe. Specifically I shall demonstrate that it is the esoteric paradigm which is revitalising the current of contemporary thought at the archetypal level. It is not merely fortuitous that the universe revealed by modern physics increasingly

resembles the magical universe of exotic legend. The convergence of worldview in systems superficially so different rather represents transcendent testimony to the validity of both.

I shall present the thesis that we are currently evolving a new and integral state of consciousness, informed by the worldview of science and mysticism respectively. The confluence of these two streams, I propose, will lead to the global activation of a new instrument of knowledge – the initiated intuition. I envisage that the perspectives thus gained will transform the way we currently do science and philosophy, indeed the way we regard ourselves and the world around us at a fundamental level. Specifically we shall come to recognise that we are creative participants in the evolution of the universe to a far greater extent than we have hitherto imagined. As a result, I suggest, we will profoundly revise our perceptions of human possibility, making the dream of a Magical Millennium an authentic option.

The Excluded Paradigm

Central to this work shall be the restoration of that aeonic and universal legacy we call the esoteric tradition. I shall demonstrate that it is legitimate to speak of an esoteric paradigm – a common thread in outlook and praxis which runs through its diverse schools of thought. Occupying centre-stage in the ancient arena, it was persecuted during the Middle Ages, marginalised with the ascent of modern science, presently to emerge with renewed vigour. The trend, moreover, is existential, expressing the subconscious tendency of the collective psyche, and suggesting the intimation that something vital has been lost which we must regain. And while there are as yet no university chairs in applied

metaphysics, the revival of supposedly discredited belief systems has profoundly and permanently changed our culture.

As a result of this seemingly subversive development a considerable rift has grown between the academic position and perceptions among the wider public. This situation has been viewed with concern by a number of writers, including astronomer the late Carl Sagan and the information scientist Jacques Valee. While Valee pleaded for more responsive and responsible dialogue across the lines of controversy, Sagan, in his posthumous work *The Demon Haunted World*, defended the view that science is the only method by which humanity may obtain valid knowledge, and that departure from its orthodoxy signals a dangerous return of medieval superstition.

I beg to differ with Dr Sagan. In this book I shall demonstrate that belief systems outside the scientific mainstream do not, as is claimed, necessarily involve the abrogation of intellectual rigour. Nor are they to be viewed primarily as primitive or pre-scientific. The esoteric tradition rather represents the *excluded* paradigm, comprising a vast and valid knowledge base, which we do well to access, especially at this critical juncture in the development of humanity. The occult arts of magic and mysticism involve their own particular disciplines, which in no way conflict with the methodology and worldview of modern science. Their perceived incompatibility is cultural and historical rather than intrinsic. Indeed there are compelling reasons why they should be understood as complementary rather than opposed.

Let it be understood that the *esoteric* or *occult* exists as a conceptual category purely by virtue of cultural default, namely the exclusion or marginalisation of certain domains of enquiry in the intellectual history of the West. Although the arts and sciences,

throughout the centuries, were secretly nourished by the esoteric paradigm, the historical record, having evidently been edited in this regard, is only now being re-established. The esoteric tradition, as such, equates with the unconscious and unacknowledged side of any culture, which, despite its unofficial status, forms an essential part of the human adventure. Curiously all human cultures appear to be thus afflicted with a partial or partisan approach in the realm of ontology; all are subject to a realm of taboo. Whether the causes are overt suppression or an unconscious conspiracy of silence, they are driven by forces, acting in concert with a covert agenda. The inevitable consequence is a cultural blindspot of indeterminate extent.

All cultures are thus selectively blind, and the cognate lack, as it afflicts the modern technological West, is easily discerned. At its core is the absence of the qualitative sensibility, of an authentic spirituality, and thus of a concerted response to the human condition. A dysfunctional relationship with nature is turning our planet into a wasteland, while the deconstruction of meaning has precipitated an existential void. The soul of humanity is thus bereft of a vital principle, that of intuitive wisdom and the visionary perspective to determine its authentic destiny. It has lost sight of its spiritual birthright, the kingdom of consciousness, which is the particular province of magic and mysticism.

The traditional response has been to divide the universe of discourse into the mutually exclusive domains of science and religion. For centuries in open ideological warfare, now at an uneasy truce – a situation long regarded as normal – the respective camps are now poised for apotheosis. For the marriage of convenience between faith and scientific doubt is repugnant to the contemporary sensibility, as is the arbitrary divide between spirit and nature. It remains for a rigorous

foundation to be laid, supportive of humanity's spiritual aspirations as well as the accomplishments of its material aims. This may occur in the context of the said integral paradigm, wherein a holistic vision of humanity and the means of conscious dialogue with nature are provided by the esoteric tradition.

What is this tradition?

In essence we assert a core of experiential verity, encoded within the teachings of the world's religions and mystery cults, in shamanic and magical lore, which engenders recognition of our transcendent heritage and makes us citizens of the cosmos. Cognate is the notion of a secret sanctuary, a universal body of adepts, and a path of initiation whereby one might attain to that exalted place. Where such claims are made, it must be understood that they are presented *not* as subject for belief or uninformed speculation of any kind, but experimental proof. Whether we speak of the Universal Medicine, the Philosopher's Stone, or the Sangraal of the mystic quest, the validation of transcendent truth can only be obtained through personal experience. For this reason the esoteric paradigm has ever been communicated as a system of initiation.

An intuitive appreciation of this tradition is presently being reintegrated into the collective mainstream. A new and integral vision based on cultural confluence and paradigm fusion is on the ascendancy, transforming our culture from the inside. We are witnessing a cultural renewal equal to, and indeed a continuation of, the European Renaissance – the rebirth of the human and humane ideal, involving the reappraisal of ancient and classical sources.

The Cultural Divide

The cultural legacy of the West is a divided universe – split between the sensibilities of science and theology. At one time in open conflict and thought to be mutually exclusive, a tacit civility now rules between the respective camps. Nevertheless the intellectual divide remains radical – like a surgical gash in the collective mindset.

Extremity of pluralism, however, is not an entirely modern phenomenon, if we credit the legend of Babel or consider the disintegration of pagan Rome. Yet an essentially unitarian worldview appears to have been the historical norm, with our present fragmentation indicative of cultural pathology. Indeed the schizophrenic divide between science and religion is a relatively recent phenomenon. Having its roots in the medieval theocracy, it gained momentum during the so-called Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, when ideological boundaries of the emerging Europe were being drawn and intellectual turf divided between theologians and the newly emerging breed of natural philosophers or scientists.

At the core of the cultural divide is the so-called Cartesian split (after René Descartes, 1596 – 1650), wherein mind and matter are regarded as separate and distinct ontological categories. This has led to the commonplace distinction we make between subjective and objective experience, and, very broadly, to the basic division within academia between science and the humanities. For three hundred years these developed in relative isolation from each other, a fact often deplored, but rarely confronted in a rigorous manner. The intellectual current of modernity favoured specialisation and an exclusive preoccupation with the world of the senses. This was part of the ideological reaction, which swept Europe from the time of the Reformation, to the untenable metaphysics of the medieval Church with its attendant tyrannies. As a

result of this reaction a new secular age was born, which rejected all claims of spiritual verity, and led to the rise of the rational paradigm, devoted to the pursuit of experiment and reason. In the process the pendulum has swung from one exclusive extreme to another – from religious totalitarianism to an ultra-reductionist scientism, which simply denies all that it cannot explain.

While scientific method has provided us with a valuable tool, it is evident that science, as a belief-system, cannot be regarded as philosophically complete. Focusing exclusively on objective experience, it fails to consider its subjective foundation in consciousness. It was quickly realised that consciousness, due to its subjective nature, cannot be studied like any conventional object. To do so would mean turning the eye of scrutiny upon itself – a mystical discipline regarded as unscientific and fraught with paradox. For this reason no science of consciousness has emerged; indeed the problem has been almost entirely ignored. In terms of my thesis, this is the heart of the matter, and the stone which the builders rejected. *Mind* is the final frontier – the undiscovered country. Scientists commonly acknowledge, indeed pride themselves on the fact, that they carry out their work, unencumbered by metaphysical concerns. In the long run this tends to isolate science from the larger nexus of humane discourse, and contributes to a scientific worldview incommensurate with the vagaries of human experience. We may learn to harness the quantum potential of space, but it is not certain that we shall thereby alleviate our cosmic alienation.

This negates the claim that science is essentially neutral and value-free. We see rather that modern science has arbitrarily split the universe in two – the *subjective* and *objective*; it has chosen to discard the half as unworthy of scientific scrutiny, and sought to build a viable edifice out of

the half remaining. It is surely not far-fetched to assert that the ecological devastation, the cultural and political instability of the modern world, is a direct result of this lopsided methodology. Proliferating doomsday scenarios and the failure of science to make us wise should alert us to the inadequacy of conventional learning, and thus the need for a superior instrument of knowledge.

In this connection we must also ask whether consecration and purity of purpose, in the sense espoused by medieval alchemists, are not of decisive import to the cultural process – especially when a culture delves deeply into the secrets of nature. Evidently the exclusive emphasis on scientific method has served us ill. For it is inconceivable in some respects why, given our technological success, universal utopia has remained consistently elusive. Concurrently the reductionist ethos of modern science has left a void of meaning, and we are besieged in the bargain by high anomaly – those imponderable occurrences that suggest an alien presence or separate reality over which we have no control.

We therefore need to redefine the concept of success to include the quality of life on the planet in the broadest sense. Specifically we need a science of values. We need to reinvest in the numinous and phenomenological aspects of our nature, and furnish a paradigm to encompass the totality of human aspiration and experience. To embrace the rich nexus of meaning whereof we find ourselves at the centre we also need to rehabilitate the arts and humanities, and restore a culture of contemplation as essential to the human process.

The Requirement Of Rigour

A multitude of popular publications have appeared in recent

decades, which aim to reconcile science and religion. Especially it has become fashionable for physicists to comment on metaphysical matters from newly gained perspectives in quantum mechanics and cosmology. While the attempt in some instances was little more than cosmetic, the foundation has been laid for a new era of cross-disciplinary dialogue, even across boundaries as apparently intransigent as those between science and theology. There is a new climate of openness, exemplified by physicist Freeman Dyson's recent admission that theologians have things of interest to say. However with the 'warm-fuzzy' foundation in place, it remains for the requirements of rigour to be served. The universe is one. Therefore all system of thought claiming valid knowledge should be subject to a coherent universe of discourse of sufficient scope and depth to critically examine such claims. The indicated task is the development of a transcendent epistemology or meta-philosophy, capable of integrating all major cultural and scientific paradigms in a creative synthesis, and leading ultimately to a new form of consciousness, the foundation of an authentic and self-aware global culture in the cosmic context.

New orders of conceptual and experimental rigour becomes imperative when we extend the domain of enquiry from the objective to the subjective universe. A rigorous foundation for such a system would combine the experimental techniques of science with those of mysticism, and appropriate the intuition as a viable instrument of knowledge. We shall require new experimental methodologies, new observational techniques, and a new epistemology – at least from the standpoint of conventional science. From a wider perspective it is evident that we merely need to reappropriate the lost wisdom of antiquity with its attendant technologies of consciousness.

The requisite knowledge base and analytical tools are thus already in existence, although they are rarely found in any one individual or institution. The contemplated synthesis is therefore dependent in good measure upon the will to integrate narrow areas of specialisation in a wider context of reference. This, of course, has profound implications for the politics of academic turf and the prevailing power structures in general. For it is evident that the coming revolution in consciousness will render current conceptions pre-scientific, even as the Copernican revolution rendered the medieval worldview obsolete..

The State Of The Art

Classical physics has long been informed by the reductionist ethos, the idea that complex phenomena can be explained by analysing them into their basic component parts. With the advent of quantum physics, which deals specifically with objects at the very small end of the scale (sub-atomic particles), this theory has begun to undermine itself in a most curious manner. For it is found that these supposedly elementary particles behave in ways that can only be understood with reference to larger systems of which they are part. Energy *fields* rather than particles are becoming our principle frame of reference, as the reductionist approach is giving way to holistic perspectives. As local fields are embedded in larger fields, we can see where this line of thought is leading us – to the idea that the universe as such can only be understood as a whole.

As a concurrent development we find organic models and metaphors replacing the mechanical clockwork universe of Isaac Newton. The idea that the universe may be alive and even conscious no longer appears far-fetched. Already Sir James Jeans (1877 – 1946), astronomer

and mathematician, made a notable statement to the effect that the universe we observe is coming to resemble a giant thought rather than a giant machine. Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Laureate in physics, was equally suggestive in stating: *Art and the re-enchantment of nature are appropriate metaphors for a creative and evolving universe*. Clearly a new current of thought is revitalising the scientific quest at the paradigm level, and overturning many of our most basic assumptions.

The most remarkable development however occurred within quantum physics, to which we shall briefly return. Essentially it was found that, on the quantum level, the mind of the observer plays a decisive role in the outcome of any experiment. This necessarily has implications for observations on the larger scale, as quantum events may be understood as giving rise to the known universe. The suggestion is that mind or consciousness plays an integral part in conjuring the reality we experience, a notion which is of course congruent with the worldview of magic and mysticism. As a result we can no longer regard ourselves as neutral and objective observers with a mind somehow abstracted from the universal nexus, but we are participants, profoundly involved in the cosmic process, and apparent creators of our reality within limits yet to be experimentally verified.

Yet, strangely, it has taken nearly a century for these ideas to percolate into the popular mainstream. Formulations of the quantum theory date from the early 1900s, and some of its founders, among them Bohr, Heisenberg, Dirac, Schrödinger and Pauli, wrote profusely and profoundly upon the philosophical implications of their work, a rare occupation among scientists. Perhaps understandably, a generation preoccupied with two world wars, economic depression and boom, had not the vocation for esoteric revelations, whether scientific or mystical.

However what we many call the millennial generation clearly has a ferocious appetite for the exotic, the strange and the bizarre. The idea that reality may be profoundly other to what we have been taught has taken hold of the collective imagination. Although controversy rages over the various tenets of the New Age sensibility, the public implicitly distrusts the reactionary stance of the scientific and religious orthodoxy, with its simplistic denials of any fact or claim not under its control.

In the absence of credible authority individuals necessarily draw own conclusions as to the boundaries of the real. Accordingly the post-modern age is the age of the individual par excellence. Ideologies have run their course. The time has come for every human being to create an individual synthesis between the universal and the personal. This does not indicate progress toward chaos or anarchy, but the creation of a new social order based on inner consensus, rather than external constraint. This means that humanity en large is now becoming self-aware in a manner conducive to initiation. For the individual in this age faces the existential mystery alone, without an intervening priesthood to interpret reality. In the cultural vacuum the individual is thus obliged to forge a personal path in terrain where everything is potentially open to question. Yet with the disintegration of the monolithic mindset, a new – or rather primeval – faculty is coming into its rightful domain – the initiated intuition.

In the mystery schools of the ancient and classical world the candidates of initiation were deliberately isolated, to face their inner terrors. They had a choice of two options – self-knowledge or insanity. In the modern world it is no longer necessary for the necessary context to be thus contrived. Apocalyptic disclosures, the quickening of the psychic manifold, and a plethora of global terrors have, of themselves precipitated

a mass exodus from the comforts of conventional reality in the quest for deeper ontological ground.

While scientists and mystics warn that the planetary community must radically change its course, there is, at least in some quarters an overwhelming expectation for rapid development in this direction. The apocalyptic impulse, properly understood, is the perception that we are on the threshold of profound revelation. And it is precisely the promise of an emerging intuitive or spiritual paradigm around which the collective imagination is crystallising.

Is There Anyone Out There?

The rising mythology of the age is the *Star Religion*, founded upon spirit channels and cults of alien contact. Here the term ‘mythology’ is not intended to denote a delusional phenomenon, but a perceptual motif of archetypal purport, the significance of which is not well understood. One might say it constitutes a contemporary Zen koan – the existential riddle in one of its more exotic guises. Yet in one form or another this riddle has haunted every age, for throughout history we find records of an alien or non-human presence. In certain notable cultures of the past elaborate cults evolved around the phenomenon, while in others it was shunned and execrated.

Our present age is confused on the subject, exhibiting a mixture of fascination and fear. Yet the quest for cosmic answers is not merely philosophical, increasingly it is seen as a matter of survival. For the dominator culture has led us into a cul-de-sac from which there is no obvious way of escape. And in accord with certain deeply held beliefs, the answer is expected to manifest from the skies. For this reason

multitudes are actively seeking alien or spiritual contact in something like the Faustian spirit, unaware of the uneven bargain that may be involved. The expectation is one of gnosis – of revelation and mystical insight rather than mere belief. A new form of spirituality is accordingly arising, which is pluralistic in orientation, syncretist in direction, and experimental in method.

It is a premises of this present work that popular mythologies have a significant basis in fact. The presence of false or erroneous cults, I submit, is indication that a true sanctuary of the gnosis does exist, along with an authentic source of transcendent wisdom. Intuition insists that the universe contains a central truth and that this truth cannot be trivial. Reason further insists that this cosmic secret must be commensurate with human consciousness and aspiration, for it is that which gave them rise.

The question, ‘are we alone in the universe?’ addresses the need for contact with higher intelligence, for some sort of cosmic epiphany, which is the object of human striving. Yet prevailing uncertainties in this regard may be regarded as due to the void of spiritual communion – a lack which makes outer space appear likewise dead and void. As a correlate it may be that, in scanning the heavens for suggestive radio signals, we are listening on the wrong frequency entirely. It is certainly not inconceivable that communion may occur on much more homely ground, involving a transceiver far more sophisticated and universal – the human nervous system. The testimony of millennia supports the contention that such is indeed the case. It is mere scientific hubris to imagine that superior intelligence would avail itself of our own technology. As philosopher Terence McKenna remarked, to monitor the skies for extraterrestrial radio-signals involves as culture-bound an assumption, as to search the galaxy for a good Italian restaurant.

Higher intelligence, alien races, a spiritual hierarchy – ultimately there is confusion over what it is we are dealing with. Our conceptual categories are inadequate in confronting the wealth of data emerging from reported alien contacts and anomaly research in general. The relevant phenomena typically manifest a physical as well as a psycho-spiritual dimension, thereby defying our neat dichotomy of mind and matter. Yet, more fundamentally, the phenomenon necessarily involves a profound investment in human hopes and aspiration. Spiritual salvation, within certain circles, is increasingly viewed in terms of transformation or translation into alternate realities – a vision linked to the doctrines of resurrection, rapture, and ascension. This further explains the popular fascination with the UFO or flying disk, in that it is not merely an intergalactic vessel, but a means of travel across dimensional boundaries, between adjacent universes or parallel worlds.

An Intuitive Synthesis

The spiritual science of the ancients – magic and mysticism – is grounded in the subjective experience. It's defining characteristic is the embodied point of view, the experience of being conscious in a living, sensing body at the apparent centre of a universe. From this empirical foundation the esoteric paradigm is derived, by way of a process the elucidation which is the subject of this book. The result is a cosmology meaningful in terms of human experience, and a technology of consciousness with practical application to all areas of human activity. And although a certain worldview is generically associated with the esoteric paradigm, it is not a religion in the primary sense. Rather it should be regarded as the science of religion; in more inclusive language,

the science of the human condition, centred upon the subjective phenomenon of consciousness. As such it is the meeting ground of science *and* religion.

Yet we are also aware of a reactionary rearguard in both these camps, which opposes (for similar reasons) the scrutiny of its disciplines from a more inclusive point of view. And while this book cites many points of confluence between science and mysticism, it does so in recognition of the fact that their respective conventions seem profoundly at odds. Indeed, on the surface it would appear that each describes a different universe. In so-called sceptical circles, ostensibly representing the scientific paradigm, this has given rise to a culture of assumed superiority. The implied suggestion is that ‘of course we know better.’ The fact is, we do *not* know better. We do not know enough about the universe to be peremptory about the nature of reality or the extent of the possible.

For this reason I decided to present the esoteric worldview as a given, both from personal observation and as an independent student of the relevant lore – not uncritically, but without special deference to scientific orthodoxy. If I make exotic claims, as I shall without apology or qualification, this is not pose as an oracle, but to offer alternative constructions of the human experience. The situation is not dissimilar to that of popular science exposition, which likewise confronts the lay reader with a wealth of arcane conceptions beyond ordinary ability to verify. However both types of literature are open to the intuitive faculty, and it is the (trained) intuition, which is able to engage the ‘magical’ realities beyond conventional perceptions, and capable of discerning therein possibilities hitherto unimagined.

It is not my concern, however, merely to vindicate the occult arts

and sciences in the abstract. My intention is to present the esoteric paradigm in the manner originally intended for such material – as a system of initiation. The esoteric tradition has always addressed itself directly – even intimately – to the individual. To every incarnate sentient being it offers the key of self-realisation and authentic creativity in the cosmic context.

Chapter One

THE CALLING AND THE QUEST

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science.

Albert Einstein

Mystery And Meaning

In the third millennium AD we confront inexhaustible mystery. The age-old questions of eternal verity, having appeared in various guises, are with us as much as ever. For our present purpose I wish to reformulate these questions thus: What is the nature of reality? Does the universe have a spiritual heart, a core of meaning which can be known? What are the authentic possibilities of human nature? And, is there an appropriate path of wisdom and understanding?

We stand, as it were, at the interface of two imponderables: human consciousness and the object of that consciousness, mind and the physical universe. In both we encounter unfathomable depth, and this depth is of the essence of mystery. We are also aware that these two must be connected in some profound and intimate way. It is not merely fortuitous that we find nature to be boundless, but, in the words of the Psalmist, the *deep* is calling to the *deep* in a symbiotic embrace of mind and meaning.

In an ongoing quest for transcendence the human spirit is probing this depth, seeking solid ground upon which to build a civilisation. The search has taken many forms. It is manifest in the mystic quest for the

true nature of mind, in the pursuit of divine revelation, and in scientific attempts to formulate a comprehensive theory of the universe.

How can one account for this perpetual quest? By what force were we lifted from the agrarian cradle to aim for the stars? The simplest theory (and therefore the best) is that we are impelled by, or drawn towards, an object of transcendent verity. Such a notion is of course consistent with the traditional worldview of all cultures. It is the religious postulate in a nutshell. Stated in humanist terms, we may all be aware on a fundamental level that, given human sensibilities and aspirations, a transcendent and utopian reality must exist because it can be *created*.

Either way, the human odyssey is spiritual at heart. It is for something unknown that we seek, and the object of our search, I suggest, is *meaning*. Meaning is the sustenance of the soul, and the longing of the soul in this respect appears to be boundless. Our proper concern is therefore with the incommensurate: the infinite and the eternal, the essential mystery at the heart of existence, which remains, despite all scientific elaboration, as an object of wonder and contemplation throughout the ages.

Mystery is the central ontological fact of our existence. We are surrounded by the mysterious, although sophistic conventions have distracted us from the immediacy of the fact. The mysterious is, as Einstein remarked, the inspiration behind all true art and science. To be fully human is to stand in awe of the mystery. A healthy culture is one which honours the mystery with appropriate rites, institutions, and a meaningful evolving cosmology. Conversely, all inhuman systems ever devised are characterised by the attempt to reduce the mystery to some trite formula, ideology, or creed.

It is a common misconception that mystery has been dispelled by

science. Deep and irreducible mystery remains, despite any amount of scientific rationalisation. Let us take an example:

It is generally assumed that the question concerning the origin of life and the universe, if not totally solved, has at least been brought into the realm of the commensurate. The relevant theory posits that the universe came into being by the rapid expansion of a minuscule object – the singularity, a point of zero dimension and infinite density. From the expansion of this singularity, referred to as the *big bang*, space, time, energy, matter, and eventually complex structures are said to have arisen. The scenario is somewhat as follows:

In the inflation of the primordial fireball the forces of nature are differentiated, and particles come into being, which combine to form simple atoms. Gaseous clouds of hydrogen and helium coalesce into galaxies and stars – nuclear furnaces where the heavier elements like nitrogen and carbon are formed. Aeons pass. Stars are born and become extinct. Dust clouds on the solar perimeter coalesce into planets. Eventually, in the primordial swamps of one such planet, carbon-based amino acids assemble into self-replicating protein chains, forming the basis for organic molecules, which combine to produce DNA – RNA sequences, the genetic information of living cells. Thence from single-cell organisms arise, in a billion year spree of evolution, the higher animals. Add a series of fortunate mutations in the direction of increased cerebral capacity, and – here we are.

I have no contention with this theory, as far as it goes, provided it is understood for what it is – a scientific myth. A living myth is a plausible tale which offers a construction of the facts from a particular point of view. That view represents one possibility among many. It comprises what Robert Anton Wilson calls a *reality tunnel*, a particular

way of viewing the world, out of a potentially infinite set. This is not to disparage any particular point of view, only to point out that there is a necessary qualitative gap between any conceptual formulation, and that mysterious something which it describes.

As with many a story, there is great interest in what is left unsaid, and our scientific tale is no exception.

Let us consider first the point of origin – the singularity. There is confusion about whether this was just very small, or infinitely small – an abstract point, without extension in any sense. If the former, the question of origin is not addressed at all. We begin with an object whose existence is yet unexplained. If the latter, we face the concept of creation *ex nihilo* – out of nothing, if indeed a point, which can metamorphose into a universe, can be said to be ‘nothing.’ But if it is ‘something,’ what is it, and whence this something? In either case, what a remarkable object this singularity is. Solitary, without location in time or space, unthought-of by anyone, a super-seed which gave rise to all this – you and I and the world we see around us. Where did *it* come from?

For a long time this question was thought to be unanswerable, at least within the framework of science. It was the point where science met theology. Now there is speculation, associated with the work of theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, that the singularity at the beginning of the universe came into being as a result of random fluctuations in the *quantum foam*. This theory revives the idea of a primal ocean or field of potential – the universal ground of being, an idea which is analogous to the Hindu *mulaprakriti*, the root substance, symbolised as Divine Mother. Yet it should not be assumed that the main ontological question is thereby resolved. We have merely taken a further step in sophistic elaboration, arriving at the concept of latent potential as a

fundamental given. Surely this latency, pregnant with all possible meaning, is as great a mystery as the singularity, or the universe to which they give rise. Cosmic seed or cosmic egg, we have not explained how is it possible that anything should exist at all.

There is, to be sure, much to wonder at in our construction of the universe – more than enough for a lifetime of engagement, with further elaborations constantly being added to the scientific edifice. We are so enthused by our success, remarkable as it is in itself, that we fail to notice that our mind has played a subtle trick on us. By some subversive slight-of-hand we have managed to convince ourselves that our models and equations serve to provide an answer to those celebrated questions – who are we? where do we come from? where are we going? and, does the universe have meaning? It is felt that we are at least on the way toward elucidating these mysteries. In effect, however, we have merely posited an arbitrary starting point within a continuum of unfathomed depth. We have interposed innumerable developmental stages between this point and the present universe, then focused exclusively on the latter. While this, no doubt, is a noble enterprise in itself, it is obfuscation to suggest that we are thereby elucidating the question of our origin. Instead we are elaborating the stages of our cosmic journey *since* the beginning. All other things being equal, the question of origin and existence remains as mysterious as ever.

Let us then focus on the journey – the projected ten to twenty billion years of cosmic evolution, and the rational edifice constructed by science in the last three to four hundred years. To be sure, there is but a single point in all of this, with which I wish to detain the reader: the ongoing and potentially endless proliferation of knowledge. Consider:

Over a period of fifteen hundred years, from ancient Rome in 1 AD

to the height of the Renaissance, information is thought to have approximately doubled. Around the time of the Enlightenment, some 250 years later, it had doubled again, and then again by 1900. By 1950 information had doubled yet again, and the process has continued to accelerate. In the late twentieth century it was estimated that the total information available to humanity was doubling in size every eighteen month. As I write the figure is said to be approaching six months. Can we see where this is leading?

Yet despite the exponential increase in the amount of information in the public domain, there is no indication that we are reaching a point of closure. The opposite rather is the case. The more we know, the more questions we are able to ask. Every step in the chain of complexity opens further avenues of enquiry. The horizons of knowledge are infinitely receding. It is doubtful that a predictable or even conceivable end to science is in sight. As physicist Freeman Dyson remarked in a recent interview, for every mystery elucidated by science, there appear to be two or three new ones lurking underneath.

Will this process have an end? Is there a rational conclusion to the scientific quest? It is often stated with a kind of Platonic faith that the universe is, in essence, simple. Simple enough, it is hoped, that we might one day write the grand cosmological equation on a small sheet of paper. Yet it is also possible that the universe is simple in a way altogether different, a way which cannot be realised by analytical means. Perhaps the complexity we see around us is a function of the human mind, the ability of consciousness to analyse and divide infinitely. Our present position with regard to quantum theory suggests that this may be the case. If so, then, clearly, there is no end to scientific speculation. No matter how far our reach, how subtle our grasp, substance and meaning

ultimately dissolve in the abyss of ratiocination. Instead of a solid foundation for a final theory, we shall find a bottomless well of indeterminacy, as concepts and particles evaporate in the infinite regress of the mind.

Let us take this a step further. If it be conceded that nature has no foundation that can be discovered by rational means – no bottom end, so to speak, then neither can it have a top. If analysis cannot be brought to a rational conclusion, there can be no ultimate synthesis. This would obviate the scientific dream of a grand unified field equation – a theory of everything. Instead of positioning ourselves with respect to universal verities, we are merely elaborating intellectual space, apparently unaware that where we are heading, at an ever increasing pace, is evidently nowhere. Have we considered this possibility? And how should we respond?

Is it possible that the quest for meaning, the spiritual quest which fuels the scientific endeavour, cannot be consummated in the manner currently proposed? Maybe the answers we seek are to be found on a plane of mentation other than the rational. If so, wisdom has eluded us, and the scientific endeavour is merely begging the ultimate question. And what of the cultural edifice we now inhabit – how secure are *its* foundations? Have we built on shifting sand? The myth or progress notwithstanding, experience suggests that something non-trivial has been excluded from the agenda of modernity. For even in the abundant satisfaction of material needs, an infinite and indeterminate longing remains, which fuels the ongoing cultural endeavour, whether it be through science, art, philosophy, or religion.

If nature is infinitely deep, as intuition insists, infinite mystery necessarily remains, and this not merely in the origins of the remote past,

but equally in the familiar events of every-day reality. Yet this is cause for celebration. For if mystery is inexhaustible, so also is the world of possible meaning. A rational universe, by comparison, is ultimately a trivial universe. We are therefore most likely mistaken in assuming that science can dispel the mystery and deliver ultimate meaning in a definitive conceptual form. *Appreciation* rather than *explanation* seems to be the appropriate response to the universe in which we find ourselves. But are we simply to stand and wonder? This is equally incompatible with human aspiration. We ask therefore if there may not be a different instrument of knowledge, able to satisfy the requirements, alike of rigour as of the subjective quest for meaning.

Such an instrument is found in the initiated intuition, which lies at the heart of the esoteric tradition, the cultural legacy of millennia, its origins predating the history of our race. It suggests that there is another way of doing science. A way which is followed, not by taking the mystery apart, but, as did the Taoists of the Golden Age, by engaging it.

The Key Of Innocent Vision

One of the persistent misconceptions concerning the practice of magic or mysticism is the idea that these are grounded in metaphysical belief – in mythopoeia and the projection of supernatural agencies. Nothing could be further from the truth. The error is the result of the projection of our own dualistic mindset upon the archaic worldview. The esoteric paradigm is not born of belief but of observation – the most scrupulous and painstakingly minute observation of nature of which the ancients were capable. Rather than inveterate dreamers, the ancients were, above all, pragmatists. Their pragmatism, however, insisted that

due consideration be given to all modalities of experience, including the psychic, the subtle and numinous, without imposing arbitrary distinctions in the ontological sense. This fact has predisposed the shallow contemporary psyche to regard the ancients as primitive and pre-scientific in their conceptions. However they were merely being inclusive and straightforward or non-sophistic. They apprehended the universe, as revealed to human consciousness, in its totality and as a connected whole. If their insights baffle the contemporary sensibility, this is due to our inability to conceive of the subtlety of their perception, and the impartiality of their point of view. For the ancients looked at the world through eyes of ideological innocence, inconceivable in the modern climate of religious and scientific inquisition.

Their worldview, accordingly, was based on first principles – that which is most evidently the case. And the most obvious fact of experience is consciousness. From the human perspective, consciousness is clearly the first foundation, giving rise to all other phenomena. Cosmogogenesis, therefore, in the esoteric paradigm begins where that of science ends – with the formation of mind.

This is extremely important. Let us pause to elaborate this concept. We are accustomed through modern education to think of ourselves as separate from the cosmos. It is quite conceivable to us that the universe could exist without us, that it did so in the past, and will probably do so in the future. This is because we regard the universe as independently real, and our presence here as incidental – a late afterthought in the cosmic odyssey. Consider however the following thought-experiment.

Let us, in imagination, turn off all conscious awareness. Let us then ask, all other things being equal, what exists? Our mind may conjure appropriate visions, perhaps of a universe essentially like ours, minus the

human race. But visions? Without consciousness there are no visions. Whereof can we conceive? Anonymous spheres churning darkly through the abyss of space? A poetic concept, but, without the foundation of consciousness, altogether impermissible. Quickly we realise that whatever we think or imagine, it must be ruled out. Then is there a void? Anything at all? And it may dawn that, without mind, existence is intrinsically impossible. For when we speak of existence, we are referring to a fact in consciousness. This is recognised in the esoteric view of the world, which holds that mind, thought, and the universe arise in unison. Upon further analysis this leads to the recognition that the mind *is* the world.

Let us view the matter from another perspective.

We are accustomed to the so-called Cartesian divide, the idea that there are actually two worlds: the objective world and the subjective representation thereof, said to exist in the mind. It was in the grip of this notion that Bertrand Russell was to remark, ‘The stars are inside one’s head.’ The venerable Cambridge don clearly did not have a Zen master as mentor, for he would have been cured of his dysfunctional view. We are tempted to say that a child knows better. Such is the result of sophism, estranged from the obvious facts. The esoteric worldview, by contrast, is based on seeing simply. Thus when the ancients looked at the heavens, as I am quite certain, they were not confused on this matter.

Where, incidentally, are the stars? Clearly, the stars are in the heavens. And where are the heavens? The heavens are *up there*. And where is *up there*? *Up there* is a portion of the universe. And where is the universe? It is in the mind. And where is the mind? The mind is everywhere – wherever we look: in the clouds, the trees, the stars, the sky. For mind is synonymous with perception, and thus with the object of

perception, the universe we know. The notion of the two worlds is therefore an evident fallacy. There is one world – the world of experience.

As to the real or objective world, the alleged source of this experience, it is a conjecture, a metaphysical fiction of which we have no evidence, and which therefore should not influence our theory. It may exist. But it is not clear that we can form a meaningful conception concerning it. By definition, we cannot contact it, and it is far from evident that the notion has ontological validity. This is not to suggest that our experience is invalid. On the contrary, it is experience itself which represents primary and objective reality. The universe, to reiterate the fact, is a function of consciousness; its structure is the structure of thought.

I do not suggest that primeval man was given to musings such as these, which can only arise in the context of the Cartesian split, the arbitrary division of the universe into mind and matter. It did not occur to early man to draw an arbitrary boundary upon what is evidently a continuous phenomenon. The distinction between subjective and objective thus did not exist. Indeed, the notion of the subjective was, in historical terms, a late phenomenon. Religion, and the notion of a metaphysical realm – *elsewhere* and *other* – these were yet in the future. In this primordial age the world was yet one.

The view here described is sometimes referred to as solipsism, in philosophy the idea that the self is all that exists and can be known. It is evident that this position is unassailable, if one chooses to think of it that way. Criticisms thereof as myopic or naive are invariable based on perspectives imported from the Cartesian worldview, and therefore out of place. It rather represents, I am inclined to insist, an obvious fact of

experience. It is the Cartesian worldview, by contrast, which is grounded in metaphysical idealism. For it posits a mystical real universe, made of a mysterious substance called *matter*, and then proceeds to ask how this matter can be conscious.

For those of us, schooled in the dualistic perspective, the recognition of the one world typically comes as something of a shock, which may take time to assimilate. It is the answer to the famous Zen koan: ‘What is the sound of one hand clapping?’ If the peculiarity of this viewpoint can be grasped, not merely as an intellectual proposition, but as a self-evident fact of experience, we stand at the gate of initiation. For this point of view, with its innocent simplicity, is the key to the esoteric paradigm.

In confronting the cryptic texts of magic and mysticism, therefore, and the seemingly oblique sayings of the Masters, we should remember that the ‘secret doctrine’ is an *embodied* philosophy. Its vantage point is not the abstract and idealised platform of the ivory tower, but the direct experience of the human sensorium, the soul.

Cosmogenesis In The Mind

Having considered the scientific creation myth, we shall now turn our attention to cosmogenesis in the esoteric mode. It need not be assumed that these two schools are necessarily at variance on all points. One has to make allowance for a different language of description, a different set of emphases, and (as pointed out at length) a different point of view. There are significant points of convergence, as shall become apparent, and which should not surprise us if we concede the relative validity of both systems.

The esoteric doctrine posits universal mind, or consciousness, as the fundamental reality. In Vedic cosmology, universal mind, referred to as *parabrahm*, oscillates between phases of latency and manifestation. Known as the nights and days of Brahma, these correspond to alternating conditions of universal recumbence and activity – *pralaya* and *manvantara* respectively. During the recumbent phase, or *pralaya*, mind and universe are said to be unmanifest. This state is closely akin to that of entropy in modern physics, where the energy differential in the universe is equal to zero, and no motion is theoretically possible. Contemporary theory proposes that the universe is irreversibly heading in that direction, suggesting ultimate extinction, the final end. This is due to the so-called second law of thermo-dynamics (or third, if we include the zero law), which basically states that, without the influx of energy, things disintegrate. Matter and energy, over time, become evenly dispersed, the temperature converges to absolute zero, and no further development is possible.

However, this view in isolation fails to address the essential question, how and from what did the universe arise in the first place? How did the universe get wound up, so to speak, enabling it to run down? The conditions of absolute entropy are, of course, a matter of conjecture. It is therefore possible that, with the approach of universal entropy, a new state will supervene, perhaps akin to superconductivity, which will concentrate the energy of the cosmos in a new singularity, and thus precipitate another big bang. In this way, from the dispersion of the old, a new universe is born. Compare this theory, and the scientific creation myth in general, with that elaborated in *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. Quoting from the Book Of The Stanzas Of Dzyan, said to derive from secret libraries in caves of the Himalayan fastness, but

attributed by some to the author herself, Blavatsky writes:

Darkness radiates Light, and Light drops one solitary Ray into the Mother-Deep. The Ray shoots through the Virgin Egg, the Ray causes the eternal Egg to thrill, and drop the non-eternal Germ, which condenses into the World-Egg.

With due consideration for poetic language, we are here contemplating a reconstruction which resembles that of modern cosmology in all essential respects. The question of the causes for such similarity in supposedly so diverse systems of knowledge is discussed below.

Here I wish to emphasise two essential aspects of the ‘secret doctrine’ in its generic sense: the cyclic nature of the universe, as indeed of all phenomena in nature, and the anthropomorphic conception which is typical of the archaic worldview. What both exemplify is the insight that the universe has themes or *signatures*, which may be observed in various manifestations, in various domains, and at various levels of organisation. As such the anthropomorphic model is neither quaint nor naive, but eminently appropriate on two counts: (1) the universality of cosmic types, and (2) man / woman viewed as microcosm, and thus as the measure of all things. From this perspective we can reconstruct the esoteric creation account somewhat as follows.

In the universal matrix of mind, unmanifest in its maternal aspect, concentrates the singularity, which fertilises the cosmic egg, leading to manvantaric dawn – the birth of a new creation. The singularity is the logos, the Creative Word of the Gnostics, the original thought or seed in the mind of God. In this seed is concentrated the cosmic program, the set of instructions for the world-ages to come. It is universal mind made

manifest through self-awareness, comprising the creative and formative intelligence by which the universe unfolds. The concept is that of the so-called acorn theory on a cosmic scale.

The universe is therefore seen as intentional, a single organism informed of a unified intelligence, living and conscious. Creation, in this context, may be viewed as the attempt of cosmic consciousness to know itself, to express its attributes, and to evolve through experience. Consciousness, rather than being a late epiphenomenon in the history of the cosmos, appears as the evolutionary impulse itself, and humanity the crest of the evolutionary wave.

As for the notion of a sequential or serial universe, I suggest that it is inherently far more plausible that the concept of a once-off universe, finite in time and bounded by ‘eternal darkness’ both antecedent and subsequent – the universe as a fluke. We observe a cyclic nature in all phenomena, and there is no reason that this principle should not extend to the ultimate level of organisation, the cosmos as a whole. Science further tells us that what happened before can happen again. And it is moreover generally assumed that the universe is non-arbitrary; it doesn’t act capriciously. This suggests that creation, or being creative, far from being something rare, is actually quite the natural thing.

The Matrix Of Mind

The magical worldview posits the interconnectedness of all things in the universal matrix of mind. Mind is identified with the universe itself, rather than being regarded as something above, beyond, or within it. This means that all things are not only alive, but possessed of a degree of consciousness. The extent of consciousness manifested depends on the

level of organisation in a given object. In the mineral kingdom it is elementary, confined to the atomic and molecular level, and comparable to deep sleep. In the plant kingdom awareness is cellular and systemic – dreamlike, without reflective awareness, but capable of complex behaviour in response to stimuli. In the animal kingdom it varies with the complexity of the given nervous system. Presumably this is most highly developed in humans, in whom consciousness has become self-aware. It is this ability to reflect the self – to know that one knows, which is the focus of the biblical charge: *in the image of God created he him*. The corresponding notion in Hermetic philosophy is that the human soul is a microcosm, the exact image and eidolon of the macrocosm or cosmic whole. The human organism is thus regarded as the universal energy vortex, the centre upon which all forces converge. This privilege is unique, whence Buddhist teachings rightly place great value on the good fortune of a human incarnation. For it is this particular circumstance which permits man and woman to engage in the Great Work.

Its universal constitution further allows the human soul to communicate directly with the various orders of creation. These are said to be informed by hierarchies of angelic intelligence, in accord with their inherent degree of complexity. The elemental or deva kingdom, as it is called, is therefore as diverse as the natural world. It covers the whole realm of nature, from the sub-atomic world to stars and galaxies, from the core of the earth to the biosphere. It further extends over the subjective realm of ideas, values, thoughts and feelings. It is the nexus of archetypal and formative intelligence, the mind of nature.

It maybe necessary to stress at this point, that here we are not speaking about cupids with wings. It is true that the elemental energies can manifest in humanoid shape and evince various other creature-like

aspects, but these are the product of human imagination. This is not to say that they are unreal, for the whole order of nature is ultimately nothing but the product of human imagination, the image-making faculty. Entire traditions have grown around human contact with these denizens of the subtle realm, who may appear quite solid and real once one comes within their thrall, and whose appearance and mode of life has been described in detail in classics like *The Secret Commonwealth* by Robert Kirk. Their apparently objective existence is grounded in the reifying power of the collective unconscious, a faculty of vast and unacknowledged capacity. For man, be it understood, is the god of the Earth, and it is well to reflect in this connection, that a god denied is a demon empowered. This is particularly relevant when considering subtle phenomena of the disturbing variety, as recently chronicled in books like *Intruders* by Bud Hopkins and Whitley Strieber's *Communion*. Conscious communication with elemental intelligences, both for the divining of information and thaumaturgic ends, is the province of shamanistic and magical techniques. Yet it will be apparent that humanity, as part of the web of life, is necessarily in constant subliminal communion with subtle and creative energies.

A further aspect of universal mind concerns the so-called akashic records, the universal memory. The relevant theory holds that every event in the history of the cosmos is recorded in the *akasha*, a kind of psychic ether, which, like the deva realm, has its structural foundation in the universal electromagnetic field. The adept of the appropriate yogas may access these records and read therein that which is sought. This ability is especially useful in the higher grades of initiation, as many of the rarefied teachings are most easily accessed in this manner.

There is occasional debate concerning the magical hierarchy,

whether it is internal to man, or represents an objective reality. It will now be understood that such questions arise from the theoretical and arbitrary distinction of psyche and cosmos. The esoteric model overcomes such problems by asserting the unity of nature. This, at a stroke, also does away with the entire controversy over occult or immaterial forces. While magical theory recognises various phenomena not yet measured by science, it regards these as entirely natural. The idea of a metaphysical domain as distinct from the material world has no place in the initiated mindset. While there are levels of complexity and abstraction, and the so-called ‘planes’ of experience, there is but one order of nature.

Whether we regard this order as spiritual or material is ultimately no more than a question of semantics. Angels and rocks – both have the capacity to impinge upon our sensibilities in their respective ways: one by informing our moral nature, the other our sensorium. Both are facts in consciousness. This perspective lays to rest yet another vexed question – that of the reality of phenomena. To the occultist it is immaterial whether angels and devils ‘really’ exist. What is decisive is the capacity of phenomena to inform the mind. A mere idea may exalt a man or drag him down to the pit, and change the course of empires. There are few ‘material’ things with such power. Whatever we conceive, therefore, is to be considered real in some sense. The significant question does not pertain to the reality of phenomena, but their plane of manifestation.

Modalities Of Consciousness

Occultists distinguish between classes of phenomena by assigning them to specific *planes* of manifestation. The various planes are loosely

associated with modalities of experience, such as sensory perception, imagination, reason, and intuition. Their number varies, depending on the school of thought one consults. Shamanic systems, as the oldest and most pragmatic, usually make do with five. More sophisticated systems, like Theosophy and that of Alice A. Bailey, typically recognise seven, often with sub-planes and scope for further elaboration.

The table below presents a comparative overview, which charts the various planes as represented within contemporary schools of thought. It is only necessary to observe that the terms shown as equivalent do not always necessarily denote exactly the same thing. The schools vary in their analysis of the subtle realms, even as different maps might be drawn of the same terrain. An overall affinity, however, of the various systems is beyond question.

MODALITIES OF EXPERIENCE IN MODERN ESOTERIC THOUGHT

PLANE	THEOSOPHY	HINDU CHAKRAS	NEO- SHAMANISM	GOLDEN DAWN	SEPHIROTHIC TREE OF LIFE
TRANSCENDENT	MONAD	SAHASRARA	GREAT SPIRIT	YECHIDA	KETHER
ARCHETYPAL	ATMA	AJNA	DREAMTIME BODY	CHIAH	CHOKMAH
INTUITIVE	BUDDHI	VISUDHA		NESHAMA	BINAH
MENTAL	HIGHER MANAS	ANAHATA	BODY OF SONG	RUACH	CHESED GEBURAH TIPHARETH
ASTRAL	KAMA MANAS	MANIPURA	IMAGINAL BODY		NETZACH HOD
ETHERIC	PRANA	SWADHISTANA	ENERGY BODY	NEPHESEH	JESOD
PHYSICAL	SHARIRA	MULADHARA		GUPH	MALKUTH

1. The Physical Plane may usefully be described in conjunction with the Etheric for reasons which will shortly be apparent. In common with ordinary usage, the term *physical* denotes essentially that which is declared by the five familiar senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste – whether directly or with the aid of an external sensing device, such as a telescope or voltage meter. It therefore equates with that charmed domain which science accords exclusive status as real and objective – the world of appearances. For we are aware that the senses also register a class of phenomena generally referred to as phantasms or hallucinations, which by general consent do not share in that privileged status. While the hallucination proper may be regarded as a fact – a demonstrable clinical phenomenon – what it declares is by definition unreal. Contrariwise, with respect to sticks and stones - or atoms and quarks for that matter – the fact of observation, no matter how indirect, is regarded as denoting the real and objective existence of the object observed – so, at least, according to the naive empiricist. Yet it should be noted that the senses themselves do not distinguish between actual phenomena and supposed hallucination; the difference, as R. D. Laing et al pointed out, turns out to be a matter of social convention and arbitrary consensus among ‘experts,’ who’s pontifications concerning the boundaries of the real become the accepted canon of truth. It is therefore not observation, but the paradigm, or frame of reference, which is decisive in the matter.

The esoteric position is simpler. It equates the physical with the sensory realm, without imposing upon experience the kinds of arbitrary and often ideological boundaries here in question. The pragmatic occultist, who is necessarily a phenomenologist, is likely to regard all phenomena either as equally real or equally hallucinatory. The distinction

therefore becomes purely semantic. This is not to invalidate the idea of a canon of ontology as such, but to point out that the relevant hierarchies should be regarded as constructs rather than experiential givens.

2. In speaking of the Etheric Plane as distinct from the physical, we are referring to the realm of sensory experience, the unit of bodily sensation, also called the *vital body*, in contrast to the symbolic superstructure, consisting of such things as *trees*, *earth*, *grass*, and *sky*. Physical theory informs us that a stratum of particle interaction underlies the manifestations of the visible world, which are described by the laws of quantum electrodynamics. The red of a rose, the solidity of a writing desk, all such phenomena are thus conveyed by the wave properties of the electromagnetic spectrum and the electrical forces between individual particles. In what appears to be the basic language of nature, the human body, with its energetic meridians, is likewise an electromagnetic system. What prevents an individual from walking through a wall, therefore, is not the collision of atoms, but the mutual exclusiveness of their respective electrical fields. The physical qualities distinguished by the senses are thus permutations of vibrational frequency within a single phenomenon – the electromagnetic foundation of the etheric plane.

Only a very small range of known frequencies is understood to be consciously apprehended by the human sensorium, a fact occultists consider due to cultural conditioning rather than the human constitution as such. Magical techniques exist – the so-called ophidian (serpent) practices – whereby human faculties may be synchronised with subtle vibrations in various domains, thereby achieving unusual forms of perception and control. The arts and sciences of the ancients, such as yoga, acupuncture, geomancy and feng shui, are similarly grounded in a profound etheric sensibility, a direct awareness of the energetic properties

of bodies – of the human and the cosmic – and the interplay between these two. A unified symbol for the entire dynamism is found in the universal glyph of the Dragon, its cultural manifestations ranging from the Chinese Chi and the Hindu Kundalini to the aboriginal Rainbow Serpent and the tellurian Worm of Celtic lore. This Serpent extends not merely in physical space but also includes the phenomena of time and mind, weaving all aspects of experience into a seamless whole. In practical affairs, therefore, the magician works with a single phenomenon, variously designated the astral light, the universal matrix, or the hyperspatial manifold. On the cabalistic Tree Of Life (see below) the Etheric Plane is assigned to the sphere of Jesod, the *Foundation*, in that the dance of energy which obtains at the quantum level is intrinsically that which constitutes the stability of the *Kingdom*, the macrocosmic domain we call the physical world. In common with Einsteinian formulations and classical theories of the *music of the spheres*, this continuum is after the nature of pure geometry.

It is held that sorcerers of ancient lore, who conjured dragon-monsters to guard a sanctuary or hoard, manipulated etheric energy, binding it in coherent form to some locale, and investing it with certain fearful properties. Lake monsters and other anomalous ‘fauna,’ in similar vein, are said to derive from telluric phenomena interacting with human consciousness. The same principle, consciously directed, applies to a ‘species’ of artificial serpent, as created by voodoo priests, therewith to harm their adversaries. Other suggestive examples abound – from haunted manors to the legendary *curse of the Pharaohs*, the postulated attempt of ancient kings to guard their burial sites. Naturally the forces employed to instil fear and cause harm can also be directed to comfort

and heal, and, in general, to channel the psychophysical force in auspicious ways, as per the archaic disciplines mentioned above.

Once etheric awareness is acquired, perception becomes subtly altered in the direction of sensitivity to the energetic properties of events, people and places. As a cultural phenomenon, this development is apparent in the use of terms such as *vibes*, *elan*, *duende*, *chi*, or plain *energy*, in ways which may seem vague, but are in fact quite precise among the relevant in-groups. The term ‘vibes’ was popularised by artists and hippies of the 1960’s, who became aware of the etheric plane through the recreational use of psychedelics such as LSD. Cognitive anomalies, as in psychosis and other states of hypersensitivity, may of course also occur naturally. The ostensible madness and suicide of the painter Vincent Van Gogh is a case in point, in that his mature canvasses emphasise the energetic or wave-like aspect of nature to an extraordinary degree. This is not to infer that the sensitive state is intrinsically pathological, but to illustrate the fact that individuals thus gifted invariably tend to suffer in a culture which is heavily fixated upon the particle-aspect, and rife with ontological chauvinism.

3. The Astral Plane comprises the realm of the imagination, the psychic vault of images, dreams and visions in the collective memory of the human race and of the universe as a whole. A world nigh infinitely vast, it undergoes constant elaboration with every moment of experience of all sentient beings throughout the realm of nature. Due to its immensity, the conjuring ability of the imagination, and the fact that it is largely unconscious, the astral plane is frequently experienced as objectively and independently real. As a consequence, astral experience such as dreams and visions may startle, surprise and instruct. Experience of the astral, as of the etheric plane, may be augmented by appropriate

yogas. The exploration and control of these elementary planes constitutes the foundation of practical magic.

4. The Mental Plane refers to the realm of intellect, the rational or reasoning faculty. It has two functions – analysis and synthesis, which are echoed in the alchemical formula *solve et coagula*. Great store is placed upon this faculty in the modern world, with its emphasis on the accurate processing of large amounts of information. However no creativity obtains in this sphere. To conceive an idea, intellect is dependent on the astral and intuitive domain of consciousness.

5. The Intuitive Plane may be considered in conjunction with the Archetypal (6), as the distinction between the two is somewhat subtle. The matter may be understood in considering that there are two aspects to creative genius – one active and one passive or reflective – which nevertheless constitute a connected whole. Here, therefore, we are considering the faculty of creation, the ability to conceive of the new. While ideas originate (are conceived) in the archetypal realm, in the intuitive realm they are clothed in form. In the Hebrew Cabala these spheres are represented as *Wisdom* and *Understanding*, denoting the male and female archetype of divine parentage. As a dynamic unit they comprise the matrix of reflective awareness, the subject and object of consciousness, the first pair of opposites. Together with the cabalistic *Crown* they comprise what is known as the *Supernal Triad*, a unity to which all true Gods are assigned.

7. The Transcendent Plane, as the said Crown of the system, refers to a state beyond ordinary comprehension. It is pure consciousness, undifferentiated, without subject or object. Here are reconciled volition and perception, the active and passive modality of mind, together with all the other complimentary binary-pairs that comprise the manifest

universe. The transcendent plane is above and beyond all these, yet, at the same time, it is permeating all. It is what I have called Point Omega, the point of origin and of return in the cosmic cycle, and the ultimate point of reference for every conceivable frame of mind.

Here it may be convenient to define certain other terms, which I shall continue to use, but concerning which there is confusion.

The *soul* is the individual subjective unit of experience. We may speak of the *Nephesh*, the animal or bodily soul, the *Ruach*, the rational soul, and the *Neshama*, the spiritual soul, but these are ultimately one, in that human nature comprises the various planes described above. The cabalistic Tree of Life, comprising Ten Divine Emanations – the universe in summa – is identified with man. Man / woman is that Tree. A soul therefore constitutes an entire universe, a microcosm in Hermetic lore. There is, to our present knowledge, no other organism with this degree of completeness. The concept of *soul* is therefore somewhat analogous to that of *mind*, with this distinction, that *mind* conveniently denotes the universal matrix, whereas the soul represents a specific centre of consciousness, an embodied point of view.

A *spirit* is a pattern of energy which informs the soul. The analogous concept in physics is that of a *standing wave*. It may be the sensation of colour, the emotion conveyed by a piece of music, an idea, a vision, any impression whatsoever. All are ‘spiritual’ qualities or elements of inspiration which determine the cast of mind in some way. Here it is merely necessary to make a certain distinction of usage: we speak of *elemental energies* with respect to simple impressions, whereas a *spirit* denotes an aggregate, possessing a certain complexity of organisation, and therefore a degree of conscious intelligence. An *egregore* is a very complex spirit, or confederated conclave of spirits,

such as represents, say, the collective psychology of an ethnic or religious group.

An *angel* is any authentic spirit, a spirit which is ‘true,’ in the sense of conforming to its original nature. Angelic forces are thus concerted patterns of energy informing nature in its healthy state. It is unfortunate, if these terms lack precision. However, there is a case to be made for the notion that moral and aesthetic qualities are possessed of the same degree of ‘objectivity’ as scientific measurements. Our confusion in the subjective domain may simply indicate a lack of rigour. Authenticity, vitality, purity, integrity, consistency, equity, equanimity, poise – arguably all of these terms are capable of precise definition within a chosen domain of discourse.

A *demon* is a spirit, deformed or estranged from its authentic and original nature. Superstition, fear, addiction, and disease are typical manifestations of demonic spirits. An obscene ideology like fascism is the manifestation of a demonic egregore. As demonic entities can be extremely subtle, their primary attribute being deception, profound discernment is necessary to identify the same in most situations. Yet in theory the distinction between angelic and demonic spirits is easily drawn. An angel is a spirit, organically integrated with the universal nexus of information and meaning. As such it is nourished and sustained by the exchange of energy with the universe at large. Demonic entities, having lost their original estate, are wrenched from the universal web of life, so that they can only sustain themselves through predatory practices. Accordingly such spirits seek to attach themselves to living beings, preferentially humans, who constitute the most significant concentration of conscious energy in the universe. Failing this, they are necessarily disintegrated by the forces of entropy.

Matrix And Vortex

Here I also wish to define two further terms which are used throughout this work in an interrelated fashion: *matrix* and *vortex*.

By ‘matrix’ I denote any domain of experience, such as the field of vision or the realm of ideas. The maternal metaphor, moreover, is intentional, as it is within the various perceptual matrixes that the universe is conceived. Ordinarily this universe appears stable in mind-space-time, the grand unified matrix, wherein the world is contained, or rather, with which it is synonymous. This universe, furthermore, can be navigated by selective focusing of attention and other mind-body tricks that have become integral to the human game. It is by means of these cognitive abilities, ultimately by the psychosomatic stance as a whole, that the universe of experience is maintained.

Each matrix is also – or can be experienced as – a vortex or hyper-dimensional gateway. The difference between these concepts arises in the following manner:

Under conventional circumstances the experiential continuum constitutes a manifold, wherein appear the various objects which comprise our reality. These objects are usually regarded as distinct from both the observer (the mind, if you will), and their surrounding field. Indeed it is only by virtue of that distinction that separate objects exist. Such is the ordinary way of looking at the world, ostensibly one which is useful for survival in a competitive environment.

However when we *relax* the conceptual and perceptual stance, when we dissolve existing frames of reference, we come face to face with universal boundary conditions. This means that instead of observing

specific objects, we become aware of the experiential matrix which constitutes their respective ‘ground of being.’ Thus we may become aware of the visual field as an integral whole, of tactile space as connected vibrating unit, or of mental space as a single phenomenon. Under these circumstances, the experience of which is assuredly non-trivial, non-ordinary energetic conditions supervene. For with the attainment of a unified field of consciousness, a phenomenon analogous to superconductivity is experienced, wherein the usual subject-object distinction of mind is dissolved. The result is ecstasy, experienced on those planes which are thus rendered transparent by the opening of the trans-dimensional vortex. This vortex partakes of the nature of the singularity, and may be experienced subjectively as the rushing together of all points within the realm thus affected, in the transcending of that realm, in a sense of lightness and transparency, as well as brilliant surges of light.

On an all-inclusive level this experience is called *mahamudra* (Sanskrit: the great gesture or grasp), the objective of certain yogic practices which are also so named. It is the mind free of conceptual framing. Music, art, and inspired lyrics may have the effect of rendering the vortex tangible, which also is the aim of various shamanic and voodoo rites. Works or objects which are thus ‘transparent’ are said to be possessed of a quality called *satvas* (Sanskrit: light, airy), a concept akin to the alchemical *Mercury*. Certain locales where the vortex may be experienced tend to be known as sacred sites, and may be revered and guarded as such.

At the opening of the vortex the universe of mundane experience vanishes and something else takes its place. This ‘something else’ is that mysterious object, neither subjective nor objective, which in mythology

is referred to as the world-tree (axis mundi) or the Tree of Life. While in art this Tree is typically depicted as an objective phenomenon, it is, first and last, to be identified with the poly-modal human soul. Legend, as we are aware, is replete with accounts of the hardy hero who ascends this world-tree, finds treasure or carries out various acts of redemption, symbolic of the accomplishment of the Great Work. Located within the human constitution, therefore, is not only the gateway to higher dimensions, but also the means of ultimate enlightenment.

The Key Of Hermes

Central to the esoteric doctrine is the law of analogy, also known as the law of signatures or types. This is based on the observation that nature is isomorphic, self-similar, or self-referential on diverse levels of organisation. The idea is echoed in chaos physics and fractal geometry, wherein the same descriptive language may be applied to complex dynamical systems throughout nature. The ancients, whose methods of classification were more qualitative than ours, took this idea to its logical conclusion. For they saw correlations between the spiritual, moral, and physical worlds, extending the notion of thematic continuity throughout the planes. The idea is that the universe, at every level of complexity or abstraction, is informed by identical themes or archetypes.

There are many such themes to be found in nature. Perhaps the most profound is that of polarity, as exemplified in the concept of male and female. This idea was extended to include the entire range of complementaries, such as sun and moon, light and dark, spirit and matter, energy and form. Another scheme concerns the classification of phenomena according to the quaternary: *Fire, Water, Air* and *Earth*. Thus

Fire referred to all things fierce and energetic; Water to those things that were placid, nurturing and receptive; Air denoted all things subtle and tenuous; while Earth signified all that is solid and stable. Yet other systems of classification involved the planets and the signs of the zodiac.

One of the most profound conceptions of the ancients, however, was that of man as microcosm, the embodiment and reflection of the entirety of nature, the macrocosm. In this vein also the scriptures testify, stating, what can be known of God is manifest in man. This truth is enshrined in one of the legendary artefacts of esoteric tradition, the Emerald Tablet of Hermes, which states in part:

It is true without lie, and certain without error:
That which is above is like unto that which is below,
and that below like unto that above,
to perform that one most wonderful work.

The principle of correspondences, summarised in the dictum ‘as above, so below,’ is recognised as a universal key in the elucidation of the mysteries. Given appropriate intuitive insight, it allows us to transfer our knowledge from one domain of nature to another, deducing that which is invisible from that which is apparent. In a more subtle interpretation of the idea we may posit that nothing is actually hidden, but, to the clear-sighted, everything is open and in plain view.

The work referred to is the Great Work of the alchemists or spiritual philosophers, the inheritors of the Hermetic tradition. It is the redemption or initiation of mankind, viewed as the raising of the microcosm to conform and coincide with the macrocosm. Since the demise of the ancient mystery schools, this Work has been considered the province of subtle and mysterious augury, of secret fraternities and

discarnate Masters, and it is to these that we shall now turn our attention.

The Invisible Hierarchy

Implicit in the notion of subtle planes of perception is the concept of an invisible order or hierarchy. The concept of order, moreover, implies structure, and this structure is co-extensive with the universal matrix described above. That is, the matrix is to be considered its energetic foundation, while the terms ‘order’ and ‘hierarchy’ refer to diversification in mind or consciousness. The principle of differentiation and unification on the inner planes is that of sympathetic resonance. Space and time considerations are immaterial; it is affinity of thought which creates a link between groups and individuals. Thus it is possible that a person’s closest spiritual companions are not only physically remote, but living in another age – past or future. Yet despite the apparent tenuousness of such a link it is nevertheless the decisive factor in a person’s character and destiny. It overrules any outward affiliation or position within the arbitrary and chaotic structures of the visible world. These considerations, naturally, apply also to groups and the human race as a whole.

We may begin to see then why the invisible hierarchy is, in fact, invisible. It is because we live in a world where there is little or no conjunction between spiritual truth and social reality, between justice and law, between the honourable and the esteemed. The list could be indefinitely extended; the point is that ours (the modern technological West) is a pseudo-culture, based on a pseudo-religion and a hybrid methodology. This is not to disparage either faith or scientific method, but to point out that profession thereof does not denote its authentic

manifestation.

Spiritual realities tend to be obscure *not* because we are dealing with subtle plains of perception, but because in a profane society they are obscured by ‘noise,’ that which Alice A. Bailey refers to as *glamour*. Clearly, a culture which has lost touch with reality will be all the more obsessive in its celebratory orgies centred on the sham. It is primarily for this reason that subtle discernment is nowadays considered essential, coupled with a great deal of independence of mind, if one wishes to enter into conscious and creative communication with inner-plane intelligences. This is the reason for the preliminary ‘banishings’ and consecrations, usually deemed a necessity in any form of spiritual communion. The magician attempts to banish all extraneous forces, so that the object of invocation may manifest in pristine clarity within a consecrated mental space. This would not be necessary to such an extent in a magical culture, a culture of authentic and manifest purpose.

While the outer order is thus fraught with confusion, the Inner Order is inviolate. My use of capitals in this instance denotes the fact that when we speak of an Inner Order, we are referring to an idealised conception, the object of which exists by definition. This is to dispel the romantic notions, circulating among the non-initiate, of secret societies which meet in Himalayan fastnesses or mahogany boardrooms. Such societies no doubt exist, but their link, if any, with the Universal Order under consideration would be incidental.

The authentic Inner Order is transpersonal and preter-human, by which we mean that it is a fact or force in nature, essentially that which we call the evolutionary or redemptive principle. As such it transcends all human organisational structure, as well as the boundaries of race, colour, and creed. It is to be considered universal in the literal sense,

acknowledging links in consciousness of galactic and inter-galactic scope. There are, as previously affirmed, no space-time barriers in the realm of mind; time and space are to be considered as modifications of mind, providing the stage-setting and the formal ‘robes’ by which consciousness may manifest and know itself.

From the human standpoint the invisible hierarchy consists of a body of initiates, who by reason of their attainment have become identified with the said evolutionary and redemptive principle, and who guide the affairs of humanity in ways that are largely beyond ordinary comprehension. Two factors distinguish this illustrious body of adepts: a considerable degree of emancipation or initiation, and a commitment to serving the best interests of humanity. These, in fact, are closely interwoven in nature, so that the attainments of the so-called ‘black’ or selfish adepts are largely illusory. Any real advance, however, in the cause of life, love, and liberty, as well as in purely practical affairs, emanates from the citadel of authentic initiation. In secular cultures, if the Masters make an appearance, they are usually disguised as artists, scientists, or philosophers, thus to benefit their contemporaries in ways that are both recognised and recognisable. Yet it is to be conceded that the most accomplished of Masters prefer not to enter incarnation, but prosecute their work from the vantage point of the more subtle and inclusive planes.

Here it is necessary to mention, albeit briefly, the so-called Black Lodge, also known as the Averse Hierarchy, or the Brothers of the Left Hand Path. While it is to be acknowledged that terms such as *Black* and *Left Hand* have a technical, as well as cultural, ethnic and physiological meaning, none of these do here apply. The reference is simply to the rearguard of reactionary forces, which oppose the course of nature. Theirs

is not an order in the proper sense of the word, but being entrenched in opposition to cosmic process, their Towers rather constitute the incarnation of disorder. These are the ‘black’ magicians, whose nature and manner of working is fully exposed in Chapter 9.

The Order Of The Silver Star

Variouly referred to as the Great White Brotherhood, the Ascended Masters, or the Secret Chiefs, the body of high initiates has been a continuous presence throughout history. At times this body identifies itself openly, at other times shrouding itself in secrecy, as the currents of history dictate.

The modern occult revival has its roots in the Renaissance and the Reformation, and is thus appropriately identified with names such as Giordano Bruno, Martin Luther, Galileo and Copernicus. Following the medieval eclipse of the arts and sciences, the current was revived by the rediscovery of the classical tradition and its ancient sources. Over the centuries that current gained momentum as more of the ancient wisdom was reappropriated, whether through scholarship or by more subtle means, and integrated with the emerging science of modernity. While still largely a secret, the esoteric tradition found temporary refuge and expression in enclaves such as the Knights Templar, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and the Bavarian Illuminati. It broke through the veil, and entered public consciousness with the founding, in 1875, of the Theosophical Society by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, thus inaugurating a movement which quickly spread to most continents, and made the occult sciences, as it were, fashionable.

This popular revival, to which contributed other luminaries such as

Georges I. Gurdjieff and Rudolph Steiner, provided the atmosphere for certain developments of a more esoteric and concentrated nature, notably the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, out which grew the A.:A.:. It is the latter of these, usually designated the Astrum Argentum, the Order Of The Silver Star, which may be regarded as an authentic formulation of the Great Inner Order, and thus has commanded the most interest among serious students of the occult.

Established in 1906 by Aleister Crowley in collaboration George Cecil Jones, the A.:A.: aims to present a concentrated synthesis of the initiated teachings of all ages and locales. In addition it provides a formal structure for the instruction and testing of candidates in the various Grades of the Order. Cognoscenti generally agree that its voluminous and authoritative publications, offer a nigh inexhaustible treasure trough of mystical and magical resources, a rich associative network by which to navigate the inner planes, as well as innumerable opportunities for initiation along various lines. Indeed, there is hardly a contemporary magician or magical order that has not been influenced by this monumental opus.

From the bowels of the A.:A.: also arose the doctrine of Thelema or ‘Love Under Will,’ expressed in the dictum, *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law*. Rightly understood, this statement embodies the essence and summation of a new magical formula, which provides the basis for initiation in this age. Thus it inaugurated a new magical aeon, which constitutes the esoteric core of the more populist New Age.

It is for these reasons that the A.:A.: has become identified with the inner-plane engine of initiation as such. While there are several bodies claiming direct lineage to the original organisation established by Crowley and Jones, the A.:A.: should be regarded as essentially an

inner-plane order. This means that its organisational structure is not specific to any particular group, but a fact of the psychic constitution of humanity, and, by extension, of the cosmic whole. Accordingly, no individual or group can claim jurisdiction over the Order except by virtue of qualifications of a non-ordinary kind. While claims of this nature are made from time to time, it must be left to the good sense of the individual how these are to be judged.

For these reasons the aspirant is urged to make contact with the Order on the inner planes, regardless of any outward affiliations that may be entered into. The means by which this may be accomplished do not concern us at present. But it must be emphasised that the subtle nature of the proposition does not imply that the results are in any way unreal. The consequences of initiation are of the most tangible kind, which is why advanced adepts tend to withdraw beyond the proverbial veil. Nor should it be imagined that the appellation ‘inner-plane’ implies something amorphous or informal. The Inner Order, by definition, is ever more rigorous than any outer manifestation thereof in an imperfect world, consisting, as it does, exclusively of actualities, which reflect the physical and psychological laws of nature. The gnostic sanctuaries of the inner planes are guarded as carefully as any medieval fortress of old, and it is necessary to satisfy the wardens of inner space of right of access by reason of spiritual attainment.

Initiation – Ritual And Actual

Initiation is the unfolding of potential, the process of becoming what we are in essence – conscious and creative beings, heirs of immortality, architects of our destiny. Specifically it implies the

assumption of our divine or spiritual nature, whether this be seen in evolutionary terms or as a process of redemption. Regarded either way, initiation is a fact in nature. For it is evident that the universe supports the generation and conservation of complexity and, thereby, the evolution of consciousness. Clearly, a conscious entity has greater creative choice; consciousness leads to freedom, and it is freedom which leads to sanity, the creative deployment of our faculties for the benefit of all beings.

Authentic systems of initiation comprise a set of instructions which distil the aeonic legacy of the secret doctrine in compact form. This form is most often literary, but innumerable occult secrets are enshrined in art and architecture. However, what the system provides is merely the key for unlocking the treasures of the soul. Initiation is not the assimilation of symbolic knowledge. It is the creative use of knowledge in an authentic context which leads to expanded awareness. This is not to deny that certain symbols may of themselves trigger powerful changes in consciousness, but this is usually due to foregoing preparation, possibly extending over previous lives.

The enormous resources available to ancient philosopher kings permitted them to orchestrate the entire process. The Giza complex, known for its pyramids and the great sphinx, was dedicated essentially to this end, as was Teotihuacan, the ceremonial city of the Toltecs, among many other ancient sites. As monolithic theocracies, in profound synchronisation with nature, ancient cultures were able to perfect ceremony and ritual in the service of initiation. Their visible accomplishments and the endurance of their legacy argue their success.

In modern times initiation tends to be informal, with the emphasis on individual attitude and interaction in the context of daily life. While dramaturgy and stagecraft play a decidedly peripheral role, this does not

mean that the realm of symbolic ideation, traditionally the interface of magical reality, is thereby abrogate. Rather, that interface is to be exported into, and mapped upon, the world at large. Ordinary reality thus becomes magical reality. This process has been referred to as the externalisation of the hierarchy. The great symbolic archetypes, long confined to the unconscious domain, are manifesting in the world of experience. The gap between psychic and social reality is diminishing, as is the difference between sacred and ordinary space. People – the world – are becoming more real.

In this seemingly unstructured context the path of initiation may appear chaotic, arbitrary, and contingent upon innumerable disconnected incidents. Yet the process is exact, for initiation is overseen from that Inner Order, where no error may obtain. Initiation thus is not to be regarded as something *recherché* or remote; it is conscious engagement with reality, wherein the entire nexus of psychological and physical actuality has bearing on the result. And while the process is continuous, it has been found convenient to identify the stages of magical and mystical attainment by a series of magical *Grades*, which have a precise and technical significance within the context of the Order. It is to be noted however, that these merely constitute a seal of official recognition that a certain stage has been reached. In themselves, all magical grades, titles, and honorifics are quite meaningless.

The Grade structure of the Order falls into three divisions known sequentially as *The Golden Dawn*, *The Rosy Cross*, and *The Silver Star*. This grouping is reflected, broadly speaking, in the various triune formulations that summarise the course of nature, such as *Fire, Water, Air; Sulphur, Salt, Mercury*; and *Tamas, Rajas, Satvas*. It also closely corresponds to the three sections of the spiritual temple, as modelled by

Moses in the Tabernacle of the Wilderness: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies; albeit with this qualification, that in the A.:A.: even the outer court, the Order of the Golden Dawn, constitutes a profoundly elitist and fiercely guarded citadel.

The three Orders are characterised as follows:

The *Order Of The Golden Dawn* provides for proficiency in the operative skills of the esoteric arts and sciences, such as astral orientation and defence, invocation and evocation of various types of energies, and the preparation of talismans.

The *Order Of The Rosy Cross* is centred on the principal attainment in the course of initiation, the invocation of a being known as the Holy Guardian Angel. This Angel is variously identified as the adept's authentic self, as the daimon or creative genius, and as Christ, the universal logos. The point is that through a conscious link with the Angel the adept's true nature and destiny are established such that it is virtually impossible to fall therefrom.

The *Order Of The Silver Star* is composed of those who have crossed the Abyss. The meaning of this expression is to be studied in Chapter 10, and the conditions attending upon the successful passage, in the chapters subsequent. This is the realm of the Masters in the grand sense of the word. These are individuals who are totally identified with the said Angel, and whose human personality serves exclusively as a means of expression for the same. It is from the Third Order that the affairs of the planet are governed, and from whence any real advance in thought emanates.

The Silver Star thus serves as the central emblem for the system as a whole, while specifically designating the Third or Inner Order that is above the Abyss. The reference is to Sirius, in Egyptian lore the source of

the mysteries and all magical knowledge. While the Stellar Cult has in recent times received much attention through the alien contactee phenomenon, the authentic theory of the Star Religion is based on the transmission of light. The speed of light, invariant in all frames of reference according to Einstein's special theory of relativity, is therefore rightly regarded a universal constant. Light, in the broader sense of electromagnetic radiation thus provides the structural foundation of the cosmos. It constitutes the matrix of mind-space-time, and thus the boundary of the known universe, and the frontier to *other realms*.

More significant, however, in this context is the fact that enormous amounts of data may be encoded in a photon stream – a beam of light. The galaxy accordingly may be regarded as a cosmic brain, wherein the stars function as individual neurons, communicating with each other through interstellar distances, as well as through holographic or hyperspatial connections. While our sun provides the essential information for life to exist on this planet, enabling plants to manufacture chlorophyll in the process of photosynthesis, tradition asserts that the spiritual and creative genius of man derives from Sirius, specifically Sirius B, its invisible companion, the 'secret sun behind the sun.' The latter is a white dwarf, one of the densest and most concentrated stellar objects known. It's orbital period around Sirius A of fifty years has been linked with the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, the fifty Argonauts in the Epic of the Golden Fleece, as well as many other occurrences of the 'sacred fifty' throughout mythological and esoteric lore.

This digression is to underscore a previous point, that the true magical order is a force in nature beyond human organisation and volition, with the additional intriguing suggestion that its origin is quite localised in time and space. It is of course to be admitted that with the

advent of the modern extraterrestrial contactee and channelling phenomenon a multitude of cults have arisen, associated with various specific regions of the heavens, from Orion to the Pleiades, from Alpha Draconis to Zeta Reticuli. If, at this stage, we are inclined to consider the entire conception far-fetched (no pun is intended), let us reflect that what is known about the universe – what is established scientific fact – is itself so utterly fantastic that a cosmos teeming with intelligent life should hardly surprise us. Let us consider, in Haldane's memorable phrase, that the universe may not only be stranger than we suppose, but stranger than we *can* suppose.

Yet we might ask, how it is that the universe should seem to us *strange*, if not by reason of radical estrangement?

The Cabalistic Tree Of Life

The grade-structure of the A.:A.: is highly formalised, and as such represents the conception of an ideal. It is generally conceded that the Grades of the Order are not always attained fully, or in strict consecution. Its austere model of perfection is to be regarded as a focus of aspiration, as well as a measuring rod of attainment in the highly subjective realm of magic and mysticism.

Nevertheless, the system is not arbitrary. Based on the cabalistic Tree Of Life, it reflects an order and evolutionary curve observable in nature. It is this organic quality, which elevates our system to a place of universal relevance. A system of initiation, by definition, must be a living structure, capable of evolving in concert with the evolution of consciousness.

The Tree of Life is a complex hieroglyph, deriving from Semitic

mysticism, which provides the theoretical foundation of the occidental occult tradition. It consists of ten spheres or emanations of divers kinds of energy, arranged in three vertical pillars, and connected by twenty-two ‘paths’ which represent states of consciousness. Taken as a whole it provides a summary and classification of the phenomena of nature, which constitute the universe, the macrocosm, and its microcosmic image, man. For voyagers of the inner planes it provides a psychic map of the cosmos, serving as a means of orientation as well as a ledger for recording spiritual experience in precise and measured language. In addition its superstructure of symbolic and literary attributions furnishes a language of invocation. Within the A.:A.: ten official Grades are accordingly recognised, which closely correspond to the ten emanations of the cabalistic Tree of Life.

Pendant to the system are two preliminary grades of *Student* and *Probationer*, wherein, apart from certain recommended texts, no definite curriculum is prescribed. The only requirement of probation is that the candidate engage in such practices as he or she may prefer, and maintain a written record thereof for one year. Provided this is accomplished within generous limits, the candidate is unhesitatingly promoted to the Grade of Neophyte. Yet according to the Master Therion (Aleister Crowley), in his own experience only a fraction of aspirants made it through the year of probation. In Crowley’s words, the candidate, in signing the probationer’s pledge, stirs up a veritable hornet’s nest of internal and external opposition. The psychology will be familiar to anyone who has set out on a spiritual path in earnest. The resolve provokes a reaction from the conservative guardians of normality, who are concerned above all to maintain the status quo.

Yet once the portal of initiation is passed, the A.:A.: provides a

highly structured curriculum. Formal instructions and a prescribed course of practices is intended to confer mastery in all areas of activity and experience as represented by the Tree of Life. In the ideal course of events, these spheres are traversed in sequential order from Ten to One. This is to ensure the balanced and comprehensive development of every human faculty in accord with individual aspiration and potential. A summary of the system here follows. The occult associations or correspondences, which could fill volumes, are here subsumed into the single symbol of an astrological planet, suggestive of the nature of each sphere.

10. Malkuth, the Kingdom. Planet: Earth. Grade: Neophyte.

The sphere of Malkuth represents the physical universe as ordinarily experienced through the senses or scientific instrumentation. In microcosmic terms it is the physical body. The corresponding magical attainment, however, is mastery of the astral plane. For this is the plane of appearances, of symbolic images and projections, whereby the human mind orders the primal chaos into a sensible cosmos.

9. Yesod, the Foundation. Planet: Moon. Grade: Zelator.

This, in one sense, is the primal chaos aforesaid. In another sense it constitutes the energetic matrix, the structural foundation of mind, and, therefore, of the universe as such. The corresponding attainments are those of yogic type – physical and mental poise, the control of the breath, and of the energies of the subtle body.

8. Hod, Splendour. Planet: Mercury. Grade: Practicus.

This sphere comprises the conceptual or analytical faculty of mind, including verbal ability, and, broadly speaking, all those functions which neurology associates with the left cerebral hemisphere. The relevant attainment is an intellectual appreciation of the world of discourse and

the mastery of the reason.

7. Netzach, Victory. Planet: Venus. Grade: Philosophus.

This represents the sphere of nature, and the holistic, non-linear, image-making faculty, associated with the arts and the right cerebral hemisphere. The relevant attainments pertain to constructive intercourse with natural forces, specifically the act of magical invocation – the fixing of spiritual energy in material form, whether through music, the arts, or any of the more specifically ‘occult’ methods.

6. Tiphareth, Beauty. Planet: Sun. Grade: Adeptus Minor.

This is the harmonic centre of the system, which unites and coordinates the various attributes of the mind. The relevant attainment is the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, the realisation of the authentic self.

5. Geburah, Severity. Planet: Mars. Grade: Adeptus Major.

This represents the limiting aspect of the mind, the principle of discipline and control which determines the boundaries of the thinkable, and thereby gives form to the sensible universe. It is the attribute of rigour. The corresponding magical function is that of demystification, of ghost-busting, exorcism, healing and breaking the chains of bondage. In other words, this is the Grade which confers power over the demonic realm.

4. Chesed, Mercy. Planet: Jupiter. Grade: Adeptus Exemptus.

This represents the opposite, the principle of expansion and growth. The corresponding aspect of mind is liberality. The magical function of this Grade is that of leadership through example. The Exempt Adept, by definition, is a leading light of the school of thought which he or she represents.

Note: Between the third and forth Sephira lies the Veil of the

Abyss, wherein is located the false Sephira Daath – Knowledge, the province of the Towers of the Black Brothers. Its associated Planet is Uranus. The true adept does not linger here. The associated designation *Babe of the Abyss* is not a Grade, but rather denotes a passage between Grades.

3. Binah, Understanding. Planet: Saturn. Grade: Magister Templi.

This represents the realm of inspiration or intuition, the highest faculty of the mind in its passive or receptive aspect. The magical attainment pertinent thereto is understanding in the profound sense of the word. It is the function of a Magister to comprehend the existing universe, to interpret the Word of the Magus, and to preside over the initiation of the world.

2. Chokmah, Wisdom. Planet: Neptune; also: the Zodiac. Grade: Magus.

This represents the positive or active polarity of the intuitive realm, the creative faculty in its highest and archetypal sense. The function of the Magus is cosmogenesis, the establishment of a new world age, or universal paradigm, in accordance with his will.

1. Kether, the Crown. Planet: Pluto; also: the Primum Mobile, the beginning of Whirling Motion, the Galactic Centre. Grade: Ipsissimus.

This represents pure and undifferentiated consciousness, without subject or object, without sense of self or other. The magical attainment cognate is the realisation of this state and its permanent establishment in the mind. For the Ipsissimus all is accomplished. His function is simply to be.

The above constitutes the merest outline of a vast subject. The interested may consult *One Star In Sight*, among the many relevant documents of the A.:A.:. The present summary, moreover, gives but a

hint of the obsessional exactitude, the quasi-Jesuitical sagacity, which informs the relevant documents. The language is archaic and formal, although of great clarity and aflame with poetic genius. While this perhaps explains why Crowley was largely ignored in his lifetime, there are other, more occult, reasons for this apparent failure. Like Einstein in science and Bach in music, he was, in a sense, the last of the ‘old’ rather than the first of the ‘new.’ As such he was to benefit least from the system he was instrumental in introducing. Esoterically speaking his opus was to seed the modern magical age, and a seed must die before it can reproduce. That it bore a rich harvest is evidenced by the fact that almost the entirety of Crowley’s voluminous output is now permanently in print, and he enjoys an admittedly small, though ardent following. Yet this is hardly the whole story. Among his most fervent ‘followers’ (he would reject this designation, preferring self-reliant ‘fellow-students’) are arguably individuals who have never heard of the man Crowley or the A.:A.: and might consider the magical proposition preposterous. Such is the extent to which the ethos of Thelema or *do what thou wilt* has sounded the keynote of modernity.

Milestones Of Initiation

Here we take a more synthetic approach, to summarise in conventional language the essential steps, as they would obtain in any authentic system of initiation. We shall divide the process into four stages: *Student*, *Practitioner*, *Adept*, and *Master*, which closely correspond to the three aforementioned divisions of the Order, with the grade of *Student* as a preliminary. Here we shall examine in some detail the tasks, the psychology, the benefits and dangers pertaining to these

stages of growth, conjoined with appropriate words of counsel.

The *Student* obtains a general intellectual appreciation of the esoteric worldview. It is desirable that he or she be well informed in the conventional sense, and read as widely as possible – the latter not so much in search of the truth, which is the province of spiritual experience, but to become conversant with the language of the Masters. From the beginning the student should exercise discernment and discrimination, not giving credit to any claim of authority, nor siding prematurely with any point of view. The literature of magic and mysticism is vast and ranges in quality from the worthless to the exquisite. Concerning any work, the student should ask, *what information does it convey?* and, *how well does it communicate the facts?* The danger for the beginner in the literature of the occult is that of fascination and seduction, leading to psychological imbalance. This condition should be clearly distinguished from a healthy enthusiasm and the profound interest which is natural to the subject. In the course of reading and reflection, the student is likely to experience original insight, thoughts and ideas that seem worthwhile. These should be recorded in a diary, which forms the basis of the Magical Record. This diary should be maintained with care, as the most valuable asset along the path.

The *Practitioner* is one who follows a spiritual path. He or she is pledged to perform the Great Work, and the commitment, once made in earnest, is irrevocable. To renege on this pledge is to incur awful penalties, as it is the equivalent of betraying the truth. This has nothing to do with offended deities; the offended deity is the failed individual. The resolve to undertake the Great Work is thus not to be undertaken lightly. Typically it is born out of despair; ideally it should be seen as a burden of necessity, an existential imperative which allows for no other course of

action. It is this resolve, once formulated and expressed, that constitutes the first main portal of initiation, and which sets in motion a train of events which must irrevocably run their course.

As the subject of spiritual practices is treated in Chapter 6, we shall here confine ourselves to a few general remarks. In this pluralistic age most practitioners follow an eclectic path, selecting whatever is needed from any system: East or West, primitive or sophisticated, classical or archaic. This is totally consistent with other trends of the Global Village, from fusion cooking to world music. The challenge is that of synthesis, of seeing through superficial differences and identifying the essentials.

The aim of practice is to gain an appreciation of the nature and powers of one's being, and to bring these under unified conscious control. A course of self-analysis is enjoined to resolve any latent psychopathology, and / or other matters of ill health. While necessarily deferring to professionals where and when needful, the occult practitioner must be prepared to assume primary responsibility in all areas of life. This ultimately extends to taking responsibility for one's every thought, word, and deed.

Gradually a path is mapped out, in the sense of calling or vocation, and a destiny is outlined. Central to this process is the discovery of the *true will*. The practitioner comes to know *who he is* – or 'she' as the case may be. In Liber Al Vel Legis it is written: *Every man and woman is a star*, suggesting for each a sovereign and unique orbit in the galaxy of souls. Conflict is said to arise if a star fails to maintain its proper trajectory, thus interfering with other stars.

The *Adept* obtains the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, a subject which is exhaustively treated in Chapter 4. It refers to the recognition of, and progressive union with, the spiritual

logos, the divine genius also known as the true self. As the central and essential attainment of any spiritual career, it is the cornerstone of the Great Work. Without this knowledge one is, spiritually speaking, more or less in the dark, regardless of the extent of one's learning. Once achieved and made secure, the initiate is strengthened and established in the chosen path, and the Angel will communicate directly concerning anything of which he or she has need. For it is the Angel which reveals the authentic purport of the sacred teachings, applying them intimately and wisely to the needs of the individual.

The invocation of the Angel is a project which may extend over years, although Abramelin prescribes a period of six months. It is inherently fraught with crisis, in that the spirits of the averse hierarchy will seek to subvert this process at all costs. For the Angel confers not only general immunity to spiritual deception, but power over the demonic host. The clear and signal danger is that of making a link with a *false angel*, a deceptive spirit, dispatched by the averse hierarchy to enslave the adept. We are counselled therefore to *test the spirits*, and the only reliable test is of the quality of the information conveyed and the quality of life thereby attained, and this in the broadest possible sense. In other words, the spirits are known by their fruits. This is where a non-sectarian attitude and a broad experiential knowledge base affords the best protection.

The *Master* is a being who has crossed the Abyss. This and the subsequent initiation in the supernal spheres involves a permanent shift in mental polarity from intellect to intuition and identification with the supernal fountains of the soul. The relevant attainments include: (1) an understanding of the essential nature of the universe, (2) powers of creation at the archetypal level, and transcending both of these, (3)

identification with pure undifferentiated consciousness, the principle of existence itself.

The Law Of Liberty

Initiation, in ancient times a privilege, is today an imperative. A popular website put it thus:

The shaman seers of the Fourth World generally agree that those who tenaciously cling to the past will fall into mass insanity. The serpent power of the Aquarian Age is upon us. The Kundalini of Gaia is about to awaken. No one can avoid being affected. Most human beings may go out of their minds; others will go beyond mind.

The choice, it appears, is between insanity and initiation. This startling scenario is based on a spiritual law, and follows from the peculiar and unique conditions of this present age, to which we must devote some space.

It is said, that God does not change; but in him there are times and seasons. We thus obtain the idea of World Ages, distinguished by specific conditions in the cultural and psycho-spiritual landscape. Here we are served by an organic metaphor. For the times in which we live are appropriately considered times of harvest and consummation. Stated simply, every spiritual or philosophical seed ever sown is coming to maturity in this age, making ours the most pluralistic and diverse in history – the antitype to ancient Babel. We see this exemplified in the resurgence of nationalism and fundamentalism, as in the proliferation of cults and ideologies worldwide. Yet this is but the phosphorescence of decay, the hardening of obsolete structures before disintegration and

renewal.

These trends are driven by a rising tide of consciousness, referred to above as the serpent power of the Aquarian Age, the Kundalini of Gaia. Energies of the archetypal and collective unconscious are being activated and made manifest. All that was hidden is being revealed. The planes of consciousness are merging and humanity is becoming aware of the so-called fifth dimension, which is mind or consciousness (assuming three dimensions of space and one of time).

According to visionary projections, the mind of man will stalk the streets, as presently does his physical shape. Humanity is rapidly developing new faculties, such as sensitivity to many subtle vibrations, with potentially disastrous results in the absence of mental self-control. A further destabilising trend is the weakening of the magnetic field of the earth. Mind, as an electromagnetic phenomenon, depends for its stability on the magnetic field of the environment and the collective mind. The exception is the initiate, whose mind has attained a high degree of stability in itself, or rather through being aligned with the cosmic matrix on a solar and galactic scale. Quite possibly the quantum leap in psychism, the high level of noise in the physical, psychic, and radio frequencies, combined with the disintegrating magnetosphere, will bring about the mass insanity predicted.

The rising level of psychism, of insight into the nature of things, has opened the *Abyss* for humanity as a whole. For behind the flimsy facade of a pseudo-culture looms an existential void. Meaning is abrogate. Responsibility is abrogate. The dreadful has happened. This is the terrifying reality of post-modernism, an age which is spiritually nowhere. Added is the spectre of some half dozen catastrophic scenarios which threaten to engulf the planet, without concerted effort to stem the

tide of destruction. An entire generation has matured with this knowledge, and everybody is at least subliminally aware of the facts. Clearly the dwellers of this planet have a choice between two options: the insane vision of terror that is spreading like a blanket over the earth, or initiation through the espousal of a genuine spirituality.

In response to the present contingencies the Secret Chiefs of the A.:A.: sent forth a messenger with a new magical formula, and a new Law, to equip humanity for the coming challenge. The word of the Law is Thelema (Greek: intention or will), and the formula is summed up in the words, *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. Love is the Law, love under will.* This is not to be construed as an invitation to license, but rather implies the austere discipline of taking personal responsibility for one's life and destiny in the ultimate sense.

Acceptance of this Law, which is also called the law of liberty, is prerequisite for initiation in this age. Rejection thereof implies that an individual wishes to cling to his divided nature and the internal civil war, in the service of gods that are alien and external. Let those who regard this as contrary to the gospel of Christ consider the following: Whereas Jesus, at the crisis of his career, is said to have uttered the words, 'Father, not my will, but thine be done,' it is not sophistry to assert, that it was *his own true will* which determined that the will of the Father (the Spirit) should be done. It is in this light that the law of Thelema is to be understood. 'Will,' in the Thelemic sense, is not whim or caprice, but the aspiration of the soul.

To return to the prophecy quoted above, it is spoken of those who will go beyond mind – those, who by virtue of initiation attain to levels of consciousness unaffected by the chaos of this world. This group, called the elect of God, are spiritually focused on a prophecy of a positive

kind. For the rising tide of consciousness means that the Tree of Life, the spiritual body of humanity, is likewise coming to maturity. Our apocalyptic age is therefore rightly understood as the age of revelation, in which the spiritual teachings are being restored in their fullness to perfection. And it is this restoration which will more than prepare us for the existential challenges that lie ahead.

Chapter Two

THE MAGIC CIRCLE

Just because you live on the same planet doesn't mean you come from the same world.

Inscription seen on T-shirt.

Mind Space Time

In magical parlance the Circle represents the practitioner's sphere of influence and experience. In other words, it is a convenient symbol which denotes one's entire universe. For purposes of ritual it is customary to render the Circle symbolically, thereby distinguishing sacred space from the profane. But it is the experiential Circle which we shall presently consider. Here it may be argued that a sphere provides a better model of our situation as the conscious centre of a cognitive domain. This is essentially correct. Such a sphere, moreover, should not be merely Euclidean, but an n-dimensional hypersphere, in accord with the conceptions of modern physics and parapsychology. It is certainly appropriate to align magical, that is, experiential, reality with advances in contemporary thought. However, understanding the term has technical meaning, we shall abide by conventional usage.

The Circle is thus synonymous with the Hermetic microcosm, the human soul defined as the unit of subjective experience. What we see 'out there' is the externalisation or projection of the soul. The conceptual structures of the mind are the perceptual structures we impose upon the universe. This notion is enshrined in the dictum that the Circle is the

magical mirror of the soul: *as within, so without*, to rephrase the well-known Hermetic saying. It is also referred to as the *aura*. Throughout one's life, one never steps outside this Circle, which is necessarily unique for every individual. Let us enquire as to the nature of this Circle.

Its phenomena may be classed under three conceptual categories, those of mind, space and time. It will be noticed that throughout this book I refer to this conceptual triad as a convenient summary of all that exists. Space-time, as a singular entity, is a well-established concept in physics, which also incorporates matter and energy. Relativity theory asserts the interdependence of these phenomena. One cannot have one without the other. To this construct of four-dimensional space-time, I have wedded the phenomenon of mind, thus obtaining the concept of mind-space-time. It is my surmise that a correct understanding of mind in relation to space-time is prerequisite to the formulation of the grand unified theory which is the object of the scientific quest, as indeed of the Great Work.

From an experiential perspective, it is clear that the unity of mind, space and time forms the necessary ontological foundation of all ordinary experience. Nothing happens outside of this conceptual frame. For the magician and mystic this is of practical significance. For the mind-space-time continuum gives us the convenient focal point of a single phenomenon upon which to work. It further raises the interesting question of a 'lever out of space,' and therefore out of time and mind, such as Archimedes sought, a vantage point from which to influence the universe, as it were, from without. Can there be such a vantage point?

Close To The Edge

Mind, space and time – each of these represents an experiential

matrix, suspended between two polarities of quasi-infinite abstraction. Ordinarily these polarities cannot be grasped; they can only be approached.

In relation to the *mind* we speak of (1) breadth – mental space as the range of ideas, and (2) depth of meaning – the number and nature of associations pertaining to any one idea.

In relation to *space* a cognate conception involves (1) the infinite extension of the outer universe, and (2) the microscopic world approaching the infinitely small.

In relation to *time* we speak of (1) duration – extending from the indefinite past to the indefinite future, and (2) the moment – a phenomenon which has a subjective dimension of depth, as artists, yogis, and psychedelic explorers are aware.

These six ‘infinities’ constitute the conceptual and perceptual boundaries of the cosmos. There is a point which transcends these, a point abstracted from the respective matrices, which I designate Point Omega: This is the transcendent ‘I,’ the black-hole singularity, and the ‘now’. These, I propose, constitute a unity beyond the mind-space-time continuum, a seventh infinity which contains all the others. The transcendental nature of the omega point is apparent in that the *I*, the *now* and the *space-time singularity* are experientially elusive. Do they exist? Does anything exist apart from them?

By a simple experiment we find that the ‘I,’ unlike any other phenomenon in the universe, cannot be observed or made the object of contemplation. The attempt reveals that the ‘I’ is always the subject of observation, never the object. While it is possible to contemplate images of the self, the self *itself* remains forever elusive. It is not to be found in mental space. It is rather a precondition of that space. An analogous

situation exists with respect to the concept ‘now’ and the geometric point. The point in time, in that it does not *take* time, does not partake of the nature of time. Similarly the geometric point does not partake of the nature of space. While existing in space, it does not occupy space, for a point has zero dimensions. Yet we hold that space is made up of points, and that duration consists of points or instances in time. Again, with the ‘I’ it is similar. Although it is uncertain what relationship exists between the ‘I’ and the mind and body, we are wont to say, *I think*, and, *I act*.

Esoteric thought, for this reason, identifies the point in time with eternity, the singularity with infinite extension, and the ‘I’ with the sum of experience. This is the immanence of the transcendent, or the transcendence of the immanent. Concurrently, the end of time, the edge of the universe – these are not to be sought in the distant future or the far reaches of space. But the end of time (as the beginning) is *now*. And the edge of space, as of the mind, is *here*, in the point singularity of the vortex called *I*. – Be here now! as the hippies used to say.

Journey To The Centre

In the above construction the reference is to *quasi* infinities, for the reason that, outside of the abstract realm of mathematics, no infinite quantity has been experimentally verified. We cannot say for certain whether space and time go on forever, whether there are external boundaries, or a beginning and an end in a temporal sense. Either way it seems inconceivable. With both we run into paradox.

In relativity theory, these difficulties are circumvented by regarding the universe as finite, yet unbounded. The analogy is the surface of a sphere like our planet. It is limited in area, yet there is no

edge where one falls off into space. Thus in Einstein's universe one invariably returns to the point of origin, even though travelling in a straight line. This is due to the postulated curvature of space-time itself. The universe, an n-dimensional hypersphere, is therefore held together by a mysterious attractor, which also prevents one from getting outside.

Significantly, the Einsteinian formulation of space yields an intriguing parallel with what we observe concerning the mind, which also appears to be organised around some attractor. Here I am speaking of something antecedent even to the great Platonic archetypes, which are considered the foundations of thought; something which prevents the world of experience from disintegrating into myriads of disconnected impressions and presents us with a unified whole. A concept for this something exists in Vedic thought. It is the *ahamkara* (Sanskrit: ego-making faculty, that which reduces the incommensurate to the specific). Giving rise to the manifest universe, it is the directed focus of consciousness, which is the 'I' or the *eye* of the world.

Esoteric philosophy resolves the paradox of the infinite by regarding mind, space, and time not in the abstract, but as experiential categories. Viewed as such, the outer bounds of the universe are identical, as matter of definition, with the boundaries of perception. This makes philosophical sense, in that the criterion for existence is that the object so dignified, can be experienced in some way. Accordingly these boundaries may consist of our four walls, and when out in the open, the sky and the grass. There are, moreover, many types of boundaries – visual, auditory, tactile, conceptual and empathic boundaries. Clearly these shift with our way of looking, and may be radically altered, say, by looking through a telescope, exploring the galaxy in a flying disk, or under the influence of a powerful psychedelic.

It thus becomes evident that the boundaries of the universe are intrinsic to our state of consciousness, our particular orientation in mind, space and time. We may wonder at this point whether the universe is something that we move around in, or more like something that we wear, like the projections of a virtual reality console. For the mind, and therefore the world, manifests wherever our attention is turned – among the stars, the mushrooms, or the Stone of the Philosophers. As the mind expands, so also does the universe. Regardless, therefore, how far we travel in any domain, we shall always find ourselves at the centre of that celebrated sphere whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference nowhere. In this sense then, the mind-space-time continuum is infinite, unbounded, and open-ended. Its boundaries extend outward even as we do. For this reason they cannot be reached in the ordinary way, by travelling to the edge of space. The boundaries, like those of *Fantasia* (Michael Ende, *The Never Ending Story*), are at the centre.

The Charmed Circle

Radiating outward from that centre is the Magical Circle, which comprises the world of experience. What can we say concerning this Circle?

It has unity, great depth and complexity of organisation, as well as order and discernible pattern. The entire system experiences oscillation in time, vibrations at discreet frequencies, from cellular and circadian rhythms to cycles on a cosmological scale. Discernible patterns of activity are said to be due to the operation of natural law. It is usually considered that we have reasonably good idea of how the universe functions. Here we shall review what we know, or think we know,

concerning this, our cosmic home.

It may be asked, what relevance do theoretical constructs have with respect to our existential situation? The answer is that we are, as it were, amphibian creatures, living partly in the world of sensory experience, and partly (increasingly) in the realm of ideas. The prevailing thought of any culture informs perception in subtle and subliminal ways, determining how individuals regard themselves, what is thinkable, and thus, what can be accomplished. At its foundation are the formative archetypes, which, according to Jung are embedded in the collective unconscious, remote and all but inaccessible, but nevertheless determining our reality. The esotericist is interested in how our conceptual constructs compare with actual experience, and how they determine or modify that experience.

There is a further reason why cosmology and the natural sciences are of interest to the initiate. It is that the universe is observed to be isomorphic (self-similar or self-referential) at different levels of organisation. This is expressed in the aforementioned Hermetic dictum *as above, so below*, which represents an insight which holds innumerable applications. Experience indicates that, once an intuitive grasp of the principle has been obtained, it permits valid generalisation and facilitates rapid understanding of complex dynamic systems through applied pattern recognition. This principle has been formalised, and given mathematical rigour in the new science of complexity, also known as chaos theory, with its fractal geometry, which has produced the beautiful Mandelbrot Set, a contemporary icon of sacred geometry.

Cosmology and quantum physics, likewise, have produced many insights capable of intuitive application in the magical domain. More and more, in fact, the universe revealed by science comes to resemble the magical universe of romantic conception. Non-local causes, action at a

distance, instantaneous communication of remote objects, faster than light connections, time travel, worm-holes through space, the connectedness of all things – these are but some of the exotic exfoliations of contemporary theory. Contemplation thereof, especially in the light of the esoteric paradigm, may serve to powerfully subvert the conventional worldview, generating deep interest in our mysterious environment, and a profound attitude of expectation with regard to further disclosures.

One World Or Many?

The primary fact concerning the universe is that it is *one*, and our Circle accordingly should be one. Where this does not obtain, it suggests that something is very wrong. Psychologically it betokens division, possibly repression and taboo, but certainly a fragmented psyche, one divided against itself. The individual thus afflicted may oscillate between two personality clusters, one of which is idealised while the other is demonised. If more than two main personalities are involved, the situation is more complex, without necessarily a sharp distinction along moral lines. But the various personalities, frequently oppose and hold each other in disdain, injure each other, and oppose and destroy each others work. On a cultural scale this is mirrored by exclusive domains of discourse, by sectarian and fundamentalist extremism, and an adversarial approach in dealing with social problems.

This condition, however, is not to be confused with a flexible, multi-faceted personality. The latter constitutes a magical attainment, and the greater one's psycho-spiritual emancipation, the more completely one may give oneself to different roles. The decisive difference is that there is an integral awareness that these are partial roles, all of them being played

subject to furthering the aims of the individual who comprises their totality. While the various partial selves may assume autonomy in their assigned domain, even vie with each other in friendly competition, they do not regard themselves as absolute, nor persecute one another. The same holds true for the post-modern ideal of multicultural eclecticism.

The Circle is further characterised by modalities of perception, including, apart from the physical senses, memory, imagination, the moral or aesthetic sense, reason, and intuition. We take this for granted, yet it is remarkable that reality should be thus conveyed on a number of separate channels, each seemingly independent of the others. Are they perhaps partial manifestations of some integral super-sense, either potential or actual? There is a yogic accomplishment (*pratyahara*), in which the practitioner becomes aware of the psychic medium in which the individual modalities of consciousness manifest. In Buddhist meditation it is referred to as the attainment of *one flavour*, the experience – not just the idea – that all and everything is one thing. This *one thing*, in Tantric lore the *cit akasha*, is also the Philosopher's Stone of the alchemists.

As a further matter of curiosity, it is often suggested that the data of certain experiential channels is somehow more objective, substantial, or real than that others. It is widely held, for instance, that what can be seen and touched is more real than that which is imagined. Such distinctions, of course, are cultural conventions. As already established, all phenomena are equally figments of the mind. What we are here confronting is simply a narrowing of the concept of the real. The arbitrary division of the universe into real and non-real sectors must therefore be regarded as philosophically suspect.

It seems however necessary to develop an appropriately adapted

hierarchy of the relative significance of phenomena. Sanity consists essentially in maintaining due proportion in this regard, an ideal we approach through wide experience and due reflection. Yet the radical diversity in cultural constructions of reality suggests that we cannot take an unequivocal view of the concept of sanity as the touchstone of the real. Indeed reality itself becomes a very malleable concept in the forge of cross-cultural perspectives. Widely divergent constructions, it appears, can result from the primary fact of human experience, without that diversity necessarily invalidating any particular worldview. The enemies of experience – ideology, ignorance, and superstition – flourish when the natural faculties of apprehension fall into disuse. Claims which deny the validity of any domain of experience should therefore be viewed with suspicion. We should rather be careful to exercise all our senses and sensibilities, and not disregard the evidence of any of them. Imperfect and fallible though they may be, they are all we have.

Mysterious Depths

The universe is ‘deep’ in the numerous ways as described above. It is tempting to cite examples. When looking at the natural world through a microscope, new levels of organisation are revealed at every step of magnification – worlds within worlds, going on forever. Forever? We do not really know, owing to the limitations of our instruments. Particle physicists until recently were enthused about the idea of discovering the basic ‘building blocks’ of matter – truly elementary particles. For a time the atom was regarded as the indivisible unit of nature. However, hundreds of subatomic particles have now been identified and the process appears to be ongoing. Matter at the small end of the scale dissolves into

the quantum potential of space, without a fundamental particle in sight anywhere. While the singularity may be regarded as fundamental, at the singularity space-time ceases and the laws of physics break down. As it is theorised that the universe arose from such an object, it may be reasonably assumed that the universe in some respects retains the properties of the singularity. This resonates with a certain view at the cutting edge of physics, that all points in space-time appear to be intimately connected in instantaneous communication. Thus the elementary particle proper is arguably the universe as a whole.

The Circle, furthermore, is deep with respect to outer space. To explore this dimension we shall board our flying disk, which takes us straight to the edge of the universe – except, as noted, there is no outer edge. The further we go, the further mind-space-time extends along the path of our trajectory. In the large and the small, the universe appears to be equally boundless, and this quasi-infinite depth equates with the projection and reach of the questing mind.

Thus we find that the universe is deep in yet another sense – that of mind or meaning. Like the universe of cosmology, we experience inner space as boundless. There are no barriers to thought. There may be paradox. There may be profound mystery. There may be complexity beyond the unaided capabilities of the rational mind to resolve. But there are no ultimate barriers, in the sense that analysis and synthesis constitute a potentially never-ending process. Does mental space go inward forever, or is there a central core – as argued researcher John Lilly in his psychedelic classic, *The Centre Of The Cyclone* – a fountain of the soul? And, if so, how could it be reached?

This might be answered by considering depth in time, which, subjectively, equates with depth of meaning experienced in any given

moment. Depth of meaning, as mentioned, is determined by the number and nature of associations, connections, and correlations which are understood to impinge on the situation at any point in time. When taken to its logical conclusion, invariably the idea leads to the cosmic singularity, in that the associative nexus is singular and of universal extent. Again we obtain the intimation of the ‘atomic’ point as identified with the cosmic whole. In yogic philosophy, the correlation of the contents of mind, experienced as a single phenomenon, is referred to as *mahamudra* (see below), a state in which the usual conditions of time space and mind are transcended.

The Cosmic Lens

While the macrocosmic universe is boundless and quasi-infinite, ordinary experience has a definite character and is usually quite specific. It has a focus in time and space, as well as in the realm of ideation. This suggests that at any point in time we are aware of a mere infinitesimal fraction of what is going on in our immediate environment, whether internal and external. The insights of cognitive psychology and the psychedelic experience attest this fact. Ordinary experience also bears this out, in that attention focused on any one task involves the exclusion of an entire universe of alternative possibilities.

The human ability to focus the attention is of great practical significance, for the type of lens we use determines the universe being revealed. The focus of awareness is usually suspended between two polarities – the macrocosmic and atomic consciousness, between the totality and the minute dimensionless point, *Nuit* and *Hadit* in Thelemic cosmology. Our specific orientation within this continuum is what yogic

philosophy refers to as *mudra*, usually translated as *stance*, *gesture*, or *grasp*. The term *mahamudra* accordingly refers to the ‘great grasp’ of cosmic consciousness. What is made clear is that the reality we experience is the function of a defining *gestalt* projected by the mind upon the undifferentiated chaos. Thus we obtain the concept of the logos, the universal archetype, in a further example of cosmogenesis here and now, and in the mind.

It should be recognised that this concept of *mudra* or *stance* goes far deeper than the intentional, or the even cultural or racial level. It is grounded, above all, in the ‘stance’ of being human, of having human senses and sensibilities. This exemplifies the notion of man as the measure of all things, a notion echoed in the counsel of the Delphic Oracle: *Man, know thyself*.

Natural Cycles

Among the most evident structuring devices in nature is that of temporal cycles. From electron-spin to revolving galaxies, we observe oscillating systems at every level of complexity. Cells, organisms, civilisations, planets – all are subject to natural cycles of varying duration. Our planet rotates once a day, and completes an orbit around the sun in a year. The precessional cycle (see below) is some 26 000 years of duration, and our sun takes 225 million years to complete one orbit around the galactic centre. Galaxies revolve, and are moving in clusters. These clusters are seen to be rushing apart at sizeable fractions of the speed of light. Here we reach the horizon of scientific vision on the large scale. We should do well, as did the ancients, to have an integral science of cycles relevant to the human sphere. Astrology, astronomy, history,

physiology – all are somewhat partial in their approach. Maybe music comes the closest.

Through an understanding of cycles we are able determine our position in time, whether in the immediate, the historical, or cosmic frame of reference. The occult arts and sciences place great significance on time. The shorter cycles – daily, monthly and seasonal – are of primary relevance to witchcraft and sorcery, which are aided in their works by subtle influences, such as of the phases of the moon, and the corresponding *tides* in physiology and the human psyche. In some systems the temporal classification of occult influences are carried to extraordinary length. Agrippa, for instance, lists twenty-four daimonic spirits or genii, presiding over the hours of the day.

The spiritual science of the Magi, whether Brahmin, Persian, Chaldean, or Meso-American is chiefly concerned with the larger cosmological cycles and their relation to World Ages. There is abundant evidence that ancient and classical cultures on both sides of the Atlantic tracked the precessional cycle of some 26 000 years in duration. This is the time it takes for the solstice sun to move through the twelve signs of the zodiac. Precession is also recognised in the cosmology of the Maya in whose sacred or ‘long count’ calendar the end of this current age and the birth of the new, is marked as December 21, 2012, when the rising winter solstice sun comes into conjunction with the galactic centre.

Interestingly, an identical end-date was derived independently by philosopher Terence McKenna, from an intensive investigation of the King Wen Sequence of the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching. While McKenna’s prophetic language is his own, his vision is no less revealing. It involves a predictive theory concerning the ingress and conservation of novelty, as contrasted with periods of relative stability, applicable to the

historical past as well as the future. On the said date, according to his model, novelty becomes infinite, suggesting change of unprecedented magnitude.

The inherent idea in these conceptions is the same – that certain things can only happen, or are predisposed to happen, at certain times. Time is therefore not a mere homogenous flow; it possesses structure, embedded in, and ultimately synonymous with, the web of cosmic synergy. Implicit is the notion that change does not occur randomly or arbitrarily, but that the universe as an organic whole is progressing toward apotheosis, a point of closure and completeness, as designated *Point Omega* in the context of my thesis.

Dynamic States

Matter is known to exist in four principal states – as solids, liquids, gases, and plasma. These states are variable with temperature and atmospheric pressure. By the law of analogy, these have their counterpart in the psychological sphere, where the variables are qualitative rather than quantitative. A principal example involves the four archaic elements of *Fire, Water, Air, and Earth*, already described. In addition, Hermetic philosophy recognised three active principles, named, *Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury*. These have a close affinity to the three *gunas*, or qualities, of the Hindu system – *tamas, rajas, and satvas*. *Tamas* is cold and inert; *rajas* is fiery and energetic; and *satvas* is temperate, airy and – mercurial. These qualities may be descriptive of natural objects, of character or personality, of the phases of development in an art such as alchemy or yoga, and on the larger scale, the evolution of the cosmos.

In the first phase it is necessary to ‘break the ice,’ to generate

movement, to inaugurate a so-called *magical current*. In the second phase the current is established and the work is proceeding energetically. Rajas imposes rhythm and, therefore, structural order. The third phase is characterised by sublimation. A state of grace supervenes and the work becomes effortless. Cognate is the application of this idea to the quality of artistic performance. It is possible to distinguish three levels which differ quite categorically: a poor performance, a good performance, and a transcendent performance.

Here we may also give some consideration to the said concept of *magical current*. The magical current, broadly speaking, is ‘what is going on’ in any particular situation. Any well established habit denotes a magical current. There are intellectual and aesthetic currents, social and political currents, as well as individual and intra-psychic currents. An appreciation of prevailing currents in any situation is of great advantage in the formulation of strategy. A work in harmony with existing currents may ride the wave, merely requiring balance and direction, while a work against the flow is likely to require an incommensurate amount of energy to initiate and maintain. Magical currents, likewise, are cyclic. In the inauguration of a current, there is always a certain resistance to be overcome, whether physical, emotional, or ideological. Yet once established, it has its own momentum and, is accepted as the norm, and it runs its course to consummation. Accordingly it has been said, not altogether erroneously, that perseverance is the only rule of success.

Natural Law Or Habits Of Nature

If one drops a stone it usually falls to the ground. The consistency of observed patterns of behaviour has led to the idea of natural law – the

scientific laws of nature. It is assumed that these laws operate evenly and consistently throughout the universe. This assumption is based on the notion of causality, which may be called the law of laws. It states that identical causes produce identical results. It is also the backbone of logic, the set of rules which define valid reasoning. Together these concepts have led to the idea of the universe as a logical or rational structure.

The success of this approach is mainly apparent in technology. Our ability to predict the behaviour of dynamic systems has allowed us to exploit the forces and phenomena of nature to serve our ends. I think we all agree that it has done so in spectacular ways, a fact I wish to acknowledge at this point. I, for one, am grateful for digital sound, and the jewel on my computer screen, an image of our planet taken from space. If I express myself critical of the rational paradigm, it is not for what it states, but for what it leaves unsaid.

The notion of causality further leads to determinism – the idea that, given the state of the universe at any particular time, the future is determined in every detail by reason of invariant laws of cause and effect. Indeed this conception implies that the entire history of the cosmos is fixed from the moment of the so-called big bang. This raises theological problems, in that human beings are believed to be possessed of free will. Here it appears that the rational materialist is faced with a choice. He must either deny free will as illusory, or admit that causality is not universally binding.

Yet causality has been called into question in at least one domain of the natural sciences, namely that of quantum physics, the realm of sub-atomic particles. As it appears that particles on this scale are non-deterministic or random in their behaviour, we can provide only a statistical description of these as a class, and within a certain range of

probability; we cannot predict the behaviour of any one particle with certainty. Einstein strongly opposed this conclusion, stating, ‘God does not play dice.’ He insisted that quantum theory is incomplete, and that there must be hidden variables at play, although he was unable to demonstrate what these might be. This echoes our own intuition that the quantum-conceptual model, despite its success, constitutes a scientific impasse, the transcendence of which will necessitate a breakthrough of paradigm proportions.

But to return to the behaviour of particles. The inherent probabilities of sub-atomic motion lend a certain stability to the universe upon which we generally rely. It means for instance that I can be reasonably sure that my computer will not suddenly turn into a tiger. I say, *reasonably sure*, because according to physicist Michio Kaku (*Hyperspace*, 1994), such radical transmogrifications cannot be ruled out by the known laws of physics. His example, to be fair, is of waking in one’s bed transposed geographically to a far-off location. The probability of such occurrences, he admits, are very low, but they are greater than zero. Theoretically, therefore, nothing is impossible. When allowing for quantum indeterminacy, the laws of nature are suggestive rather than prescriptive. They no longer tell us what must transpire as a matter of necessity, only what is most likely to be the case.

This introduces the notion of a certain spontaneity and flexibility in the operations of nature, which perhaps explains the discontinuous curve of evolution. It has long been recognised that evolution, natural and cultural, does not involve a steady ascent, but tends to proceed in sudden mutations and quantum leaps. Here it is possible that local causes are modified by non-local ones, the universe thus acting in concert to a degree which science has only begun to suspect. As such it cannot be

ruled out, that at any moment the entire universe may be radically transformed.

That being as it may, is certainly interesting that the law of causality appears to break down both at the simplest and most complex level of organisation – that of elementary particles and living organisms, in particular human beings, who exhibit the most complex forms of behaviour. Should this lead us to suspect the concept of natural law as illusory, the artefact of generalisation from too few facts, abstracted from the total nexus of meaning? It is certainly customary nowadays for scientists to regard all natural laws as provisional. Recent history has demonstrated the necessity for refining certain long established ideas, such as the Newtonian laws of motion, which were modified by Einstein's special theory of relativity. We have already asked whether there can, or is likely to be, a final theory of the universe. If so, what form might it take?

There is a further long-standing notion which has recently been called into question. The idea of natural law as absolute and universally invariant has been challenged by biologist Rupert Sheldrake. Sheldrake proposes that the observed 'eternal' laws of nature may be local habits, which the universe has evolved over time, and which are therefore subject to further change. This, of course, leads to the question as to whether there are any fundamental laws at all; indeed, whether there need be laws as a matter of necessity. Is it possible that invariance is a myth, and that the universe is flexible to the last? This, I suggest, is a question for *Babes of the Abyss* to ponder. (See Chapter 10 for the meaning of this phrase.)

Another interesting question to ask is as follows: Did the universe arise in accordance with pre-existing laws of nature, or did the laws come

into being along with the universe?

On the point of nomenclature we may observe that the modern idea of universal law arose in feudal times. In that context the idea of a deity presiding over a cosmos which, as a whole and in every part, obeyed eternal laws was reflected in the social order. In the present era a new moral theology has led to a new cosmology. In *The Book Of The Law* (Liber Al Vel Legis, the founding document of Thelema) it is written, *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law*. As a cosmic formula this prophecy proclaims the law of liberty – that all phenomena in the universe, far from obeying any external laws, move and behave according to their intrinsic nature. This accords with other contemporary formulations. According to Einstein’s theory of relativity, a rock falling to the earth is not ‘obeying gravity,’ but following the shortest possible path in curved four-dimensional space-time. In this formulation natural law is intrinsic to phenomena, rather than externally imposed. While arguably a mere semantic distinction, it profoundly alters our moral view of the universe to consider law and causality abrogate, and to view all phenomena as manifesting freely and spontaneously in accordance with their will. We are also given an understanding of the concept of liberty that is non-arbitrary. Freedom or liberty is defined therein as the ability to conform to one’s intrinsic nature.

Novelty And The Universal Constant

Yet another attribute of the charmed Circle is permanent change, involving the generation and conservation of complexity. The universe is an evolutionary engine. Whence this driving force in the direction of complexity, life, and consciousness? That is the sustained mystery.

Indeed it contradicts the laws of science. The second law of thermodynamics states that the universe as a whole can only run down. From order to disorder, from organisation to randomness, the supposedly irreversible arrow of time indicates the dissolution of all aggregates. And while our local planetary sphere is an evident exception, the theory asserts the overall increase of entropy in the universe. One by one, the stars will go out, and the world will be shrouded in eternal darkness – so it is said.

Yet what the theory fails to explain is how the stars got lit in the first place. How is it possible for anything to ‘run down’ at all? This would not be possible if there is only one force, acting in one direction. The theory, clearly, is incomplete. However, as suggested in the previous chapter, it may be possible to incorporate thermodynamic theory into a cyclic conception, wherein the approach of entropy gathers momentum toward apotheosis in a new cosmic seed. The fact that it has happened once, suggests that it can and, indeed, must happen again. Else the universe is an anomaly, an aberration, more difficult to explain than the universe as a cyclic manifestation of nature.

This resonates with the view that the perceived universe of science constitutes, at best, one half of the cosmic equation, and that the tendency towards thermo-dynamic equilibrium is compensated by an equivalent tendency in the opposite direction in a way not yet understood. It may not even be necessary to evoke some mysterious parallel universe to sustain this theory. Maybe the concentration of consciousness in which we are direct participants, is that which is missing from the cosmological equation, and which will re-ignite the current of creation in a new cycle of manifestation.

From the cyclic universe, it is but a small step to the perpetually

evolving universe. The well-known conservation law of physics states that energy and matter can neither be created nor destroyed. To this I wish to add a further principle: that of the conservation of information or meaning. To preserve symmetry however, we would need to propose that information, likewise, can neither be created nor destroyed. We thus require the concept of a Universal Constant – let us call it the mind of God – which is unchanging throughout aeons of eternity, while periodically giving rise to the evolving universe. While the physical form may dissolve, the archetypal image remains in the mind of God.

This is the rationale of the resurrection, which allows us to posit not only the resurrection of body and soul, but also of the universe in a way whereby all essential attributes and attainments are preserved in perfection. Thus we obtain the vision of a universe, not merely moving through cycles of creation and destruction, but ascending in a perpetual spiral wherein the emerging universe is seeded with information and meaning by that which is dissolving. In addition the potential of quantum indeterminacy and non-local causes, as discussed above, may signify creative possibilities on a scale of as yet unimagined magnitude. Our conceptions are necessarily based on an infinitesimally short duration of cosmic history. Conceivably the creative function of consciousness is as yet embryonic. Conceivably this universe itself is but a seed in the process of gestation.

The Butterfly Effect

Chaos theory informs us that in any complex dynamic system, far from thermo-dynamic equilibrium, small causes can have major consequences. Such a system is the world in which we live. The so-called

butterfly effect illustrates the idea by suggesting that a butterfly beating its wings may produce a thunderstorm thousands of miles away. This is but a minor example. A more familiar though less poetic version is the idea that, at the push of a button, civilisation as we know it may come to an end.

Armed with this perspective we can perhaps contemplate with more comprehension the seemingly quaint observances of shamanic cultures with respect to the environment. Indigenous cultures of the northern tundras, especially in wide open plains, will be careful to refrain from hasty bodily movement, on the understanding that such extravagant behaviour is the cause of devastating winds. For the same reason they keep their voices lowered. How infinitely remote are these sensibilities from those of the average city dweller, and a global civilisation which has detonated hundreds of nuclear devices. In *Genesis* it was said that, ‘Because the *cry* of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I (Yahweh Elohim) will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it.’ Shortly after, according to the record, these cities were destroyed. An equivalent fate, according to contemporary shaman seers of the fourth world, appears to be in preparation for modern technological society. The problem, it would appear is that of *noise*, both in the literal and metaphoric sense – noise as interference with an unambiguous signal, noise as pollution, resulting in the catastrophic destabilisation of natural and cultural systems.

Here it is useful to borrow another concept from chaos theory – that of turbulence. Given the influx of energy and increasing complexity, an evolving dynamic system remains relatively stable for a period. However when a certain threshold is reached, quite suddenly turbulence

sets in and the system becomes chaotic and unpredictable. This may easily be observed by bringing a pot of water to boil. The surface of the water remains relatively calm throughout the steady rise in temperature until it approaches 100 degrees Celsius. Then it begins to simmer and small bubbles rise to the surface. The progressive hiss suddenly ceases and there is an ominous quiet. Presently the entire mass is churning.

It is the universality of chaos theory that makes this example applicable to dynamical systems in general. This is to say that all processes in nature have the equivalent of a boiling point, a point at which abrupt and discontinuous change supervenes. Comparisons with the psychological and sociological domain are particularly cogent. The pre-psychotic personality is under increasing internal pressure, while maintaining an outward semblance of normality. Suddenly, ‘out of the blue,’ symptoms appear and aliens come out of the wall. Similar considerations apply to the behaviour of crowds, social classes, and entire populations. Discontent may brew for a considerable period of time, yet remain relatively contained. Suddenly there is hysteria and an outbreak of mass insanity.

Chaos, however, is not intrinsically a destructive force. As a refinement of the Newtonian laws of motion it is impersonal and impartial in its activity. The destructive aspects of chaos are the global consequence of acting unwisely, and without due appreciation of deep structure in the world of phenomena. As Hosea wrote some time before 700 BC, *they shall sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind*. Yet to a culture in harmony with nature, its existential roots deeply embedded in the universal nexus of meaning, the forces of nature are benign. They not merely support and maintain such a culture, but raise it to beatitude and cosmic apotheosis.

The Psychic Censor

The butterfly effect is an instance of our world being deep in structure or meaning. We live in a world in which nearly all significant factors affecting us and our environment are beyond sensory awareness. Our senses are of limited range, as are our scientific instruments; our focus is proscribed. Cognitive psychology moreover informs us that in any situation we only attend to a small portion of available stimuli in our environment, that most of the data we experience on a sensory level is filtered out on an unconscious level. This is ostensibly a survival strategy of the rational mind, which can only respond to a finite – indeed a very small – set of variables at any time. Yet the sensory data we receive at any moment is of quasi-infinite complexity. The minute set of data to which we respond undergoes further filtering and modification through the process of projection, the tendency to experience the world in terms of cognitive and conceptual structures inherited from our culture. While *sensation* is a biological phenomenon, *perception* and *cognition* are acquired through learning and therefore culturally conditioned. We see what we expect to see, and our expectations reflect a largely unconscious choice in the intuitive domain. We are further aware that what we observe results from the interaction of our nervous system with certain properties of external objects, such as their ability to reflect light or their electrical resistance which renders them visible and apparent to the touch. The objects *in themselves* remain unknown.

All cultures and cults, furthermore, have limits on what is considered thinkable, which results in an inability to conceive of alternatives outside normative conventions. If the conservative habit is

deeply entrenched, it will further preclude the ability to perceive any fact contrary to prevailing dogma. The internalised belief-system functions as the reality structurer or *psychic censor*, known to occultists as the *dweller on the threshold*. It is the principle which prevents us from undergoing any experience which contravenes our idea of reality. Individuals of rigid and mundane beliefs are likely to become distracted or even to faint, when powerfully confronted with the paranormal. Later they shall be able to assert that the event, being impossible, could not possibly have taken place, and that those who saw it, or thought they saw it, must have been hallucinating.

Interestingly, it has been found, that we all ‘blank out’ to some extent many times a day, ostensibly to avoid offending against the cultural taboo of seeing things we are not supposed to see, or worse, things that are not supposed exist. Experiments with the practice of mindfulness or self-recollection will demonstrate as much. This suggests that to experience the profoundly paranormal it is only necessary to remain conscious. Indeed the full extent of our cultural blindness can only be a matter of conjecture.

Magical Protection

This has implications for the integrity of the Circle. It is how we are informed that determines the strength of our magical defences, both in regard to what we admit and what we exclude. In technical parlance these functions are known respectively as invocation / evocation and banishing. The initiate will be concerned to fortify the mind and inform the soul with information of quality, while rejecting the counsel of insanity and despair. This is the work of magical defence, which in times past

involved fortifications of stone, towers and battlements. In the modern world it consists primarily of a mind fortified against negative suggestion, unified under the concerted will of the individual. In the context of a culture in terminal decline this implies a progressive differentiation of the individual mindset from the nexus of social reality. The contingencies of magical defence are thus becoming more critical and more profound with the passage of time, extending ultimately to every thought, word and deed that characterises our Circle.

Here we also confront the supreme and subtle danger inherent in any form of magic or mental development: that in the pursuit of magical reality we may cut off meaningful sources of information and focus on the partial and possibly inimical. It is a hard saying, but until we have crossed the Abyss we are in no position to determine what is beneficial and needful for spiritual growth. On the contrary, we are likely to be attracted by those aspects of reality which reflect our partial tendencies, thus further exacerbating our bias in that direction.

The contemporary cult phenomenon is an example of this failing. We define a cult essentially by the partiality and exclusiveness of its adopted point of view. In the extreme there is a complete rupture of information flow between the cult and the larger nexus of discourse. Where the inherent viewpoint of a cult is sufficiently dysfunctional, tragedy invariably results. Cultism, moreover, need not be a mass phenomenon, attended by the usual trappings of charismatic leadership and overt forms of mind-control. The lone magician, as indeed any person whatsoever, is always in danger of forming a one-person cult. Similar considerations apply to isolated families and social groups. Ultimately they apply to humanity as a whole, highlighting the appalling danger in that otherwise appealing notion – a one-world government.

How, as individuals or as a world-community, can we determine that we are sane? Only by reflection in the context of balanced information.

Sanity consists of being established in one's authentic nature. For this reason the initiate must confront the self, asking, *who am I*, and follow the directives of the inner self wherever they may lead. This takes determination in a world where the herd-mentality rules and profound estrangement from the authentic self is the norm. It is indeed a perilous journey, for the inner world, as a reflection of the outer, is necessarily wrought with deception, falsification, misinterpretation and denial. Before the voice of the true self is recognised and heard with clarity, the seeker may follow many false trails, perhaps leading from one bizarre cult to another. Is this a reason not to commence the quest? Of course not. For the average person is already enslaved, even if by nothing more exotic than the soul-destroying cult of the mundane. As the demonic mentor remarked (C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*), the best road to hell is the steady one.

As initiates we are pledged to pierce through the layers of pseudo-reality and cultural obfuscation, so as to discover and manifest the authentic self. This must be accompanied by a commitment to mental and emotional hygiene, whereby complexity and confusion is resolved into simplicity and clarity. This simplicity is not to be confused with the simplistic, but refers to the ability to see into the essential nature of things. The more we attain to simplicity, the more our mind may broaden and deepen without disintegrating or becoming obsessed. This is the path of sanity, the pursuit of which is the only way of assisting others to do the same.

The practice of the magical circle involves the cultivation of the sanctuary of inner space, and its protection from disruptive and hostile

influences. Occultists speak of a clean aura to denote a condition of electromagnetic equilibrium or dynamic repose. The phenomenon is observed in that people, places and objects are possessed of an ‘atmosphere,’ sufficiently tangible for most individuals to make an impression of some kind. While extant grimoires (spell-books of magic) instruct in the art of making a clean sweep by ritual means, these are but a peripheral aid to this end. No amount of ceremony will outweigh the reality of sustained concourse with one’s accustomed ‘familiar.’ The banishing of negative influence, above all, involves discernment, the ability to see through deception and obfuscation, through mental and emotional fog.

A Break In The Circle Of Humanity

Among the most radical of occult developments in recent years is the invasion of the contemporary psyche by aliens. The grey-green creatures with the large cranium and formidable eyes have become familiar icons of the public domain. Their presence, whatever they are, is an open secret, yet it represents one of the great cultural divides of the post-modern era. What for a growing number of contactees has become a nightmare reality, is mostly denied and frequently derided in scientific, official, and media circles. Yet the phenomenon is but the latest manifestation of a reality documented throughout history.

Into this cultural wasteland have stepped courageous researchers like New York artist Bud Hopkins and Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, who collectively have documented hundreds of alien abduction cases. According to Dr Mack, the ontological validity of these cases is beyond dispute. The abductees he interviewed he found to be demonstrably sane

members of the community, without apparent psychopathology. They told their bizarre stories with appropriate emotional affect and manifested the psychological stress consistent with their alleged experience. He concluded that the encounters are experientially real to the individuals involved.

According to Hopkins and Mack these encounters follow a fairly consistent pattern. They usually begin with anomalous sightings or some other strange phenomenon. The person may be subject to unexplained impulses, such as the need to visit a certain locale or engagement in some form of ritualistic activity. Underlying these developments is a subtle yet pervasive alteration in psychological reality. Yet, and this is one of the curiosities of anomalous experience, the altered state may seem quite normal, and the individual is not likely to reflect that anything unusual is afoot. Beyond a dreamlike *oh, how strange*, there is no deeper reflection.

What is happening is this: the psychic censor has been relaxed or side-stepped, and the individual stumbles into regions of consciousness previously subliminal. The person is, in fact, entranced. And here we need to invoke the philosophical perspective that all subjective reality is a form of trance, from which we awaken in the course of initiation. For the non-initiate, however, the spell of any given reality is absolute.

At some point in the process, if allowed to persist, mundane reality is suddenly shattered and the person is confronted with the little creatures. This may occur in deserted areas or upon waking in one's bedroom at night. From this moment the person is generally unable to resist the aliens, who appear to exert a hypnotic power over their prey, and to communicate their intentions telepathically. The abductee, perhaps frantic at this time, may try to waken a spouse, only to find husband or wife in an unreachable, seemingly death-like, stupor. The explanation for

this is that the abductee is now in an accelerated time-frame, in relation to which very little or no time is passing outside the alien circle of influence. The person is then floated under escort out of the room, through walls or through the roof, and up a vertical shaft of light emanating from a craft hovering in the sky.

Inside the craft a twofold scenario obtains. The abductee is subjected to various quasi-medical examinations and procedures, including the removal of sperm or ova, as part of an ostensible breeding program of alien-human hybrids. The other aspect of the alien agenda seems to be that of *educating* their reluctant guests. Matters relating to bio-ethics, ecological responsibility, and advanced psychophysics are among the information imparted through advanced technologies of consciousness. Very clearly, abductees are given an initiation of some sort, centred on relating to the dimensional matrix which these aliens inhabit. The aliens, apparently, are concerned to build a dimensional bridge.

How do abductees respond? Predictably and significantly, they tend to rationalise the situation in the course of time and find some accommodation with the recurring phenomenon. They will likely come to view the aliens more favourably, to justify their activities, and to participate willingly in their agenda. One must wonder whether to regard this a creative response to an intractable situation or as due to the manipulative skill of the aliens. One point, however, is abundantly clear. We are confronting a major break in the circle of humanity, a break occasioned by endemic denial and profound unresolved contradictions within that circle.

It should also be born in mind that the widely publicised alien abduction phenomenon is but one aspect of reported extraterrestrial or

otherworldly encounters, many of which are not necessarily to be construed as inimical or hostile to humanity. Numerous individuals over the last fifty years or so have claimed to have greatly benefited from such encounters.

Reality Selection

The initiate, committed to the practice of the Magical Circle, is consciously engaged in the process of reality selection, aware of the creative potential of the mind in this regard. The idea is now well established in certain circles that any worldview represents a particular reality tunnel, one of many conceivable tunnels through the mount of mystery. Cognate is the notion that no particular worldview or paradigm is endowed with ultimate or divine sanction, and that, given appropriate skill and determination, it is possible to radically alter one's reality to conform to a chosen ideal. The more we become aware that our culturally conditioned belief system is purely arbitrary, without absolute validity or universal approbation, the more we are free to explore and inhabit alternative worlds. This is the province of magic, which is defined as the art and science of causing change in conformity with the will.

How far does this potential extend? Can it be enhanced? The idealist position is that nature as such is unqualified chaos, and that any semblance of structure and meaning is imposed by the mind. This is the doctrine of the mind-created cosmos. Reality within this view is infinitely malleable. This is also the position of certain esoteric schools of the East, including sects of Tibetan Buddhism, Tantra, and Bon. Chaos Magick (the altered spelling being widely preferred) takes this doctrine to its ultimate conclusion and asserts that any reality construct is equally

viable, subject only to the powers of the magician to create and sustain such a construct. This leads to certain interesting questions, such as – is anything objectively and absolutely true? – does the universe have absolute properties – is there *in any sense* a universal constant? Chaos magicians will answer emphatically – no! Their motto reads: *Nothing is true. Everything is permitted.* Very clearly this is essentially a ploy of iconoclasm, intended to liberate the mind from restrictive pieties, and a defence of libertinism.

I wish to rephrase the above, in saying: *Everything is true. Everything is possible.* This alerts us to the fact that any experience has its reality, its ontological validity, and that any experience or reality can be created. Yet at the same time it is evident that some realities are intrinsically more sustainable and of greater ontological verity than others. This suggests that existence involves some constant, an innate quality or character which is invariant. The coherence and consistency of nature testifies of it. What is this mysterious attribute? In metaphysical tradition it is the universal logos, the creative Word, the Platonic archetype. It is the necessary absolute of any system which includes a canon of meaning. And, by definition, it is One.

Chaos Magick by contrast, in common with non-theistic positions in general, appears to be a restatement of nihilism. Yet nihilism has a curious tendency to undermine itself. For if everything is meaningless, so also are any statements to that effect. Psychologically, therefore, nihilism is a subterfuge, an attitude of denial, a way of avoiding confrontation with the existential mystery, a pseudo-philosophy of the ideologically weary. While Chaos Magick, like quantum physics, may be useful as a methodology, as a theory of the universe both must be regarded as incomplete.

To the adept engaged in reality selection these are questions of serious import. To what kind of reality might one profitably aspire. Is there such a thing as, heaven, nirvana, or liberation? Does the universe have a core of meaning? Is there a God? Or is the idea of the transcendent a grand illusion? Testimony and spiritual counsel appear heterodox. In any case, the literature is too vast; a lifetime does not suffice for even a cursory overview of the matter before us. How can we formulate a viable path?

Transcendent Guidance

Life choices made on the basis of a healthy intuition have their peculiar reward. It is the feeling of coming home – that everything is all right, of ‘absurd good news’ felt even against rational judgement and considerable odds. Widely recognised as an experiential reality, this guiding principle it is said to be ever present, but often obscured by a dysfunctional culture and conduct of life. Yet most people have experienced this profound, though inexplicable sense of guidance at some stage in their life. For some it is a constant reality.

The primary objective of all authentic systems of initiation is to bring the person into intimate communion with the source of this phenomenon. Recognised within many different schools of thought, it has a multiplicity of designations, such as the true or higher self, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Guardian Angel, the daimon or genius, the sub-conscious or super-conscious. Each of these terms implies a certain theory, and we need not insist that they necessarily mean exactly the same in the various systems involved. Let us rather content ourselves with the observation of a general similarity, the subjective experience of inner guidance and

certainty.

What can we say about this phenomenon? When it manifests it appears close and intimate, yet still as the ‘other,’ as strange, yet strangely familiar. It appears to know us intimately, and is therefore profoundly able to comfort, to guide, to counsel and to direct. It is usually experienced as personified, for the significant reason that it speaks and can be spoken to. Complex, specific and detailed dialogue may occur; alternatively the information conveyed may be simply a feeling or vague intimation. Whether it is by grace or ability, individuals differ greatly in this regard. Yet there is every reason to assume that anyone who so desires can forge a link with the Angel (as I shall designate the source of this experience), and that over time this link can be nurtured and strengthened. This Angel appears to be endowed with transcendent wisdom and knowledge; indeed in some systems is considered omniscient. Experience of encounters with an entity of this type has generated one particular line of argument for the existence of God – the argument from revelation.

The literature of religious biography informs us that some such experience is most often the basis of profound religious conversion. Regardless of criticism from sceptics and detractors, for those who have had the experience, it is profoundly real. For such individuals it may become the very touchstone of reality. Their evident conviction is such that their testimony alone is often sufficient to persuade others to their cause, to say nothing of the profound life-changes that characteristically attend such an experience. Clearly something has happened to such individuals. But what?

Does God Exist ?

The philosophy department of a certain university runs an undergraduate course, entitled, ‘Does God Exist?’ Not having done the course, I cannot criticise it, but I am told by insiders that every semester the existence of God is neatly disproved. What I find interesting is, firstly, how it is possible to prove a negative, such as the non-existence of anything, and, secondly, the inevitability with which the academic agenda takes its accustomed course.

Far more plausible, indeed far more self-evident, it seems to me, is the case for the affirmative. Grant that the universe is one, a philosophical necessity as most would insist, and the existence of God is virtually proven. *God is that unity*. One may refine the case by defining this God as creative intelligence, as conscious energy, or the evolutionary principle, but this neither adds nor detracts very much from the essential case. God exists by definition.

This result, I would argue, is already an advance. Neither violating any principle of science or theology, it provides a foundation for dialogue between these respective cultures. Thus we obtain a more inclusive language, and (who can deny it?) an expanded realm of theoretical possibilities. It is indeed intriguing how the mere act of naming something radically alters the manner in which we think of it. This identifies the real issue behind the ideological war between metaphysics and materialism. For there is in both camps a residual fundamentalism, which regards mere concepts as either sacrosanct or intrinsically heretical. It is certainly interesting to see precisely the most vocal bastions of scientific scepticism evincing a quasi-religious faith in their own formulations. More of this later.

What informs academic reserve in this matter is the understandable

concern to exclude the savage and intolerant God of European history: the God of the inquisition and the crusades, the God of arbitrary miracles and ill-digested scripture classes. With this any enlightened individual would agree. Conversely the ‘cosmic’ religion of Einstein most scientists would presumably be prepared to tolerate. Whether they would find it of relevance is another question. Laplace elegantly stated the agnostic position, saying: ‘I have no need for that hypothesis.’ This is illustrious and acceptable. There is no peremptory assertion here of the existence or non-existence of anything. Whether, in fact, we have need of the god-hypothesis we shall have cause to examine.

What are the consequences of this sophistic God which exists by definition? As noted, the concept admits new realms of discourse and sensibility, and offers scope for experiment. If God exists as a fact in nature, that fact ought to be capable of verification. Yet there have been, to my knowledge, no experimental projects to this effect in the scientific realm, and this despite the tipping of the theoretical balance towards notions of inherent intelligence or consciousness in the universe. If such intelligence is a fact, it should be possible to contact the same.

The fact that this has not been attempted within the academic context is due, I suggest, to a residuum of cultural taboo. Arguably the social stakes are perceived as very high. Yet from a spiritually mature perspective, very little is actually at stake. If appropriate test were inaugurated and a result obtained – either negative or positive – what would be proved thereby? Precisely nothing, if only in so far as nothing is ever conclusively proven in science anyway, and in a matter such as this, while controversy would rage out of control, the legitimate result would be trivial – a minor incremental adjustment in the hierarchy of the thinkable. Faith, worthy of that designation, would not be moved by

either result, while scientists are notoriously unimpressed with any result that conflicts with their theoretical inclinations.

It thus remains for a more mature society to seek official contact with God. Any society, upon reaching the requisite stage of scientific, spiritual and psychological maturity, would necessarily perform this experiment, possibly over many generations, while calmly and dispassionately tabulating the results. It may be noted, moreover, that such an experiment would have much in common with the current search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Intelligence, whether extraterrestrial or divine, is traditionally held to be characterised by a specific defining attribute – the ability to communicate. Between the God of the sophists and this latter kind of God, a God that speaks, a vast gap remains, and it is arguably here that the philosophical controversy finds its most contested ground. Salvador Dali, surrealist and Hermetic philosopher, epitomised the situation in that he acknowledged the existence of God as a scientific and mathematical certainty, while lamenting in the same breath that he was a man without faith.

Experience, not sophistry, then, is the necessary basis for apprehending a God of real significance – a God whose existence makes a difference – and it is at this point that I wish to challenge my readers to a personal experiment.

A Turing Test For The Existence Of God

The so-called Turing Test (after Alan Turing, 1912–54, mathematician and pioneer of intelligent systems) is a procedure, intended to test for artificial intelligence, that is the ability of a computer program to behave as a normal human adult. Specifically it is language

behaviour which is the object of the test. The procedure is as follows: A human subject is seated at a computer terminal, which is hooked up to two separate systems in another room. One of these is a terminal operated likewise by a human, the other is a computer running the artificial intelligence program. Via the terminal a subject engages conversationally with both systems, to ascertain, if possible, which one is operated by a human, and which is run by the intelligent program. There are no other rules. The dialogue may be pursued for any length of time, on any topic whatsoever. If the subject is unable to distinguish the program from the human, or if the program can convince the interrogator that it may possibly be human, then the program it is said to have passed the test and may be accorded the distinction of quasi-human intelligence.

The experiment I am proposing is not without its dangers. Therefore the reader should be warned. I do not wish to be melodramatic; I wish to emphasise the seriousness of the matter. The experiment is for those – and only those – with genuine intent to be convinced – one way or another. The intent must be real for the experiment to be valid. Is there is a God which can be known? As previously remarked, for this question to be meaningful we must have some idea of what we mean by *God*. The God I have in mind, therefore, is a God who can pass the Turing Test for divine intelligence, a God who speaks, and who can be spoken to. Such a being is usually indicated when we speak of a God who is omnipresent and omniscient, not to mention omnipotent, as well as compassionate, and therefore concerned to enter into fruitful dialogue with his creatures.

The experiment is simplicity itself. One addresses this God as one chooses and awaits the results.

The difficulties lie in the interpretation of these results. These can be formidable, for the question at once arises what kind of phenomenon

or event one should accept as qualifying as an answer from God. What faculties, what cognitive and conceptual tools shall we bring to bear upon the matter? Of necessity the evaluation of the results must be qualitative and subjective. This introduces the further difficulty of our subconscious expectations, prejudices, desires and fears. Who could approach this situation with scientific impartiality? Who can guide us in this situation? To which authority can we turn?

The value of this experiment lies in what it teaches concerning self-analysis, and in the way it forces us to confront the existential mystery head on, without recourse to tradition, convention or consensus. When we ask ultimate questions – questions concerning the absolute – all lesser considerations, values and conjectures must necessarily become open to question. This recognition opens up a conceptual void which occultists term the *Abyss*. At this point there is no going back. The aspirant must follow through or go insane. As matters stand, confrontation and successful negotiation of this Abyss is integral to the process of initiation, especially in the higher degrees thereof.

It will then be apparent that this experiment cannot be performed arbitrarily or by everyone. The quest – the question posed – must be authentic. One must *want* to know. While the experiment itself is therefore one of utter simplicity, it is the preparation, the consecration thereunto, which poses the great challenge. As the mystical saying has it, *To await thee is the end, not the beginning*. No one, without seriously contemplating this experiment, can imagine the scope of the challenge involved. Its performance alone is life-changing in its implications, as the world of social constructs is left behind. Indeed the world has come to an end, for consensus reality is nothing more than the aforesaid constructs. In the resulting void the individual comes to confront existential truth

with unprecedented immediacy, and it is this confrontation in itself which provides the context of initiation.

The dangers attending the mystic experiment are these: (1) an error of discernment, whereby a deceptive voice is accepted as that of God, with the possibility of falling prey to a malignant spirit, and (2) the event of courage failing on the path of analysis and deconstruction, with the result that one remains in the Abyss. The former befalls those who are less than totally honest with themselves, who have a secret and unacknowledged agenda, some ideological axe to grind. The latter threatens the half-hearted, those who are not totally committed to the quest on which they have embarked.

Let me be emphatic; these are most dire. The usual persecution, the trials and tribulations, the ordeals attending the mystic path are, by comparison, the merest trifle.

Glamour, Deception And Religious Tradition

The problem may be stated thus: Given a quantum of information, how can we test for possible divine origin? On reflection it will be apparent that there can only be one possible test – that of the quality of the revelation, where it leads and what difference it makes. In other words, by their fruits you shall know them. All other things being equal, there is in this situation but one reliable guide: the resulting quality of consciousness and of life in the broadest and deepest sense. We then find ourselves in a curious position of sitting in judgement of God. Yet while our beliefs and expectations play a role in this process, we must also be prepared to challenge these to the core. What an extraordinary situation this is – certainty neither within nor without. This again leads to the said

Abyss, from which the one way out is the divine revelation sought, also referred to as the dawning of intuitive understanding. The confrontation inevitably it lead to existential death and subsequent rebirth – the death of God or of the self as hitherto understood. How poignant then, in this context, is the symbol of the crucifixion, in which the Christian God has seemingly pre-empted the entire transaction, and shifted the burden onto his own ground. For while the saint who comes to Christ first recognises himself as the agent of Christ's death, he is also identified with Christ *in* his death, and therefore in the resurrection. The life, death resurrection of Christ is therefore both archetype and prototype of the spiritual birth.

Dialogue between the individual and the deity, therefore, will necessarily be of a non-trivial sort. It was asked, if you had *but one* question in the Turing Test, what would that question be? Douglas Hofstadter in his *Gödel, Escher, Bach* suggests that *that* should be the question – *if you had but one question in the Turing Test ...* etc. Translated into the spiritual realm this equates with the petition, *teach us to pray*, again underscoring the non-ordinary, the profoundly unequal nature of any human confrontation with the absolute or divine. This would hold, irrespective of whether one took a theistic or non-theistic view of nature. There is even a point where this distinction becomes quite arbitrary. Many individuals, when pressed concerning their beliefs on the matter, will respond with the ambivalent, yet telling, phrase, 'I believe there's *something* there.' Something, clearly, is there, so the question revolves around the nature of this something.

In its theological context the question becomes: does this 'something' equate with a God in the traditional sense of the great world religions; a being which has unity, which is transcendent or self-existing, which is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, as well as

compassionate, a universal creator, with a benevolent agenda for his creation? It is questions such as these which ultimately comprise the gist of the questing type of prayer. Beginning from the void of uncertainty, it amounts to groping in the dark, and as pointed out, is not dissimilar to the question posed with respect to extraterrestrial and artificial intelligence: is there anyone out there – in there, in here – or wherever? If no answer is received, that is presumably the end of the matter. If the answer is the eternal *I Am*, this immediately raises all the secondary questions which have been asked in this context: *Who are you? What is your nature? What's going on? To what should we aspire?* Eventually all existential and philosophical questions come within the context of this dialogue, once it is accepted that God is and that he is the kind which the relevant traditions assert. More; the pronouncement of the deity on any subject is by definition truth – absolute and incontrovertible.

Here then lies the danger of deception – that the deity is either misunderstood, or that the spirit which speaks is but a malignant demon. *Be careful how you hear*, counselled the Master of Galilee, and in view of the diversity and often perversity of religious belief the warning is apt. For the convert to any established faith, as for the lone seeker after truth, formidable obstacles exist in the realm of religious tradition. Here I am not merely referring to the extremes of religious bigotry and conceit, but to the broad cultural heritage of any nominally religious society. We observe that humanity does not constitute a world community of saints. Based on this fact we can unequivocally assert that our ideas concerning divinity do not merely miss the mark, in fact *they are not even wrong*, utterly failing to come to terms with the transcendent nature of the proposition. Religious traditions nevertheless constitute powerfully persuasive archetypes in the collective unconscious which are

encountered, activated and energised in the course of the spiritual quest. Being what they are, the projections of human longing and fear, they will appear to possess whatever quality one is looking for in the spiritual realm. For all that, they are merely the deadly and deceitful veil of glamour.

Needless to say, the collective human psyche is burdened with unfortunate constructs ranging from the mildly dysfunctional to the horrendous. History has shown entire ages to be subverted by doctrines now regarded as pathological with consequences utterly tragic. These dangers incidentally are not unique to theological belief. Any ideology, to the extent that it becomes absolute, harbours the possibility of inhuman and inhumane conceptions becoming the norm. It is for this reason that all forms of fundamentalism are universally decried within humanist cabals, while ideologues of every persuasion find humanism a persistent stumbling-block in promoting their particular brand of heaven.

In response to these concerns there is a robust tradition which asserts the supremacy of the scriptures as a bastion against heresies of all kinds. Here it matters not which scriptures are meant. The Torah, the Koran, the New Testament, the exotic range of Apocrypha – all are accorded the essential distinction among believers of divine inspiration, infallibility and absolute truth. In the more naive of fundamentalist cabals this is regarded as the matter settled. Of course the historical record argues against so simplistic a notion. Let the scriptures (any scriptures) be what is claimed, the objective and authentic record of God's revelation to humanity; it is a considerable step from ostensible acquiescence in this fact to an appropriation of their inherent purport. The questions are, of what specifically is the individual or religious community persuaded, how was that belief acquired, and, is that belief authentic? Yet even more

fundamentally, how do we know that any religious text or teaching is valid in the first place? The fact is we don't, except by virtue of knowledge of a non-ordinary kind, namely spiritual revelation, the objective of the spiritual quest. This is why revelation must always stand above tradition, a truth which fundamentalists resolutely oppose.

The initiate, for this reason, must penetrate beyond the veil of religious tradition. The religious person worships the veil; the saint or initiate tears it down. This difference exemplifies religious conflict in its most elemental form, a theme to which we shall have cause to return. Rightly understood, it is part of the cosmic drama which parallels the symbolism of the Circle. For the Circle emphasises duality, separating that which is within from that which is without. Announcing the nature of the Great Work, the Circle constitutes an advance fortress against the forces of chaos and disintegration, as indeed do all organised structures within the cosmos. Eventually this duality must be resolved in the crossing of the Abyss, and in this sense the Circle is the veil to be transcended. Chaos, as the poet wrote, is peace. Cosmos is the war of the Rose and the Cross.

Chapter Three

THE FOUR GREAT PARADIGMS

In quality of mind it is depth that matters.

Lao Tse, *Tao Te Ching*, c. 500 BC

A Vision

An image by the Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher depicts a lone human being, riding over a shoreless ocean on the back of a large turtle. Looking up he sees, suspended in the void, the glittering image of a floating city, pyramid shaped, and hovering unsupported in the air.

This visual enigma, I submit, is a perfect rendering of the human condition. The beast on which he rides is himself, a creature unknown, as symbolised by the shell separating him from the age-old product of aeonic evolution, lumbering onward through the abyss. Supporting him is the primeval ocean of life. The *Sky Castle* (as the work also is titled) represents his vision – science, art, philosophy – the entirety of his culture. Up in the sky, it is more remote than the beast on which he rides, and it is moreover free-floating. *It has no foundation.*

World Ages And The Season Of God

Cult and culture, terms used somewhat synonymously throughout this book, represent the ways of different peoples of moulding the astral light, the undifferentiated *cit akasha*, into a world of value and meaning.

This is the creative act of conjuring a cosmos out of primeval chaos, a process which is adaptational, its course determined by local factors. As a result every culture inhabits a unique reality tunnel, with its inherent filters on reality, and conceptions of the thinkable. The universe, it appears, is tolerant, though not infinitely tolerant, of widely divergent beliefs and practices. It seems to support and confirm a number of radically different constructions of what is the case. The range of such constructions is the range of cultural diversity on this planet.

It is possible to delineate four major paradigms, or cultural archetypes, in the course of human history, each comprising a particular approach and resultant point of view as to the existential mystery of life. These cultural types I have labelled the *shamanic*, the *magical*, the *mystical*, and the *rational*, in approximate chronological order of their appearance on the world-stage. In addition to these four, I shall posit a fifth, and *integral*, paradigm, which is presently emerging, and comprises the confluence and integration of the antecedent and partial points of view.

I am indebted for the basic idea to Peter J. Carroll (*Liber Null & Psychonaut*, 1987), although the formal analysis here presented differs somewhat from that of Carroll. It is to be understood that a categorical formulation of this kind represents an ideal, rather than an actual, situation, with the aim of reducing complexities to definitive essentials. While it is probably true that most known cultures exhibit a degree of admixture as to their inherent type, the fourfold model identifies the archetypal gestalt, the defining image, implicit in each particular worldview. Providing the basic premise is granted, it offers a valid tool of comparative cultural understanding.

What becomes apparent from the perspective thus gained, is that

there is nothing essentially sacred or absolute about any particular point of view. It is hence no longer possible to take an unequivocal view of what is rational (in the sense of being valid), and what constitutes aberration or superstition. This insight is of practical significance to the process of initiation. For this process can be considered as consisting of two phases – (1) a broadening of the conceptual base through experience of alternate realities, and (2) the transcending of the notion of absolute truth in the conceptual realm. An immersion in alternative paradigms thus provides an appropriate foundation for the higher initiations, by undoing the hypnotic grip of one's acquired outlook, and preparing one for the realisation that all relative truths are mental projections.

It is with this purpose that I present this chapter on the inherent worldview of the four great cultural paradigms. Concurrently we shall celebrate the diversity of human achievement, and prepare the way for the birth of the fifth, and as yet embryonic, integral paradigm in this, our present age.

Before embarking on an extended discussion, I shall seek to concentrate the essence of each respective worldview in a conceptual nutshell. This will provide an overview, as well as illustrate the complementary nature of the various cultural paradigms within the overall evolution of consciousness on this planet.

Shamanism represents the ecstatic oneness with nature and the direct apprehension of subtle forces by the human sensorium.

Magic is the exploration and mapping of the inner cosmos, and its projection onto the outer world.

Magic evolved (or rather *revolved*) into **science**, which is the mapping of the outer world onto the inner domain.

Mysticism is the transcending of conceptual maps of any kind.

These four postulates granted, an even simpler picture emerges. For it is apparent that both science and magic involve conceptual maps – a symbolic or representational cosmos whereby the world of experience is understood and negotiated. Both systems therefore imply a fundamental duality, born of the mother of all dualisms: the division of the universe into subject and object, the ‘I’ and the ‘not-I.’ From this basic division arises cosmic alienation, and thus the quest for knowledge and power.

Shamanism and mysticism, by contrast, are grounded in non-duality. In a sense they are separated only by the chronology of their appearance, representing, as they do, the first and final stage in the evolution of human consciousness. For shamanism arose in the predawn of human history, its mindset reflecting the seamless web of nature before the appearance of concepts. Mysticism, on the other hand, may be seen as a response to the sophistries of science and magic, a return to unity of consciousness, after the descent into the abyss of complexity.

Based on this analysis, it is possible to chart the evolutionary pattern in the historical succession of paradigms as follows.

The subtle understanding of nature found among nomadic tribal cultures arose in a state of symbiotic oneness with the universe. The intrinsic respect for nature, and an attitude of minimal interference, has produced perhaps the only sustainable cultural type so far evolved. Historically we are referring to hunter-gatherer societies dating from the

paleolithic or early Stone Age. In mythopoeic imagination, this is the aeon of the Goddess. The universe is seen as pure nourishment and as a place of shelter. The defining image is of humanity at the breast of nature. Social organization is said to have been on a matriarchal basis, with a matrilineal chain of descent, ostensibly as the intervention of the male in conception was not then understood.

With the more settled conditions of the agrarian phase arose the need for a more manipulative approach to nature which agriculture implies. The primeval unity was discarded, and the concept of personal property arose, along with a more hierarchical social structure, new types of knowledge, and a host of novel inventions. Relevant estimates differ, but the earliest cities found in Mesopotamia have been dated to around 6000 BC. This led to the magical cultures of the ancient world, whose legacy remains an object of fascination even today – notably Sumer, Egypt, Assyria, and the empires of the pre-Columbian Americas. In mythology this is the aeon of the Dying God (after Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1890), in reference to the numerous deities – among them Osiris, Mithras, Quetzacoatl, and Christ – who meet with a heroic sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection. These are the solar deities of what has been termed the patriarchal age, in reference to the symbolic death of the hero in conception and redemption. The associated ethos is one of sacrifice and great striving, with immortality as the ultimate objective. Nature could no longer be left to her own devices, but had to be aided, and ultimately subdued. As a magical formula the mythology of the Dying God has been current until modern times.

Science must be considered in this context as a type or complement of magic. It arose when the universe was first regarded as an objective entity, separate from the self, and it was found that precise observation

and the classification of phenomena could lead to accurate predictions. There is considerable evidence for the exact sciences in antiquity, although the methods of the ancients remain shrouded in mystery. There is, for instance, no credible theory, as to how the great pyramid of Giza and similar megalithic monuments were or could have been built.

What distinguishes science and magic in the narrow sense is the shift in emphasis from the subjective appreciation of phenomena to the objective measurement thereof. External measuring devices take the place of the human sensorium, in a shift from a qualitative to a quantitative understanding of nature. This, I submit, is what distinguishes academia from the wisdom of the Magi at the paradigm level. Science, moreover, intentionally differentiates itself from all other methodologies by excluding the subjective domain from its formal discourse. The scientist can thus be defined as a person who takes extraordinary care with respect to his measuring apparatus, his samples, and his data, but who knows and cares nothing about the mind or consciousness thus engaged.

It is not totally clear why, or how, this approach should have gained the ascendancy and supplanted the more qualitative methods of the ancients. But it seems reasonable to suggest that the method of measurement was found to be of superior practical value to the ethos of dominion and control over nature. Modern science, moreover, arose in a cultural climate wherein the separation of the spiritual and earthly domain was the officially sanctioned doctrine of the Church. Not wishing to tangle with the inquisition, the emerging breed of natural philosophers tended to acquiesce in the prevailing hegemony and leave heaven and hell to the theologians, the more to focus on the natural realm of observation. Yet it is a documented fact that many scientists, for one

reason or another, pursued their magical or occult research in secret. Upon the death of Isaac Newton, for instance, it was discovered that the god of classical physics had been engaged in a monumental opus on the subject of alchemy. For the consummate scientist the arbitrary and ideologically imposed boundaries of enquiry are of course irrelevant. Great scientists have always transcended the culture of science.

There is perhaps also a more subtle reason why the magical arts fell into disuse. Already in the first century AD it was remarked by the philosopher and historian Plutarch that hardly anyone any longer understood the ancients. Thus it appears that already in classical times a certain degradation of sensibility was noted, which made the consciousness of the ancient philosopher kings seem alien and remote. The conclusion seems near, that a progressive coarsening of mankind and the environment eroded the preconditions for the subtle qualitative observations upon which the discipline of magic depends.

In mythology the modern age is referred to as the magical aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child, denoting the confluence of the matriarchal and patriarchal current of prior ages, and their unity in a higher synthesis. Witness the revival of the shamanic ethos, and its integration into mainstream consciousness. The emphasis, accordingly, is on the potential for unlimited growth and development. The symbolism of the Child, however, also reflects the immaturity of modern humanity, its impetuous and childish nature.

Mysticism arose as a reaction to the increasingly complex and manipulative mindset which characterises science and magic. The attainments of the latter, moreover, were regarded as transitory and ephemeral, a vanity and vexation of spirit, as the writer of Ecclesiastes sighed. The exponents of mysticism thus advocated what they considered

a simpler and surer path of transcendence, based on reaffirming the primal unity, and its realisation in consciousness. It is interesting to note that in India and the Far East, where the great mystical traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism mainly flourished, the relevant path is considered as one of renunciation. The mystic is one who renounces the world, worldly attachments and responsibilities, to devote himself to ascetic and contemplative practices. Where this tradition is still robust, such individuals are generally held in esteem, and their moral authority is acknowledged. Yet among its practitioners, too, are those who lament that the mystic path is falling into disuse, and its purity being compromised.

The Best Of All Worlds

Into this religious and cultural mix is projected the magical philosophy of Thelema, which asserts that one can have the best of both worlds, transcendence and immanence, sex and mysticism, magical power with holiness. The relevant formula, *do what thou wilt*, has been variously interpreted, and it is not my intention here to enlarge on the matter. But I wish to draw attention to Liber Al Vel Legis III, 72, which states:

I am the Lord of the Double Wand of Power; the wand of the Force of
Coph Nia – but my left hand is empty, for I have crushed an Universe
& naught remains.

The *Double Wand of Power* refers to the complementary but opposing powers of transcendence and immanence, and the *left hand* to the left pillar of the cabalistic Tree of Life, that is, the feminine or

formative aspect of manifestation. The indication is of the existential blank slate which the law of Thelema confers, and the corresponding creative freedom, nay – the imperative, which *do what thou wilt* implies. The task, no less, is the creation of a new universe from the chaos of the old. It is ultimately to this end that the evolutionary forces, the spiritual hierarchies with humanity's best interests at heart, conspire to initiate mankind.

If we are to create a world that is fully human, it is essential that all the various paradigms contribute to the emerging synthesis. For, individually, they each reflect some aspect of human sensibility which is not to be denied. Collectively they provide a foursquare spiritual foundation, from which humanity as a whole may ascend to higher levels of consciousness. To this end we shall now deepen our appreciation of the four great cultural paradigms.

Shamanism, Ecstatic Oneness With Nature

Historically shamanism represents the traditional worldview of nomadic and tribal hunter-gatherer societies, as well as their modern descendants. Originally worldwide in extent, elements of shamanic culture are still found among local ethnic groups ranging from the Siberian tundra to the rainforests of the Amazon. To the extent that such groups have remained unchanged by outside influence, their original practices persist. However shamanic syncretism tends to be the global norm in this age of political and religious conquest, which is to say, a diluted form of shamanism, compromised with more recent technologies and beliefs.

Dating back at least to neolithic times Shamanism has been called

the oldest religion of mankind. Shamanism however is not so much a metaphysical belief-system as a technology of consciousness, which enables the practitioner to bond with the environment – the Earth and its astronomical surrounds. It represents a way of communing directly with the potencies and forces of nature, including various orders of subtle manifestation. These potencies are regarded as living and possessed of consciousness. They speak, and may be addressed by appropriate means.

The outsider may regard these as the spirits which populate the animistic worldview. The modern shaman may indeed use such language by way of necessary default, when employing the tongue of the conquering dominator culture. However it would be a mistake to regard the totemic entities, the gods and spirits of shamanism as the product of mythopoeia. The worldview we now describe as animist, the belief that a spirit world underlies all natural manifestation, is for the shaman a matter of direct experience. Shamanism may therefore be described as an aesthetic and existential dialogue with nature, involving subtle realms of perception. Nature as a whole is regarded and revered as a living being, or family of beings, including Mother Earth and Father Sky – the Great Spirit, which sustain the complex and interrelated commonwealth of creatures. While the attributions may vary, anthropomorphic imagery is characteristic of all shamanic and archaic representation of the cosmos.

To the scientific worldview this is merely quaint. Does not science emphasise its objective and impersonal point of view? What is overlooked therein is that any formulation, no matter how subtle or sophisticated, is, always and only, an artefact of human sensibility. The notion of objectivity is therefore an elaborate delusion. Within any paradigm, man is and remains the measure of all things. Whether this realisation is intrinsic to the shamanic worldview is immaterial. What the

anthropomorphic sensibility illustrates, is the qualitative and humanity-centred view of the archaic sciences in general. The method is grounded in the classification of phenomena on the basis of their perceived qualities in human terms.

To this end the shaman enters into a state of subtle rapport with the object of investigation in order to gain information of aesthetic or practical significance. To achieve this state of rapport, specific techniques are employed, which we now regard as essentially shamanic. Principal among these is the exploration of the mindscape of the natural world in altered states of consciousness. Various means are employed to achieve a variety of trance states, which include chanting, dancing and drumming, but above all, the use of psychedelic or mind-altering substances. The pharmacology of the forth world is rich with psychedelic extracts and preparations, derived from both the plant and animal kingdom.

While in the altered state of consciousness, the shaman appropriates a variety of paranormal abilities – that is to say, abilities which are regarded as paranormal in industrialised society, but which are considered normal in shamanic cultures. These include the ability to leave the body and travel in the spirit world, to converse with spirit entities and obtain verifiable information in this way, to see and sense at a distance, to diagnose problems and diseases and determine their cure, to read the signs of nature, and as previously stated, to enter into intimate rapport with any chosen object. Other purely psychic abilities pertaining to the psychedelic state include telepathy and communication at a distance, as well as collectively shared experience of the visionary type.

In addition there are reports of remarkable trance-abilities of a physical kind (bearing in mind that the mind-matter distinction is a cultural artefact of the scientific worldview). These include feats of

endurance, such as running for days without pause, highly developed dexterity and manual skill, and, according to some reports, trans-dimensional or hyper-spatial ability such as physical transmogrification into animal forms, travel in an instant, travelling through the air or under water, and tunnelling through the earth. Implicit in these alleged abilities is the direct control of telluric energies, the forces of the electromagnetic world-grid to which reference has been made.

Apart from these more controversial claims, there is well-documented evidence of the observational sophistication of shamanic societies, which has led to their profound understanding of the natural environment. Such understanding enabled these primeval cultures to live comfortably in the earth as it was, without imposing major changes on the environment. This adaptational style might be described as one of maximal observation and minimal interference, resulting in an ecological balance indefinitely sustainable. Use of external technology was minimal, and based on natural providence rather than excessive artifice. This simplicity allowed for an emphasis on physical well-being and the quality of consciousness, and rendered the human organism virtually self-sufficient in symbiotic partnership with the earth. Instead of exercising control over natural forces, shamanic cultures may rather be said to exist in a state of *deep correlation* with nature. The image that comes to mind is that of a skilful surfer riding the waves.

This cultural style of moving along the line of least resistance generally allowed for a life of abundant leisure. Typically this abundance of creative energy was channelled into the elaboration of the *dreamtime*, as it is called in Australia, although I shall apply the term to the shamanic cosmo-conception in general.

The dreamtime is now widely imagined to be situated in the

primeval past. This is, at best, a half-truth. In psychological terms, the dreamtime refers to the contemplative state of mystical union with the cosmos. It is the experience of the unbroken whole, the seamless web of nature, extending in time to the point of creation, and linking all phenomena in the nexus of meaning. It is not a static mythology, but an evolving aesthetic and existential dialogue with the universe, and the earthly environment in particular. Any significant experience, whether of a practical or aesthetic nature, is subject for inclusion, and appropriate celebration in song, dance, and the visual arts. Thus it is always possible to enter the dreamtime, given the requisite know-how.

It should also be noted that there exists in shamanic lore no distinction between the practical and the aesthetic sensibility. All of the arts, to use our modern term, were employed in the elaboration and transmission of the dreamtime, which is the ultimate repository of knowledge concerning the natural world. This is to say that, in shamanic culture, the sacred and the immanent are inseparably intertwined. The entire landscape – the earth and the sky above – are regarded as sacred. They constitute the setting of the dreamtime, as well as the product of its creative spell.

There are however certain locales – so-called sacred sites, which are singled out as having special significance in the mythical landscape. These tend to be places, having special aesthetic and geo-magnetic qualities which facilitate the contemplative states, referred to above. They may be regarded as portals to the dreamtime, and as such they are usually possessed of mythological associations of great age and importance. A major site of this type is Uluru in central Australia, previously known as Ayers Rock. A huge boulder of red sandstone in an otherwise flat landscape, it is regarded by many as the central knot, or vortex, in the in

the etheric web of the Australian dreamtime. Visitors to this site remark on the numinous quality of the area, and its sensitising influence on consciousness.

Here we may introduce the Rainbow Serpent, beside the dreamtime itself, the primary mythological motive of Australian aboriginal culture. In common with serpent and dragon symbols everywhere, it represents the energetic unity of nature, specifically the matrix of subtle energies which connect human consciousness with the environment. The dreamtime, as stated, represents the experience of that unity.

The Dreamtime and the Rainbow Serpent – these, I suggest, are appropriate symbols global integration and renewal. While shamanistic and indigenous culture throughout the world has enjoyed an ongoing revival in recent decades, the phenomenon, in the wider geopolitical context, is yet marginal. Yet scientists, governments, and industrial leaders will be wise to heed the shamanic voice in matters of ecology and true conservative values. As a culture in terminal decline, modern industrialised society can only gain from an ancient perspective and a knowledge base so profoundly at variance with its own values and achievements. From the confluence of the dreamtime and twenty-first century technology may yet emerge the mindset to prevent the total collapse of the biosphere.

In Australia we have been labouring in recent years over the concept of reconciliation between Aborigines and the conquering dominator culture of European origin. As ever, its realisation remains in limbo, in the absence of an overarching sensibility, capable of accommodating both cultural paradigms. Only when the essential and necessary contribution of tribal and shamanic culture to global consciousness is recognised, can there be a meeting of cultures on equal

terms, and a true reconciliation effected. Only then will the Rainbow Serpent again be seen flying laughing over the Earth.

The Magical Paradigm

With the emergence of settled communities shamanism evolved into magic. As communities grew in size and complexity, a greater level of organisation was required and people began to map the cosmos in greater detail. Conceptual models of the world were devised as a matter of contingency.

The experiential universe however was still whole and undivided; the mind-matter, subject-object division did not exist, as it does in the modern world, as a fundamental postulate. This is chiefly apparent in the matter-of-fact way in which mention of the gods – of numinous and subtle agencies – is integrated into accounts of practical purport in many of the oldest inscriptions extant. The fact has led archaeologists to conclude that such accounts, as of the Egyptian *Zep Tepi* – the First Time, are mythological in character. Their often fantastic content notwithstanding, concerning a Golden Age when the gods walked the Earth, there are reasons to suggest that they are historical accounts. They were certainly regarded as historical by the ancient cultures themselves.

The controversy, and others of a similar nature, involves what I consider to be a fundamental misconception concerning the ancients: that they were intellectually primitive and given to superstition and mythopoeic elaboration. I hold the opposite to be true: namely, that the ancients were profound pragmatists, who described the world in as simple and straightforward a manner as they could. Consider the great pyramids of the Giza plateau in Egypt. These are not the products of a

culture given to obfuscation. Rather, we may reasonably conclude, that the ancients were possessed of sensibilities and a technology, the nature of which we have not yet begun to fathom.

Let us reflect that in archaic cultures art and religion were not the cosmetic afterthought they are in the modern world, but integral, even fundamental, to a practical mode of life. In accord with the magical paradigm, experience was classed as pertaining to different planes of manifestation within a psychic continuum. Within this continuum, at the centre of the cosmos, crystallised the mysterious ‘I,’ the source of all wisdom and knowledge. With the ‘I,’ in Egyptian iconography symbolised by the Eye of Horus, arose the concept of God as an objective entity. As the inner hierarchy was mapped onto the external world, the feudal state emerged, with a priest-king as head – the emanation and embodiment of the godhead.

Being accorded divine status, these priest-kings naturally disposed of immense resources which they shared among a ruling elite – a select body of initiates which partook of the king’s power and privilege. Somewhat lower in rank were scribes and administrators. Division of labour at all levels of society became increasingly the norm, and this led to specialisation and the development of enormous skill in a large number of areas. Thus were born the arts and sciences of antiquity, which remain the object of fascination even today. Large and powerful city states arose in Mesopotamia, Egypt, on Crete, in the Indus Valley, in China and South-East Asia, as in Central America and the Andes. Their monumental structures, their temples, pyramids and pagodas are still extant, some having lasted for periods exceeding four thousand years, and remain to this day as sites of veneration and pilgrimage. Among the accomplishments of the ancients we can cite mathematics, astronomy,

architecture, engineering, medicine, social administration, agriculture, writing, music and the arts.

Yet, as anyone who has considered a culture such as ancient Egypt must be at least subliminally aware, this is not the whole story. Something infinitely mysterious remains to haunt us concerning the ancient megalithic builders. The fascination is reflected in the popular interest which the subject fuels. Exotic theories (see below) abound, to the chagrin of academic archaeologists, and there are reasons to believe that the motive for such theories is not mere hysteria. Reason and intuition combine to tell us that we are missing a vital clue in making the ancient world accessible. The Greeks and Romans, by comparison, seem familiar, the revival of classical ideals, intrinsic to the European Renaissance, having linked these with the modern world. Contemporary efforts, however, by Giordano Bruno to introduce the worship of Osiris into papal Christendom met with magical opposition. Bruno was summoned by the inquisition, tortured and burned. This, like the burning of the great Alexandrian library and the wanton destruction of the pre-Columbian empires, is exemplary of the ideological warfare which has rendered the cultures of greater antiquity remote. As a result, our magical link to these cultures has been broken, and their magical current arrested in time, like records in a hermetically sealed vessel, awaiting a future revival. Efforts, therefore, to portray the ancient philosopher kings as people ‘just like you and I’ are profoundly unconvincing. They were human, of course. But the genius of Pharaonic Egypt, like its kin among the pyramid builders of the Americas, remains remote and utterly alien to modern sensibility. Why is this so?

What do we find when we look at these ancient cultures? Building on a cyclopean scale, a mysterious agenda followed with obsessional

exactitude, nigh superhuman projects, executed with apparent indifference to their difficulty, and a complex body of symbolic ideation, the purport of which essentially eludes us. Conventional explanations as offered by mainstream archaeology do not adequately account for these phenomena. Indeed there seems to be a fundamental failure in coming to terms with the essential questions involved. It appears that the accepted view of regarding the ancients as clever savages has blinded us to the scope of their achievement. We are stunned by the appearance of something that cannot be, and yet, there it is in plain view.

These intimations are not merely subjective. It is a hard fact that no credible explanation has been proposed in modern times, as to how the ancients were able to build on the scale which they did, and with the evident sophistication now amply documented. The reconstructions offered in textbooks, involving ramps, pulleys and levers, turn out, on analysis, to be inadequate. On the whole, the textbooks acknowledge as much, therefore merely begging the original question. It seems that, when confronted with the mysterious, any explanation is better than none, no matter how inane or incongruous with the facts. The simple admission, ‘we do not know,’ seems to be difficult for the experts in any field. Obfuscation and stonewalling of open enquiry, moreover, has been documented in a number of related fields where academic prestige is at stake.

The failure of conventional archaeology to be convincing in its own domain has given rise to a body of alternative speculation concerning the ancient world. Alternative theory, to use that umbrella term, was originally greeted by academia with predictable derision. Meanwhile it enjoyed enormous popular support, and currently appears to be gaining in respectability. The alternatives proposed range from the

cautious to the flamboyant, the latter including the theory that the ancients were aided by visitors from outer space. Other theories in this class relate to a science of consciousness and acoustics, to telluric technologies, the significance of astronomical knowledge, and questions pertaining to the chronological aspects of ancient and pre-history.

Challenging the accepted chronologies, some have proposed the existence of an unknown and highly advanced culture in remote antiquity. This hypothesis has recently been revived by Graham Hancock in his monumental *Fingerprints Of The Gods*, which quickly became a popular best-seller. The relevant theory also questions the dogma of progress, the idea that scientific knowledge has been subject to steady increment and reached its apex in our time. Whether or not we equate this proposed civilisation with the fabled Atlantis or mythical Lemuria is, for all intents and purposes, little more than an exercise in semantics. What is to be noted is that this theory conveniently accounts for a number of facts which are otherwise difficult to explain.

It is generally acknowledged, even within mainstream archaeology, that the great cultures of the ancient world appeared virtually instantaneously. That is to say, civilisation seemingly progressed from neolithic hunter-gatherer and early agrarian societies to complex and highly sophisticated city states, without the supposedly requisite steps of cultural evolution appearing in the historical record. It is as if advanced arts and sciences, sophisticated script, a complex cosmology and social organisation arose overnight. Mainstream archaeologists have no explanation for this phenomenon. The problem, at best, is only acknowledged in passing.

A further link in the chain of alternative theory consists in the many points of similarity, observed between dynastic Egypt and the pre-

Columbian empires of the Americas. If we accept that there was no communication between these cultures, as academic archaeology maintains, these similarities cannot be explained by conventional means; they can only be explained away.

There is much indeed to be explained away if we credit the academic version of human history. Collections, public and private, throughout the world harbour artefacts of unexplained purpose and origin which defy the generally accepted chronology of technological development. Their relative isolation makes it somewhat easy for researchers to simply ignore them, while in their entirety they present an overwhelming case. How is it that in this age of information we can fail in so simple a task as correlating the facts?

Needless to say the growing rift between academic conservatism and the body of informed public opinion has given rise to conspiracy theories, charging the withholding of information and the subversion of ordinary common sense. In this climate of controversy flourish theories at the bizarre and exotic end of the spectrum. Notorious among these is the aforesaid ancient astronaut theory, which asserts that the ancients were aided by technologically advanced visitors from the cosmos. Other daring writers propose that the ancients themselves developed a technology beyond our present understanding, which included exploration of our solar system, and even beyond.

While such ideas are typically dismissed as crank and crackpot by more conservative thinkers, it seems to me that we cannot unequivocally rule them out. We simply do not know enough about the universe and its history to categorically deny the range of alternative constructions, irrespective of how unlikely they may appear. It is intellectual arrogance and dishonesty to pretend that we do. However it should be equally clear

that fanatical support for such ideas is on par with out-of-hand denial. Both partake of the nature of religion and have nothing to do with science. As it is a contention of this book that conventional ideas of the thinkable may be profoundly deficient, we shall consider the situation in the light of a postulated psycho-technology, with the hope that we might elucidate the secret of the ancients. This involves the penetration of a paradigm which, to the modern sensibility, is, to all intents and purposes – alien.

Being aware that this material may be regarded as equally controversial, I want to make it clear that I am presenting them in the scientific spirit – on the basis of intuitive insight, to be precise – and without dogmatism or the intention to pose as an oracle.

To reiterate; by all reasonable estimates the ancients could not possibly have erected the structures associated with their legacy, given only the primitive means with which they are credited by conventional archaeology. Yet they did erect them. Conventional explanations, while arguably constituting a remote possibility, represent, on the whole, an unlikely scenario. There is, accordingly, strong suggestive evidence, that the ancients were in the possession of an advanced technology of an unknown type – a technology qualitatively different from anything we presently understand. The evidence for such a technology is the absence of credible alternatives, and the general fact that there is nothing we have found which can enlighten us concerning the modus operandi of the ancient builders, or as to their essential point of view. On the contrary, there is much which frankly baffles us.

Let us take the case of ancient Egypt. Although we have been able to decipher the various hieroglyphic scripts for over a century, the essential purport of many significant texts continues to elude us.

Specifically texts relating to the cult of immortality, and the Egyptian cosmology in general, remain cryptic. Egyptologists have traditionally contented themselves with the view that these mysterious texts are mythopoeic in nature – that they represent nothing more than the poetic elaborations of a gifted, yet essentially primitive and superstitious, people. The same approach is accorded any object, artefact or structure the purpose of which we do not understand, in that it is summarily labelled ‘ritual object.’ Archaeological and ethnographic collections around the world are brimming with ‘ritual objects’ – a tacit reminder of how facile is our understanding of exotic cultures.

Fortunately this mindset is now being challenged on every front. The emerging view is that ancient Egypt, and similar cultures in the distant past, harbour a non-trivial secret, enshrined in an arcane technology, and a profound insight concerning humanity in the cosmic context. This intuitive recognition, I suggest, explains the popular fascination with ancient cultures of the magical type. And this same secret is that which I style the magical paradigm exemplifying these cultures.

To illustrate the above by way of example, let us remain focused on Egypt, traditionally regarded as the land of magic par excellence. It is possible to identify three major themes throughout the opus of Egyptian mythology. These are (1) the star religion, centred chiefly on the constellation of Orion and the nearby star, Sirius, (2) immortality, and (3) ascension of the soul.

With an insight that has the simplicity of genius, it was noted by the independent researcher Robert Bauval, that the alignment and relative size of the three major pyramids of the Giza plateau corresponds to the pattern formed by the three central stars that constitute Orion’s belt. This

is but one of numerous correlations which suggest that the ancient builders were concerned to replicate celestial configurations on Earth. The implicit statement contained in such a design is that what is *down here* is a reflection of what is *up there*. In this connection it appears plausible that the familiar concepts of upper and lower Egypt do not refer to the upper and lower Nile, as previously thought, but the Egypt in the starry sky and the Egypt on Earth.

The idea of occult wisdom coming from the starry heavens is a central archetype of esoteric lore. It centres on the concept of the galaxy as a cosmic brain. There is nothing intrinsically far-fetched about this idea. The galactic vortex is, after all, a unified dynamic system, the individual units (stars) of which are in mutual communication through the medium of light. Modern physics has established that vast amounts of information can be encoded in a photon stream – a beam of light. It is therefore not necessary to invoke ancient astronauts to support the notion of knowledge from the stars.

The idea that different regions of the heavens are associated with different types of energy is central to astrology, the ancient science of celestial-terrestrial correlations. Many ancient documents bear testimony to the same. *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades*, is written in Job, the oldest of the books of the Bible. For the Egyptians, however, it was Orion and Sirius, which were regarded as the celestial source of their civilisation. This is apparent in the identification of their major deities. Osiris, the first mentor of the Egyptians, the progenitor of the arts and sciences, is Orion; while Isis, his consort and repository of the mysteries, is identified with Sirius. The god Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, represents the arcane knowledge itself, as his iconography makes clear. He is symbolised by the Falcon and the Eye, expressing the idea of soaring, as

of subtle perception or insight into the secrets of nature.

In the pyramid texts, found in certain tombs at Saqqara, it is stated:

Horus Sept comes forth from you (Isis), in the form of Horus-dweller-in-Sept (Sirius).

and:

O Osiris, the King, I bring you the Eye of Horus ... O Osiris, the King, Horus has put his Eye on your brow, in its name of Great Magic ... Live, O my father, Osiris the King, for I set the Eye of Horus upon you.

In his quest for immortality the reigning monarch of Egypt was identified with Osiris both in life and in death. The Eye of Horus is the equivalent of the Eye of Shiva in the yogic system of the Indian subcontinent. It is the so-called Third or Wisdom Eye, at the opening of which the universe is annihilated. In less confronting language, it is the eye of infinite analysis, which dissolves all aggregates to perceive the void of primeval chaos. Certain exalted initiations, as indicated by the supernal mysteries of the A.:A.:, allow for the dissolution and reconstitution of matter and material structure in conformity with the will of the seer. Granting the principle involved, a technology of consciousness along these lines accounts more convincingly for the material mastery of the ancient Egyptians than any of the more prosaic theories so far advanced.

It is now clear that the famous Giza complex of pyramids and temples, including the Sphinx, was not primarily a burial site, but a centre of initiation. This was the place where, according to magical

tradition, a dimensional gate was opened for the soul of the pharaoh to ascend to realms of immortality in the constellation of Orion. In the pyramid texts, the officiating priest addresses the king as follows:

The gate of the earth is open for you ... may a stairway be set up for you to the Duat in the place where Orion is. – O King, the sky conceives you with Orion ... The sky has born you with Orion. – O king, be a soul like a living star. – The gate of the earth-god is open ... may you remove yourself to the sky and sit upon your iron throne. – The aperture of the sky-window is open for you. – The doors of iron which are in the starry sky are thrown open for me and I go through them.

On his way to the starry abode, the king had to pass through the *Duat*. Usually translated as the underworld, it refers to the astral plane where the candidate was confronted with various ordeals. Yet it was also identified with the night-sky, especially the constellation of Orion. Like the Xibalba, the dark road of the Maya, the Egyptian underworld was thus located in the starry heavens. The matter is taken up in the Egyptian Book Of The Dead (originally called, *The Book Of Coming Forth By Day*), which details the initiatory path taken by the soul on the after-death plane. In function, it mirrors the Tibetan Book Of The Dead, which was rehearsed by the living as initiatory preparation for the mysteries confronted in death. The language of these respective texts is appropriately different, the Tibetan text pertaining to what I have called the mystical paradigm. In it, it is spoken of recognising the clear light of the void as the path to liberation. In the Egyptian text the central ordeal is the weighing of the soul in the judgement hall of Maat. Ascension to the higher realms is predicated on the soul of the aspirant being no heavier than a feather, which was placed in the opposite container of the balance.

Yet a similar idea underlies both of these formulations – that of a consciousness unencumbered, and thus light as a feather or capable of unclouded vision.

Did the ancient kings succeed? Did they open a stargate, and ascend to higher dimensions? Did they attain to immortality? Owing to the nature of these questions, we cannot give an unequivocal answer based on a purely historical perspective. While we possess their records, we know nothing concerning the state of consciousness to which the ancients attained. Yet it is apparent that a non-ordinary secret informed the magical kingdoms of the ancient world, and non-ordinary methods of research are required to elucidate them.

The Mystical Paradigm

Mysticism, as here defined, arose in direct response to the hyper-complexity of the magical paradigm. Its aim is non-duality, the transcending of conceptual maps altogether, and its method is primarily that of meditation. Its representative schools of thought include the systems of the Hindu or Vedic Yoga tradition, Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism, contemplative Taoism and Zen.

It has been typical of early western scholars to regard these disciplines as religions, a view which can be powerfully misleading, if by religion is understood something like an Eastern equivalent of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. The semantic habits resulting from this ethnocentric view have largely remained in popular usage. One hears for instance of Christians who think of Yoga as a religion which could somehow be in conflict or competition with Christianity. This, as shall be duly explained, is a ‘confusion of the planes.’

Mysticism, rightly understood, is the subjective science of mind and body, which has as its aim the cessation of thought. It is essentially a methodology or path – not a worldview or belief-system. While it has generated precepts, these are not the product of divine revelation, but of insight on the basis of experiment. Mysticism is therefore entirely empirical in its approach. Its teachings, in a nutshell, state that certain practices lead to certain results. The truth of such claims is not presented as a matter for belief, but verification. This being understood, I shall continue to use the umbrella term ‘religion’ in its widest sense – a mode of being in response to the human situation.

A further difference between the mystical path and revealed religion relates to the matter of a personal deity. While Hindu and Buddhist cosmology enjoy an extensive and colourful pantheon, one does not find therein a personified supreme deity, comparable to Yahweh, Allah, or Jesus Christ. The gods and goddesses of the eastern pantheon are either the remnants of earlier magical traditions or universal abstractions, that is, they are embodiments either of legendary figures, of natural forces, or philosophical concepts. Such, at least, is the enlightened view espoused by its more illustrious exponents.

A fundamental distinction may here be drawn between the religious paradigms of East and West. The mystic path is *analytical*, aimed at discovering the foundations of consciousness and human nature. Revealed religion, by comparison, may be described as *relational*, grounded in the notion, or actuality, of human intercourse with the world-mind or logos, the Spirit of God. Can it be said that these two approaches are ultimately identical? As one with experience in both of these paths, I think not. Equally certain it seems to me, that they are not in intrinsic conflict or opposition. It is therefore utterly feasible to engage in both of

these paths with vigour and fidelity. Their complementary nature, whether in a psychological or global context, appears abundantly evident.

If they are complementary as a path, what of their ultimate tendency – their final result? Can the Buddhist nirvana be equated with the Christian heaven? The descriptive language is entirely opposed, not merely in content but in style. Nirvana is translated as extinction or cessation, its attributes described entirely in negatives. Heaven, by contrast, is more like an idyllic place, even though a state of consciousness may be regarded as the essence of that idyll. There seems to be, however, no a-priori reason to regard them as mutually exclusive, except in a formal sense. An analogy is furnished by the concept of ‘descriptive levels.’ A human being may be regarded as a person, a biological entity, an aggregate of cells, and a collection of atoms and molecules. None of these levels is more ‘real’ or ‘actual’ than another; they are simply the product of a different focus or observational stance. Nor can it be argued that any one of these is the ‘true way of seeing,’ the claims of science notwithstanding. They rather represent a range of possible points of view. Yet each observational stance produces what must be regarded as a fundamentally different world. There is no person to be found on the sub-atomic level. This does not mean that persons do not exist.

A similar consideration applies to the analytical path of meditation. Meditation may be defined as the practice of seeing clearly. Specifically this means seeing at the primary or preconceptual level of consciousness. At this level, likewise, there is no individual or person to be found. Buddhism, therefore, does not recognise the self or the ‘I’ as essentially real. There is, accordingly, no place for God in the Buddhist cosm-conception. Its prime postulate of ontology is: all aggregates are

impermanent, and, the essence of all things is void. Such, as already noted, is the logical conclusion of the analytical attitude per se. Buddhism, as the ultimate development of this tendency, may therefore be regarded as the quantum physics of mysticism, and Zen, the mystic equivalent of quantum logic.

Hindu metaphysical cosmology tends to be more liberal in its conceptions. It permits the concept of self, the *atma*, and posits a universal ground of being in *parabrahm*. The central trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva represents the principles, respectively, of creation, preservation, and transcendence; while a deity such as Krishna, represents a particular incarnation of Vishnu. The goddess Shakti, as the consort of Shiva, represents his opposite polarity, universal energy and the power of reification – and so on. However, none of these constitute a God in the sense of Western monotheism. The charge of polytheism, as levelled against the Hindu cosmology, is therefore grounded in misunderstanding. Hinduism may possess thousands of gods, but these are either (1) actual or legendary personages, (2) categories of experience, or (3) philosophical abstractions – the latter being but thinly veiled in anthropomorphic imagery. A unitarian non-dualistic outlook permeates the entire system, so far as the enlightened practitioner is concerned. This is not to deny that, at the populist level, it manifests in cultism and superstition comparable to that of medieval Christendom.

The Buddha, likewise, although the object of veneration, is not to be regarded as a God. ‘Buddha’ translates as ‘the awakened one.’ The designation refers principally to Gautama Siddhartha (c. 563 – 483 BC). The founder of Buddhism, he said to have attained the ultimate enlightenment, after some six years of intense ascetic practice, while sitting under a banyan tree. The term is further applied to any person,

who has thus become enlightened. Thirdly, the term is used in the abstract, to denote the principle of enlightenment itself. In this sense there is mention of the Buddha of Peace, the Buddha of Bliss, the Buddha of Compassion, and so on.

The renunciatory nature of the mystical path is enshrined in the Four Noble Truths, in which Gautama concentrated the essence of his doctrine: (1) Life is suffering. (2) The origin of suffering is desire and attachment. (3) There is a way to the cessation of suffering. (4) This Way is the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path is also designated as the Middle Way, so named in that it is intended to preclude extremes of asceticism and indulgence. It may be summarised as: right understanding, right thinking, right speech, right attitude, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. These, in certain essential respects, are akin to the Eight Limbs of Yoga, with which Gautama must have been familiar. They are: correct posture, breathing, observance, abstention, abstraction, concentration, and meditation (Sanskrit: *asana, pranayama, yama, niyama, pratihara, dhyana, samadhi*).

The rationale of such systems is easily explained. The mundane aspects of the practice are intended to regulate the affairs of life so as to create a safe and reliable foundation for the more esoteric practices. Stated more simply, the objective is quiescence of body and mind, to facilitate the process of meditation. Meditation, in the yogic sense, does not denote mere musing or introspection. The word has a technical meaning which involves two closely related phenomena: the cessation of thought, and the uniting of the subject and object of consciousness. This may require elucidation.

When we look at our mind, we are aware of two categories of

experience. We observe the mind itself, its thoughts and sensations which constitute the world, the object of our experience. We are also aware that there is *someone* doing the observing. Behind our experience lurks that mysterious being ‘I.’ This ‘I’ is identified with consciousness itself, which is regarded as the subject of experience. As mentioned, in the yogic state of *samadhi* the subject and object of experience are united, with the result that both disappear, to be replaced by something else altogether unimaginable. This conceptually elusive and utterly transcendent state is such that Hindu sages generally agree that nothing definite can be said concerning it, a situation expressed in the phrase *neti neti* – it is not this, it is not that. It is this uniting of the subject and object of experience – the self with the all – which is the goal of *yoga*, a term which means *to join together*.

While the trans-conceptual and non-dualistic state of *samadhi* is usually first experienced as a trance, with intensification it can be maintained in the ordinary course of life. It should therefore not be imagined that we are in any sense contemplating an impairment of mental function. Masters of meditation, such as are known, tend to be revered teachers and world-renowned luminaries in the arts and sciences. While the intrinsic objective of mysticism is the transcending of the phenomenal world, it is not to be denied that its techniques lend themselves to the attainment of extraordinary ability in any form of human activity.

The Rational Paradigm

Science, the secular religion of modernity, is now widely regarded as the most successful paradigm in explaining the universe. Even mystics and occultists accord it unconscious respect; either by defending their

theories *against* those of science, or by claiming that its latest advances support their age-old views. For better or worse, science has cast its defining shadow over the modern imagination, determining how we see the world, and what is generally regarded reasonable or thinkable. Physically and mentally we live in a science-created world, and we are as reluctant to forego its comforts and protection, as we are unable to see our way beyond its intellectual hold. For the rational individual there seems to be no other option. Science is powerful magic, and most people do not doubt that it works.

So what is this thing called science, and how justified are its claims? Let us examine its worldview and methodology.

Here we must bear in mind that science is currently evolving a new paradigm, with implications as yet unforeseen. Science attitudes and beliefs are changing as I write. The following remarks therefore pertain to the established or classical view of science, which has its roots in the Renaissance, gained momentum in the Enlightenment, and became consolidated around the time of the industrial revolution. It defines science attitudes and practices, and reflects a position which retains enormous influence within academia and the scientific community. The emerging paradigm and its implications will be discussed separately.

Science is both a methodology and a belief-system. As a belief-system it is based on a number of assumptions which are accepted *on faith*. That is, they are not customarily questioned within the framework of science; indeed the methodology of science largely depends on these assumptions. These assumptions are as follows:

1. There is one real world ‘out there,’ to which we have sensory access, and which represents objective reality – the universe. This

universe is self-existing, and independent of human observation. It is regarded as a ‘thing in itself’ (Ding an sich), in the sense of the German philosopher Emanuel Kant.

2. The universe is one. Already implied in the above, this is essentially a matter of definition. We define the word *universe* as ‘all that exists,’ with *nature* and *reality* being synonymous terms. This has generated some semantic confusion with the introduction of the many-worlds model of quantum physics, with its notion of parallel universes. Modifying the original definition, the terms *megaverse* and *multiverse* have been employed to designate the system as a whole.

3. The universe has laws, which are invariant in time and space. These laws are regarded as eternal, or at least co-extensive with the universe. This leads to an interesting philosophical question concerning the formation of the universe, if, indeed, it had a beginning. It may be asked, whether the universe came into existence according to pre-existing laws, or whether it brought the laws into existence with itself. If the former, how did those pre-existing laws come to be? If the latter, did the universe arise in a manner infinitely random, and could the laws of nature have turned out totally different?

4. The universe has order. This turns out to be a difficult concept to define, as well as being specialised in its scientific usage. Order is the attribute which enables us to perceive patterns or structure in objects and events. Order is involved in our appreciation of complexity and levels of organisation, such as the atomic, the molecular, the cellular, and so on. Finally, order is identified with information, or the measure of information which we have concerning any system. In lay terms, order is what makes the universe a rational structure, with which we can interact in meaningful ways.

5. The universe can be understood by rational means, through observation and reason. This is a pivotal point. It posits that the rational faculty (combined with our observational apparatus) is in principle adequate to elucidate the mysteries of the universe, or at least, to progress indefinitely in this direction. Our predictive theories and powerful technologies appear to lend credence to this claim, and we wonder whether such a result should be ascribed to the simplicity of nature, the scope of human genius, or some other factor.

6. The universe is deterministic. This is a special case of (5), the attribute of order. It posits that identical causes have identical effects. More fundamentally, it posits a causal universe – a universe in which causation is the principal determining factor in any event. This leads to the question, if the universe had a beginning, what caused it to come into being?

7. The universe, despite its complexity, is fundamentally simple – simple enough for us to eventually formulate the complete laws of physics. It is difficult to say whether this reflects the actual belief of scientists, or their hopes concerning a complete theory of the cosmos.

8. The universe is a physical structure. Material forces – matter and energy – alone are objectively real. As *physical* means *measurable by physical means*, this syllogism appears to be self-referential or circular in argument, and meaningless as such. It is included here as a demonstration of scientism – the rhetoric and polemics of the culture of science, which not infrequently are confused with science itself.

Such are the beliefs of the classical scientific worldview. The way of *doing* science is called scientific method. This approach is characterised by the following attributes:

1. Empiricism – the acquisition of knowledge or data through observation and measurement.

2. Parsimony – the idea that assumptions should be limited to the necessary minimum to account for the observation, or, that the simplest explanation is the best.

3. Scepticism – ideally the necessary doubt to question the validity or universality of any assumption; the attitude of an open mind.

4. Precision – the devotion to refinement in observation, measurement, and analytical technique.

5. Theory – the formulation of explanatory models of the universe and its constituent parts.

6. Formal Language – the quantitative language of mathematics, in which the essence of all physical theory is expressed.

We thus obtain a rather complex picture of science. Is it possible to reduce this complexity to a single defining image?

The objective of science, I suggest, is the formulation of a conceptual model, which corresponds to the universe of experience in all essential details. Such a model must have the power to ‘explain’ the universe. When we ask what might constitute an adequate or satisfactory explanation, the answer turns out to be subjective – almost mystical – in nature. For practical purposes, therefore, the explanatory power and validity of a theory is determined by its utility in making accurate predictions. This allows us to *describe* what happens in nature. Predictability further translates into executive power – the power to control and alter our environment through technology. In this sense scientific understanding equates with the ability to *manipulate* nature.

Whether the power of description and manipulation amounts to understanding – this is a question for philosophers.

Scientific theory however is not merely utilitarian. Stated in the formal language of mathematics, it also has aesthetic qualities, as scientist with the requisite level of appreciation attest. Such individuals speak of elegance and symmetry (in physics a term of specialised meaning), attributes valued in themselves, and as a guiding principle in the formation of hypotheses. An ugly theory, so it is widely held, does not resonate well with the universal nexus of observed meaning, exemplifying a view of nature that extends back at least to Pythagoras and Plato. The scientific edifice may therefore equally be regarded as the work of artists, or artisans at the very least.

From these considerations a more fundamental proposition arises; that the product of science is an artefact, intended as a working or meaningful model of the universe; a conceptual replica of the real thing.

This leads to certain interesting questions: Why do we need a model? And, what relationship exists between the conceptual model and the world of actual experience? It is to be conceded that the model determines how we see and relate to the world. Once accepted, it determines the validity of any particular line of thought, and, even more significantly, of any observation. Broadened into the consensual worldview, it becomes identified with the nature of reality itself. While scientists, at their best, distinguish between the model and reality (whatever *it* may be), there is no question concerning the social construction of the universe of discourse. In so far as thought and language are the essential determinants of the quality of our experience, it is fair to say that the prevailing paradigm gives rise to the world in which we live.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that our interaction with the world is largely mediated through digital instrumentation. The universe has been successfully digitised, and increasingly we negotiate our lives by manipulating formal symbol systems of our own devising. The meaningful content of life is thereby reduced to the set of relevant variables, while mystery is banished to the outer fringes of awareness. This is the price for technological success – the fact that we are becoming increasingly estranged from the infinite nexus of sensibility that is nature. At the core of this alienation lies a redefinition of what it is to be human. For we, although a part of nature, are equally reduced to a set of variables – a finite and rather small set of variables, which necessarily leads to a reduction in human possibilities. Paradoxically, therefore, as technological muscle increases, authentic human options are becoming more proscribed.

Because the rational paradigm has been relatively short-lived, it has not yet vindicated itself as a sustainable option. Indeed there are warning signs to the contrary. As philosopher Terence McKenna pointed out, another hundred years of business as usual are inconceivable. It appears to be incontrovertible that modern civilisation is heading for catharsis, seen by many as the end of the world as we know it. Please recall the reference of the previous chapter to the butterfly effect of chaos theory. The point was made, that in complex dynamical systems, far from equilibrium, small causes can have large and unpredictable consequences. Such is the artificial environment which science has created. There is an even more disturbing fact to be considered; that human intervention on this planet can no longer be regarded as ‘small causes.’ The global environment has been profoundly and irreversibly altered. The implications are beyond surmise.

To obtain an adequate sense of perspective, let us invoke the wisdom of the mystical paradigm. I wish to quote from two sources: one ancient, one modern. In around 500 BC Lao Tse wrote in the Tao Te Ching: *Woe to him that wilfully innovates without knowledge of the constant.* and: *The universe is a sacred vessel, and nothing should be done to it.* In Liber Al Vel Legis, the prophetic Book of Thelema, it is written: *Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown & and all their words are skew-wise.*

These verses, I suggest, point to a flaw of the scientific method – indeed the central and defining flaw; that of building a case from a limited number of variables, abstracted from the totality of universal experience. Yet, as we are aware, this is an inevitable fact of scientific method as we know it. For the rational mind is incapable of apprehending and manipulating more than a finite (and rather small) number of variables. As a matter of necessity the scientific worldview must therefore be reductive in nature – based on the selective focus upon a small set of data, and the disregarding of all else. By definition, classical science is incapable of a concerted or holistic view.

This, I suggest, explains both the meteoric success of science, and the extremely partial and ephemeral nature of that success in human terms. The ignoring of the factor *infinite and unknown* has led to innovation *without knowledge of the constant*. As the scientific worldview constitutes a secondary universe, an abstract model injected into nature, so does the technological edifice constitute a mutation, a foreign growth upon the tree of life. It remains to be seen, whether the growth is basically healthy, or whether its link with nature is altogether too tenuous.

It should be remembered that the subject-object dichotomy at the

heart of science, is imposed upon the nexus of experience; it is not a fact in nature. Yet science depends upon this formality. Having cut the universe in two, it examines one half of the dualism, and discards the other. The ‘other’ is the realm of consciousness, traditionally the province of magic and mysticism. Defined as the subject of experience, consciousness cannot be the object of scientific scrutiny in the ordinary sense, wherefore other modes of enquiry are appropriate in this domain. Science contents itself with charting the correlations in the objective realm. It tells us nothing about consciousness, or the correlation between consciousness, mind and nature. These, therefore, must needs remain in the realm of the ‘occult.’

Science is therefore incomplete at best. To the extent that it arrogates to itself sole and / or transcendent validity in the domain of knowledge, it must be regarded as inimical. The dangers of deifying a partial method or point of view are well understood within the esoteric cosmo-conception. It is the tendency referred to as ‘black magic,’ with the full implication of evil the phrase suggests. While scientific method remains valid in its own domain, the culture of science must needs be regarded as an extraordinarily narrow, philosophically naive, and ideologically driven belief-system.

Yet it is to be hoped, that the intrinsic values of scepticism and open enquiry will transform the culture of science from within, so that science as a discipline may reinvent itself in the context of the emerging holistic and integral paradigm.

The View From Above

Within each paradigm we find some central concept, or core of

ultimate verity, defining that which is absolute – that which is God – within the respective viewpoints espoused.

The God of shamanism is nature, which is to say, the *experience* of nature, for these two, as noted, are one.

Magic has many gods; all faculties, all potencies, technically speaking, are gods. The *God* of magic, however, is Man – specifically, the Will of Man, his highest manifest attribute.

The God of science is intellect.

The God of mysticism is consciousness.

Those, capable of authentic engagement with each of the various cultural paradigms, develop a point of view, appropriately described as transcendent. Theirs is a vantage point which transcends the conceptual and observational boundaries, inherent in each individual system. For only when stepping outside the system do its limitations and peculiarities become fully apparent. The perspective thus gained permits a degree of insight which far exceeds that of any individual, exclusively immersed in only one of these systems.

Indeed, such insight is of a qualitatively different order. It lays the axe to the root of several myths, which tend to gain currency whenever a particular viewpoint hardens into dogma. What are these myths? With respect to the scientific paradigm they include the notions of absolute truth in the conceptual sphere; an objective, mind-independent, universe; a real world as distinct from that of observation, the universal validity of the reason, and many others dependent on these.

These myths, moreover, have a formidable hold on the human imagination, and to challenge them, is no light matter. It should further be noted, that is one thing to grasp these matters intellectually, and another entirely, to obtain existential verification thereof. The former is the mark

of a student; the latter indicates a step in initiation. Real attainment in this regard confers emancipation from the conceptual limitations inherent in any cultural system, thus releasing the mind into a sphere of unimagined creative freedom. It presages a re-evaluation of what is thinkable and possible, with the suggestion, that any limitations in this regard may not be a universal given, but inherently a matter of the human imagination.

The view from above further allows for an integral perspective, wherein the value and contribution of the various cultural types is fully appreciated. The ideological war of the paradigms thus becomes apparent for what it is – a misuse of energy. For the ‘gods’ of the various cultures – nature, creative will, reason, consciousness – are of an intrinsically different order. This is an example of what we mean by ‘separating the planes.’ It is this separation, assigning to each their appropriate sphere, which reveals the great paradigms as complementary and clears the way for an integral vision.

There are, of course, unmistakable developments in this direction, to which writers like Gary Zukav and Fritjof Capra (on the one hand) and Paul Davies and Freeman Dyson (on the other) have contributed in their respective ways. While some have suggested that the purity of science might be compromised thereby, I have shown that the opposite must necessarily obtain. The danger, rather, it seems to me, is that of a naive eclecticism with non-specific boundaries between separate enclaves – an essentially unchanged science agenda, suffused with religious sentimentalism and draped with magical tinsel. What is required, rather, is a philosophical foundation of sufficient scope and rigour to facilitate fusion at the core of the four great paradigms. Such a development will undoubtedly bring to birth the fifth and integral paradigm, thus inaugurating a new epoch in the cultural evolution of humanity.

The Integral Paradigm

There are clear indications that such a paradigm is presently emerging, although its final form is still in the realm of conjecture. We notice that the post-modern cultural matrix is becoming polarised with the influence of the various cultural paradigms, thus preparing the ground for a grand fusion at the paradigm level. As a matter of ideal, therefore, it is possible to visualise a distillation of the essential contributions of the various paradigms, and their confluence in a creative synthesis. Let us try to define these contributions, and observe their complementary character.

Shamanism offers the key to empathic rapport with nature, and a psychopharmacology, providing access to a range of altered states of consciousness, conducive to insight and a widening of human perspectives.

Magic elucidates the mind-dependent nature of all phenomena, and the relationship between mind and the objective universe. It emphasises the essentially creative process, inherent in any act of observation.

Science introduces the systematic application of measurement, leading to the recognition of patterns and correlations in the objective realm.

Mysticism provides experiential access to the intrinsic nature of mind and consciousness. As such it constitutes both the foundation and pinnacle of an integral science of the future.

There are many attractive symmetries to be observed in this potential fourfold unity:

Science and magic are grounded in duality; mysticism and shamanism in non-duality.

Shamanism equates to oneness with nature; mysticism to oneness with the self – the transcendent ‘I.’

Science is concerned with charting the correlations in the outer, objective domain; magic with the correlations of the inner, subjective domain.

Shamanism equates with immersion in the sensory realm, science and magic with immersion in the conceptual or symbolic realm, mysticism with immersion in consciousness itself.

The emergence of an integral paradigm may be seen as the correlation of the global mind of humanity. Such correlation, indeed, appears inevitable. Cycles of differentiation and reintegration may be observed in all complex dynamical systems. On a cosmic scale this dynamism manifests an evolutionary spiral of ever greater diversity coupled with synthesis on a level ever more profound.

The process, however, is not merely cumulative. It must be accompanied by refinement – a pruning of the evolutionary tree. In the present context, this implies enhanced conceptual rigour in all schools of thought, and the deconstruction of all ideological and dogmatic accretions which might adhere to their respective cultures. All of the great traditions must be purged of their dross in the forge of intellect and meditation, if they are to yield their base metal to that alchemical alloy which constitutes a new phase in the evolution of consciousness.

What might be the result of such a synthesis? Comparisons come to mind with the Copernican revolution, which altered our worldview by placing the sun in the centre of the universe, and relegated humanity to the outer fringes of the cosmos. This is an apt metaphor for the cultural impact of science, which has marginalised humanity by placing a fictitious objective universe in the centre of ontological space. As for the

coming revolution in consciousness, it holds the promise of restoring humanity to the centre of all possible worlds. While history provides examples of extraordinary advances which resulted from the merging of two previously unrelated fields, we are here considering the unprecedented confluence of polarised paradigms. Science, as presently understood, will necessarily come to be viewed as pre-scientific, much as the Aristotelian opus is today. For the new epistemology arising from the contemplated paradigm fusion will give us unprecedented access to the *sources* of knowledge. The consequences are likely to be of unimagined magnitude, and I am content to leave the details to those creators of tomorrows, the science-fiction writers.

It is enough to grasp the essence of the vision. The integral paradigm, at the very least, will provide for a meaningful ontology of life in the universe, as for the practical wisdom to ensure the quality of that life – specifically the quality of consciousness – thus achieving the two vital aims which are presently eluding us. As the notion of the mind-created universe will be extended from the quantum to the macrocosmic realm, it will become apparent that it is given to humanity to determine what the meaning of life shall be. This is not because the universe as such is meaningless, but because we are that meaning. As a result of this shift in consciousness, reality will no longer appear simply as a given, but humanity will assume its cosmic responsibility, and take its place at the ‘creating end’ of reality.

Such an awakening will allow us to play the paradigm game with imagination and grace. With the recognition of the relativity of phenomena, and the primacy of the imagination, human faculties may be consciously directed to the discovery or creation of the universe we intend. Knowledge, and the world it illuminates, will thus become subject

to the human will, rather than dominate that will, as it does at present. Idols will be deposed, and minor deities assigned their proper place under the creative godhead of humanity.

Chapter Four

THE ANGEL

Freedom leads to sanity. It is in this sense that our magic can be said to be sacred or holy. Nature, the gods, God are on our side. Knowledge of the Angel leads to wholeness.

The Magical Record of Heru Raha

The Spiritual Challenge

The central theme in the quest of initiation is the attainment of the *Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel*. In psychoanalytic terms this is the realisation of the true or authentic self, and in the language of mysticism, union with God. While this is unachieved, an individual is largely at the mercy of the environment, precariously open to suggestion, and subject to any wind of doctrine. Once achieved, he or she is established in a path, a unique trajectory in conformity with the nature of the self. The Angel manifests as an inner voice of certainty, which comforts and guides with preternatural wisdom and assurance.

As the attainment of communion with the Angel is synonymous with the Great Work itself, the road that leads thereto is necessarily unique for every individual. It is for this reason that no definitive guidelines can be provided concerning the matter, no fail-safe formula or ritual vouchsafed. While relevant instructions do exist, such as those of Abramelin, and the 8Th Aethyr of *The Vision And The Voice*, experience has shown that they are best regarded as suggestive, rather than an

absolute guide.

The invocation of the Guardian Angel is the central creative act of one's life. As such it must be an act of inspiration, which cannot be performed mechanically or perfunctorily. It is a sacred and solemn undertaking, which must be approached with sincerity and total commitment, or it is better left alone. And while it is not possible to provide the aspirant with an iron-clad set of rules, one may nevertheless state in broad principles the psycho-spiritual dynamics involved, the conditions of success, and the dangers and pitfalls attending the venture.

First it should be recognised that it is the Angel which is seeking communion with humanity, rather than humanity which is seeking God. For we do not know what it is, that we are seeking. If we did, the search would be over. Spiritual aspiration is the seed spark of desire of the Angel itself, kindled within the human soul. We can neither force nor precipitate the union; we can only seek to prepare ourselves for its eventual consummation. It is we who need to ready ourselves for the encounter. The Angel is always ready and willing to take possession of its rightful place.

Secondly the aspirant should realise that the Angel is already a present and continuous, but unobserved, reality. The Angel is speaking, and we may be hearing its voice, but the nature and significance of its message may be unrecognised, even as the Angel remains unknown. This is often due to the presence of too many voices, each clamouring for attention. In the confusion it is difficult to separate the spiritual wheat from the chaff. Thus, though we may be sitting in the presence of a Master, it does not necessarily follow that we are beneficiaries of his wisdom. There remains the question, first of recognition, then of comprehension. The spiritual challenge is exemplified in the words of

Jesus, when he asked, *who do you say, that I, the son of man, am?* This question confronts every generation. It is the central question of divine identity – who or what is God?

The answer, it should be understood, is the Great Work accomplished. It, therefore, does not consist of some trite formula or definition, some feat of Jesuitical sophistry, or the articles of a creed; it must be a revelation of existential verity. This revelation also must be ongoing, as the nature of God, from a temporal perspective, can never be fully appropriated. The revelation, which is the said Conversation of the Angel, will cast light on the various questions that have perplexed the individual, and expose the identity of the *false angel*, the spirit of deception, which vies for dominion over soul of mankind. Spiritual discernment, therefore, the separation of the true from the false, is the principal challenge of initiation. It is the foundation and cornerstone of the spiritual temple.

Let us therefore enquire as to the nature and identity of this Angel. Who is the mysterious messenger of the divine, which haunts the pages of sacred literature and the world's great mythological epics? What is his function and purpose in the cosmic scheme?

The Angel Of The Lord

The concept of divine or transcendent guidance, manifesting as an inner voice which speaks with authority, is ancient. Tradition assigns it various designations – the Holy Spirit, the indwelling Christ, the daimon or genius (as of Socrates), the higher self, the Angel of the Lord, the *augoeides*, the over-soul. Invariably the Angel is the voice of prophecy and revelation, a messenger – herald or bard – it is the voice which

speaks. Thus it is identified with the creative Word, the universal logos, that of which it is said: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

The voice of this Word may be heard within or manifest in visible guise. According to the *Exodus* record, Moses saw it in a burning bush, in a cloud and a pillar of fire. Yet Moses, as the mediator of the law, could not look on the *face* of God. To Abraham, however, the first to be called after the election of grace, the Angel spoke face to face, in the person of one *Melchizedek*, the king of Salem, which is the king of peace. Both of these visitations centred on a covenant between God and man, now referred to as the Old and New Testament respectively. The Angel is the messenger of the covenant, and as such is identified with God, or that which can be known of God.

Sacred and secular literature is replete with accounts of strange and otherworldly visitations. Qualitatively these encounters range from the sublime to the sinister. A recent example of the latter is the reported interdimensional traffic between humans and the alien Greys. For the student of the relevant lore, a comparative and critical approach is essential. While there is an underlying unity of concept, we should not necessarily conclude that all such accounts refer to the same idea or experience. Specifically, we should beware of deducing a theory from the use of a particular term. Words such as *god*, *angel*, or *alien*, for most conjure complex worlds of associations which are vague and without rigorous basis in experience. Hence the tendency in certain enclaves to wallow in oceans of metaphysical gush, all without definite connotation or anchor in the experiential domain. To understand the consequences of such is to chill to the marrow at the thought of contributing thereto. The correct approach is the phenomenological one. We should always begin

with actual experience; then formulate our impressions in language as best we may. For the practising occultist and mystic this precaution is of profound practical import. For, without rigour in the subtle and subjective domain, it is impossible to formulate a meaningful hierarchy of qualities or values.

Questions as to whether we should regard the Angel as part of ourselves or as a separate being, turn out to be arbitrary. They invariably hinge on definitions of what it is to be human, and it would be inane to try to settle the matter in any a-priori sense. Of decisive significance is the experiential nature of the encounter, and it is evident from the bulk of the literature, that the Angel is not usually experienced as oneself, especially in the early stages of the relationship. Indeed the initial recognition typically involves profound astonishment, more or less in keeping with conventional expectations of divine visitation. Yet for all its exotic strangeness, to speak from personal experience, the shock of recognition also conveys a profound sense of the familiar, of being reminded of one's inmost, yet long forgotten, truth. It is the experience, subjectively speaking, of returning from spiritual exile.

The Conversation Of The Angel

Spiritual tradition furnishes us with numerous metaphors for this experience. In Zen it is spoken of as recovering one's original face. Other traditions speak of a return to the source. These symbols emphasise the redemptive aspect of the spiritual birth, the regaining of something which has been lost. Initiation, accordingly, does not consist primarily of adding anything to our constitution. Rather it involves a stripping away of accidental accretions to reveal the essence of the authentic self. Thus

within certain traditions consummation of the link with the Angel is referred to as the Solar Initiation – Sol, the Sun, being the symbolic centre of the occult constitution of man. It is also known to occultists as the Abramelin Operation (see below), named after the mage who formulated a system of spiritual attainment, centred on the attempt to formalise the relevant process.

After the initial recognition, there is an ongoing process of attunement, as the adept continues in communion with the Angel. It then becomes apparent that the Angel has a message. This message, in the usual course of events, cannot be related all at once, as it comprises the communicant's life-script, both in human and in cosmic terms. It is the canon of meaning and the Book of Life. It is also the book of redemption, revealing the nature of eternal life. As the revelation unfolds one becomes attuned to the voice and transformed over time to the viewpoint of the Angel. In this process the Angel appears as comforter, teacher, counsellor and guide.

Speaking thus of the conversation of the Angel, we are referring to dialogue in the most literal sense. To sceptics and critics of such a proposition one can point out that, in the absence of a rigorous language of the subjective domain, nobody knows, or is able to know, how another experiences the world. In the course of initiation it furthermore becomes apparent how profoundly human experience varies from individual to individual. But let us enquire further concerning the nature of this dialogue.

We find that the Angel has intimate knowledge of our nature and our affairs; indeed within certain traditions the Angel, as the logos of God, is considered omniscient. If this is so, as Christian theology maintains, this clearly obviates the need to inform the Angel of our

aspirations or tribulation, as in the conventional prayer of petition. There is nevertheless a two-fold purpose in clearly formulating these in consciousness, for in so doing we gain clarity as to our position, thus creating the context for preternatural guidance. To recognise the answer one must recognise the true question. This sounds trite, but exposes the most common cause for spiritual failure, in that the religious individual will confront the Angel with the lies he is telling himself. This explains why many individuals pray with apparent sincerity, yet without result. God does not *hear* the hypocrite. For it is the Angel which manifests in consciousness our authentic prayer, and to this the Angel addresses itself. This puts the burden of the work clearly on listening and honest self-appraisal.

For those who can hear, the Angel has an agenda, which is initiation and preparation for service within the universal order. Accordingly it will preferentially address matters of fundamental import, and is unlikely to be diverted into trivial concerns. There is a certain dignity to the interaction, which should not be profaned by the introduction of trifles. Nevertheless, we can expect the Angel to have our welfare at heart, and that in a profoundly personal and intimate way. In addition it is almost invariably impossible to anticipate or second-guess the Angel. As the illustrious mage Benjamin Rowe pointed out, the price of initiation is to be ceaselessly surprised. The Angel's viewpoint is typically so far beyond one's own, that, even after years of intimate communion, the disclosures never become commonplace. Experience rather suggests the opposite. This, however, does not mean that they are either chaotic or cryptic. On the contrary, the revelation possesses integrity, and, despite its grandeur, a profound simplicity. These qualities actually become more pronounced over time, as the viewpoint attained

becomes more inclusive.

We can thus be assured that the Angel ‘speaks our language,’ knowing our thoughts and sensibilities, and the way in which we frame them. In a sense it is our own voice, through which the Angel speaks, using our own concepts to the extent that these are adequate. Clearly, this provides for intimate understanding, without ambivalence or equivocation, in any domain of discourse, and to any degree of detail. Nevertheless, the profundity of the interaction leads us to suspect, that the verbal level of discourse is only the conscious crest of a wave, which involves the entire psychosomatic organism. Indeed, the verbal level is often bypassed altogether, as the Angel conveys information directly to the mind by way of intuitive insight, and it remains for the communicant to formulate the matter in language as best he may.

Yet even while employing the common tongue, there may be discerned another, supra-rational, language at the core of the Angel’s message. Words, as the saying goes, are cheap. Yet the communication of the Angel invariably moves the heart, imparting something tangible and substantial. The revelation is creative in that it conveys the insight and energy to manifest its inherent truth. This has led occultists to postulate the existence of a primal language (German: *Ursprache*), a language of creation, wherein what is stated, either *is* or *comes to be*. This is the language which the Angel employs. St. Paul drew attention to the phenomenon when he told the Corinthians that the gospel manifests not in word alone, but in the demonstration of spiritual power. Acquisition of this language is the Grail of the Magi, the lost Word of creation, the pronunciation of which is equivalent to the accomplishment of the Great Work, the redemption of the universe.

The Abramelin Operation

Among the relatively few authentic grimoires extant is *The Book Of The Sacred Magic Of Abramelin The Mage*, translated by MacGregor Mathers, the ill-fated head of the Golden Dawn, from a fifteenth century Hebrew manuscript in the Bibliotheque de l' Arsenal, Paris. This work distinguishes itself from conventional grimoires in the medieval 'goetic' style, by emphasising principle over mere protocol in dealing with the subtle realm. Its intent is to distil the essence of the solar initiation in a formal curriculum, by the performance of which one may attain to that summit of the spiritual quest, the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. The quaint archaism of this phrase actually derives from that text, and was later adopted by Aleister Crowley as a banner under which he proposed to teach humanity the next step upon the evolutionary ladder. He added words to the effect that the phraseology is so inherently absurd, that it would only occur to imbeciles to deduce therefrom a theory.

I am departing somewhat from the tradition of the A.:A.: by discussing the nature of the Angel at length. This, ostensibly, was considered undesirable, so as not to influence the aspirant in a manner suggestive or prescriptive of the goal of attainment, thereby compromising individuality. In justification I propose that the reader of this text is likely be sufficiently individual to reject peremptory prescriptions in favour of authentic experience. After nearly a hundred years of Thelema, *Do what thou wilt* has brought certain fruits, and whereas the emphasis in yonder days was upon the Angel, today it is upon the initiation of the Abyss.

The procedure, known as the Abramelin operation, is simplicity

itself. It is summarised by Crowley in *Genesis Libri Al* somewhat in this wise: The aspirant must possess a house of secluded aspect, unobserved by the outer world. Within this dwelling there must be an oratory with a window to the East and a door to the North, which opens onto a terrace. At the end of the terrace should be a lodge where the spirits of the Operation may congregate. Both the terrace and the lodge are to be strewn with fine river sand. Further appurtenances of the art include a Robe, a Crown, a Wand, an Altar, Incense, Anointing Oil, and a Silver Lamén. In addition a set of daemonic talismans – vellum squares inscribed with India ink – is to be prepared, in accord with instructions furnished in the text. A period of six months is prescribed for the entire Operation.

Upon commencement, which is to be at Easter or one of the holy days of the spiritual calendar, the aspirant gradually withdraws from human intercourse, and devotes himself to prayer for the space of four months. Thereupon he intensifies his solitude, praying continually, and speaking to others only in absolute necessity, for a further two months. At the end of this period he invokes a being known as the Holy Guardian Angel, which shall comfort and strengthen him, and communicate those things which he needs to know.

Immediately after the first period of intense communion with the Angel, the initiate summons the four Great Princes of the daemonic world, and compels them to swear obedience. On the following day he extends his dominion over the eight Sub-Princes, and on the day, the legions of spirits subservient to these. These inferior daemons, four of whom serve as familiar spirits, are then employed to operate the aforesaid talismans.

For practical purposes it must be understood that grimoires of this

kind reflect either a particular instance or an archetypal ideal of the work in question. This means that the result described is not necessarily obtained through a slavish imitation of the procedures set forth. Magic, be it remembered, is an art as well as a science. Success may be obtained under circumstances overtly quite different from those here described. I may disclose that the author of the present work performed this Operation in all essentials, when he had not so much as heard of Abramelin. Other biographical accounts reveal a similar degree of variance with regards to the external details, while affirming the universality of the essential principles. It is thus apparent, that the Abramelin Opus illustrates a process in nature, describing in symbolic language the essence of the steps involved.

Magical Opposition

The Abramelin opus reveals the lordship of the soul in the realm of nature, and it is incumbent upon the adept to establish at once his dominion over the infernal host by accepting the mantle of authority and the responsibility this involves. For, as the text makes clear, the spiritual authority of the Angel invests the initiate with power over the elemental world, both in the angelic and demonic realm.

For this reason the infernal hierarchy will oppose the union and seek to prevent its consummation. This can be a time of tremendous strain, as the armies of light and darkness are ranged for a decisive confrontation. The magus, pledged to perform the Abramelin Operation, can expect a concerted effort of the most concentrated malice and cunning to subvert the work at all costs. The persecution may take various forms. In this age of relative civil order the main line of attack

most likely to be on the inner planes. But this need not be exclusively the case, and great care should be taken to protect the Circle in the ordinary sense.

The greatest danger lies in the realm of deception, deriving from failure to recognise the Angel, or to accurately discern its Conversation. In such a case, the demonic host, aroused by the fervour of the invocation, is likely to despatch a lying spirit to impersonate the Angel. This demon will ingratiate itself, present itself as God, and assure the candidate that all is well. It will demand worship, subservience, and sacrifice, to the eventual ruin of the individual thus deceived. To the extent that such individuals become enslaved, their moral sense disintegrates and they may find themselves committing atrocities against self and others which they previously would have thought unthinkable. Their situation is best described as a form of downward transcendence, a demonic inversion of true initiation.

Yet even for such individuals not all is necessarily lost, provided that their link with the soul, and thus with the Angel, is not irrevocably severed. In such a case they may, perhaps years later, come to their senses, recognise their mistake, and, purged from their error, embrace the counsel of Angel.

To guard against spiritual disaster of this magnitude, the aspirant should be prepared for the confrontation through a broad experiential base, a balanced spiritual curriculum, and the avoidance of fanaticism and excess. The best safeguard may be that of spiritual community or the guidance of a Master. Yet here again we confront the question of authenticity and authority. Ultimately there is no refuge from the possibility of spiritual error other than the Angel itself.

Spiritual Discernment

Be careful how you hear, counselled the Master of Galilee. The utility of this advice is patent, for of whatever we are persuaded, to that we become subject. Spiritual and occult pathology is invariably the result of a false union and a false surrender – the surrender to an inferior principle. It is therefore necessary to state what the Angel is *not*.

The Angel is not an arbitrary voice speaking out of the blue, saying, life is worth living in Philadelphia, or some such thing. While spiritual revelation may be radical, it is not chaotic or discontinuous with the nexus of personal experience. The Angel addresses itself meaningfully in the present context, demonstrating integrity and consistency day after day, year after year.

The voice of the Angel is lucid and precise. It does not manifest in cryptic gibberish or mystical mumbo-jumbo. This is to dispel the romantic notion that unintelligibility equates with profundity. In the spiritual realm it more likely denotes a void of meaning and the intention to hide this fact. Nor does the Angel speak in platitudes and vague generalities like the channelled entities of late in popular vogue. Though its message may be of transcendent import, it will nevertheless admit of measure, and be specific in structure and content.

The Angel is not a voice of agitation or clamour; it does not excite intra-psychic controversy or commotion. The Angel speaks in peace and moves the heart, bringing clarity of insight and settled conviction.

The Angel is not the unconscious mind. As a reservoir of powerful imagery and ideation, the subconscious domain is naturally a source of great fascination. Personal growth, physical and spiritual healing – these usually involve the activation of subconscious energies. And while the

initiate is sworn to explore the ‘river of the soul,’ the integration of sub-conscious energies, and the resulting state of psychic and physical wholeness, is not to be confused with the conscious presence of the Angel. The two are however complementary.

The voice of the Angel is not some quaint curiosity hidden in an obscure corner of the universe. As it was said concerning of Christ, *when they say to you, he is in the desert, or in the secret chamber, do not believe it*. For the revelation is like a great light that lights up the spiritual sky from East to West. And though it may be profoundly simple, it will be of awesome implication.

The Angel is not a split-off part of the psyche. This may be regarded as obvious. However the recovery and reintegration of some aspect of the self may temporarily seem like the realisation of the final goal. The resulting symmetry is so profound, the healing surge so powerful, that one is overwhelmed. There is none too great harm in this, except that one is, for the moment, distracted, and faces the inevitable adjustment to the facts. We are thus counselled by experience not to assign to any result the importance which at first it seems to possess. And yet, there is *one* result, the importance of which it is impossible to over-estimate.

The Angel is not an idealised projection of the self. This is an important point. As part of our cultural legacy we have received certain romantic ideas about the spiritual path, sainthood, and the life of service to humanity. These ideas, be they ever so grand and lofty, can lead to serious trouble, when energised with the concentrated force of the awakened kundalini. For these ideals are not the truth. They do not comprise the realities which they simulate. If they did, we should not be in need of spiritual illumination. On the contrary, they mask various

demons. In the usual course demonic deception takes the line of least resistance, which lies in the exacerbation and exaggeration of some innate tendency. Thus the saint who cannot be tempted with ordinary vices confronts the more subtle ordeal of spiritual deception in the form of ideals and aspirations. While these remain unregenerate through appropriate revelation, they will sooner or later result in bondage. The initiate Alice Baily thought the matter so important that she devoted an entire monograph to the problem (Alice A. Baily, *Glamour: A World Problem*).

The Trinitarian Heresy

Although the Angel may appear in human form it is not a person – a human soul; it is a *spirit* which indwells the soul. This is where Christianity has erred, asserting that the person of Jesus indwells the believer. As personhood connotes personality – the human characteristics of temperament, preferences and the like – one should, in this case, expect all Christians to manifest identical personality traits. Here the cynic will argue that indeed they do, and this is the measure of the extent of the problem. There is a dreadful dreariness, a predictable sameness about groups and individuals subject to some such belief, who, having no internal anchor for their faith, find security in conforming outwardly to others of their kind. Those that are spiritual, by contrast, are a heterogeneous, colourful and heterodox body whose link to one another is the link with the Angel. Thus we do not have the soul of Jesus – for that is offered as a sacrifice on the altar of God. But we have the spirit of Christ.

The misconception follows from the trinitarian doctrine, which

holds that the godhead comprises *three individual persons*, respectively God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. By a materialistic and spiritually naive way of thinking, the said *manifestations* of God are regarded as discreet units, like three lumps of chalk, having indeed the same constitution, but representing mutually exclusive entities. The psychological result is that the worshipper has three Gods instead of one. It is pointless to argue that they are one in essence; the mere fact of the tripartite attribution engenders ideation of a diverse and conflicting order. The inevitable anthropomorphic projections lead to a kind of spiritual schizophrenia, which indeed can be widely observed in the relevant circles.

This extreme trinitarian conception has implications with respect to the indwelling presence of the divine. For the concept of a godhead in three individual persons emphasises separation, in that the God of the trinitarians is usually considered as separate from the worshipper, even as Christ is deemed separate from God. The believer, afflicted with this dualistic view, is subject to the inevitable intra-psychic civil war, which the co-presence of another person within the same body must precipitate, no matter how benign that person.

That the spirits which are likely to indwell an individual under this arrangement are not usually benign is indicated by the destructive power they wield. What saves the majority of Christians from the greater calamities is moderation with respect to their faith – the fact that they do not take it too seriously and water it down with a healthy dose of liberal humanism. The communal sense which rules the churches ensures spiritual inertia, tied to the common denominator of mutual accommodation and compromise.

We are aware of what happens in this context when the sincerity

bug bites, and salvation becomes a matter of life and death. The demon will fuel the fires of ideological intoxication which its prey assumes to be religious fervour. Extremist cults and fanatical crusades, persecutions and purges thus are born. Depending on the orientation of a particular cult, the resulting violence may be unleashed against the self or others. Such is the inevitable consequence of the worship of a strange God, a God that is separate from the self, a God that is *out there*.

There is neither truth nor God out there. *Out there* the demon lies in wait, ready to impersonate whichever God the worshipper desires or fears, the God which the worshipper unconsciously projects. This demon is the said false angel, a composite of the believer's ideas and impressions, both conscious and unconscious, which is projected upon the cosmic *other* and worshipped as God. In occult parlance it is referred to as the *dweller on the threshold*, an amorphous entity which constitutes the boundaries of the thinkable, and therefore of reality, in our individual universe.

Millions cower before the dweller, which can be a formidable foe even for the seasoned adept, such is the influence of religious tradition, the veil of glamour which conceals spiritual truths. Yet it is not merely tradition, but also the rational tendency of the mind which constitutes a barrier to spiritual vision. For the mind tends to reify the revelation in conformity with its limited understanding, consolidating organic metaphors into concretised images. This is the way of all orthodox religion, wherein spiritual experience becomes hardened into dogma. Well was it said in this connection, that the carnal mind is enmity with God. It is a hard saying, but the Angel exists only in the present. And as a living fire it consumes all else in its presence. Its memory, the eidolon of past revelation, is a but an idol, and that idol but the shell of a demon.

Martin Luther served this demon, scourging himself beneath an effigy of the crucifix, until he was liberated by the voice of the Angel saying, *the just shall live by faith*. The demon is served by those who debase themselves in the confessional and for penitence drag on their knees along stony roads. It is served by those who abdicate their spiritual sovereignty to another, whether discarnate entity, spiritual master, cardinal, bishop, priest or pope. It is served by them that heed the voice of a stranger, even though that voice be speaking on the inside. The greater religious world is thus bound in ignorance and superstition, far from the voice of authentic consolation. If the comforter is become a source of terror, who is there to comfort?

Various Truths The Angel Teaches

While the Angel addresses itself uniquely to the individual soul, there are universal themes which comprise the esoteric teachings to humanity as a whole. These are resonant with the core revelations of the world's great religions as taught by the spiritual masters of all ages. The assertion is that there *are* objective truths and a Truth in the grand sense. If it were not so, cosmos would be chaos.

Let us consider this point for a moment. If, as I have argued, the universe is a subjective phenomenon, how can anything be objective? I suggest that, on the basis of my premise, a new kind of objectivity comes into view. It is the *experience* which is objectively real. And while this differs profoundly among individuals and cultures, there is, I maintain, a common basis in human experience. It is this, which allows us to speak of human nature – indeed of nature as such. When I am speaking of objectivity, I am referring to the fact of intrinsic nature.

If the sophist, at this point, will argue that the above is necessarily no more than a subjective appraisal, I readily concur. For if, as would follow, it is *all* subjective, the distinction between subjective and objective experience becomes meaningless. And this is the point of my argument: only *one thing* exists – not two. And this one thing, I suggest, is objectively real in the above transcendent sense, being beyond the conventional duality here at issue.

Why this preamble? The fact is, we are a little ashamed in the contemporary intellectual climate to speak of truth with a capital T. Academia has discarded the notion, and modernity is plunged into the deconstructionist quantum-conceptual void of relativistic indeterminacy. Such, indeed, is the final stage of intellectual development, which leads to the previously mentioned Abyss. Here perhaps we gain a glimpse of what this signifies. For in the crossing of the Abyss the transition is made from the pseudo-objectivity of naive empiricism to the transcendent objectivity beyond duality.

As for the Angel, it is that *one thing* real. So, yes; the universe does have a spiritual heart, a conscious centre which speaks and which can be spoken to. While some intimation thereof may be obtained along rational or intuitive lines, it is, above all, an experiential fact of the solar initiation.

Here then follows an exposition of spiritual revelation in the wider historical context. These are discussed under a number of discreet headings, which shall presently provide an overview. The Angel teaches: (1) the unity of the godhead or the oneness of nature, (2) initiation or spiritual birth, (3) spiritual community, (4) freedom, power, consecration and service, and (5) transformation and ascension. These I will simply relate as a given. For it is pointless to argue about the validity of what for

most individuals pertains to a conjectured metaphysical realm. To reiterate a previous point, meaningful discourse must be grounded in experience and admit of precise definitions. These qualifications are met by the Angel – the voice spiritual of experience.

The Unity Of The Godhead

God is one; with this most would agree, for whom the concept as any meaning at all. Yet we observe that most professed believers in a God consider this God to exist outside themselves. Even when this God is regarded as also being *within*, it is still considered as intrinsically ‘other’ or separate from the essential self. Such individuals, according to my thesis, have not one God but at least two. For God can never be another. Such a God would necessarily be a partial and incomplete being. God is the One – the only One. There is no room in the universe for God *and* another being. Nor is there thus room in the human soul. In the scriptures (of the Old and New Testament) God, as executive agent in human affairs, is referred to as *the Lord*. Who is this *Lord* but the authentic self at the centre of the human soul, the sole creative agency in the realm of nature. It is consciousness, which gives rise to the universal logos, the invisible yet all-seeing ‘I.’

Thus the deity is not to be sought afar off, somewhere in the illimitable ether, but much closer to home. This is that which is written: *Wherefore when he (Christ) cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me, and, This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.* (Hebrews 10 : 5, and Psalm 132 : 14) The eternal throne of God is thus identified with the soul of man, which is the conscious heart of the universe.

The Spiritual Birth

Initiation, salvation, illumination, liberation – whatever term we use to denote the Great Work, the essential attainment is the shift in identification from the ego, the culturally created self-image, to the transcendental ‘I’. This process is also known as the spiritual birth, the birth of the incorruptible seed, which is the Spirit and Word of the Angel of God. While many claim to be born of the incorruptible seed, the claim alone does not make it so. The seed must be received into the human soul by the revelation of God, and it must be the authentic seed.

Another symbol of initiation is that of entering beyond the veil, there to consummate the spiritual union. This veil comprises anything which hides the transcendent self, yet it is also that by which the same manifests. The image derives from the Tabernacle which Moses established in the wilderness. Yahweh Elohim, who made himself known as *I Am*, was emphatic that he (Moses) build it according to the pattern which he had seen on the Mount, when the Pillar of Fire descended and the prophet communed with God forty days. Its structure had to reflect heaven, as this was to be the literal dwelling place of the Spirit of God. And *heaven*, it will now be understood, is not a mythic region above the sky, but the firmament of the human soul.

This pattern involved three concentric levels. There was to be an Outer Court, and within this court the Sanctuary or Holy Place. Within the Sanctuary, separated by a veil, was to be the Most Holy, the Holy of Holies. Volumes could be written about the potency of these symbols. It is impossible here to do more than state the bare facts.

In the Outer Court was an altar of brass with the appurtenances for

animal sacrifice, instituted under Mosaic law. The Sanctuary contained a table furnished with the shewbread, and a seven-armed lamp, burning olive oil. Within the veil, in the Most Holy Place, stood a golden censer, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod which had budded, and the Ark of the Covenant, wherein were kept the tablets of the law. Above the Ark, between the wings of the cherubim, stood the Pillar of Fire, also known as the Shekinah Light – the presence of God in spirit form.

While the Outer Court was for the congregation at large, only a priest of Israel could enter the Sanctuary and eat of the shewbread. As for the Most Holy Place, it was to be entered once a year by the high priest alone. Magical purity had to be observed; the priest had to be robed in ceremonial vestments, and be anointed with a certain holy perfume made from oil of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive. Before him he bore a vessel of blood of a sacrificial bull, to be offered upon the Mercy Seat, the Ark of the Covenant, for the sins of the people. To enter the veil into the Shekinah Light, for any other person, or under any other condition, meant certain death.

The structure of the Tabernacle reflects the constitution of the living temple, which is man. For man is essentially a triune being, comprising body, soul, and spirit. Let us elucidate the correspondences involved.

The body as detected and known by the five physical senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell – is the Outer Court.

The soul comprises the entire subtle anatomy of man, described at length in Chapter 1. Sometimes referred to as the theophany or subtle body, it constitutes the energetic pattern, which informs the physical structure. This subtle body can also be said to possess five senses – imagination, memory, reason, the aesthetic and the moral sense. It

corresponds to the Sanctuary or Holy Place.

The spirit is the energy which informs and vitalises the soul. In the case of the solar adept this is the creative Word, the logos of God, the indwelling presence of Christ. The spirit operates but a single faculty, although in so doing it informs the senses of body and soul. This faculty is faith, correctly understood as spiritual perception or intuitive insight. The intuition both synthesises and transcends the other senses, uniting the totality of our impressions into a coherent gestalt. As such it constitutes both the archetypal ground of ideation and perception, as well as their resultant in any particular experience. Faith or intuition thus bypasses the analytical stages of the partial senses and attains directly to the object of desire; or, in the case of pathology, the object of dread. The spirit of man corresponds to the Holy of Holies.

The solar initiation, or spiritual birth, can accordingly be viewed in three consecutive stages.

The first pertains to the Outer Court of the senses. This is the domain of nominal religion, of convention and religious tradition. Here the knowledge of the Angel is limited to the realm of symbolic iconography. It may be understood that ‘Jesus is the Son of God,’ or ‘so-and-so is an illustrious Master,’ but without any conception as to what this implies. The Angel may be recognised in its human incarnation, but without comprehension of its message or the meaning of its office. Although religious activity may be habitual, even intense, it remains on the level of symbolic observance. Little or no meaning attaches thereto, other than the consensual welter of pseudo-spiritual ideation. Those in the Outer Courts are usually there because they happen to be born into a certain caste or clan. Little or no actual initiation pertains to this sphere. Nevertheless, the blessings emanating from the sanctuary may radiate

outward and bestow many benefits upon them that dwell there. And many are thus content to remain in the Outer Courts.

Those who search for spiritual meaning, however, come to the Sanctuary from whence proceeds the *Word of the Lord*. Here we find individuals engaging on an existential level with the spiritual teachings of their faith. They acquire its worldview and adjust their lives accordingly. These people are concerned to practice their religion in earnest. They partake of its more esoteric rites, such as baptism, communion, or the laying on of hands, and pray with sincerity. Attaining to sanctification they may experience ecstasy and be subject to spiritual gifts – spontaneously acquired paranormal abilities, such as prophecy, subtle discernment, speaking in unknown languages, and interpreting such. Some, in addition, may experience signal emancipation or deliverance from mental or physical affliction.

This stage of spiritual development, especially in evangelical circles, is widely regarded as the new birth, but this assumption is in error. It only constitutes the second phase of the inward journey. The candidate has not yet entered the inner veil.

The widespread error is due to mistaking enthusiasm and intellectual understanding for spiritual illumination. Many also are taught that their spiritual gifts or some transcendent experience constitute evidence of the spiritual birth. This they do not. The individual may be in contact with authentic spiritual teachings without being identified therewith. There is, as yet, no revelation and the Angel remains unrecognised. While individuals at this second stage may expound the relevant teaching with eloquence and conviction, their understanding, being of the intellectual order, remains in the vicinity of the letter of the law. In practice they may actually persecute the principle which they

believe to uphold.

Here it must be emphasised that spiritual teachings cannot be understood with the rational powers of intellect alone. This is especially difficult for the educated and cultured to grasp, those who are accustomed to vanquish their difficulties by dint of intellect and moral strength. Scholarship and good will, they are convinced, will take them to the pearly gates. In the nature of things, such individuals not infrequently suffer the torments of hell in being purged from this delusion. The simple truth is that the redemptive message is not addressed to the intellect of man. It requires the opening of a superior faculty – the intuition – for the voice of the Angel to be heard.

This failing explains the incongruencies so frequently encountered in the religious domain; of reputed saints involved in scandal and the sanctified spectacularly falling from grace. The phenomenon may be understood in perfectly ordinary terms. We are aware that most individuals can be inspired in the presence of grandeur. At the moment of exalted consciousness they are convinced of a higher reality and may manifest genius such as might later astound them. But for the majority the exaltation does not last. When the stimulus is removed, mundane reality supervenes and the transcendent experience will seem increasingly pale and remote. Such are the worshippers of the outer sanctuary. They may be partakers of the spiritual manna, the bread of life that comes from heaven, but their experience remains in the realm of intellect and emotion. They remain untouched and unchanged at the core of their being.

Those, however, who are dissatisfied to remain even in this condition, become candidates for the esoteric priesthood of the inner veil. These are they who are not content to stay in the Outer Court or even the

Sanctuary. Consumed with the conviction that they must see God or die, they are willing to sacrifice all to win the Pearl of Great Price. These are the saints, the salt of the earth, a body set apart, solitary and unknown – a body that is not of the present world.

Yet to enter beyond the inner veil requires a step of grace. It does not come by human volition, but results from the shift in perception that accompanies divine revelation. In other words, it is the Conversation of the Angel that opens the portal. To hear *this* voice is to be spiritually reborn. For the spirit of the Word revealed, is the seed of God received in the innermost sanctum. Here obtains the Shekinah Light, the universal source of wisdom and healing, the light of creation itself. Here is found the fabled pot of manna, the spiritual food that is never depleted, symbolic of the revelation itself, the holy discourse of the mysteries of God. Here the worshipper communes with God face to face. Henceforth he is taught of the spirit, and has no need for the teachings of men. From the inner sanctuary, moreover, no man comes forth. As the veil closes behind him, the mystic remains in the presence of God forever.

The Mystery Of Redemption

To enter the inner veil a man or woman must overcome the religious deception of the age. The present age is unique in this regard. While in previous ages the spiritual quest was met with physical persecution, the main challenge of this age is in the realm of spiritual deceit. It is for this reason that the averse hierarchy has put on a human face, congenial and ever so urbane, to enslave through deception, and that more surely than ever it could through force. The ministers of Satan accordingly appear in the vestments of religion, and it is religion itself,

which has become the main obstacle to the realisation of spiritual truth in this age.

The prophetic and historical basis of this conception may be derived from the Apocalypse of St. John, also known as the Book of Revelation. In this Book, the powers of antichrist are represented by four horse riders, which go out to conquer the world. These are called forth, engaged in battle, and overcome by the four *cherubic powers of God*, symbolised as a Lion, a Bull, a Man, and a Flying Eagle, which guard the heavenly throne and convey the spiritual sacrifice into the presence of God. A cognate vision is of the cherubim with a flaming sword which guard the way of the Tree of Life. And this is the mystery of redemption, that the sword of the cherubim pierces the heart of the redeemer, as he enters into the Holy of Holies, the temple not made with hands. The death and resurrection of Christ thus constitutes the archetypal pattern which is reflected in the life of the mystic who follows Christ into the inner veil, where the spiritual union is consummated.

Those who have entered the living temple are designated a *royal priesthood*, also referred to as the *royal seed of Abraham*, after the patriarch who was the first, according to Genesis, to whom this mystery was revealed. Now that it *is* revealed, where previously it meant death to enter, it now means death to remain without. In contemporary language, there are only two vortices: the Angel which is the attractive vortex of the true self at the centre of the universe, and what we may call the alien vortex, which is the lure of outer darkness, of strange gods, of any god or truth *out there*.

Death is to be faced, one way or another. In order to hear the angelic voice, the mystic may have to ‘forget’ all he ever knew, including the very precepts of the religion he has come to espouse. The seed of the

Word, as it were, must fall into the ground and perish, before it can be resurrected. This is the existential death, symbolised by the crucifixion, which must precede the new birth. For the rational theology of human understanding is incompatible with the revelation of the Angel. This explains why fundamentalists generally fail to attain to spiritual grace, in that they maintain, and accord idolatrous worship to, the letter of the law. Thus they fail to recognise the redemptive nature of the Cross. It further explains why the spiritual are persecuted by those that are merely religious. The manifestation of the spiritual revelation will necessarily appear as heresy to the orthodox cartels.

Communion Of Saints

The angel teaches the community of saints, a mystical body of individuals, whose essential link to one another is their link with the Angel. This body has been known under various designations, such as the *Great White Brotherhood*, the *Mystic Body Of Christ*, the *Bride of Christ*, the *Elect of God*, the *Ascended Masters*, and *The Order of the Silver Star*. Here one must make allowance for context, understanding that the precise meaning of these terms may vary among such groups as employ them. One must further distinguish between membership and initiation. The former betokens outward allegiance, while the latter involves a bond on the inner planes, wherein adepts are united by virtue of their spiritual attainment. There is an organic connection, without overt hierarchy, organisational structure, or centre of affiliation.

This group is nevertheless the best co-ordinated body on the planet, being subject to one Head, which is the Angel. It is principally characterised by its service to humanity, understood in its broadest sense.

While not an organisation, it is in every sense an organism, with many subtle and symbiotic links on the various planes. The solitary saint is never alone, but the entire resources of the Order are at his or her disposal if necessary for the work. While organised co-operation cannot be ruled out, such will be incidental rather than essential to the spiritual dynamics involved. This is reflected in the impossibility of organising any group on truly spiritual lines in this age. Such organisations have served their historical purpose. The spiritual seed which fell into the Earth has completed its various stages of growth, manifesting again the original seed. This, accordingly, is the age of the individual, and the dissolution of arbitrary bonds and boundaries alike.

Communication among the initiate may be subtle. As the Angel may speak by any means and at any time, those awaiting divine visitation are enjoined to be continually vigilant, asking, *what is it in itself?* - what is the meaning of this particular situation or gestalt? Initiation these days is informal and swift. It may occur by means of a casual word or gesture. Here a little, there a little. And before you know it, it is over. At the same time it is important to maintain due proportion with respect to ideas. The spiritual veil is not fully removed until the Abyss has been crossed. Until such time one cannot expect to divine without a margin of error. It is therefore possible for the adept to be temporarily misled. But if the link with the Angel is strong, the error will be corrected, and become itself woven into the sublime fabric of the angelic discourse.

While in times past an actual community of saints was the best way to safeguard the integrity of the Work, this is no longer a common option. While many these days have their familiar spirit-guide, revelation at what we might call the cutting edge is extremely rare. The advanced adept may need to be content with inner plane communion, and a few informal but

vital links to other incarnate individuals. Telepathic or empathic contact between adepts is the norm, rather than the exception. Such contact, however, is not in any way personal. It is rather a conjunction of ministries, wherein the various members of the mystical body aid and support each other in the Great Work. While ours is also the age for deeply empathic relationships of a personal nature, this is another matter entirely.

As to the claim of any church or religious organisation to represent the elect of God or anything cognate, we can say categorically that it is false. The Angel in this age does not address itself to organisations. It speaks to individuals – always and only. One cannot organise the Body of Christ. The wind blows where it will, and so is every one that is born of the spirit. What the visible churches and covens do represent, is circumstantial evidence of an Inner and invisible Order of initiates. This is an Order one cannot join. One is born into it by the process of initiation.

Freedom, Consecration, Power, Service

The Angel teaches freedom, and that in the widest and deepest sense imaginable. We speak of the Free World, but that is mere propaganda. The Angel, by contrast, proclaims freedom of an authentic kind, the emancipation from every form of bondage that afflicts the soul. Freedom from oppression, repression, restriction and coercion – that is the thrust of the message from cosmic central in the human heart. This includes freedom from the impulses and obsessions of the false self, of cultural idols and imperatives, and the various deceptions and seductions of a pseudo-utopia, a freedom which is conferred by the revelation of the

true self, the Angel. While on occasion it must be actively appropriated, defended or even fought for, it cannot be realised outside this revelation, and apart from a progressive identification with the Angel. Alone the Angel, the authentic self, is free.

If it were enquired by the sceptic, does not the total domination by the Angel in itself represent a form of bondage, we can answer, no – not by any means. For the voice of the Angel issues from the core of one's own being. As the authentic voice that speaks from the heart, it cannot be experienced as constituting an imposition; this quite apart from its liberal and liberating thrust as such. This message is inspirational in character, and although inspiration may compel, yet, paradoxically, in acting upon inspiration we are free.

The history of religious repression rather indicates the ease with which the purity of the divine discourse can be degraded. Two equal and opposing errors are to be avoided in the pursuit of freedom, and the spiritual path in general. These arise from the twin notions that freedom is obtained either by self-indulgence or self-control.

Let us first consider the latter. A religious individual wishes to be free from *sin*, neurotic habits which constitute the anchor of the personality and restrict the authentic function of the soul. If a Catholic, the person will confess to a priest, do penance and fight the symptoms, pray to Jesus and the Virgin for help, confess to a priest – and so on indefinitely. The rare individual of concerted will may certainly win the contest, but this only means that the offending symptoms have been driven further into the subconscious mind, and the neurotic split in the psyche deepened. This is the victory of the false self, the triumph of the Pharisee. For the greater majority, who lack the necessary concentration of will, it is an ongoing and hopeless struggle of which they are typically

the loser. In either case the ongoing cost in psycho-somatic energy is immense, and the spiritual gain near zero.

The opposite error is that of pushing oneself into all manner of indulgence in the mistaken hope that catharsis, surfeit, or exhaustion will resolve the problem. A more subtle form of this approach is a kind of quietism, wherein the practitioner seeks to become totally passive, usually with the idea that when all assertive volition has ceased, the Holy Spirit will indwell the person. The problem with this approach is that the attempt to make oneself thus passive is but a further, albeit subtle, exacerbation of the ego. The result will be nothing more than spiritual and psychological stagnation.

The truth is that both categories of approach, the controlling and the cathartic or quietist, represent an ongoing and elusive quest, without resolution or positive end. Their only appropriate use is as a tactical device, for a specific purpose, over a limited period, and in a clearly defined domain. Beyond their magical deployment in this deliberate manner, they lead to diminishing returns and ultimate futility. It may be observed that these types of spiritual error have their correlates in the domain of politics, social administration, and medicine. The defining psychology is that of the crusade, the dualistic and interventionist approach, which typically exacerbates whatever problems it is intended to solve.

The revelation of the Angel takes us beyond the usual dichotomy of liberty and control, whereby we become subject to a higher law – the law of inspiration, which issues from the heart of our being. This truth has been expressed in numerous ways. Prophet and evangelist William Branham told his followers: *If you are in Christ, do anything you want to do, for you will have no desire to do any wrong.* Liber Al Vel Legis, the

prophetic Book of Thelema, puts it thus: *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.* The Taoist sage Chuang Tzu stated: *If you want the plain truth, do not worry about right and wrong. The worry about right and wrong is the sickness of the mind.* And in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story* the mandate for the Great Quest is conveyed with the words, *Do what you wish.*

While the enemies of liberty maintain that such an attitude would lead to a state of anarchy and confusion, the opposite is the case. In the words of Heru Raha, freedom leads to sanity. The knowledge of the Angel leads to wholeness. This freedom consists in conforming to one's authentic nature. It is not the arbitrary power to perform capricious acts at random. It is the ability to unfold and express one's attributes without internal or external constraint.

Such inner freedom leads to consecration, the channelling of creative energies into projects of purpose. Hindrances and distractions are discarded and of life becomes structured around the Great Work. What this means in practices is an individual matter. While religious orders, past and present, have insisted on specific rules concerning such things as diet, sexual conduct, and mode of dress, these are usually arbitrary and culture-bound. Indeed conventional ideas of virtue and vice are inevitably so self-contradictory that they are without relevance to the initiate. Generally speaking moral codes are the invention and boast of those who require such for lack of a moral sense. A Rosicrucian injunction however advises that the initiate be attired in the *common garb*, in other words, that he concede to the accepted code of conduct within his community.

Consecration, the focussing of energy, leads to spiritual power, which is the power to create, to redeem, and to heal. As observed in connection with the Abramelin Operation, identification with the higher

principle confers power over lower forms of organisation. Thus the Angel teaches power over nature, and over any spirit which opposes the redemption and emancipation of humanity.

This power is to be understood as power over oneself. In no wise does it involve power over others in a coercive sense, except in very limited and special circumstances. The fact that dictators and tyrants usually plead special circumstances is an unfortunate aside. It is the nature of truth to be subject to abuse. In this connection we should especially be cautious of the so-called Religious Right, essentially right-wing political elements with a religious gloss. They are known by their attempts to introduce the kingdom of heaven through legislative means, often draconian, and their proclivity for the witch-hunt and human sacrifice. Political and military power is, of course, illusory. As Lao Tse remarked, the force which is forced is not true force.

Spiritual power manifests as a creative agency, to influence the universe in a substantial and permanent manner, as it were, from within. The range of these powers is very broad, extending from the elemental and demonic to the angelic realm and comprising all that is needed in the prosecution of the Great Work. This includes powers of teaching and prophesying, of transforming the culture through music and art, the generation of wealth, the healing of disease, and the art of government. It is certainly not incompatible with initiation to seek public office, and to work for improved conditions by conventional means. Indeed many of the powers are quite ordinary and may not attract special attention. However with great consecration it is not unusual for ability to extend into areas considered paranormal. The line is actually quite arbitrary and simply reflects the cultural norm. Yet all are powers of inspiration and creation, and while they include the area of defence, it is not in their

nature to be used destructively.

Spiritual power, as compared to that which is merely occult, is moreover non-arbitrary. In contrast to civil and political power, it equates with authority in the profound sense, as of the prime mover or originator of things. As such it is not conferred indiscriminately, but as an attribute of all-round spiritual attainment. Whereas gifts and callings are said to be ‘without repentance,’ it is to be conceded that, although human potential is a given, it takes initiation to activate the same. Concurrently, by way of an alternative reading, we may affirm that gifts and callings are divinely placed and cannot be altered arbitrarily. This means that it is ultimately impossible to escape one’s authentic destiny. You cannot argue with the choice of the soul.

True spiritual power further manifests in service to humanity. This principle is linked with the concept of *vocation* or *calling*. It posits that each individual is uniquely constituted and placed, and has a unique mission which cannot be fulfilled by another. The nature of this calling, if not understood from the outset, is revealed through the discourse of the Angel. In Liber Al it is stated, *Every man and woman is a star*, implying a trajectory or path which is both unique and glorious, in that, no matter how seemingly insignificant or humble, it forms a necessary constituent of the cosmic whole.

It is further important to recognise that many aspects of service are subtle, in that they may not be overtly apparent to others or even to oneself. The spiritual vocation thus consists primarily in being oneself. Secondly it consists in doing one’s authentic will. Thirdly, as is well worth mentioning, it consists of *not doing anything more*. In this connection it is well to beware of the ‘leaven of the Pharisees,’ of crusaders and inquisitors. Like the missionaries who went out to put bras

on the women of Polynesia, they are running without authentic mandate. Not trusting divine providence and the voice of revelation, their assumed charter is to herd the heathen into the kingdom of God, and this, typically, for their own justification and esteem. Needless to say, this attitude is grounded in ignorance concerning spiritual service. The hearing of the Spirit is the one thing needful.

Transformation And Ascension

The result of the divine revelation is the transformation of the individual to conform to the image of the Angel. Essentially this involves the formation of what is variously known as the theophany, the light-body, the glorified or resurrection body.

Traditions differ as to how this is accomplished. Mystic Christianity propounds the seed-theory, here discussed at length, wherein the Word of the Angel is the seed, which brings forth Christ. By comparison, the Eastern school of adepts, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist or Tantric, enjoins spiritual practice of the yogic kind as the crux of the work. This is the chief difference between these respective systems of belief.

Whether the difference is categorical or one of emphasis is for the aspirant to discover. From a philosophical point of view it would seem that a cognitive change, which the revelation involves, constitutes a more fundamental development, than the commencement of any practice. With the latter it is the *result* of such practice which is of the essence, while the revelation, in itself, *is* the result. It is of course possible for revelation to lead to spiritual practice of some kind, but none are specifically enjoined other than prayer or communion with the Angel. The oriental schools of

yoga, by comparison, provide a complex and structured curriculum, involving nigh every aspect of life.

Essential to any spiritual change is that it should derive from the true centre, the throne of the spirit in the human soul. Change which is purely behavioural produces the intra-psychic split of the religious hypocrite. The spiritual transformation must therefore proceed in an organic manner, as the result of evolutionary development in accordance with the laws of nature. As any change in nature commences on the subtle planes, so is it with initiation. Profound revelation is seldom accompanied by any form of extravagant outward expression. Indeed it would require a subtle observer to notice that anything had occurred at all. All the more permanent and profound are the long-term changes.

When Heru Raha first communed with his Angel, the culmination of some seven years of intense aspiration, he happened to be staying as a guest with friends. None of these were aware, or were ever informed, that anything special had taken place. While it might be imagined, that the adept being exalted in so signal a manner, would at once ascend a podium and trumpet his success to the world, the opposite is usually the case. Profoundly awed by the revelation, the adept will, more likely, retreat a while into contemplation, to assimilate its purport and consider its implications.

By contrast, it is pseudo-conversions which are typically accompanied by intra-psychic commotion and inter-personal drama. Afflicted in this manner are usually those whose religious experience is primarily second-hand, confined to the outer courts of emotion and reason. Such individuals are usually driven by a need to convince their fellows of the superiority of their newly acquired point of view, chiefly because they are not convinced themselves and seek moral support. They

are likely to force abrupt and radical changes in their life-style, primarily to convince themselves that they have undergone a spiritual change, and will go so far as to seek to impose similar changes on others.

A truly spiritual experience, by comparison, transforms a person on the inside, that is, on the *inside of the inside*, in terms of the model presented above. Considerable time may pass, before this transformation manifests in change of a more discernible nature. When this change manifests it will be deep and pervasive, a tectonic adjustment of the foundations of the soul, rather than sporadic eruptions or quakes. Yet the cumulative effect is for the individual to be transformed in ways hitherto unimagined, although in a manner unobtrusive and after the nature of gentle growth. Its fruits are so extensive and profound that they are beyond the scope of any treatise to describe, for they are of eternal significance and concern the cosmic destiny of the individual involved. Concurrently they are manifest in the ordinary affairs of life. Ultimately it will be seen that there is no difference between the two.

This broaches a subject which has generated much interest, as well as controversy, in recent decades, namely the question concerning *rapture, translation* or *ascension*. Understood by these terms is a kind of discontinuous change, whereby subjective reality is changed *in an instant*, from the conventional to a supra-mundane, ‘higher-dimensional’ or spiritual state. The language may be vague, the entire concept conjectural, yet it constitutes a core of deeply held belief among a diversity of enclaves, as well as an apocalyptic myth which has surreptitiously entered the collective imagination.

Its manifestations are numerous; it figures as an article of doctrine in Pentecostal churches, it informs ‘extraterrestrial’ and other exotic New Age cults, and it appears in certain schools of Magic. In popular

imagination it involves the intervention of space-alien or some spiritual agency to save the chosen from the catastrophic end of a dysfunctional world. The strength of the idea may be gauged by the recent suicide of some thirty-eight members of the *Heaven's Gate* organisation, who were motivated by a variant of this basic belief. Indeed throughout history groups have gathered on mountaintops and in deserts to await an event of the kind indicated. While such incidents reflect the extent of spiritual despair to which the human race is subject, the question remains why it should take this particular form.

What are we to make of this strange belief? Does it have a legitimate basis, or is it a delusional wish phantasm? It is, of course, the charge of the sceptic that the religious postulate as such rests essentially upon wishful thinking. Yet the fact that it accords with human aspiration is no argument against the basic premise. Why should the universe be disinclined to fulfil the basic human desire for life and meaning? All reductionist arguments to the contrary are no more than post hoc rationalisations of an intuitive choice concerning the nature of reality. They come into play only if one grants the reductionist postulate, the assumption that its minimalist way of seeing defines the limits of the actual. But as knowledge is expanding at an exponential rate in a universe of possibly infinite depth and complexity, such assumptions are unwarranted.

If one thus grants the premise of a conscious and infinitely creative universe, some form of apotheosis of consciousness and meaning seems a likely destiny. As previously noted, natural processes appear informed of purpose. The aim evidently is not merely the perpetuation of life, but the generation and conservation of complexity, the widening of possibilities, and therefore transcendence of prior conditions. We notice further that, at

certain critical stages of growth, there is catastrophic or discontinuous change. A child is conceived and for some nine months there is gentle growth, perceptible only in its cumulative effect. Then suddenly, in a relatively short space, the matrix is ruptured and an altogether altered state supervenes as the child is born. Birth, death, and the casting of a seed – these are some of the discontinuous changes in nature.

And if, as I have argued, that nature is consistent, we can expect a climactic consummation of the redemptive or evolutionary process wherein mortal life is sown as a seed in its ascent to transcendent realms. Traditionally this was thought to occur at the point of physical death. Yet in the full flowering of the Tree Of Life, which is redeemed humanity, death is vanquished and dimensional ascent in full consciousness becomes viable.

While nature thus supports the concept under consideration, its origin in human consciousness derives from sacred literature. Among primary source documents for the relevant teachings is the Bible and its apocryphal accretions upon which innumerable cults have been founded. However the concept of ascension can be found in magical cultures from ancient China to the new world. It has become evident that the entire thrust of the great ceremonial cities, such as Giza and Teotihuacan, was to furnish the magical means whereby this might be achieved. As a historical mystery the sources of the tradition and their various interconnections are still being elucidated. Yet the Bible speaks of ascension not only prophetically, but in terms of precedent. We may begin our search with the patriarch Enoch, according to *Genesis*, the seventh from Adam and the father of Methuselah, the most long-lived of mortals. Of him it is stated simply: ‘And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.’ This cryptic verse is the full extent of Old

Testament reference in the concerning this particular sage. However the Hebrew scholar St. Paul, who was familiar with the relevant traditions, states that, ‘By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.’

A piece of the puzzle is provided by William Branham, who stated that it was Enoch who built the great pyramid of Giza. The Stellar Cult of the Egyptians and their quest for physical immortality may thus be understood as an attempt to emulate the legendary ascent of Enoch. This suggests that the Hebrew patriarch Enoch (the name meaning *teacher* or *mentor*) is to be identified with the Egyptian Osiris Ra, whom the Greeks named Thoth Hermes Trismegistus, an opinion echoed by Eliphas Levi in his *Transcendental Magic*. Osiris, regarded as mythological within orthodox Egyptology, was understood by the ancient Egyptians, as the fount of wisdom and divine understanding, the source of the arts and sciences. This tradition was perpetuated by the Neo-Platonists of later ages, ultimately becoming enshrined in the modern lore of the occult which refers to the Western mystery tradition as *Hermetic*.

The next Old Testament reference concerns the Hebrew prophet Elijah. Of his illustrious career we shall only concern ourselves with its climactic conclusion, where Elijah is found in the company of his disciple Elisha, whom is trying to shake off a part of a magical ordeal. After various symbolic stations they come to Jordan, for Israel the boundary between the Wilderness and the Promised Land. Their crossing the river signifies death and spiritual rebirth. Elijah strikes the waves with his robe and the waters subside. This indicates that he has conquered death, for the robe is symbolic of the theophany, the body of light. Having resisted all attempts of Elijah to dissuade him, Elisha is tested further. He is asked what it is he seeks, and answers, ‘a double portion of

the spirit that is on Elijah.’ He is promised his desire if he is able to see his master depart, that is, if he can remain conscious and focused in the presence of God. Elijah then ascends heavenward in a chariot of fire.

These accounts represent primal archetypes, foreshadowing that which is prophesied for the consummation of the ages. Thus the scriptures correlate with the book of nature in testifying of the event in question. For the solar adept, in communion with his Angel, these are likely to resonate with the purport of the divine revelation, seeing the Angel is the author of both the above. The Angel therefore teaches ascension, translation, or rapture, as the final stage in the growth of the human Tree of Life.

In popular exegesis reference is made to an acceleration in vibrational frequency of the psychosomatic unit, which results in the transfer of consciousness to higher, more inclusive, dimension. In conventional terms this would denote a departure from this Earth, and the arrival on a planet, in all respects the equivalent of ours, but in pristine condition. It is the earth in its archetypal condition, as it exists in the mind of God. One could imagine magical cities, palaces set in alchemical gardens of delight, huge forests and vast untamed wilderness – the synergetic projection of the body of the redeemed.

Where is this planet, this alternate universe? Due to the holographic nature of space-time-mind, and the interpenetration of dimensions, we may not have far to travel at all. Although it may be beyond the stars, we are also aware that heaven – the mystical land of hearts desire – is right here. The concept of the mind-dependent universe suggests that alternate worlds are right within our intimate sphere. Compare the saying of Jesus, that the kingdom of heaven is within. If this be so, we are speaking of the eventual reification of the spiritual seed. In

the words of Terence McKenna, we shall internalise the body and externalise the soul.

While it is thus customary, especially in New Age teachings, to invoke scientific conceptions to substantiate the mystical assertion, we should beware of pinning the revelation down to the extent of our scientific understanding. Faith, revelation, intuition – these, according to our thesis, reflect a faculty beyond intellect. And it is to this higher faculty that the angelic voice, the book of nature, and any genuine mystical treatise is addressed. These three, being of commensurate verity, testify to the truth here considered. Whatever the Angel reveals, wherever the Angel leads, these for the individual are quite ordinary and altogether natural. For the Angel is the self, not another. It is also the reality structurer, and this not in any idealised, but in the most prosaic, sense. What the Angel states either *is* real or *becomes* real.

All individuals on this planet, it must further be understood, are thus attuned to *some* inner voice; all are persuaded of something. Thus all individuals inhabit, in essence, their own reality vortex, so that a meeting of souls is a meeting of worlds. However there is a vortex which is common to humanity, represented by the Angel as the eidolon of human nature, and thus the foundation of authentic communion, with the universe, with the self, and with one another.

Chapter Five

CULTURE AND THE CULTS

Name thy rapture for thus will you burn.

Elixir Incunabula of Selma Olanta

The Matrix Of Persuasion

Within the mindset of post-modern pluralism it is now widely accepted that reality is something heterodox, a matter of personal attitude and belief. Foregoing chapters have established that every individual inhabits a unique reality vortex, centred upon a mysterious attractor called ‘I,’ and informed by an intuitive archetype, the reality structurer. In some respects this is a mere commonplace. Experience is necessarily unique for each individual. Yet only initiation – a certain amount of magical experience with alternate points of view – can provide an inkling of the stupendous diversity that may obtain in the realm of ideation, and the gulf that may separate one mind from another. The nature and extent of that diversity must furthermore remain a mystery by all ordinary reckoning; nobody ultimately knows, what it is like to be another. We may wonder how nature is at all intelligible, and communication between individuals possible.

Yet pluralism is not the only factor. In Chapter 4 I argued for a transpersonal and universal attractor called the *Angel*, defined as the inherent essence, the ‘thusness’ of nature, ultimately identified as the authentic self. I further believe I have shown the Platonic ideal of

‘objective’ truth to be logically inescapable, where *experience* is objective verity, thus affirming cosmos against chaos, intentionality against randomness, and meaning against the void. As most would agree, *something* is clearly there. Yet controversy reigns concerning the nature of that something. Belief in this matter can unite or separate, and the social and political realities of this planet make it evident that division is in many respects the dominant force. By some imp of the perverse, humanity is fixated upon the parochial and partial, to the detriment of a more inclusive vision.

This, as I have shown, is the consequence of projecting the deity elsewhere. As a result, an idol is born, and idols are invariably worshipped with human sacrifice. The mechanisms involved may be overt or subtle, but the reality remains the same. A further result is alienation, cosmic isolation, or separation from divinity – however we conceive of that something which mars the image of humanity. And in that isolation, our spiritual nakedness, so to speak, it is perhaps not surprising that groups and individuals are prepared to defend their *covering* (religion, ideology, or creed) with often insane passion.

Here we need to consider the reifying power of mutuality. I trust most of my readers will know the magic of sharing some belief or perception with at least one other sympathetic person. Whatever that something shared, it immediately takes on a greater significance; it becomes more real. Ideas widely held and sufficiently repeated become correspondingly irresistible. This is implicit in the social contract, underlying the unacknowledged but tacit conspiracy to support one another in the mutual reality. For most of us the relevant cues form part of the shelter against the ultimate existential confrontation, wherein each individual faces the absolute – spiritually naked and alone. No wonder

that we perceive intimacy as something miraculous, as we are literally bathed in the bliss of affirmation and meaning that accompanies the deep and sustained communion of souls.

Reality, whatever it is perceived to be, is thus shaped in the forge of mutuality. The shared intuitive archetype is thus energised and takes on a transpersonal dimension. This is the beginning of cult and culture, the concomitants of a mindset shared by a particular community. Yet, as the process is perennial, and one in which we are all embedded, reality is mostly taken for granted. Individually and as a culture we have some fairly settled convictions about life, the universe, and the concomitants of being human on this planet. This is largely due to the self-reinforcing tendency of any culture; education and the ongoing process of socialisation comprises initiation, so to speak, into the prevailing cult, and the cult becomes reality.

Descartes' Demon

Yet far from the crowd, in the lone sanctuary of the soul, the individual wonders. How certain is this edifice of our affirmation? Can we be sure of anything? In solitude the existential doubt which we might harbour comes to the fore, asserting its gravity against the consensual orgy of hubris. Philosophy is the formal expression of this activity, intended to buttress our intellectual citadel against doubt, mental entropy and cosmic despair. In this rational age, defenders of the orthodoxy are concerned to demonstrate that our system is, in fact, rational, that we have good cause to think and act as we do.

A celebrated contribution in this line concerns the work of the seventeenth century philosopher and mathematician René Descartes.

Concerned to establish a system of knowledge secure from scepticism, Descartes asked if there is anything which it is impossible to doubt. What of the material universe? Can the evidence of the senses be trusted, or is it possible that this world is but the phantom of a malignant demon, intent to deceive us? He concluded that there are no self-evident means of deciding the matter. The deliberations of the reason, he argued, were likewise questionable. Yet he found that he could not doubt his own existence as a thinking being. This led to the famous *cogito, ergo sum* – I think, therefore I am. Consistent with the prevailing thought of his age, he further argued that God *is*, and that the same would not deceive him concerning the evidence of his senses. Thus to the effigy of an external God, he felt compelled to add an external (and, as I have shown, fictitious) universe, the ‘real’ and ‘objective’ world, independent of experience.

From the perspective so far developed, it is relatively easy to unravel the Cartesian conundrum. His (contrived) existential doubt is evidently necessitated by his a-priori division of existential reality into mind and matter. For, when experience itself is discarded as the sole reality, existential truth is effectively banished *elsewhere*. That ‘truth’ henceforth is open to radical doubt. Yet his confrontation with doubt remained on the level of a pseudo engagement. Today, his opus necessarily strikes us as insincere and inconsistent, a sophistic exercise in Jesuitical piety (Descartes was a papist). It appears the prevailing hegemony of his age, of which he remained the prisoner, effectively forbade authentic confrontation with naked existential reality. The religious orthodoxy had to be upheld as a first consideration. As his dilemma is perfunctory, so is his solution contrived. Failing to question his more fundamental premise, the division of the ontological continuum

into mind and matter, he realises that the resulting philosophical difficulties are insoluble as they are intolerable. Thus he opts for a solution by fiat.

Here again we expose the arbitrary core of the rational edifice, its irrational foundation in a clandestine marriage with religious faith. Yet, as I have also demonstrated, a leap of faith, an intuitive synthesis, has to be brought into play at some point. Without it, intellect leads to the void of interminable deconstruction. It is scientific doubt, reaching its logical conclusion, undermining the edifice of knowledge, and the validity of scientific method as such. This should be clearly recognised, and the impasse of the rational stance acknowledged. As to the necessary leap of faith, it should be recognised for what it is: a creative act at the archetypal level. As such it need not be a leap into the dark, provided we do not relinquish rigour at the archetypal and intuitive domain.

It is the latter error which lies at the root of the rational worldview. The reasons for this are partly historical. For the theological doctrines, which formed the intellectual foundation of modern Europe, were decided on the basis of political decree in the chaos of ecclesiastical councils. When Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire, the authentic genius of the faith was deposed, and the inventions of an apostate clergy became the pronouncements of the most high. As a legacy of this inauspicious beginning, science has failed to secure its metaphysical foundations, effectively disowning an entire domain of discourse, and concentrating its efforts on the proscribed universe handed it by the Church.

Subversion Of The Ostensible Real

Under philosophical scrutiny the flimsy nature of the rational edifice becomes apparent. Undermining itself in the infinite regress of deconstruction, it is shown to be without ultimate foundation, its metaphysical underpinnings the result of ideological chaos. Equally vulnerable is the reality construct on a personal level, a situation reflected in ubiquitous existential angst. Given the partial and parochial nature of that construct, the bubble of modernist culture cannot indefinitely withstand the shock-waves of a larger and ever more pressing reality. What for Descartes was a philosophical diversion, becomes a confrontation of critical augury, when existential doubt becomes actual and ontological foundations dissolve. This is the experience of individuals whose worldview is undermined by contact with the Abyss or the alternate realities of exotic cultism.

The experience may be fearful or liberating, yet as a scenario it is relevant to our culture as a whole. For all are persuaded of *something*, persuaded, in effect, that reality is such-and-such, without ultimately being able to account for their beliefs. Reality as such is a matter of habit, rather than deep conviction, as evidenced by the derangement of mind so easily engendered by anything mildly non-ordinary. For the majority the determinants of persuasion, the processes which shape reality, are informal, circumstantial, involuntary, and largely unconscious. We do not expect the ordinary person to reach down, as it were, to the foundations of the mind, and change his or her beliefs at will. Yet, regardless as to how they were acquired, our beliefs do not appear to us as arbitrary, and we are often willing to defend them a great length. In truth, nothing is so sacred to us as our beliefs, for our self-concept is ultimately nothing more than those beliefs. Nevertheless, there is no telling when, how, or under what circumstances our worldview and sense of self may be radically

undermined and subverted.

It is possible to define three basic types of response to the existential uncertainty which afflicts our age.

The first is that of the so-called sceptic, who will routinely brush off all suggestions of an alternative or non-ordinary kind as the fulminations of lunacy. Such individuals often pride themselves on being rational and sceptical, and the literature often refers to them as such. What is frequently overlooked, is that such people are also avid believers, in that they believe in the unassailability of their own position with an unshakeable faith. One cannot argue with such a person. Their professed rationality is usually no more than token, or, at best, operative within certain proscribed limits. They are typically in denial concerning any fact which does not accord with their worldview, no matter how well attested. Reflection and self-critique is alien to such individuals. The proper designation for this kind of pseudo-sceptic, whether scientific or religious, is that of *fundamentalist*. While theirs is ostensibly a defensive stance, under certain circumstances such individuals are profoundly vulnerable to suggestion, as their capacity for self-deception is virtually boundless.

The second is that of the vacillating and emotional type. Such individuals, given appropriate circumstances, are easily awed, fascinated, and enticed. To some extent we are all thus impressionable (with the exception of the third group – see below). Studies on cults have revealed that there is no particular personality type or socio-economic class that is susceptible to the claims of predatory cults. Many of their members are well educated, with commensurate achievements in every ordinary sense. However, human longing runs deep, and conventional reality at its best rarely addresses the gamut of human aspiration. Such individuals,

accordingly, are aware of some unrequited need, and are prepared to venture beyond the consensus world to explore alternatives. Such, at least, is one construction. Another is, that they have fallen for an elaborate psycho-spiritual trap. In either case, the truth in such matters is rarely black and white, and quite beyond conventional analysis.

The third is that of initiates and sophisticated travellers in alternate worlds. Individuals in this group are aware, that all conceptual realities are the construct of a ‘demon,’ a species of creative intelligence which orders the primal chaos of no-mind into a sensible universe. Yet it should not be imagined that mere awareness of this fact places an individual beyond the possibility of being glamoured and enticed. While the solar adepts, who know their Angel, are beyond the grosser types of deception, only those who have crossed the Abyss are fully immune. However, even a degree of cross-cultural awareness and pragmatism in the realm of belief, confers emancipation from the worst forms of ideological excess.

On a more fundamental level, individuals in the first group do not differ profoundly from those in the second. Indeed their differences may be seen as merely situational. The former have found a cult to suit them, while the latter are in a state of flux. Psychologically, these are like two sides of the same coin, and one may turn into the other at any time, given the circumstances which trigger conversion. For, as long as a person is committed to the idea of truth in the conceptual realm, in a set of propositions or teachings, that person is subject to the possibility of conversion by a cult. Expressed more radically, only those who are cultists already, phenomenologically speaking, can be recruited into a cult. And this, bar rare examples of emancipation, is the social norm. Only the essential attainments of initiation – the Angel and the Abyss – render an individual ontologically autonomous and capable of

maintaining a personal identity against the forces of proselytism.

The Dynamics Of Conversion

The question as to how different claims come to be judged as plausible or thinkable in various cultures is very interesting. The psychological process is rarely what it seems. Critical thought, the supposed filter of the irrational, is profoundly irrelevant where human aspiration, affection and desire is involved.

Take any controversial issue where basic realities clash, say, the alleged situation concerning so-called flying saucers or UFO's. For some this area provides a stimulating and fascinating realm of enquiry. To others the subject is profoundly distasteful, the province of crackpots and cranks. For yet another group the subject is one of neutral disinterest. Thus that a mere word or phrase may conjure up a whole universe of associations in the mind of a subject, which have little intrinsic connection to the object in question. These associations are largely unconscious, and, for the most part, unexamined. It is therefore not reason, which is ultimately persuasive, but *suggestion* which commends itself on subliminal levels to the individual's sensibilities and ideals.

Defining life choices thus tend to be made on the basis of intuitive affinity at an archetypal level of ideation. A subtle network of psychic currents informs the social nexus, and determines both individual and collective belief. This is the aforesaid Magical Circle, the associative matrix by which one connects with other individuals, with ideas, places, times and experiences. The familiar notion of *good connections* is mirrored on the magical plane, where it corresponds to one's relationship to different kinds of information. For each individual the magical

universe is necessarily unique; there are some experiences which are habitual, some which can be obtained with some effort, some which are out of reach, and some which are not even contemplated. Individuals and groups move within streams of varying parameters in these areas. The resultant reality is thus a function of subtle magnetism or sympathetic resonance within the associative matrix, a ‘magical’ conjuring act whereby the universe manifests as ‘real’ the image or icon that is present in consciousness.

In the literature on predatory and destructive cults, a great deal of space is usually devoted to the documentation of devious tactics of recruiting, indoctrination, and social control. While only the most extreme of these tend to be physically coercive, it is to be admitted that many are adept at psychological manipulation. This nevertheless begs the question, why supposedly mature individuals can be so profoundly vulnerable to suggestion. Does it not suggest a social norm of gross spiritual and psychological immaturity? And is the proliferation of cults not ultimately a reflection of that immaturity?

The entire cult phenomenon must therefore be seen in its wider social context. Every culture has its dark or unacknowledged side, some aspect of human aspiration and sensibility which is unacknowledged, marginalised, or driven underground. It is these aspects, whether congenial or pathological, that find expression in cults. Such cults may therefore be seen as the necessary alter-ego to a mainstream cultural agenda that is too narrow and heavily proscribed by taboo. Cultism, in this sense, is the social equivalent of the fragmented personality.

It is this fragmentation, both on the personal and social level, which predisposes toward cultic activity. While the circumstances of religious or ideological conversion differ, it is ultimately the quest for

wholeness, which is the intuitive driving force. Implicit therein is a distrust of the inherited worldview, making alternatives seem more attractive. When doubt and dissatisfaction and become acute, everything may be called into question, and the accepted worldview radically subverted. The ephemeral and arbitrary nature of belief suddenly becomes appallingly clear. Doubting the validity of accustomed beliefs, of sanity and salvation, in short, of reality as we know it, there may be nothing to prevent the slide into existential despair.

It is in this void of no-meaning, that the unprepared individual is most vulnerable to suggestion, and, therefore, the fascination of cultic allure. In this vacuous state, which equates with a kind of existential death, there exists the maximum potential for influence, either for good or ill, in a subsequent rebirth. In cases of deliberate indoctrination this principle is abused, so as to implant the desired ideology all the more deeply into the unconscious bedrock of the psyche. Yet in terms of initiation, the experience is one which must be confronted sooner or later. It is the opening of the Abyss, potentially the gate of liberation for those who can fearlessly contemplate the void, and escape the potential pitfalls of denial, fixation, fascination, and the clutches of psychiatry. Confronted with this situation, certain individuals – rare spiritual giants – may attain enlightenment in a single stride, that is, the emancipation from all identification with conditional thought, and the realisation of pure consciousness or the unqualified self.

For others there are intermediary steps. Unable to face the psychic void, these individual seek for ‘answers,’ which, in our opinionated and cult-ridden society, are always readily provided. The upshot, for better or worse, is that one set of beliefs is replaced with another, possibly equally unfounded and contrived. Mere conversion, it should be understood, is

not initiation. The former may involve a purely lateral shift in the continuum of ideas, without advance toward a more inclusive point of view. In the collective arena, most typical of this type of shift is the political revolution, wherein, after extensive chaos and upheaval, the reformed structures resemble the old in everything but name. Cognate in the religious domain is the kind of conversion wherein subtle vices replace the gross – arguably a gain, but a situation profoundly treacherous.

Yet there is a path for the seeker to follow. The objective at this stage is not to become a convert or believer, but to gather experience. This is best accomplished through sympathetic, yet critical immersion in a diversity of cultural and spiritual paradigms. This will lead to recognition of the relative nature of so-called reality, and the artificial character of most forms of persuasion, without the trauma of existential despair, conversion and sectarian fanaticism. It will rather be realised that, at the cultural level, a multitude of meaningful constructions are possible. This has the result of broadening the base of one's spiritual temple, so that the error of bigotry is subsequently much less likely. For the creative and self-responsible individual, therefore, opposing cults may provide the necessary stepping stones toward release from cultural fixation, and, by subtle degrees, from conceptual bondage altogether.

What Is Truth ?

For the sophisticated aspirant the above may seem commonplace. Yet the ingrained tendency toward monolithic and monotheistic conceptions predisposes the seeker toward the ideal of a single truth. While, from a philosophical standpoint, it appears necessary that truth

should be one, it is equally certain that this truth is not found in the spiritual market-place of cults, churches, and esoteric fraternities. Yet a constant stream of individuals convert to highly specific belief-systems, with the idea that this constitutes a spiritual advance. This is the usual hallmark of the spiritually immature, who narrow their focus in the search for a god after their own image, the god which exists as the projection of their ideals. Given the diversity of the cultic continuum, most very likely will find a cult to meet their expectations, even if only for the reason that these cults are in themselves only the result of such projections.

Accordingly there are cults suited to every temperament. Some appeal to the intellectual type by offering complex teachings, while the emotional aspirant finds fulfilment in a cult centred on devotion. Some may look for scientific language, while others are impressed by cryptic jargon. The legalistic may seek out a cult requiring labour and sacrifice, while the artistic will gravitate to a path of introspection and creative self-expression. For the idealist there are utopian cults, and for the practically minded, cults offering services to humanity. In addition there is the situation to be considered wherein the individual will, by a kind of reverse psychology, embraces a cult radically opposed to his or her natural inclinations, ostensibly in the belief that such is the way of spiritual advance. In either case, the spiritual quest degenerates to the level of indulgent self-seeking, and the gratification of having one's personal prejudices confirmed on a cosmic scale.

There is nothing much wrong with this, provided it is eventually realised that such activity has nothing to do with truth or spiritual growth as such. The cult encounter rather provides a mirror to the soul, displaying dormant attributes in an externalisation of hopes, fears, ideals, and aspirations. Even the most negative cult experience can be turned to

advantage, in view of what it reveals about an individual and the relevant culture. Such portraits-of-the-artist-as-young-man are to be regarded as a prelude to genuine spiritual illumination. It is desirable that the individual first understand his or her true nature in the human sense, so that when contact with the Angel is made, there is greater scope for authentic dialogue.

It is the knowledge of the Angel, to emphasise a previous point, which constitutes the cornerstone of spiritual truth. Without the benefit of such guidance, ordinary mortals are in the position described above – bemused, vulnerable to suggestion, and without authentic ontological foundation. For we live in a world which provides no absolute certainty in any ordinary sense. As for the inspired scriptures of whatever persuasion, supposedly the objective standard of truth, these require initiated insight for their apprehension – insight at a level altogether beyond the letter of the law. Where it not so, this educated age would have produced a surfeit of enlightened Masters.

There can be no absolute truth in dialectical propositions, and from an absolute perspective, all intellectual debate is inane. Truth, as the sophist Crowley maintained, is the quality which generates assent, and this, as we know, differs profoundly from one school of thought to another. On examining the various theological factions, we usually find earnest and illustrious exponents in all of them. It is somehow fatuous to suggest that one of them has somehow found the right way of putting words together, while the rest are either too wicked or stupid to recognise that fact. We can therefore categorically deny the claim of any group or organisation to be in sole possession of the absolute truth. Indeed, owing to the nature of the case, the very claim amounts to a serious disqualification in the domain of credibility. Under these circumstances it

will be useful for the beginner to consider respective belief-systems primarily as a *path*, rather than look for absolute truth therein. The relevant question is, how functional and effective are the lives of the people espousing a particular belief?

As for the truth itself – while learned opinion diverges at the paradigm level, at the very foundation of thought, the entire controversy is no more than a semantic diversion. Let the seeker therefore beware of becoming partisan, but learn what can be taught of any position.

Truth, in the ordinary sense, is whatever is experienced as real. And this, as demonstrated by the forest of cults and cultures, is a matter of temperament and disposition.

Truth, in the philosophical or spiritual sense, is that which cannot be taught in any ordinary way, and it would be presumptuous for the student to take a position concerning the matter.

As Wittgenstein remarked, whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent. And as the Truth is not to be found in the jungle of cults, this is all we shall presently say on the subject.

The Jungian Shadow

A type of conversion was mentioned above, wherein the individual undergoes a radical polarity shift and embraces those traits and attributes which were previously dormant – that aspect of the self which is sometimes referred to as the Jungian shadow. This ‘shadow’ constitutes the repressed, and unacknowledged aspect of the personality. Like the dominant personality, it is a partial fragment of a potentially psychic whole. Characteristically it will consist of those traits that are most remote to the dominant self. A person, undergoing this type of polarity

shift, will therefore exhibit profound personality changes, and this typically in a vehement and belligerent manner. For, the greater the polar extremes involved, the greater the fanaticism with which the new ideals are usually pursued.

The shadow, in the larger sense, consists of primal and primitive urges, barbaric and atavistic energies from the pre-dawn of humanity, which became submerged with the rising tide of civilisation. Freud saw that, while sublimation is a real possibility, civilisation essentially equals repression. He focused his theory specifically on the repression of *libido*, the sexual drive. The contribution of Jung was to propose a collective or racial unconscious, the common well of suppressed ideation reaching back through aeons of time. In addition to the spectre of sexuality, he identified various additional archetypes, which concentrate and channel currents of psychic force. These include symbols of transcendence, of mythopoeia, magic, and idealised projections of god and goddess.

Different cultures find different ways of accommodation with the shadow. In every society, no matter how refined and ordered, provision is made for the expression of unbridled and orgiastic energies. Witness as examples such institutions as *carnivale* and the phenomenon of ‘running amok.’ Among ancient Greeks the principle found expression in opposing Apollo, the god of clarity and order, with Dionysus, the god of indulgence and revelry, whose respective rites were given due recognition. Where such provision is lacking or inadequate, sporadic violence may provide the necessary catharsis to prevent psychic stagnation.

In the ordinary course of events, the process of individuation or integration consists of gradually merging the two polarities in a larger and tempered synthesis. This, essentially, is the work of maturity. But in

the situation here described, the sense of identity is merely transferred from one fragment of the personality to another. It is the former self which is now repressed, as the reformed personality converges entirely upon the said shadow.

To invoke the shadow can therefore be perilous. If exposed too rapidly, it may come to dominate the personality with a vengeance. Unleashing psychic energies suppressed for generations, it may cause considerable chaos. Certain cults, classed as *Typhonian*, deliberately invoke these energies, with the object of subduing and incorporating them into the spiritual hierarchy. Other cults of more sinister augury centre on the actual worship of these primeval and unenlightened forces. These are exemplified by the Cthulhu mythos, ‘invented’ by the writer of horror-fiction H. P. Lovecraft. Occultists nevertheless tend to take the view, that Lovecraft saw and described, albeit in his garbled way, a portion of the astral universe.

The shadow is usually aroused by some external stimulus, and, under certain circumstances, it may be called forth on a massive scale, thus engulfing entire populations. A stark and notorious example concerns the developments by which the National Socialists under Hitler were swept into power over Germany, returning a supposedly civilised nation to unheard-of savagery. As was then the case, the energy associated with this type of polarity reversal is typically atavistic, primitive and highly destructive. It is in situations of extremity, such as want, agitation, hatred or fear, that the totalitarian current typically takes hold to engulf a people in its tide.

This exemplifies the vulnerability of the partial, uninitiated psyche to glamour and ideological seduction. Our example shows how individuals and entire nations may be seduced into the maelstrom of

powerful magical currents, whether for good or ill. It demonstrates the ease, given the environmental stimulus, with which apparently rational and cultured individuals can arrive at conclusions radically at variance with their former conviction. It also re-emphasises the fallacy concerning the rational faculty in the formation of a particular worldview. Preconscious intuition rather than rational thought is the basis of belief formation, a process greatly compromised by prejudice and cultural conditioning, as by desire and fear.

While it is therefore true that beliefs are ultimately chosen, only the initiate takes conscious responsibility for the choice. For the majority the process will appear as one of intellectual or moral imperative, to the extent that it is reflected upon at all.

War In Heaven

Extremist cults are among the most derided phenomena in the contemporary media. Yet the typical manner of presentation is such that it indulges precisely the kind of cultic and sectarian attitude it deplors – the *us and them* mentality. Cults are usually recognised as such to the extent that they are exclusive and distinct. But distinct from what? – *Other cults*, is the only possible answer, including the cult of consensus reality. Cults are symptoms, signalling the break-up of the culture. Their presence indicates the absence of a common spiritual centre, the failure of the dominant paradigm to offer consolation and meaning. They are also symptomatic of the fact that all cultures have a dark and unacknowledged side – a domain of taboo. Here the unconscious currents of a culture reside, consolidating into more or less distinct channels, occasionally gaining strength to challenge the established order.

In this context the distinction between culture and cult becomes ambivalent. Both terms denote specific reality tunnels, a more or less exclusive set of attitudes and beliefs, which are the basis for a particular mode of life. Yet in practice the label of ‘cult’ is typically projected upon groups that are of the *other*, not of the party making the attribution.

Cults thus tend to be viewed as an aberrant phenomenon, affecting a sizeable, though limited, section of the community. This is to deny totally the cultic nature of the cultural mainstream. Every ideology, every partial worldview, from naive social realism to academic scepticism partakes of the essential nature of a cult. Organised religions are cults, so also are political movements, as well as movements in the arts and the intellectual world. Their cultic nature is overlooked in that the cult-terminology is applied selectively, and in that the myopic nature of any worldview is not usually recognised by its adherents.

The media response to cult extremism is standard. When thirty nine members of the Heaven’s Gate organisation committed suicide in 1998, ostensibly in order to rise to a higher plane of consciousness, this was greeted with the usual mixture of ostentatious concern and the assumed superiority of fashionable scepticism.

What is interesting about this particular case is the clinical and organised manner of the exodus. This was not the chaotic scattering of bodies we recall from Jonestown, Guyana. The group ran a website to inform the world of its views and intentions. It left videos of personal testimony to the same effect. The presentation was rational and, on the whole, dispassionate. Members calmly explained their resolve to leave this earth for a better world, involving exit in the said manner, and a rendezvous with an alleged UFO trailing the comet Hale-Bopp. This resolve they put into action. Their bodies were eventually found, covered

in shrouds of purple, and peacefully reposing in their beds, their souls departed – who knows where? There was no sign of overt violence; the post-mortem impression was one of ceremony and ritual deliberation.

In typical fashion the suicide was deplored as tragic (perhaps rightly so), the cult phenomenon derided, and a token amount of soul-searching displayed, before media attention shifted to other sensations.

The implication in such treatment regarding the exotic claims of cults in general is that, *of course*, we know better. The orthodox bastions of science, religion, and consensus opinion combine in such a case to the effect that whatever the exotic claim, it is without substance. This, of course, is not explicitly stated, as any recognition of the central issues would at once generate a torrent of controversy. Despite media hunger for sensation, most news agencies tend to be conservative in this respect, and collaborate in the conspiracy to ‘keep the lid’ on the issues involved, by implicitly denying the need for serious discourse.

If, as a culture, we are honest, we must concede that we do not know enough about the universe to categorically deny the claims of exotic cults like Heaven’s Gate. Higher planes of consciousness? – who knows! A UFO in the wake of Hale-Bopp? Unlikely perhaps, but inconceivable? Who, unequivocally, could make such a claim, other than by dint of sheer dogmatism?

What the cultural attitude displays is the denial of its own cultic status, denial which serves as a cloak for its own anxiety in the face of existential uncertainty. In this situation it becomes necessary to create the maximum possible distance between so-called normality and anything perceived as a cult. Cult members must be stigmatised as brainwashed or crazy – certainly as abnormal in some way.

Such denial may reach hysterical proportions, even in supposedly

rational and responsible authorities. Recent history furnishes an example wherein the combined forces of the police, the FBI, and the US army were deployed against a group of civilians huddled together in a farmhouse in Waco, Texas. This group, centred around apocalyptic preacher David Koresh, was of harm to nobody but itself. Yet it was attacked (children and all) with the weapons of psychological warfare, poison gas, helicopter gunships and tanks in a scenario bizarre to the point of surreal. The resulting massacre was displayed on national television worldwide, yet it did not apparently register with the majority of viewers that a massacre had taken place, presumably because it was labelled as an accident.

This is a tragic example of cultural blindness, and the ideological war between conflicting cults. It exemplifies the extent to which even a supposedly moderate government feels obliged to go, in order to defend its religious orthodoxies against dangerous mutations. Implicit is the notion that any form of violence may legitimately be used against those that are perceived to be sufficiently different. And cult-members, as everyone knows, are second in this regard only to aliens.

It is clear why the very existence of any partial and exclusive cult should be an affront to any other such cult – the more so as their respective claims tend to be absolutist. The stakes, understandably, are high, for what is at issue is reality itself, salvation and the sanctity of a cherished way of life. This explains why individuals routinely become insane on the subject, willing sooner to sacrifice their humanity than relinquish their cultic affiliation. All ethnic and sectarian violence is essentially cultic in nature. The so-called war on drugs is an example of cult warfare, as is the damaging treatment routinely inflicted on psychiatric patients with electro-shock, psycho-surgery and psychotropic

medication.

Thus it is also apparent why proselytising is such a ubiquitous phenomenon. This questionable pastime is not restricted to the realm of eccentric cults. Many people hold certain views which they will defend with insane and irrational passion, and to which they feel compelled to convert others as a matter of course. This attitude is born out of the insecurity that attends any cultic, and therefore partial, worldview.

As suggested earlier, ideological warfare is also a phenomenon that may be entirely intra-psychic. In this case conflicting viewpoints will stage interminable passionate disputes within the psyche of the hapless individual thus afflicted. In an aggravated state, the various ‘factions’ persecute one another. In extreme cases the result may be suicide. It is further evident that intra-psychic scenarios are reflected in social realities, and, vice versa – social realities are internalised as fixtures of the subjective realm.

Cults On The Inner Planes

We should be aware that many cults and cult phenomena are invisible. This is mostly due to the selective use of the relevant descriptive language. Consider: the Society For Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishnas), the Unification Church (Moonies), and Scientology are widely referred to as cults. Methodists, Baptists and Pentecostals, by contrast, are regarded as mainstream churches, with all the sanctity this implies. While in relation to, say, eco-freaks, computer nerds and acid-heads, we speak of *sub-culture*. The distinction is arbitrary; it reflects cultural bias and carries connotations which are in themselves cultic and sectarian.

It is further important to realise that not all cults have an overt hierarchical structure. Cults exist in the minds of their members, who, as a group, are induced to think, feel, perceive and act in certain ways. This does not mean that the inducement is necessarily experienced as a form of coercion. Cult members and ideologues usually protest that they are free and their mode of life entirely voluntary, that their views are the result of mature reflection, and that no-one but they themselves is in charge of their lives. The most dangerous cults, therefore, are perhaps those which are so subtle and unobtrusive that their influence is not even suspected. Yet it is a matter of record that members of even the most manipulative and exploitative cults insist that they are free and self-responsible agents, and their lifestyle the result of personal choice.

This indicates the extent to which ordinary people are prepared to justify that of which they are persuaded. A more extreme example is observed in the psycho-pathology of abuse victims, where this tendency manifests as the attempt to justify the aggressor. Victim, worshipper, free-thinker, or believer, all are persuaded of something, and this persuasion is the essence of the phenomenon called ‘cult.’

We are therefore now in a position to refine our understanding of the concept. A cult is a defining mindset, shared by a group of people, which predisposes them toward common views, ideas, perceptions, values and modes of behaviour. Being on a similar wavelength, such people will be naturally inclined to form associations with one another. Birds of a feather flock together. It is irrelevant whether or not such a group has an overt organisational structure, or whether it is even perceived as a discreet entity by itself or others. Formal and outward affiliations are, in any case, quite arbitrary. It is one’s inner orientation which determines to which group one belongs. This means that formal

hierarchy and social structure is secondary in practical significance to an informal arrangement, which reflects the actual psycho-dynamics of the players involved. Common experience bears this out.

According to the esoteric view, the thought-form or egregore which informs a particular mindset or cult has an independent existence within a psychic continuum called the akasha or astral light. This theory well explains a number of interesting phenomena which would otherwise remain mysterious, such as the behaviour of crowds and the phenomenon of mass hallucination. Another is that of historical coincidence, observed in the frequency with which individuals in various parts of the world independently have the same idea or make the same discovery. It explains why the various cultural sub-groups with which we are familiar are so self-similar and predictable, regardless of whether they are found in Berlin, Tokyo, or Johannesburg. It further explains how certain individuals can gain information, and develop in ways, not readily explained in relation to their physical environment.

Occult theory informs us that the information we attract to our Circle is consistent with our psychic constitution, so that the magical link on the inner planes is formed on the basis of sympathetic resonance. The obverse of this principle forms the basis of psychic self-defence. By these means it is possible for the practitioner, skilled on the inner planes, to gain access and initiation into a wide variety of cults and covens without leaving his temple. Esoteric philosophy concedes that the psychic continuum is probably unbounded and universal. Access to information is therefore dependent on making the appropriate link. The analogy to cyberspace is more than fortuitous. Mental space, like cyberspace, constitutes an n-dimensional hypersphere, where in principle a direct link may be established between any two points or ideas.

There are, therefore, many ways of coming into contact with powerful cults of the most diverse kind – through the printed word, films, music, art, as well as in ways which do not involve any external stimulus. In the latter case it will be a matter of intra-psychic development which activates a previously dormant aspect or faculty of the subconscious mind. It should of course be realised that, in any situation, there is an entire universe of subliminal cues which constitute the psycho-biological underpinning of any mental state. Mental states do not exist in the abstract, but only and always in the context of the whole existential gestalt. Psychological atmosphere, a phenomenon difficult to quantify, can in itself precipitate a specific reality, or prevent its manifestation, as the case may be. It is no mere accident that the Serpent, the biblical tempter of mankind, as always been portrayed as a master of stagecraft, of glamour and fascination, and as the Prince of the Powers of the Air.

Ceremonial magic may be seen as the attempt to gain initiation on the inner plains through contact with appropriate energies residing in the subconscious domain. Here we are referring to not merely the personal sphere of remote ideation, but what may be called the universal unconscious, the cosmic web of information, to which any individual, in principle, has access. Any coterie, coven, or cult may thus be accessed in the astral or akashic world, and initiation obtained by the subtle practitioner. As in cyberspace, to extend the analogy, physical proximity is irrelevant. Everything hinges on satisfying the warden of one's right to enter, by providing the appropriate access code.

Another way of contacting the inner worlds, long the province of tribal and indigenous cults of initiation, involves the use of psychedelic substances. The object of the relevant shamanic journeys may be tribal welfare and cohesion, physical and spiritual healing, the vision quest, or

any knowledge concerning the natural environment. It appears that all aboriginal cultures originally possessed an ecstatic cult of subtle gnosis through psychedelic means. This in itself goes far to explain the astonishing range and depth of the relevant knowledge base.

Angelic And Demonic Cults

Cults are characterised and motivated by the spiritual energies which inform them. These comprise various hierarchies of angelic, elemental, and demonic forces, as diverse and complex as the physical manifestation to which they give rise. Cults are therefore most meaningfully grouped on the basis of the defining intelligence, daimon, or genius which by which they are guided. To the extent that cults, covens, or coteries are differentiated as such, they are the manifestation of a specific thoughtform, or egregore, wherein the various strands of their constitution are united in a coherent gestalt. Powerful cults, such as the great religions, and influential political movements, have a quasi-iconic and archetypal presence on the astral plane. Immediately recognised by most individuals, they conjure an entire universe of associations, which, while different for every individual, also have many points of similarity.

Apart from a central defining core, all cults are spiritually heterodox. The pure or perfect cult, church or brotherhood does not exist, except in the Inner Sanctum of the Great Order which is above the Abyss. The cults of this world are therefore not a resting place, but a stepping-stone and a tool for spiritual learning. Initiation has been defined elsewhere as the accumulation of spiritual discernment, whereby truth is separated from error. The challenge in this age, as previously stated, is

moreover so subtle that only the Angel can accomplish the task. However a few general observations can not be out of place, so long as they are taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

An *angelic* charter is apparent wherever a cult or individual brings something new into the world that is of benefit to humanity. Creativity in the broadest and most wholesome sense is the hallmark of angelic inspiration. The result may be a song, a new medicine, or a formula of initiation; anything of value, whether common or rarefied, is the embodiment of divine energy. That spectacular results can be achieved in conscious co-operation with angelic forces is widely attested. Some readers may recall the extraordinary experiment of the Findhorn Foundation, in which a community in alliance with the deva kingdom achieved extraordinary results in the realm of horticulture in a windswept barren locale of northern Scotland. Subsequently attracting worldwide attention, it is but one of many successful attempts of living in harmony and creative partnership with nature.

As for the spirits of the *elemental realm*, these are amoral in character, as indeed the forces of nature are judged to be. The nature of their influence depends entirely on the ruling intelligence by which they are organised and impelled. They are, however, subject to natural law which must be respected in any dealings with them. Where nature shows her destructive or recalcitrant face, this is due to the failure of the ruling cults of the earth in this regard. A firm but subtle command of elemental energies is necessary in all practical affairs. The required subtlety being partly qualitative, it has been overlooked by science. Thus it remains to restore a viable civilisation – culture as a way of containing nature, not obliterating it.

The *demonic* hierarchy may be defined as a set of spirit beings of

varying rank and intelligence, which have become separated from the cosmic nexus of sustenance and power. As such their power and ability to sustain themselves is limited to the extent that they can appropriate the faculties and vitality of a captive humanity. It is for this reason that legions of demon armies are intent on constantly extending the domain of their influence. This generally accounts for all forms of propaganda and ideological warfare, as for the proselytising activities of many cults. The means employed to this end tend to be a subtle mix of seduction and coercion, often with violent rites of initiation and what may be described as psychic rape. The ultimate aim is to enslave the individual, destroy their link with the Angel, and make them utterly subservient to the demonic agenda.

As for demonic activity, in its more belligerent forms, it is fairly easily identified. The demonic aspect of the cult phenomenon is principally apparent in the divisive and sectarian nature of most cults. Demonic intelligence being partial and internally divided in its ranks, its influence must necessarily result in separate and mutually exclusive enclaves of loyalty. However the mere fact that a group is exclusive does not make it satanic. The reasons for such exclusiveness must be taken into account, as well as the fruits thereof. Moreover, the merely exotic, the strange, or unconventional – these need not arouse our suspicion. But evil inventions are the mark of a satanic cult.

Other signs of demonic activity include notable symptoms of degradation, whether physical, mental, or moral, and any form of exploitation. Exploitative cults tend to diminish and abrogate personal responsibility as the first step in enslaving their victims. 'Let God, let the Master do your thinking,' is the relevant directive in what constitutes a perversion of a spiritual truth. Demonic control is evident, where cult

members act with robotic sameness, are depersonalised, and lacking in spontaneity. Nature does not behave in that way. Where members are utterly conventional and shallow, void of authenticity and human depth, that cult is also most sinister, as is the cult where you never get a straight answer. Exclusive emphasis on a limited range of emotions, such as *either* elation or sorrow, must be regarded as suspect, as must the fanatical fixation on minor points of doctrine. Sanity, as Aleister Crowley remarked, consists principally of due proportion in the realm of ideas. Obsessive compulsive activity is therefore to be regarded as demonic, as is hysteria, chronic anxiety, and morbid preoccupation with suffering and doom.

To the extent that any of the above symptoms are in evidence, they are a sure sign that all is not kosher in the camp. Energies are being diverted into inimical – satanic – channels, regardless of who they say is God.

It may be asked, given the relatively straight-forward nature of the case, why abusive and destructive cults are so prevalent. Part of the reason is historical. Mankind is spiritually so demoralised, that sacrifice in the service of abominable gods is quite the norm. But this begs the question of how the situation arose in the first place. Here we must point to the extraordinary capacity for deception that obtains in the spiritual realm. Popular imagination tends to paint religious evil in crude primary colours – the inquisition, the crusades – but these are only the final exacerbations of a spiritual error which begins imperceptibly. The aetiology is fully discussed in Chapter 9. Suffice it here to say that both truth and error is found wherever people congregate in whatever cause. There is an inherent grain of truth in virtually any cult or religious sect, and this, more often than not, is what attracts its members.

Possessed of the wisdom of the serpent, demonic entities dispose over authentic secrets of an occult nature and do provide initiation of sorts. However the results are likely to be uneven. The acolyte may acquire various powers, but without the overall development and emancipation which the knowledge of the Angel confers. Indeed the attainment may come at the cost of being vampirised by the initiating entities. Total allegiance to a narrow sectarian cult may also prevent development along more comprehensive lines. Spiritual stasis, if not outright decline, will gradually supervene in such a case. Of these the former is potentially more insidious, as the individual, content with partial or pseudo attainment, relinquishes the spiritual quest, and devotes his career to the promotion of some cult.

Most cults furthermore rule their subjects at least to some extent through fear. Consider statements such as: *There is no salvation outside the Catholic (or Mormon or ... etc) church.* Or, *To do anomaly research is to be classed as a crank.* The transgressor is threatened with excommunication, perhaps a ruined career, possibly eternal damnation. In instances more subtle, the appeal is directed to the individual's sense of loyalty, patriotism or idealism, to adhere to the cause, to uphold the true faith, or whatever more. A form of emotional blackmail is employed to keep the individual in bondage.

Such forces need not always be consciously directed. Within any institution of cultural depth, such normative forces appear to be automatic and self-perpetuating, the result of a subconscious, and therefore largely unacknowledged, but deeply shared conspiracy to keep things as they are. Thus it is the hardening of a partial and myopic mindset into dogma, which accounts for the intransigence of certain phenomena, the utter irrationality of so much human behaviour, the maddening disparity of

cult and culture, heaven and hell, psychoanalysis and the death penalty.

This explains why initiation must be seen as a form of spiritual warfare, and why magicians and mystics are universally considered subversive. For theirs is the power to unloose the girders of sanity and civilisation; the acid of their doctrine dissolves the foundations of the established order; their influence is to loose the shackles of humanity and to open the doors of any prison. This is the reason for the persecution of visionaries and prophets. Theirs is a direct attack on the gods that are worshipped of men.

Cultism Versus Initiation

The main danger of the spiritual path is this, that the partial view of any cult becomes exalted as the sole and absolute truth, and any given doctrine, instead of being regarded as the means to an end, becomes the object of worship. This is the nemesis of fundamentalism, and spiritual stasis is the usual plight of its victims. Fixated on the *form* of the spiritual teachings, the mere letter of the law, such individuals tend to be resistant to all other sources of information. Caught in a web of their own making, a web of words and religious emotion, they remain thus trapped unless they are willing to destroy that which holds them in thrall. In the extreme such individuals are more likely to volunteer for ritual suicide than question the cult that exploits them. But it is not my intention to incite iconoclasm. The truly insidious idols are the idealised projections of the human mind.

The appropriate attitude to guard against this type of error is that which has been called *model-agnosticism*. This is the view which holds that any explanation or model of the universe is just that – a model,

possibly useful, but to be accepted only provisionally, and subject to replacement if a better theory comes along. To worship the model or theory as absolute truth is to fall into idolatry, and the student of the mysteries is most earnestly warned against such. The temptation, be it understood, will most assuredly arise, as the neophyte, venturing upon the subtle planes, is bound to encounter images of unimagined terror and splendour.

To exalt one's personal concepts to a level of universal verity is to make some lesser spirit into veritable godhead, and a demon is thus empowered. Impersonating the deity, the demon will exact worship and devotion, and the worshipper thus deceived, becomes the slave of a demonic cult. Enclaves of demons subsist of the energy and devotion thus accorded them, and tend to exploit the situation by demanding ever increasing submission and deference, up to and including, human sacrifice. These enclaves, naturally, do not advertise themselves as demonic, but pose as respectable religious institutions of whatever persuasion. Let the initiate therefore regard any claim of absolutism with the utmost reserve.

Another danger and potential trap in this pluralistic world is that of distraction. There are innumerable cults, which promise much but do not deliver. While at first less dramatic in their impact, these cults, too, can be devastating when the spectre of a wasted life suddenly rises up to haunt the seeker. A similar fate befalls those who make a career of moving from cult to cult, without making genuine progress of any kind. These are usually individuals who abrogate personal responsibility as regards their salvation, expecting some external authority to take charge of their lives. Invariably disappointed, they shake the dust off their feet and move on, fortunate indeed for not having been eaten alive by

Moloch, who waits for such to devour them.

Let the student therefore reflect, that new habits of thought, a new vocabulary, an altered point of view – in short, immersion in a particular cult, does not necessarily imply advance toward enlightenment. The result may be a broadening of the mind, and that is good. Indeed immersion in a wide variety of cultural paradigms is the best possible foundation for initiation, but it is only the foundation. Cults are therefore stepping-stones on the evolutionary path, to be traversed as needs may be, but ultimately to be transcended. What is at first a stepping-stone may later turn into a wall, barring further progress. Cultism, in this latter sense, the solidification of any partial point of view, then becomes the adversary which needs to be overcome.

One should therefore distinguish between religious cults and schools of initiation. The former present a belief-system, the latter the means of criticising the same. In terms of spiritual dynamics they are opposed, as two sides of a coin, although they may appear outwardly as one and the same. For belief, in the conventional sense, is but the veil of tradition which veils the fire of God. Initiation is that which opposes belief by doing away with the veil and manifesting gnosis – spiritual revelation and communion face to face. Those who cherish their delusions do not seek initiation. For the spiritual axe is laid to the root of every religious and ideological tree that does not bear the original fruit of the Tree of Life.

The polarity of cultism and initiation is expressed in the alchemical dictum ‘solve et coagula,’ and exemplifies the intrinsic tension between transcendence and immanence, between spirit and matter, between energy and form. Both are necessary for the universe to manifest. Culture and cult thus represent the *vessel* of the magical force, as does another

word of four letters, and if the vessel is holy, it is a conduit of holy fire.

The Cultural Continuum: A Feast Of Cults

This is an age of unprecedented proliferation of cults. Esoterically speaking it is a time of harvest or consummation of the present world-age growth cycle. This implies that every ideological seed ever sown is coming to maturity in this age. Every cult, ideology, teaching or practice that ever was, has its adherents somewhere on earth today.

In a sense this is hardly surprising. The cult phenomenon is totally consistent with an age of pluralism, hyper-specialisation and social fragmentation. The world of knowledge has become so vast that any individual or group can only command a minute fraction thereof. Cultism arguably has become a necessity, in so far as it creates islands of coherence in an otherwise uncoordinated universe. It represents an intermediate step between the monolithic cultures of the past and what we may call the united souls of the future.

It is therefore not unreasonable to expect the hardy initiate to benefit from selective and conscious association with specific cults, whether formal or informal. The access to information, the reservoirs of energy, the human resources of skill and experience, wisely used, cannot but accelerate individual progress. As with any association, there are of course certain cautions to be observed. It should be ascertained that the aims of the group in question are consistent with the individual's aims, and that there is compatibility of values and ideas. This is especially important to the beginner, who has not yet formed a conscious link with the Angel, and whose individuality may be undermined rather than strengthened by contact with a powerful cult, no matter how benign.

Presented below is an overview of some contemporary cults, both religious and secular. They are classified according to type, as determined by a certain consistency of outlook, doctrine, and practice. Needless to say, a formal model of this kind involves simplification, which belies both the complexity and fluidity of the phenomenon. The reality is probably closer to an interweaving of subtle strands within the cultural continuum, than a set of spiritual enclaves with static and clearly defined boundaries.

While the descriptions aim at being objective, without any value judgement being intended, they reflect of necessity the observational bias of the author. Nor do I claim that any degree of justice is being done to the traditions and organisations here represented. Let it also be understood that the term *cult* is used here in its broadest sense, denoting either a belief system, a method of attainment, or the two in combination, without any derogatory note intended.

Yoga Masters – Osho, Gurdjieff, Babaji

In this group are cults whose founding leaders motivate their students to work on themselves, following broad yogic principles. The emphasis on ways and means differs from group to group. Some focus on quasi-Tantric techniques of controlled ecstasy, some focus on wakefulness and self-confrontation, others may work with a refinement of yoga technique like pranayama, as in rebirthing or conscious connected breathing. It should however be noted that the overall approach of most groups is much broader than these simplified portraits suggest. Yogic technique is remarkably similar in traditional societies around the world, and it is merely the points of emphasis which differ

with culture and climate, and the preferred methods of individual Masters. This should not surprise us, as yogic disciplines naturally arose in response to the common human situation, the human attributes and the perceived laws of nature. It suggests that, in the absence of an imposed ideology, people everywhere are likely to come to similar conclusions concerning the nature of reality.

These similarities, moreover, are not confined to matters of practice, but extend to theory, which usually comprises an entire cosmology, with a derived social system, a moral and judicial code, and a path of initiation. The essential unity displayed by the various systems is perhaps transcendent vindication of the general principles involved.

Exegetes And Sophists

In this group we can include Theosophists, Anthroposophists, armchair occultists and followers of Jungian depth psychology. The emphasis in this category tends to be on the gathering and dissemination of information through research, public lectures, reading and writing. Spiritual practices within these circles tend to be private, individual and eclectic. Exceptions of course exist, such as the notable and ongoing contribution to early childhood education of the Steiner Schools, named after their progenitor and founder of Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner. However the prime contribution of these groups appears to be the communication of esoteric teachings to a wide audience. Witness the prodigious output of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, whose *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled* have become classics in their field. Equally stupendous is the opus of Alice A. Baily, produced in co-operation with the Tibetan adept Djwhal Khul, which

comprises some twenty-five volumes of concentrated and masterful exegesis.

Psychism, Accelerated Learning, Human Potential

This group comprises organisations which disseminates tutorial information, usually at a fee, in the art of mind-control. Individuals tend to work in private, and follow their own agenda. The emphasis varies, but tends to focus on successful living in the present world. The common thread, uniting these groups, is the reasonable belief that through proper use of our faculties we can achieve superior results in all areas of human functioning. Techniques employed include self-hypnosis, neuro-linguistic programming, types of trance, subliminal suggestion, techniques of mental and emotional hygiene, operand conditioning and psychoanalysis.

Deist And Messianic Cults

These are usually tightly knit groups, centred around the teachings and charismatic influence of a single individual, whether living or deceased. They are usually centred on the assertion that so-and-so is God, with the inevitable tendency of projected worship. While superficially dialectical, the majority of these cults emphasise collective bonding through emotional affect and catharsis.

A number of such groups have in recent decades acquired considerable notoriety in the world media, on account of the chaos and tragedy in which they involved their members. Inspired by a cataclysmic eschatology, some of these have resulted in multiple violent deaths in apparent conformity with self-fulfilling prophecies. The phenomenon

reveals the possible extent of manipulation, paranoia, and mass hysteria in the religious domain, of which cult leaders, incidentally, are as much the victims as their followers.

However it also reflects the spiritual bankruptcy of our age, and the potential desperation of ordinary individuals in search of salvation. If ordinary people by the thousands routinely succumb to the spell of exploitative and destructive cults, what does this say about contemporary culture? While it is popular to sermonise on the evils of cults in general, we should reflect that they represent the necessary counterpole to the bland and spiritually desolate post-modern world.

Christianity

From the atheist theologians of Jesuit Rome to the snake-handlers of Louisiana, no other source document has been interpreted as widely as the Bible. The thousands of cults based on this Book are so diverse that it is barely credible that they derive from a common origin. At the extremes, they not only have no point in common with each other, but display no similarity with the original message as preached by Christ and his intimate disciples.

This is true historically, and it is true today. Millions today confess themselves to be Christians, yet its central doctrine of vicarious atonement is known to few, understood by fewer, and believed by hardly anybody. Indeed the ostensible message of the gospels is so radical that no church dares to uphold it in its purity. According to the Pauline epistles the believer is made perfect forever through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This truth becomes operative when it is believed by faith. This faith is revealed by a being called the Holy Spirit, also known as the

Angel of the Lord.

Satanism

Satanism in the contemporary world is equally diverse. At one end of the scale we find nothing more sinister than a jolly band of eccentrics who find in Satan an appropriate symbol for their bon vivant life-style. At the other end of the scale – reports differ, but we should be prepared to entertain the idea of a criminal conspiracy of cosmic scope. Very broadly, the philosophy of Satanism is that self-interest is the primary driving force in nature, and which therefore should be acknowledged and celebrated as such. It also involves a reaction to metaphysical obscurantism and hypocritical piety in its insistence upon the world of the senses and the enjoyment thereof.

Neo-Paganism, Wicca, Ecological Mysticism

This group of loosely federated individuals is concerned with the revival and maintenance of the ancient arts of geomancy, herbal lore, and sympathetic magic. Pagan practice combines shamanic technique with symbolic ritual, in a calendric paean of seasonal celebration, various rites of passage, and in the practical affairs of life.

The pagan gods are the powers of nature personified. Being attuned to natural forces, pagans tend to work in close association with the deva-kingdom – the hierarchy of nature spirits or subtle energies of elemental intelligence. As such they may also be allied with the universal dreamtime confederation of indigenous cultures on the astral plane.

The broad aim of wicca and paganism is the restoration and

preservation of the world-grid – the matrix of geo-magnetic forces which is the foundation for life and consciousness on the planet – and the furtherance of ethical and responsible attitudes toward the natural environment of the Earth.

Magick And Occult Science

Magicians tend to work alone or in small select partnerships. Drawing on the work of historical Magi such as Solomon, Abramelin, Agrippa, Doctor John Dee and Aleister Crowley, the successful magician sooner or later develops his own eclectic methods, thus contributing to the ever-expanding field of the occult arts and sciences.

The curriculum of Magick (the ‘k’ being added to distinguish a sacred science from charlatanism and legerdemain) includes psychic self-defence, astral exploration, divination, the evocation and invocation of subtle forces, whether elemental angelic or demonic, and the creation of talismans – objects concentrating some particular type of energy.

Magicians not infrequently publish their work, thus ensuring the survival of the tradition.

Psychodrama, Art Therapy, Human Encounter

This school of thought is devoted to the notion that much of human potential is locked in unconscious regions of the mind, but may be liberated through a range of symbolic and affective behaviours. These may be appropriately stimulated and developed through role playing and various other forms of creative activity.

To this end mythological or Jungian archetypes are employed in a

deliberate evocation of specific aspects of the collective unconscious. Through ritual re-enactment of primal scenes, events of defining import, the release of associated energy patterns may be effected, thus resulting in a modification of the psychic imprint. Once appropriately expressed, the emotional energies and meaningful purport of subconscious ideation may be integrated into the personality and channelled towards creative ends.

Spontaneous creative activity is further encouraged to enable the obstructed personality express itself with fluency and ease, and various forms of human encounter are enjoined to heighten sensitivity and self-awareness in social situations.

Hedonism And Psychedelia

The Hippie cult of the sixties was a revival of shamanism, reclaiming the ecstatic continuum of nature through communal living, psychedelics, music, dancing and orgiastic sexuality. At its more refined end it embraced the teaching and disciplines of mysticism. Being in head-on confrontation with the dominator culture of the Evil Empire, it was short lived, lasting exactly three and a half years – seven years if you go back to the Beatles, who started it all. As to the flower children of the sixties, some went on to become saints, mystics and leaders of various schools of thought, while the majority relapsed into conservative middle class obscurity whence they arose.

The psychedelic community in the contemporary world represents not so much a social movement as an elite body of researchers, philosophers and healers, committed to the ideal of a psychedelic utopia. Working in a serious and responsible manner, these individuals

increasingly enjoy official sanction, and not least, government funding, whereas their precursors met with persecution. As a result of new and enlightened attitudes, the psychedelic experience is increasingly becoming available to the wider community in a safe and therapeutic context.

Competitive Materialism

The cult of conventional consensus reality in the industrialised world may be appropriately termed *competitive materialism*. This is also the officially sanctioned cult of political and economic rationalism. It teaches that the only real power is political and economic in nature, that material consumption is the purpose of life, and competition for resources a universal contingency.

Without question, it is the most savage and inhuman of all cults ever visited upon this planet. It turns humans into commodities, to be enslaved, exploited and expended in the service of the idol of progress. Thousands of lives are sacrificed annually to this idol, in traffic and industrial accidents, and, where this does not suffice, through famine, war, and disease in convenient corners of the globe.

This is the suicidal doomsday cult par excellence, concerned above all with the speedy destruction of the eco-sphere, our biological foundation of life. It is further characterised by extravagant projects, addictive behaviours, symbolic gratification, ideological schizophrenia and the psychology of denial.

Cyberculture

In response to the dehumanised and highly technological urban environment arose cyberculture. It represents the endeavour to forge a conscious symbiotic link with our ubiquitous partner – the machine. To this end the race is on to evolve intelligent machines, capable of all aspects of human interaction – especially verbal interaction.

This is the logical outcome of the reductionist paradigm which essentially discards human consciousness, and projects ultimate and exclusive meaning *elsewhere*, that is, into inanimate matter and energy. The making and deification of an intelligent, indeed conscious, machine must of necessity be regarded as the holy grail of scientific materialism – the vindication of the relevant worldview.

The inherent dangers in this endeavour are those of reductionism in general – the deliberate or unwitting reduction of human nature and sensibility to that which can be automated, quantised and digitised, so that instead of making the machine in our image, we are conforming to the image of the machine.

It yet remains to be seen whether the cybernetic revolution represents the means to an end, or the end.

Academia

The world of academia is appropriately regarded as a cult, in that it is subject to intellectual fads and fashions, has a hierarchical structure, is tinged with authoritarianism, tends to be exclusive and elitist, and has its own rituals of initiation and provisions for excommunication.

As the new orthodoxy, it is in some respects as intolerant of dissent as the religious hegemony of the Middle Ages. While it generally tolerates elaboration within the existing paradigm, its attitude tends to be

inquisitorial toward any work done in opposition to, or outside the paradigm. Witness the reception of Wilhelm Reich, Emanuel Velikovski, R. D. Laing, and Rupert Sheldrake, philosophers and researchers whose work met with subsequent vindication, yet who were vilified by the scientific establishment of their day.

As was pointed out, scientists rarely change their opinions, formed over a lifetime of work. The succession of paradigms rests on the fact that any generation of scientists sooner or later retires, to be replaced by another.

Chapter Six

TECHNIQUES OF TRANSFORMATION

**Three are the veils before intuitive vision: the cloud of the body,
the swamp of emotion, and the tempest of mind.**

The Grimoire Of Selma Olanta

On Living In A Body

As incarnate beings, within a conscious mind and a sensing body, we have the opportunity to know the universe, as it were, *from within*. The ancients made a science of this, and called it yoga – union.

This chapter outlines a number of practices adapted from shamanic, tantric, yogic, and magical sources with the intention of making them accessible to the modern practitioner. These practices lead to improved psycho-somatic functioning, the acquisition of unusual knowledge, an altered point of view, and the development of abilities usually regarded as paranormal. If there is a single aim which these practices assist, it is the widening and intensification of consciousness. The goal is the flowering of the intuitive faculty, leading ultimately to the fruit of wisdom. Thus realising who we are, and the nature of our relationship with the cosmos, we become aware of the attendant privileges and learn to use our powers responsibly. The yogic path is thus the concrescence of the evolutionary process, leading to conscious participation in the unfolding of cosmic destiny, and thus the self-realisation of man and woman in the universal context. Stated another

way, the practice leads to the recognition that it is man and woman which is the heart of cosmic evolution.

This is not so much a process of accretion, but self-discovery and the growth of certain faculties. The human organism, as stated, is regarded as the universal energy vortex, the concentration of universal intelligence. All that the student needs is therefore found within. The practice of magic and mysticism simply provides the key to unlock these inner treasures. The vortex of consciousness is further embedded in a cosmic web, extending infinitely in mind, space, and time. This web, which we may call the *World Wide Web*, was recognised by the ancients as a matrix of electromagnetic charge and vibration. Called the *Kundalini Shakti* by Vedantists, *Te Ching* by Taoist, and the *Astral Light* by occultists, it represents universal energy in its formative aspect, the substance and foundation of all sensate phenomena. Mind is seen therein as a non-local attribute of the universe as such, opening the possibility of direct access to information by intra-psyche means.

The shakti, moreover, remains dormant until specifically informed of consciousness. This occurs at the moment of cosmic creation, when the universal matrix, unmanifest in the night of Brahma, concentrates the singularity, a point which is the vortex called 'I'. This archetypal process of creation is mirrored on every plane of manifestation. It is repeated when spermatozoon meets ovum, creating a single cell and leading to the birth of a star. The inherent principle of polarity is the crux of creation, a principle which is enshrined in the iconography of esoteric cults throughout the world. A third element is usually introduced, the result of the union of opposites, thereby giving rise to the triad, which represents the equilibration of the forces in manifestation. To this the Vedic adept might give expression with the mantra *Aum Shiva Shakti*. The

comparable Word of Lao Tse, the Dragon of the East, was *Tao Te Ching*, while a Thelemic adept may announce *Nuit, Hadit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit*. What these formulae express, is the fact that, in yoga and tantra, in magic and mysticism, we work in a context of polarity to produce a *magical child*, a spiritual being, which is the object of the Great Work.

The principal aim, in practical terms, is therefore the development of the so-called *light-body*, also named the *theophany*, the *resurrection* or *ascension body*. Whatever term we use, we are referring to a perfected body, free from the accidents and constraints of mundane existence, independent of environmental support, ageless and indestructible. Eastern legends, both Hindu and Taoist, speak of immortals, sages who were able to sustain themselves indefinitely on the physical plane. The Bible likewise records three individuals – Enoch, Elijah and Jesus – who walked the earth in their body of light before ascending into other dimensions, with the prophetic charge that in the consummation of the ages others will likewise obtain such a body and make the dimensional ascent without experiencing death in the ordinary sense.

Viewed in this context, the present state of humanity is not its natural state, but death entered the human race as the result of a cosmic separation, as recorded in legends of the *fall*, the expulsion from paradise. According to mystical conceptions concerning the Golden Age or First Time, death was not part of the original creation. In biblical terms, the union of Adam and Eve would have produced Christ, a god incarnate, had it not been for the original break in the Circle. In this, the grand cosmic conception of the redemptive process, the fruit of spiritual attainment represents no less than a return to physical immortality, the fullness of godhead in woman and man.

Self-Responsibility

The student working with these practices can expect a variety of results, their range and profundity commensurate with the range and intensity of practice. At the very least there should be a general improvement of psycho-somatic function, with positive effect on the quality of life. Where this does not obtain, or negative results are experienced, this should be regarded as due to faulty practice, or the presence of some obstacle or malignant influence within the Circle.

The student working alone, without a teacher or guide, must be prepared to take full responsibility for the intelligent application of these practices, guided by the nature of the results, both immediate and in the longer term. These results should be carefully observed and recorded in a diary. This diary, the Magical Record, is the student's most valuable external asset and care should be taken concerning it. As we are working on ourselves, nigh instantaneous feedback is usually available, and only self-deception constitutes a danger of serious derailment. The student, as a matter of necessity, must therefore be vigilant in the monitoring of mental, emotional, and physical states.

Conditions Of Success

For the serious practitioner it will be helpful from the outset to work in a dedicated temple, a space consecrated to the work in question. Such a space should be chosen and furnished according to the geomantic art of *feng shui*. It should be clean, quiet and airy but without a draught, secluded and free from disturbance. Properly understood, it is a Magical Circle.

Practice must further be regular. Dabbling, for various reasons, is worse than useless and to be discouraged. This is not to say, however, that one should avoid experiment, or cultivate a rigid attitude. The beginner is rather encouraged to find out which practices he or she prefers and specialise in these areas. One should also beware of setting too ambitious a schedule, as only disappointment can result therefrom. Such practices as are taken up should be integrated into daily life, and become as natural a breathing.

Results will naturally follow as long as the student continues to work. Perseverance, in this sense, is the only condition of success. This is not to imply, however, that the road will be equally smooth for every pilgrim. On the contrary, human differences, with respect to aptitude, talents, gift and callings, tend to be surprisingly large. The student is therefore encouraged to find his or her own path and be content therein. And yet, we should not forget the ubiquitous element of grace, whereby the impossible is so often made possible. Lastly the student should not be overly concerned with results, but the practice – say, meditation – should be its own reward. *Art for art's sake* is here the appropriate attitude.

The Integral Curriculum

A program of spiritual arts and sciences should of necessity reflect the entire spectrum of human sensibility and aspiration. It should be a humane or humanist program in the full sense of the word, such as, according to legend, was offered within the ancient mystery schools. In like spirit, the following material is presented with the intention of providing a complete curriculum of initiation. Let it be remembered however that completeness in this domain must of necessity be a relative

term. The relevant literature is so vast, that it is impossible to do more than provide a convenient summary of the essential points, in the hope that our coverage reflects the matter in a balanced and representative way. In an evolving and creative universe, moreover, there may always be new vistas to attain, new skills to acquire, new freedoms to realise. Therefore let the student be at liberty to add to the material, to discard any or all of it, and to modify what is here given in any manner deemed appropriate.

The Human Temple

The unit of bodily feeling and sensation is called the *nephesh* by cabalists, the *ba* by the ancient Egyptians, and the *animal soul* in conventional occult parlance. Also known as the etheric body, the aura or bodily soul, it constitutes a matrix of electromagnetic energy which is the physiological basis of awareness. Let me emphasise that these terms do not refer to the body in an objective sense, but to the totality of *what we feel and sense* while being embodied. When in a healthy state the *nephesh* has *integrity, symmetry, transparency* and *vibrancy*. In experiential terms this means that it is experienced as a connected whole, as a balanced and centred unit, without internal obstacles or blockages, and vibrant with energy. Such is the natural state of the animal soul, which equates with a state of *bliss*.

Among the problems of civilisation is that it has distracted our attention from the primary reality of the *nephesh*, the unit of feeling, and placed it upon the secondary reality of conceptual symbol-systems. As a result, dis-ease has invaded the citadel of sensation, by slow degrees, and largely unawares. For what the medical profession recognises as

symptoms is but the final stage of a long chain of events, beginning with a departure from the healthy state described.

A number of yogic techniques focus principally on restoring the pristine state of the bodily soul. These are the techniques of hatha yoga (or their equivalent in other systems such as chi gong), as well as sacred dance, ritual coitus and massage. The emphasis in these practices is on correct posture, breathing, movement and touch. Their aim is the control of *prana* or *chi*, the flux of bio-electric energy which constitutes the etheric body. When the electromagnetic matrix attains the qualities outlined above, it concentrates a singularity or vortex which arouses the *kundalini shakti*, a latent form of energy which permeates and vitalises the etheric body.

The kundalini is a universal phenomenon. In the human organism it is said to reside ‘as a coiled serpent’ in the root chakra at the base of the spine while in its dormant state. Fully activated, it ascends the *sushumna*, the subtle analogue of the spinal column, and stimulates the *chakras* to optimal activity. These chakras constitute vortices or concentrations of energy in the etheric matrix which correspond to various modalities of consciousness. From the physical point of view, they represent the various ways in which matter has become conscious. The subject is further discussed in Chapter 8.

Paranormal or exceptional ability in any domain is a manifestation of the awakened kundalini. Yet this does not mean that the so-called superstars of the human galaxy have their kundalini fully functioning. The latter condition is extremely rare and individuals thus distinguished tend not to be in the public view. Their aura is such that the average person could not abide the energy differential arising from contact with such as being. However every living person experiences a share of the

kundalini. It is the energy which keeps us alive, and which is experienced in states of sensual or emotional arousal, in those psychosomatic surges of well-being which keep us connected with the body. More broadly it is the field of somatic, sensory, and symbolic perception as such.

The postures of hatha yoga are too numerous here to describe, encompassing the range of what is humanly possible. I will focus on one of these, which may serve as the foundation for other practices. The aim is to acquire perfect ease in one or several postures so that they may serve as a basis for meditation. The posture here described specifically allows for deep relaxation, the somatic basis of a healthy aura.

Savasana – The Recumbent Posture

The chela or aspirant lies supine on a soft, but firm and even surface. The body is aligned along the north-south axis, with the head due north. If this seems inconvenient, the body may be aligned according to the design of the room. The posture is symmetrical, with the hands resting by the sides, the heels placed together, and the feet allowed to open out. The eyes are closed, the jaw relaxed and the tongue touching the upper palette. The sensation is one of comfort and relaxation.

The mind is restrained from wandering and awareness focused on bodily sensation and breathing. Mind and body progressively relax, without however falling asleep. (The student consistently falling asleep in this posture should perhaps consider using an upright position for the following practices.) In the end, a state of relaxation deeper than sleep is experienced, while remaining fully conscious.

Results: The practitioner is likely to be surprised by the ever deepening sensation of well-being which attends progressive relaxation.

Over time this leads to permanently enhanced mind / body integration and overall functioning.

In states of deep relaxation (*deep* in a sense beyond the ordinary), the usual sensation of body-weight disappears and awareness shifts to the etheric body. The etheric body is also called the body of bliss, and appropriately so, for bliss is theirs who proceed to this level. Every cell in the body is quickened with energy, and the various bodily centres merge into a single vibrational field. This state, as mentioned, is conducive to the arousal of the kundalini shakti – in this context, a kind of orgasm of the entire body.

Pranayama – Conscious Connected Breathing

While lying in the posture called savasana, the chela is focused on the flow of the breath. The breathing is deep, slow and rhythmical, but without undue strain. It is moreover cyclic, connecting the inhalation and the exhalation in an uninterrupted loop.

The proper technique for inhaling is as follows: After breathing out, the lungs are filled by first expanding the lower abdomen, then the rib-cage, then by extending the collar bone. For exhaling the technique is thus: After fully filling the lungs, the breath is released first from the abdomen, then from the chest area, and finally from the top of the lungs. The order is therefore the same for breathing in and breathing out – lower, middle, upper lungs.

When executed correctly, the whole process comprises smooth and connected cycles which may be experienced as describing the curvilinear path of a figure 8. Moreover when well established the cycle is quite effortless, with the lungs experienced as a kind of perpetual energy

device and the breath as riding on waves of bliss.

Results: Breathing is an interesting activity in that it may be performed both consciously and unconsciously. As such it forms a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind. Indeed the ancients went further stating that mind *is* breath. The practice of pranayama results in the cleansing of the physical, mental and emotional body. It activates repressed feeling and ideation, so as to be reintegrated into the psychosomatic unit, thereby restoring integrity to the vital or etheric body. Indeed the practice stimulates awareness of this body, so that the practitioner, on becoming grounded therein, may learn to consciously extract the chi or prana from the oxygen so as to derive maximum sustenance from every breath. This leads to a reduction in the need for food and sleep.

Trataka – Gazing Into The Formless Void

This practice is ideally performed in absolute darkness. While in savasana or some other convenient posture, the chela is gazing into the void. If the darkness is absolute, it matters not whether the eyes be open or closed. Otherwise they are closed. The gaze is attentive, yet unfocused and relaxed.

Results: It is necessary to caution that the results described are subtle. The student must be careful not to imagine these, but simply gaze into the formless void, and see what is there to be seen.

What is beheld is the field of vision itself. This field, however, is not empty. Once any after-images have subsided, the darkness is revealed as a swirling dance of unearthly colour. These colours constitute an entire spectrum, and, although unlike the colours of conventional sight, they can

be considered as a reflection or inversion of the same. And as the colours of the familiar spectrum combine to create white light, so these ‘inverted’ colours, in an infinitude of sparkling micro-dots, constitute the black light we call darkness. And this is the surprising revelation; that the darkness is indeed light, and that light of a brilliant intensity.

On reflection it is perhaps quite logical that darkness should be a kind of light. It is after all something visible, and quite unlike ‘seeing nothing’ or ‘not seeing.’

Yet there is a further surprise in store. If the mind and gaze are quite relaxed, the chaotic vista of swirling lights will resolve into an object I have called the *infinite mandala*. (A mandala is a concentric image as found in the sacred art of Tibet.) Its grandeur is awesome. Subjectively it represents the aura in a state of equilibrium or electromagnetic repose. The vision, however, is not static, but the mandala is pulsating with energy. Yet while the gaze remains relaxed, it will of itself repose in the centre. (The act of focusing, paradoxically, causes one to lose that centre, which also disintegrates the mandala.) But if the gaze remains in a state of repose, a further phenomenon becomes apparent. The centre of the mandala opens out like a rose, even as the periphery extends outward. This produces the sensation of rushing inward towards the ever receding point at the centre, giving way to sensations transport or rapture in surges of the kundalini.

On the mental and moral plane, the insights resulting from this practice aid in the so-called *separation of the planes*. This refers to clarity with respect to the boundaries of the perceptual modalities previously described. Specifically it prevents such outrage as may arise when, say, the emotions interfere with the reason, or the reason with the natural functions of the body. The result is a kind of hygiene of the planes

wherein every aspect of our being is free fulfil its function without interference. Indeed all of these contemplative practices are conducive to the kind of clarity described.

Among other health benefits, the practice soothes the eyes and refreshes the associated areas of the nervous system.

Nada Yoga – The Hearing Of The Rarefied Sound

This practice must be performed in a silent place, like an anechoic chamber or the desert. The use of earplugs in connection with this practice is not recommended.

The chela adopts a suitable posture, relaxes mind and body, and regularises the breathing. The attention is then focused on the faculty of hearing. All other mental activity ideally ceases, and the chela listens attentively to the silence, becoming concentrated upon, and utterly absorbed in, the silence.

Results: Auditory space, like visual space, does not comprise an empty void, but it has structure. Like darkness, silence is not a mere nothing. It is the object of a positive experience. After a period of immersion in the silence the optic nerve is cleansed of the pervasive noise pollution, and careful listening reveals a constant sound in the ultra-sonic range (very highly pitched). Analysis further reveals that this sound does not consist of a single pitch or note, but it is a *chord*, the simultaneous sounding of many notes. A whole spectrum of sound is found to be present, extending upward beyond the threshold of hearing. This spectrum comprises what science calls a *standing wave*, in which every possible vibration is present, but the majority of which, by way of an interference pattern, cancel each other out. The result is auditory space,

the audible aspect of the aura, and the container or field in which positive sound is manifest. More accurately, sound is a modification of that field.

The quality of this field varies with the condition of the inner and outer space. The more pristine the environment, the more absolute the silence, the more rarefied is the audible silence. Eventually it is realised that the silence *is* sound, and this is the audible dimension of what the ancients called the music of the spheres. Heru Raha in this connection remarked that music worthy of the name is that which leaves the silence inviolate.

Like the etheric vision described above, immersion in the silent sound aids in the analysis and purification of the planes. Progress in these practices sooner or later affords access to the so-called akashic records, the universal repository or cosmic memory of all point-events (subjective experiences) in the history of the world. There further results a kind of transparency of the planes, a phenomenon referred to as *satvas*, and analogous to superconductivity. This ultimately allows for a transcending of these planes, or their inclusion within a larger frame of reference.

Mindfulness Or Self–Recollection

Throughout the course of life, and as a specific practice, it is recommended that one observe due mindfulness or self-awareness. This is the attitude of being cognisant of present actualities, rather than being lost in reverie and mental distractions. It is a stance of alert awareness of the totality of what is the case from moment to moment. Here the word ‘totality’ refers to the content of ordinary experience, without any suggestion of paranormal awareness. Nevertheless, the practice, consistently engaged in, soon extends the boundaries of perception

beyond the ordinary.

This is due to the fact that ordinary awareness, as Gurdjieff observed, is akin to a state of sleep, and that sleep subject to the dreams and hallucinations which are taken for reality. The objective of the practice is to permanently awake from this semi-conscious stupor into a state of mental clarity. There are further benefits of the practice, which include (1) the correlation of the contents of the mind, (2) improved control of the mind, and (3) a widening of mental perspective.

Here we confront another aspect of the uncultivated mind, the fact that it is far from possessing anything nigh unity or consistency. This is one of the difficulties encountered by the beginner, in that he or she may be rightly disposed to the work one day, and be altogether lacking the faith to persist on another. The phenomenon is further evident in the extent to which the stability of the untrained mind depends on external circumstances. We are aware how quickly, given unusual stimuli, ordinary sanity may disintegrate. Thus in situations only slightly removed from the ordinary, a man may kill the woman he claims to love, or find himself before a tribunal for crimes against humanity. Civilisation for the ordinary individual is thus little more than a matter of normative context. The adept or saint, by comparison, is characterised by constancy in the face of all situations. It is the said correlation of the contents of the mind which leads to control, and thus to integrity.

As a further long-term result, the practice of mindfulness removes the conceptual and perceptual frames by which the culturally conditioned psyche is proscribed. Carried to its ultimate conclusion, it leads to the Zen enlightenment of satori.

Meditation

The science of meditation comprises three levels of attainment:

1. Relaxation. This is a setting free of the energy within the psycho-somatic system.

2. Concentration. This is the focusing of the energy upon a specific object or task.

3. Meditation. This is identification with the object of contemplation, the state wherein the subject and object of consciousness are one.

Having quietened the somatic and sensory realm with the above practices, it is time to focus the attention specifically upon the mind, which is the province of *Raja Yoga*. ‘Raja’ here means ‘royal,’ denoting the highest form of yoga. The objective is to observe mental space, free from conceptual activity, even as we observed visual and auditory space in their pristine and unconditioned state. Like the dark light and the rarefied sound, the silent mind has positive properties which the Hindus call *sat*, *cit*, *ananda* – being, consciousness, bliss. There are a numerous techniques of raja yoga, many involving concentration upon specific objects. The technique here presented is called *mahamudra*, the great gesture.

The initiate adopts a suitable posture, enters a state of relaxation, and focuses attention on the mind, which, be it remembered, comprises the entire spectrum of awareness. The aim is one of global awareness of the intra-psychic domain experienced as a single unit. With success in the previous practices, bodily senses are in repose, so that the more specifically mental functions of thought and imagery occupy the foreground of awareness. Thus the chela observes the flow of mental activity, without directing or getting involved in the same. Self-

recollection is maintained, with a neutral and detached observational stance. Consciousness simply reflects itself.

Results: The objective of this practice is mental poise, or *dharana* (Sanskrit: concentration), which leads to *dhyana* (meditation, or the universe experiences as a single phenomenon), which leads to *samadhi* (one with God), a state wherein the subject and object of consciousness are fused in a transcendent unity beyond the dimensions of time, space and mind.

Sacred Dance, Coitus, Massage

It is generally conceded that there are two paths to the inner sanctuary of the gnosis, the quietist and the energetic. The latter, comprising ecstatic movement and touch, represents a more active approach to the healing of the nephesh, and the arousal of the serpent power, the kundalini shakti. These may be performed according to ritual pattern, or in a free exploratory and improvisational manner. *Sacred* dance in this context does not necessarily mean anything formal, but rather any movement of conscious and holistic intent.

The physical movement involved may range from the barely perceptible to exuberant abandon. Yet when properly performed, these practices *do not produce exhaustion*. This is due to a level of psychosomatic integration, wherein, even during the fiercest frenzy, every aspect of the interaction is under the absolute and minute control of the central intelligence, the nephesh or bodily soul. This phenomenon is best observed by studying orgiastic cultures of Caribbean voodoo, of equatorial West Africa, and of the South Seas. However, one is likely to see stars of the art on any dance-floor where authentic music is heard –

specifically the music of *Shango*, the serpent god of voodoo-drumming, which organises inert matter into rhythmic patterns of creative activity.

Anthropological observations attest to the fact that awesome energies may be liberated by means of such practices. These are often channelled into various displays of paranormal ability – acrobatics feats of strength and endurance, walking on glass or glowing coals, piercing the flesh, drinking poisons or handling scorpions and venomous snakes – all without injury.

These energies, accordingly, must be handled with care. In any practice which leads to liberation on some plane, the rule of thumb is this: that the more freedom or power we appropriate, the more we need to refine our sensibilities to channel the liberated energies safely and constructively. Within traditional cultures safety is vouchsafed by the context of time-honoured and invariant ritual, wherein familiar energies are evoked and channelled in well established patterns. The relevant body of ritual, like the ancient temples of stone, therefore serves as both catalyst and safeguard with respect to the energies invoked.

The contemporary practitioner may seek initiation into one of the many cults devoted to the worship of the serpent power, or with caution explore the matter independently from first principles.

Results – Apart from the paranormal abilities outlined above (and there are many others), these practices lead to clarity of mind, physical vigour and enhanced mind / body integration.

The Magical Properties Of Sound

According to esoteric tradition the world *is* sound, a continuum of oscillating frequencies, which characterise mind-space-time as we know

it. Sound as vibration or wave has the property of structuring the universal matrix of manifestation through the phenomenon of sympathetic resonance. A vibrating object (and according to atomic theory all bodies vibrate) will transmit its vibration to the environment, bringing forth a response in other bodies according to their own vibratory nature. This gives rise to the phenomenon of entrainment, whereby bodies in proximity tend to vibrate in unison.

Among the many examples of this principle we may cite the beautiful sound of a well-rehearsed orchestra, or the extraordinary rapport displayed by jazz musicians. A good band, as everyone knows, is more than the sum of its parts. Another example is the extraordinary repose felt to exist in certain places or rooms where harmony has reigned undisturbed for years. It is in these circumstances that depth may be cultivated. And, as was stated by Lao Tse, it is depth which matters in the quality of mind.

Within most traditions of shamanic and magical practice the use of sound is therefore integral, even fundamental, to the arsenal of techniques. In modern times the availability of recorded music has obviated for many the need for individual music making. After all, why try, when we only have to go to our CD cabinet to select from a galaxy of superstars. Nevertheless, I encourage the modern practitioner of the spiritual arts to engage in some type of musical practice. It need not be the violin. It may be something much simpler like a shamanic drum, a bell or gong, or a simple flute – whatever seems attractive. These should preferably be acoustic instruments (not electronic), where the sound body *is* the instrument. The instrument may be one belonging to a particular spiritual tradition, such as the legendary *singing bowls* of Tibet. Such objects should be approached with reverence and care. They may offer a

gateway of initiation into their respective mysteries, and, as such, they may also harm the careless practitioner.

In the practice of any art one should look for positive feedback. Good practice will result in an improvement in the quality of consciousness. This improvement will subsequently lead to even better performance. As long as this loop is appropriately energised, it will constitute an evolutionary vortex, maintaining its ascending spiral.

Another avenue, with the sanctity of the most ancient tradition, is the use of the voice. The human voice is the most complex of all instruments, and its cultivation has taken the most diverse of paths. Leaving aside its function in the domain of symbolic language, we shall concentrate on the generation of pure sound, specifically the five major vowels: I E O U A. (These vowels, it must be emphasised, should be Germanic or Latin in sound.) The quality distinguishing these five sounds is called *colour* or *timbre*. It is that which gives different voices and instruments their individual character.

When intoning (singing) these vowels, they are found to resonate in various parts of the body. This stimulates the psychic centres, the chakras or vortices of subtle energy, associated with those parts. When the vowels are properly sounded, the resonance correlation is as follows: I – the head, E – the throat, O – the upper abdomen. U – the lower abdomen, A – the heart region. Sounded in this order, I E O U A, the effect is to draw energy from the crown of the head to the base of the spine, bringing it to rest at the heart. This results in a centring of the energy, and thus a state of dynamic repose. Note the close correlation of the vowel sequence IEOUA to the conventional rendering of tetragrammaton, *Jehovah*. The sequence accordingly represents a gnostic formula of creation and incarnation.

Consider now the sequence: U O A E I. Sequential toning in this order draws the energy from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. This represents the complementary formula of refinement and transcendence. Note also the sonic similarity of this sequence – UOAEI – with the word ‘why’. This is most interesting. Why do we ask ‘why’? Because in so doing we vitalise that part of the anatomy best adapted to recognise the answer to that most subtle of all questions.

Being thus armed with IEOUA and UOAEI, the shaman has the means of navigating the polarity between manifestation and transcendence.

The Secret Of Occult Influence

Magical literature is replete with depictions of archaic and formidable rites, as employed by their authors or some illustrious and historical exponent of the art. It would be pointless to add to their number, as it is becoming increasingly evident that using the rituals of others is bad magic. The only worthy approach is to devise one’s own ritual procedures, even as one furnishes one’s own Magical Circle. The basis for this work is the Magical Record, the Conversation of the Angel, and the facts of one’s magical environment as one happens to find it.

The principle of ritual magic is simple enough. One sets in motion a symbolic train of events, which have some form of resonance with the desired result. The questions of interest are these: what is the basis for sympathetic magic? does it represent a real fact in nature? and if so, what is the secret of success?

Is magic a fact? Yes. For magic, properly understood, is the inexorable outworking of natural law. The argument here may be

circular, but this is to emphasise that magic is not the working of haphazard and arbitrary miracles. There is nothing accidental, random, or circumstantial about the world of magic. Unlike science, with its uncertainty principle, quantum randomness and probability distributions, the magical universe is super-deterministic. Here nothing happens by accident or chance; there is no mere coincidence, and no event without meaning. Each atom, each quark is accounted for. It is a universe of synchronistic hyper-connectedness.

It is the rationale of the magical worldview, this super-determinism or hyper-connectedness, where superficial commentators on the subject have erred. For they have presumed a model of cause and effect; wherein, say, the spectre of a robed and hooded figure, waving a wand and howling, *causes* a thunderstorm, or that a particular rising sign in the nativity *causes* a certain destiny. True enough, even many occultists espouse this line of thought, which arbitrarily imports the scientific notion of causality into magical realm, where it has no place. In the universe of magic every event and phenomenon arises independently and spontaneously, moment by moment, from the void. The dynamic principle at play is not causation but correlation.

Consider: *If it starts to rain, I close the window* – mundane event. *If I close the window, it starts to rain* – magic. The arbitrary difference in interpretation rests on the fallacy that the statistical results of modern science *explain* the universe. They do nothing of the kind, for infinite mystery always remains. A few observations are combined with inductive reasoning; it happens to work in a few cases: and – the fallacy of causation is foisted upon us. Consider any scientific explanation. For any question it claims to answer, many more can be raised. If we follow the causal chain of scientific explanation, sooner or later we confront the

final mystery – the first cause. As a philosophy, therefore, science merely offers distraction. I repeat; in the simplest of phenomena, infinite mystery remains. If, following this argument, we see that both of the above events are equally mysterious we are beginning to see the world magically.

The secret of magical power therefore lies in *deep correlation* with the way of nature, conformity to the *Tao* of Lao Tse or the *Dharma* of the Buddhists, in alignment with the first cause. Tribal shamans, therefore, who regularly work successful magic, do so by way of their deep integration with the natural environment. Theirs is the magic of doing what comes naturally, which, by virtue of resonance and entrainment, grounds the practitioner in the natural world. The universe, from this perspective, is understood as an extension of one's being. The philosopher Carl Jung identified a relevant truth when in collaboration with physicist Wolfgang Pauli he proposed *synchronicity* as an a-causal connecting principle in nature. What synchronicity implies is *deep structure* in mind, space and time, an underlying order, giving rise to the visible world. The concept is akin to the *implicate order* of physicist David Bohm, to primal and unmanifest causes, and, ultimately, to the unifying principle of a first cause. This first cause, the reader may recall, we have previously identified with the phenomenon called 'I'. This makes it unequivocally clear true magical power can only be obtained in the context of initiation, considered in this context as deep connectedness with nature. The secret of occult power lies not in bending cosmic consciousness to the will of the individual, but in raising the individual to the level of cosmic consciousness.

Transcending The Reason

Concerning the intellect let it first be clear that reason and the scientific method are our ally in the prosecution of the Great Work. Our mystic aim of banishing thought, therefore, does not in any way imply a devaluing of the rational faculty. The phenomena of reason are as valid on their own plane of manifestation, as the sensory and intuitive functions are in theirs. Accordingly, it is a great a mistake to prematurely relinquish the reason. For on whichever plane we relinquish rigour, on that plane we are likely to be defeated.

Our aim, rather, is to bring the rational mind under control, that it may serve us within appropriate limits, without interfering or diverting attention when it is not wanted. As it is inappropriate for the initiate to be ruled by whim and caprice, so is it inappropriate for the same to be dominated by conceptual thought. This may be a hard saying, in that, historically speaking, reason has barely won the contest over emotion. However, as the rational faculty is not an instrument of truth, the intellect cannot be considered our spiritual home. It is an instrument of analysis and synthesis with respect to the realm of ideas. A higher function of mind – the intuition – constitutes the place of rest.

We must therefore object to the modern tendency of deifying the reason, regarding it as the highest or only valid instrument of knowledge. Like our other faculties, the reasoning mind is a tool to be mastered, and which, having done its duty, should ideally lapse into blissful silence. Yet this, as we know, is not the case. Introspection invariably reveals the mind as a raging tempest, clamouring for constant attention and diverting vast amounts of psychic energy – the result of wrong education over millennia. The pre-eminence accorded the reason further results in a kind of spiritual servitude, wherein the rationalist is imprisoned in a dialectic web of his own making, and the ostensible ruler becomes the ruled.

The intention in yogic practice is to gain silence on the various planes, so that one is (at first temporarily, then permanently) free from the relevant obsessions, and able to observe a particular domain in its pristine, unconditioned or ‘transparent’ state. This is the state of meditation, which, achieved on any plane, allows the practitioner to transcend that plane, and observe its phenomena, as it were, from above. The principal attainment, with respect to the mind, is silence on the plane of mentation. Once achieved, it provides insight into the nature of thought, which could not be obtained by confronting the phenomenon on its own plane, that is, with the *tools* of thought. Thus liberated from the rule of thought, the individual is set to transcend the reason in the ‘crossing of the Abyss,’ a permanent shift in mental polarity from intellect to intuition.

Yet before taking this momentous and irrevocable step, we are wise to perfect our faculties below the Abyss to the utmost, the reason included. For those who master its disciplines, and apply its canon impartially, the reason may become a tool of enlightenment. This is due to the ability of the reason to expose its own limitations. There are two lines of rational enquiry in which we may engage – that of analysis and that of synthesis. These are complementary as well as opposing, and both, as we shall see, lead to an identical result concerning the reason itself.

As noted in Chapter 1, it is doubtful that the path of analysis can ever yield a definitive point of closure. Such a point would be reached with the demonstration of an object of indivisible simplicity. But we have no test for this property. The atomic theory of nature, associated with Leucippus, Epicurus and Democritus, can be dated to around the fifth century BC, and for millennia the atom was held to be the irreducible ‘building-block’ of the universe. This changed around the turn of the

previous century, when Ernest Rutherford (1871–1937) demonstrated that the atom has internal structure. Since that time hundreds of sub-atomic particles have been identified, and it appears that the process of discovery may continue forever. The idea that there is a rational foundation in the chain of complexity must therefore be consigned to the domain of conjecture.

Accordingly it was proposed that the quality of divisibility is inherent in consciousness as a function of the analytical faculty itself. In this case what we are exploring is the nature of the mind. It is mind which is infinitely divisible. This idea correlates with the esoteric notion of consciousness as the universal solvent. It posits that the process of analysis could theoretically continue for eternity, resulting in a causal chain of infinite complexity. This negates the possibility of discovering an absolute foundation in nature by rational means. What we encounter is the infinite regress of deconstruction, as the horizons of knowledge forever recede and particles dissolve in the cloud of unknowing.

In occult philosophy, this is the vision of the *Abyss*. It is the realisation that mind and reason inhabit an ontological void without rational foundation or ultimate meaning. Here the phenomena of intellect appear arbitrary and self-referential, reflections in the looking glass of its own inherent nature. The rational mind can neither traverse this void nor sound its depth. No sea-bed of meaning, no distant shore of certitude can be expected, for it is the mind which creates this void. The Abyss is identified with the reason itself.

The recognition of inherent limitations of logic, reason and analysis has found formal expression in a number of mathematical and scientific discoveries of the last century. These include the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, Gödel's incompleteness theorem, and Bell's

theorem of non-locality. More broadly the situation is echoed in cultural relativism and psychoanalysis. All significant areas of enquiry have become as open windows on a universe of quasi-infinite depth and complexity, a universe which dwarfs the rational faculty into insignificance.

If analysis constitutes an endless task, the work of synthesis may be accomplished by fiat in a single moment, namely with the formulation of the Platonic idea that the universe is one. No argument can establish this position, no experiment verify it; we say it is so by definition. This is partly a statement of the archetypal significance of number; in this case the number *one*, and it reflects our transcendent intuitions concerning the unity. This unity is not simply one of aggregates, as of so many items contained in a box. Intuition further insists that all the parts are somehow connected. We believe that, using the tools of analysis, we have begun to fathom some of these connections. However, if *all* the parts are mutually interconnected, as recent findings in physics suggest, this negates the validity of analytical results, which are based on the study of phenomena in relative isolation. Again we reach the conclusion that the rational faculty is ultimately and fundamentally incommensurate with the task we have assigned it – that of making the universe intelligible. For, while nature appears infinitely divisible, it also appears to be *one* in a manner transcending the reason. The aim of science to formulate an all-inclusive theory of the universe thus appears unattainable by present methods. The reason therefore can only be regarded as a tool of limited and local application. Its specific function is the criticising of ideas and the resolution of intellectual complexity. Its most important result is the demonstration of its own limitations.

On naive reflection, it may be crystal clear why science, a cutting

tool (in occult iconography, the Sword), cannot create a meaningful world. To create we need a Magic Wand.

Concerning Paranormal Abilities

Extraordinary powers of mind and body have always attracted considerable interest. Since the founding in 1882 of the *Society For Psychological Research* the subject has generated its own body of popular literature, and scientific interest has been constant, if somewhat marginal. Although a controversial domain of enquiry, certain types of paranormal ability are acknowledged even within the most conservative sectors of academia. These include the abilities of so-called idiot-savants, such as lightning calculation, advanced pattern recognition, and unusual (untutored) musical or artistic skills. This further makes it evident that concept of the ‘paranormal’ is quite relative. A habitual fire-walker, whether sufi, tantric or kahuna, would hardly regard this ability as anything unusual. Ideas of the normal (and paranormal) are therefore as culture bound as those of manners and morals. From the esoteric perspective we make no categorical distinction in this area, considering the siddhi – the magical powers – integral to the continuum of nature. To raise one’s hand and to levitate, both are considered examples of the siddhi, a result of proficiency in certain yogas. We do not doubt, however, that one is more commonly observed than the other.

In asserting the continuity of nature, we moreover reject ‘supernatural’ explanations. Indeed the word ‘supernatural’ has no place in esoteric terminology. For our term ‘nature’ is synonymous with ‘universe’ or ‘reality,’ denoting the sum of everything that exists. It therefore makes no sense to assert that anything could exist outside of,

apart from, or beyond, nature. There are, however, realms of nature which are not well understood, and others which are not even suspected within the cultural mainstream, and these, by default, become designated as *esoteric* or *occult*. While reductionism maintains that what cannot be explained does not exist, nature is infinitely more subtle than our theories. The gap between these incommensurates explains modern alienation and our dysfunctional relationship to the universe.

Yet we are in possession of an instrument which is fully commensurate with the subtlety of nature: the human organism, the instrument and laboratory of the esoteric arts and sciences par excellence. Its limitations are unexplored, and it is not certain that it has limits. As the practitioner may verify, concerted yogic practice results in a development of abilities, which, slowly and imperceptibly, cross line into the unusual. It is then recognised, that so-called paranormal powers are simply extensions and refinements of abilities we consider normal.

These powers, specifically in the psychic domain, are much more common than we suspect. However, what does not officially exist is not easily recognised. Where it does manifest, it tends to be marginalised or explained away. A great naiveté in this regard still informs the Western mindset, the New Age notwithstanding. For we constantly make decisions on the basis of subliminal information, and exert influence on our environment in ways of which we are unaware. In other words, the terms of our interaction with the cosmos are to a great extent unconscious. By way of esoteric training the nature of the interaction is brought into consciousness, and thereby made subject to conscious volition.

Enumerated below are human abilities, which are usually regarded as unusual or occult. All of these have been reported at various times,

some much more frequently than others. Simply by considering the nature of these powers, we awaken a recognition of their ubiquitous presence and promote their cultivation. Let us reflect again that occult initiation does not add anything to the human constitution; it consists in developing that which is already present.

We may mention here that is widely regarded an error of emphasis to cultivate these powers for their own sake. This is correct, in the sense that the appropriate focus of initiation is the Conversation of the Angel. Beyond that, however, the above view must be regarded as a metaphysical extension of the vow of poverty, an unnecessary exacerbation of the ascetic tendency. Our superior ability to analyse the conditions of success obviates the need for such rigours. Under the guidance of the Angel it is quite appropriate for magical powers to flourish. The Angel usually conspires with the dweller-on-the-threshold to prevent one from accessing more information than one can usefully coordinate. The important question from the karmic viewpoint is how these powers are used. While it is generally conceded that paranormal abilities are appropriately developed and employed in the service of humanity, even this may lead to black magic (so-called), if not exercised under the aegis of the Angel.

Magical powers can be grouped into two classes:

1. Powers which are receptive in nature, enabling one to obtain information.
2. Powers which are executive, and may be deployed to effect change in oneself or the environment.

These are governed respectively by the intuition and the will. As becomes apparent in the higher initiations, especially upon crossing the Abyss, intuition and will are one in a manner ineffable and not here to be

further described. The initiate may however discover an analogy on the lower planes in the interaction of sensory and volitional activity in the practice of various yogas.

It may further be evident that balanced development of these two areas is of the essence of spiritual health. However, as a bias of temperament is the norm, there is usually a natural predisposition toward one or the other. This tendency must be overcome.

The Receptive Powers

These powers may be subsumed under the general rubric of discernment, empathy, or subtle rapport. Their highest development is the supernal intuition. Their reward is Understanding and its companion, Sorrow.

The dangers of uncompensated development in this direction are those of succumbing to glamour, fascination and melancholia. Their pathology manifests in suggestibility, paranoia, and delusion.

When appropriated wisely these powers lead to sanity, maturity and compassion.

Clairvoyance, Remote Viewing, Penetrating Insight

The literal meaning of *clairvoyance* is clear sight. This fully describes the nature of the phenomena here under consideration. While conventional understanding regards clairvoyance as the ability to see what is not actually present, this view is one of error. According to esoteric doctrine, *everything* is here and now. All events in mind-space-time – past, present and future – are manifest in the present moment,

albeit in a pre-conscious state. From this totality the conscious experience is constructed by a process of selection. Whatever is not deemed appropriate in the cultural context is filtered out at the preconscious level. Clairvoyance consists in the ability of bringing into view those aspects of reality usually filtered out; that is, of selectively removing the socially imposed filters on reality. Here the operative term is *selectively*. The indiscriminate psychic, by contrast, is one who throws the doors of perception wide open, often with deleterious results. To emphasise a previous point, the greater our powers of perception, the greater the need for discrimination.

As a basic preconditions for extended awareness we may cite a certain remove from prevailing cultural prejudice, an independent spirit and a certain dispassionate stance, allowing one to see what is actually there. Further essential is the ability to navigate in this extended realm, so as to focus on that which is of interest. The latter is simply a matter of experience, not unlike learning to negotiate any other cognitive domain. Wide experience is valuable in yet another sense. For the seer is likely to recognise only the familiar, that which has some analogue in his conception of reality. Without a requisite level of understanding, the vision will be incomprehensible. In this case another faculty is required, that of interpretation and prophetic insight, the ability to conceive of the new.

A number of techniques exist to help us see more clearly what is transpiring before our gaze. These include: *refocusing*, a shift in emphasis as to what are the important elements in a given situation; *reframing*, the deliberate imposition of a different context; and *deconstruction*, the disallowing of the social pretext or conventional interpretation of the event in question – in other words, to see with an innocent eye.

Clairaudience

Similar considerations obtain in the realm of hearing. We basically hear what we expect to hear, and in categories that are culturally defined. A further problem in the modern world is noise. There is a cataract of conflicting voices, and it is difficult to distinguish and discern between them. Indeed *everything* has a voice, and there is no sound without meaning.

A sound, once born, makes an impression in the psychic ether, the akashic records, from whence it may be retrieved by yogic means. The wave form thereof continues to propagate throughout the universe until it reaches the shore, the transcendent object at the end of time, which is the singularity called 'I'. As there is propagation backwards and forwards in time, we are again faced with the reality of total presence here and now, in a mega-word of awesome augury.

The quest for quality information again involves a process of selection. The voice, above all, which we should seek to hear is that of the Angel. The Angel indeed continually speaks, but one must be attuned to hear the message with clarity, filtering out the nonessential voices. This again equates with prophetic insight or discernment, only obtained through the continued refining of the intuition in the context of an ongoing initiatory journey.

Upon gaining familiarity with the Angel, we are in a position to hear other voices in appropriate context. For the Angel, by definition, is the voice of verity, wherefore any voice to the contrary is necessarily deceptive. The discernment of spirits is the ability to hear what a voice is saying, as distinct from what it claims to be saying.

Again, there are techniques for gaining information concerning the true nature of a voice, and for hearing more clearly what is going on in any situation. These are equivalent to the techniques cited in connection with clairvoyance – refocusing, reframing and deconstruction. Here are some additional suggestions: (1) Instead of concentrating on verbal content, listen to the sound of a voice. (2) In a complex and confusing sound environment, unfocus (mentally take a step back), and listen to the cacophony as a whole, say, as music. Focus attention at random on various details in the sonic environment. (3) Do not interpret the sound you hear, just listen. And finally – listen!

Note that these techniques do not take the place of the revelation of the Angel.

Telepathy

Telepathy, the subtle rapport between minds, is a function of a larger phenomenon, that of akashic perception on the mental plane. The key to reading the mind of others is to accurately read one's own. Indeed, according to the esoteric view there is only one mind. The obstacle, as observed heretofore, is the cultural climate of taboo, obfuscation, and denial of the supposedly non-ordinary. As a result the average person is radically estranged from his or her inner world. This explains why concepts of the *unconscious* or *subconscious* mind have become so important in psychoanalysis and therapy. Alienation from the facts of nature has become the norm. The estrangement is from the authentic self, and thus also entail estrangement from others. This has led to a situation in which telepathy is regarded as something rare or remarkable, while it is the most natural phenomenon in the world.

Indeed telepathy, the communion of minds, is fundamental to all forms or social interaction. Without it, any form of communication would be impossible. The simplest of directives, in what ostensibly constitutes a shared language, fail where the protagonists are not on the so-called same wavelength. Conversely, individuals who share a common ‘wavelength’ easily communicate across the conventional barriers of language and culture. The explanation for this phenomenon probably lies *less* in the transmission of brainwaves and such, than in the fact that individual minds are linked within a larger gestalt, wherein individual differences are trivial compared to the substratum of shared information. A mature society, accordingly, is one which acknowledges this fact, one wherein the perceptions of a common humanity outweigh any cultural or ideological differences.

Astral Projection And Lucid Dreaming

The ability to function consciously on various planes of perception is essentially a matter of concentration, the ability to focus attention exclusively and at length upon a chosen object. The successful separation of the planes, now several times alluded to, is a further prerequisite for remaining focused upon any particular plane. While cosmic mind moves in a broad stream, comprising all vibratory levels simultaneously, ordinary consciousness is usually fixated upon a very narrow band of frequencies. These frequencies, moreover, are somewhat exclusive of one another, hence the familiar dichotomy of waking and dreaming. However, in a waking state we do not cease to dream. The dreaming continues uninterrupted, but the beam of selective attention is now focused on the phenomena of the waking mind. What is outside the range

of the latter is the so-called unconscious or subconscious mind.

Astral travel and its kin, lucid dreaming, consist of the ability to become immersed in the dream-state while maintaining reflective consciousness. The main difficulty in this for the average educated Westerner is the inquisitorial nature of the intellect, which tends to dispel the dream-world. The reasoning mind will insist on analysing the dream, thereby becoming involved in a secondary plane of abstract ideation, quite removed from the dream-plane itself. It is also likely to impose its own agenda, with the result that the authentic dream sequence at once fades from view. In its self-importance, it may further assert that the dream is but a phantasm, and that *it*, the intellect, is the touchstone of reality. This is reflected in the culture of intellect, wherein it is derisively spoken of ‘dreamers,’ ‘*mere* dreams’ and the like. Dreaming and reasoning, quite unambiguously, are aligned to opposing cults. And while the phantasms of the dreamworld are of course unreal, so also are the phantoms of the reason.

The difficulties emphasise the central relevance of meditation, wherein the mind is trained simply to observe without intruding with conceptual ideation, to become entranced while yet remaining fully conscious. While such is the *gate* to the astral plane, the ability to navigate therein is a function of the associative or poetic faculty. On the astral plane, symbols are actualities and their negotiation is cognate with the phenomenology of magical invocation and evocation. Indeed, within magical teaching orders, it is customary for astral exploration to be conducted with intentional destinations and objectives. Thus it is the astral plane, which frequently constitutes the theatre for the dynamics of initiation.

It remains to distinguish astral vision and lucid dreaming from the

phenomenon of etheric projection. The latter involves the extrusion of the etheric envelope from the physical body and sending it forth upon some particular errant. This practice is associated with shamanic rites, with astral intercourse of incubi and succubi, with vampirism, with the witch's sabbath, and with modern UFO contactee cults. The projection of the etheric body and its involvement in various nocturnal adventures explains the observed effects on the physical body of ostensible dream encounters. Its occurrence also explains the reported phenomenon of bi-location, in which the etheric double takes on, in all respects, complete human semblance, which may be seen, felt, and heard to converse. A dangerous and difficult practice, etheric extrusion is not recommended for the beginner. It is frequently the result of occult pathology, whereby it is undertaken in a manner not altogether voluntary, but as a result of enticement or coercion. Its involuntary occurrence usually betokens witting or unwitting collusion with cults of the Black Brotherhood.

The Executive Powers

These are the powers of creation, and their nature is joy. Their highest development is the supernal Wisdom. The dangers of unbalanced development in this direction are those of hatching monstrous schemes, innovating without knowledge of the constant, and imposing the inferior upon the superior. The relevant pathology manifests in tyranny, megalomania, and spiritual isolation. When these powers are used wisely they provide the spiritual, political, intellectual and material structures wherein the soul of humanity is nurtured and permitted to unfold its authentic potential.

Enchantment And Spellcasting

The art of fascination, of enchantment and the casting of spells need not remain mysterious. Etymology furnishes us with the insights to illuminate their secret. A *spell* refers to spelling, and *enchantment* to the practice of chanting. The object of both is the Word, and the Word is the law. Here, therefore, we are referring to the work of the Magi, the law-givers of humanity, such as Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Gautama (the Buddha) and Lao Tse, to mention some of the most influential. These are beings who announce, *the world is thus*, who define reality itself, and create a universe in which multitudes acquiesce and shelter. The list, of course, is not confined to founders of world religions. We may cite Claudius Ptolemaeus, Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein as founders of world systems, and, with equal justification, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Pablo Picasso. Overt success is not necessarily a measure of real influence, and influence not necessarily an indicator of the quality of the attainment.

A Magus, in the ideal, is defined as a being whose will is undivided and free of external opposition. This, it should be understood, does not refer to the personal wishes of the individuals in question, but the will of the creative genius which manifests through them. A Magus, further, is a person who creates a new synthesis of the elements which constitute the worldview of his age. Finally, a Magus is a person who has transcended the Abyss, and made of the infinite a new image for the orientation of mankind. It is the creative genius, as manifested by the Angel, functioning fully and freely through the individual. Or, to put it another way, it is the individual as fully identified with the Angel.

Lesser examples of this phenomenon may be due to possession by

an elemental, a spirit of inferior intelligence in broad terms, but highly gifted in a particular domain. This explains the situation with regard to certain ‘stars,’ whose contribution in their field may enrich millions, but whose personal lives remain chaotic and unfulfilled.

Pathological forms of possession are found in the example of the con-artist, the demagogue or evil genius, who weaves a hypnotic spell of fascination and deceit in order to exploit, to enslave and destroy. Such individuals may be identified with the evil spirit as a matter of choice, or they may themselves be victims of deception. The dividing line is not often clear-cut, as individuals in this class cannot be properly regarded as sane. Their intelligence is likely to be progressively compromised by their need to indulge and rationalise the possessing entity.

On order to cast a spell, to weave a web of enchantment and fascination, one must be enthused with the reality one wishes to convey. All individuals are thus influential to some degree, in that their presence and conversation conveys an atmosphere of some kind. However, the non-initiate is compromised in self-contradiction and self-negation, and therefore unlikely to make a profound impression. But where a particular spirit dominates the aura of an individual, its influence on the environment may become overwhelming. Such individuals tend to attract followers, regardless of the quality and character of the spirit involved. Their dominant nature will inspire others, uplifting or debasing, as the case may be.

Transmutation And Ascension

The essence of the Great Work is the transformation of consciousness, otherwise known as the raising of the microcosm to the

level of the macrocosm. Among its corollaries on the physical plane is the transmutation of metals, as associated with the medieval alchemists. Their theory was that, as consciousness permeates all things, it was reasonable to expect a transmutation of base metals into gold, if preceded or accompanied by a corresponding change in the spiritual domain. Underlying this conception is a more fundamental tenet, that all material phenomena are permutations of a basic essence, in Vedic philosophy the *mulaprakriti* or root-substance. Given the equivalence of mind and matter, central to the esoteric worldview, this root-substance is none other than the *cit-akasha*, or mind-stuff. The relevant theory posits that, given a requisite level of control over the phenomena of consciousness, any material object may be disintegrated into its fundamental constituents, and reassembled in a manner quite different. The process is expressed in the alchemical formula *solve et coagula* – dissolve and reformulate.

With the advent of materialistic science the secrets of the alchemists, embodied in the mind-matter equation, were lost. But in this age of revelation, the secret once again is coming into open view, due not only to the resurgence of the archaic paradigm, but also to the progressive subtlety in modern science. By way of this subtlety, as expressed in the *Copenhagen Interpretation* of quantum physics, the mind has been restored to its rightful place at the core and foundation of the ontological edifice. And this also brings us back to the embodied view, the view from within, which characterises the alchemical opus, and which is the key to the relevant texts.

In the literature of Alchemy we find two recurring motives, representative of the object of the Great Quest. These are the *Philosopher's Stone*, and the *Elixir Of Life* or *Universal Medicine*. It is

now possible to reveal what these are. The *Stone* is the mind in its totality, the unit of experience synonymous with the world, the universe experienced as a single entity. It is that which is found everywhere, and by which all secondary phenomena become manifest. It may be noted in this connection that the internal and inaccessible spaces of physical objects correspond to the inner, and equally inaccessible, regions of the mind. The *Elixir* or *Elan Vital* is consciousness, that which permeates and vitalises all things. It is the Medicine which quickens the Stone, rendering it soft and malleable, and allowing for the transmutation of its essence into anything desired.

This Stone is the object of mahamudra. As such it is the mind, void of conceptual framing, whereby the hyperspatial vortex of consciousness is made apparent. This is the dimensional gate which opens up onto higher and more inclusive dimensions, wherein three-dimensional space-time is but one particular projection of the mind, a theatre for the play of its devising. By virtue of the *Elixir* its phenomena may be dissolved, absorbed and reconstituted upon a higher plane. This is the key to ascension and interdimensional travel.

Levitation And Psycho-Kinesis

The legendary ability to circumvent gravity, and move objects directly through the powers of mind, offers the most credible explanation for the ability of the ancients to build in stone on the scale observed, provided the fundamental theory is granted. Throughout the Old World, as in the Americas, megaliths weighing tens, sometimes hundreds of tons, were routinely transported and fitted with apparent indifference to the difficulties involved. In the absence of a more credible alternative, I

prefer to invest in the notion of an exotic technology, the nature of which we are perhaps in the process of elucidating.

The mystery we are here confronting may be understood as a further example of the concepts cited above – the recognition of the dimensional vortex, wherein space and time, energy and matter, are seen as modifications of mind, and subject to manipulation by consciousness, wherein physical qualities are seen subjective, and thus as malleable at the behest of the initiate. This, I suggest, is the principle behind the reported phenomena of levitation, psycho-kinesis, flying unaided, walking on water, walking through walls and the traversing of interstellar distances, achieved through the manipulation of the electromagnetic foundation of mind, space and time.

Invisibility And Transmogrification

A further application of the same principle, though on a lesser scale, concerns the matter of altering the appearance of anything. Unlike transmutation, which involves a change of essence, transmogrification is merely the temporary rearranging of the outward semblance. This is a commonly observed phenomenon. We are aware that a person's stance and countenance may change dramatically under the influence of a particular emotion or idea. This is usually accompanied by other changes, as of voice, temperament, vocabulary and speech patterns. If the change is powerful enough we are inclined to say that another personality has taken over the body, and a different individual is seen to be looking out of the eyes. Through repetition over time such change may become permanent, as the stamp of character is etched onto the personality, while bodily frame and visage are shaped in the forge of the related vortex.

While here we are speaking of changes undergone more or less involuntarily and over long periods, let us recall that occult training involves rendering the unconscious mind conscious and the involuntary subject to volition. In accord with this principle, certain individuals manifest an extraordinary degree of control over their personal appearance, which may be aided by costume and cosmetics, but is essentially dependent upon the fixation in consciousness of a particular spiritual state. It is impossible to say at which point this ability crosses over into the paranormal or pathological domain. Some actors possess this ability to an uncanny degree, and cases of permanent obsession by an assumed character have been reported.

As to invisibility, this is but a modification of this power. It is contingent upon a certain abstraction of mind, a state of meditative absorption, which, when active, prevents one's physical emanation from informing the senses of others. Sight is only one of these. Or, stated more accurately, sight is but a modification or extension of a central unifying faculty, of which the other senses likewise are specialised adaptations. The subject is invisible to the extent that the emanation frequencies are too rarefied or remote for the sensing organism to register. The opposite of invisibility, of course, is the vibrant and larger-than-life emanation of the charismatic personality.

As to the more extreme manifestations of these powers which the literature reports, the vampire fangs, the werewolf, the shamanic flight on eagles wings, these are similarly accounted for by the theory, provided we don't impose arbitrary limits upon its application. The fundamental principle may be restated thus: The outward form of any entity is the manifestation or reflection in the material domain of its spiritual essence. The material universe, as a fact in consciousness, is a modification of

mind, and therefore subject, within limits unknown, to the will of the possessing entity.

Chapter Seven

MANTRAS SPELLS AND CONJURATIONS

How then shall he end His speech with Silence? For He is Speech.

Aleister Crowley, Liber B Vel Magi

A True Language

In the sanctuary of the gnosis it is held that the universe and all within is alive and conscious. It both speaks and responds to the spoken word. The phenomenon of language therefore occupies a pre-eminent place in the magical arts. Indeed it is appropriate to say that the universe *is* language, the manifestation of a creative word, the universal logos. This Word, moreover, is the expression of a thought, which is the original seed or attribute in the mind of God.

Modern cognitive psychology likewise concedes that our reality is word-dependent, insofar as perceptual categories of experience are isomorphic with conceptual categories of thought. Expressed another way, the structure of the world is the structure of mind, or put more tersely, the world is mind. What is experienced is what is conceived in thought, and conception takes place when *cit akasha*, the undifferentiated mind-stuff, congeals into a word. Language as such is the reality structurer; the word creates the world.

As the world is one, we postulate a single, all-comprehensive Word, which gives rise to and sustains the universe moment by moment. Creation, in this sense, is not viewed in the distant past, but in a trans-

temporal eternity as manifest in the moment *now*. In the Cabalistic and Judaeo-Christian mystery traditions this Word is tetragrammaton, the four lettered name of God IHVH (Hebrew: yod he vau he), which is usually transliterated as Yahweh or Jehovah, and the appropriation of which is synonymous with the accomplishment of the Great Work. In the Vedic tradition the word is OM or AUM. Correct utterance of these words (that is, with appropriate affect), is said to confer creative power on the cosmic scale, for the spoken Word is synonymous with God manifest. This is that of which it was written: *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.*

This concept of the creative Word has led to the idea of a *primal language* (German: *Ursprache*) – a language of creation, the language of nature itself, wherein all things are named by their true name. This language is the Word in its full manifestation, or, as the scripture has it, *the word made flesh*. It is the logos unfolded, the creation in detail – each particle vibrating in concert with the collective anthem, the universe as a whole. The idea correlates with the findings of physics, which posit that the oscillations of the quantum electrodynamic field give rise to the structure of space-time, matter and energy, complex structure, life and, ultimately, consciousness. Esotericists agree; only with the view that mind or consciousness is inherent in the beginning, not merely the end result of evolutionary processes. Yet cosmologists likewise now recognise that the universe is overwhelmingly predisposed to the creation of complex aggregates and thus the formation of life. Intelligent life therefore appears to be no ‘accident,’ as the theory of random selection has it, but the crest of meaning in what appears to be a conscious and intentional structure. Language and meaning as universal information thus were not arbitrarily added at some point, but inherent from the

beginning.

Primal And Symbolic Language

This primal language is a language of actuality in that it equates with what is the case. In mythology it is the language of the gods, of the universal dreamtime and the Golden Age predating history. In human terms, we may define this language as the total range of sensory and behavioural possibilities available to a human being. It is the natural language of being-in-the-world.

At some stage in the predawn of history, however, another kind of language arose – symbolic language. While the primal language is by definition consistent with actuality, symbolic language is abstract and hypothetical. It allows us to speak of things *not* actually present. Concurrently meaning, which was previously attached to actual present experience, is being transferred to *representations* of some reality. We therefore now have two distinct conceptual categories – the experience of a phenomenon and the word or symbol which stands for that phenomenon. Thus a secondary symbolic world arose, and with it a rift between the world of sensate experience and the world of ideation – again, the Abyss.

The history of culture comprises the gradual transfer of consciousness and meaning from actual experience to representations of experience. To the extent that we abstract, analyse, synthesise and project our constructs upon experiential reality, we come to live increasingly in a symbolic world of our own making. Through theory and its application in technology we have the means of distancing ourselves from any unwanted experience, and creating largely the kind of social and physical

environment we desire. Yet in so doing we are largely unaware to what extent our natural sensibilities are becoming atrophied, as increasingly we interact exclusively with human-created symbol systems, and our dialogue with nature is becoming increasingly self-referential. This is especially apparent at the cutting edge of physics, where the universe is conceived in a language altogether remote and meaningless from the standpoint of embodied experience. As a result we no longer live in the original world of primary language, but in a secondary world of conceptual abstractions. In the course of this transition from the actual to our 'ideal' we have remade the world in our own image – again the word is made flesh.

While superficially successful, the cracks in this system are nevertheless becoming apparent. The obvious danger is that our self-contained tunnel vision might remove us forever from authentic aspirations and possibilities, and from the universal nexus of meaning in general. For it is the primal language which is the source of life and meaning. Symbolic language, by contrast, is a language of absence, of abstraction and hypothetical augury. We are further beginning to notice how very fragile our culture is, in view, not only of natural phenomena beyond our control, but also of the increasingly complex and unpredictable nature of that culture itself. And intractable as our global problems appear, who has not felt at times that any group of ordinary intelligence and goodwill would be able to solve them in relatively short order. Failure in this regard is the measure of the inutility of our operative language.

To the extent that a culture relinquishes creative sovereignty at the paradigm level of meaning, it becomes imprisoned within the conceptual walls of its own making. To the extent that it abrogates creative control

over the function of language, words become independent entities, driven by the chaotic currents of populist ideation and subject to control by the unscrupulous. Again it must be remembered that we live in a word-built culture; words have deity status, and where the authentic deities of meaning are deposed, they are replaced by demons of obfuscation and subversion. Any word not under conscious creative control is thus a potential carrier of energy or meaning inimical to human welfare.

Language As Black Magic

The above exemplifies the primary danger in any form of magic – and symbolic language *is* magic – that of creating a non-viable or dysfunctional reality, based on the selective function of the conceptual intellect. There are several aspects which distinguish symbolic language from our postulated *Ursprache*, and which are at the root of the problem. Four of these are here outlined.

The first is its fixity – the fact that languages evolve very slowly and indeed are strongly resistant to change. Definitions and usage, once established, may determine reality for centuries. During such a period, alternative formulations are literally unthinkable. Wars and revolutions may need to be fought to redefine the meaning of a word. The introduction of a major new concept is referred to as a revolution in thought or paradigm shift. Thus for all its acclaimed fluidity and flexibility, symbolic language moves at a glacial pace, especially when compared with the speed of affect and ideation.

The second aspect is its categorical finitude. The number of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions and conjunctions is finite, as is the number of grammatically correct word combinations. To

the extent that we are operationally bound to symbolic language, its categorical imperatives define the range of our options. An example makes this clear.

Classical Aristotelian logic prescribes an either-or resolution to questions such as, *is this the one?* The answer is yes or no. It is the one, or, it is not the one. Buddhist logic however allows for a total of at least four possibilities:

It is the one.

It is not the one.

It both is the one *and* it is not the one.

It neither *is* the one, nor is it *not* the one.

It is difficult to convince those whose categorical appreciation only includes the former two, that the latter two have any meaning. This indicates the extent to which our linguistic habits determine meaning and reality. Is it possible to think up further categories? In trying to do so we confront these habits of thought and the conceptual boundaries of language itself. We realise that nothing exists beyond the boundaries of language. To go beyond requires the creative act of a poet or magus. Noting the impossibility of thought and expression outside language *of some kind*, it is apparent that symbolic language constitutes a mental prison. For it is clear that the language structures we admit as meaningful determine what is thinkable, and thus the limits of the possible.

The third is the lumbering slowness which characterises the institutions and interactions reliant thereon. Whether it is in peace-negotiations, environmental protection, relief-aid or due process in the cause of justice, instead of a swift response to global contingencies, we

are accustomed to delays which mock and negate those very efforts. How ironic, if the human race should fail as a species simply through being inefficient! It is further apparent that no amount of rational discourse will reconcile groups or individuals estranged on the archetypal level, nor will an abstract language restore our link with nature. Indeed, with the increase of abstraction, the possibilities for meaning, mutual understanding, and an authentic dialogue with nature (as with one another) are receding to the vanishing point. This is the legend of Babel in its modern manifestation.

The fourth is its lack of precision. This may seem paradoxical, in so far as science is claimed to constitute the only descriptive language of rigour. However, as argued elsewhere in this book, the language of science being incommensurate with the world of experience, the scientific universe constitutes an approximation, ultimately a radical simplification. Yet for all practical purposes it is a language too complex for most of the important executive situations. Where are the legislative bodies which display even a glimmer of the necessary sophistication? In practical affairs, as R. D. Laing observed, for all our theoretical refinement, we invariably fall, as into a heresy, into unheard-of simplicity.

When these various aspects are deeply entrenched or even total, the language involved is one of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is the total shift of meaning from experience to its representation in some symbol system. In its extreme manifestations this symbol system is considered complete, absolute and universally valid – the Word Of God, the will of the people, or something equally grandiose and abstract. In religious as in secular versions of fundamentalism we observe the idolatrous worship of an artefact of human understanding, the tenets of the operative language

involved. It is immaterial that this artefact may have its roots in an act of genius or divine inspiration, for the idolater's mind is fixed upon its form, not its meaning or the dynamics of its origin. It is fixated upon the *letter of the law*, which, in the words of St. Paul, brings death. Any truly fundamentalist language is therefore a dead language, spoken by individuals who are spiritually dead.

Now let us consolidate these ideas. Symbolic language represents an adaptation, fixation or modification of the primal language, useful in certain directions, but with specific disadvantages. Chief of these is our inability to deal with the incommensurate, which is to say, with reality as such. When we confront the actual, when we consider initial and boundary conditions at the cosmic level, we run into paradox. This is the inevitable consequence of reducing the infinite mystery to a finite number of variables. The rational language of abstractions has handed us a secondary and simplified universe, which constitutes a pale and lifeless effigy of the real. To the extent that our ontological investments concern this secondary universe, the life-giving mystery is effectively banished. As a direct and concrete result, meaning is being eroded and the environment destroyed.

The influx of genius, of visionary inspiration, is typically rejected within the framework of any orthodox symbol system, and the messenger persecuted. One cannot pour new wine into old skins, as the saying has it, or contain spiritual revelation in the dead language of fundamentalism. When eventually an inspired message is widely accepted, as was the case with Christianity, it is forced into the constraints of prevailing systems of thought, and thereby distorted beyond recognition. This is why prophets and spiritual teachers are invariably misunderstood. They speak the primal language, grounded in a cognitive sensibility which obtains above

the abyss of conceptual ratiocination.

Magical Arts And Arts Of Magic

It is significant that, concurrent with symbolic language, evolved mathematics, music and the diversified arts. For the arts – both fine and liberal – preserve some aspect of the primal language, in so far as each of them exercises some aspect of the human sensorium, its cognitive and expressive ability. Thus with the rise of culture the primal language, and the understanding it afforded, was broken up and diverted into a number of separate channels, each developed more or less independently. It is for this reason that the arts have always been central to the celebration of the sacred, and are considered, even in secular culture, as having spiritual significance. Cognate conceptions are the basis of sensibilities which recognise a sacred geometry, a mathematics of archetypal significance, and a music of the spheres.

However it is clear from the esoteric perspective that many aspects of the primal language, and therefore, of human sensibility fell into disuse and became atrophied to a greater or lesser extent. This accounts for the conceptual category of the *esoteric* or *occult*. For these terms denote the range of excluded arts and sciences, of excluded sensibilities and abilities now held to be paranormal. Historically this exclusion from the cultural mainstream has been effected through censorship and other normative means of social control, acting in concert with a certain agenda. At the same time there has been a corresponding attitude of secrecy adopted by initiates of the arcane wisdom.

Magic, as an art and science, may be defined as the attempt of regaining familiarity and conversational use of the primal language. The

subject divides conveniently into two distinct branches: divination and thaumaturgy. Respectively these comprise the passive / receptive and the active / executive mode of magical functioning. In occult iconography these two functions are often symbolised as binary pairs such as yin and yang, fire and water, male and female, or wand and chalice, thus emphasising their complementary nature. They are characterised by insight and intuition on the one hand, and by intervention and innovation on the other. Their highest development respectively is the supernal Understanding and creative Wisdom, which is to say, perception and will at the archetypal level.

In the prosecution of Great Work these two branches are necessarily united, as understanding without power is impotent, and power without understanding, brutish. Only in the highest initiation of which it is possible to speak, that of pure being or unqualified consciousness, these two aspects of the magical persona are finally resolved, along with all the other dualities that comprise the nexus of existence.

Discussed below are the main branches of occult art and science. These, having been developed over thousands of years, exemplify a cultural legacy which is co-extensive with the evolution and development of the human race itself. Some of these are primarily divinatory in nature, while others are clearly thaumaturgic. A third category involves the more complex arts, such as healing or any other form of creative activity, which necessarily must combine both aspects of human functioning.

Divination

Divination is the obtaining of knowledge by more or less indirect

means; or, stated more accurately, by means not readily apparent to the uninitiated. It involves accurately reading the environment, or some part thereof, to discern what is the case. This may include seeing into the future, into the past, into the mind of oneself and others, and that which is far off. The idea is that the visible speaks of the invisible.

Some forms of divination are purely observational, focusing on aspects of the natural environment, such as the movement of clouds or water, or the behaviour of flora and fauna.

Other forms involve interaction with a unified symbol system, comprising a set of characters, images or pictograms, which are taken to represent the course of nature. Examples of these are the twenty-two characters of the Runic alphabet, the seventy-eight cards of the Tarot and the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching. Collectively, the units of each system are understood to comprise a symbolic map of the magical universe, that is to say, of the human psyche and the range of experience to which it is subject. Taken individually, they represent primary concepts and basic categories of experience, as formulated within their respective cultural context. The relatively small number of symbols is compensated by their fluidity and universality, and the fact that they are interrelated in complex ways. Added to these is the interpretative skill of the reader, for whom each symbol is a living entity in a complex web of associations. The implicit theory of types and archetypes is yet another – qualitative – instance of the idea that nature, despite its complexity, can be understood in simple terms.

A third type of divinatory practice combines artifice with the random chaos of the natural world. Examples include such practices as the reading of tea-leaves or coffee-grounds, and pyromancy – the reading of the glowing embers in the hearth. Automatic writing and drawing

comprise a more active form of this category. The common thread is the idea is that unconscious or natural activity should produce some tangible trace, which may afterwards be subjected to interpretative scrutiny.

Most methods of divination therefore consist of two steps – the manipulation of the elements of the divinatory system, and the reading or interpretation of the resulting gestalt.

A particular attitude is generally considered helpful in producing meaningful results. This is a mental state which is alert but relaxed, concentrated and focused on the task, but without expectation or lust of result. According to Heru Raha this is best achieved through immersion in the ritual and aesthetic aspects of the oracle being consulted. One opens the temple and consecrates a magical circle. One sets upon the altar the instruments of art. One establishes a link with the relevant intelligences by uttering an appropriate invocation. Then, with the mind passively observing, one shuffles the cards or manipulates the yarrow stalks, which are used for deriving a hexagram of the I Ching. Entranced by the sensuous nature of the process, focused upon its formal austerity, one remains in detached contemplation. The resulting figure is to be regarded as a work of art, the product of a creative act.

Then follows the work of interpretation. This is essentially a matter of seeing clearly what is before one's eyes. One must discard expectations and preconceived notions, and allow the image to manifest and impress its individual character upon the mind. The diviner must be visually literate, understanding the traditional attributions of the symbols employed, with their interrelationships and conventional interpretations. But this amounts to no more than a basic grasp of the vocabulary. It is essential that the image speak to the reader afresh, in the unprecedented uniqueness of the present moment. This usually requires a certain artistic

or poetic gift, and a level of conversational familiarity with the oracle, which can only be developed through frequent use over a period of time. Needful also is a well-developed intuitive sense, and the ability to observe one's own mind. The last of these is the crux of the matter, if we take the view that divination is a process of bringing unconscious ideation into conscious awareness. In this case, magical systems such the I Ching and the Tarot may be regarded as tools which aid the process of introspection, by stimulating both the imagination and the analytical faculty.

The relevant concept of consciousness is one wherein individual mind is part of an interconnected universal nexus which registers all phenomena and events, past, present and future. Contemporary theories, such as the principles of quantum connectedness, depth ecology and morphic resonance, likewise offer an explanatory framework to account for the phenomena of divination. In view of these mutually supporting notions, our formulations at the scientific cutting edge may be regarded as a contemporary restatement of the ancient theory of universal mind.

It is recommended that the initiate master at least one system of divination, as this will stimulate the flowering of the intuitive faculty. Each divinatory system has its own unique personality and characteristic mode of behaviour, and a selection should be made on the basis of sympathetic affinity. The Tarot, as its popularity attests, is perhaps best suited for beginners, as its archetypal images are easily accessible and highly suggestive. The multitude of available designs, moreover, allows for a choice of pantheons as diverse as Egyptian, Celtic, Tibetan and Alien. As such, different version of the Tarot must be understood as statements of individual insight and cultic propaganda, as much as systems of universal verity.

Each divinatory system is under the aegis of its ruling intelligence, usually either angelic or elemental in nature. As such they behave and should be regarded as living entities. They should be accorded the respect worthy of their dignity, and not be abused in frivolous pursuits. To do so is a waste of spiritual capital which will surely avenge itself. Nor is it good magic to resort to divination too often, as exhaustion of the oracle may supervene, and simplicity may be lost to a profusion of conflicting signs, portents, auguries and voices.

Divinatory systems also differ in their performance, and areas of expertise. In this respect the I Ching is possibly the most formidable; universal in scope, it is yet capable of addressing even the most mundane and specific of detail. However none of the oracles are to be regarded as infallible or omniscient. As tools for manifesting latent aspects of the mind, their dependability is the measure of the competence of the diviner.

Geomancy And Feng Shui

Among the secrets of magical cultures is the direct apprehension of geo-magnetism, the electromagnetic energy field which surrounds and permeates our planet. The significance of this energy field to the ancients was immense. As the etheric matrix of the Earth, it constitutes a network or grid of subtle energy, which provided a groundplan for projects ranging from agriculture to sacred architecture. More fundamentally, it was understood to inform the structure of consciousness itself. The monumental sites of the ancient world, from Stonehenge to the Pyramids of Giza, from Borobudur and Angkor Vat to the temples of Kukulkan, are known to have been erected in conformity with geomantic principles.

Contemporary researchers may question the motives of the ancient

philosopher-priests, wondering why they went out of their way to such an extraordinary extent, transporting megalithic boulders for miles, when they could have more conveniently built elsewhere. This, however, is to misunderstand the essential nature of the phenomenon. The energy grid was of primary reality to the ancients, which they symbolised as a serpent or dragon, due to its pulsating and undulating nature. Moving and building in conformity with the coils of the serpent was to move along the line of least resistance. This explains on utilitarian grounds what must otherwise be regarded as the epitome of extravagance. It should be remembered here that the key to understanding the ancients is always, and above all, their pragmatism.

Yet it is clear that the ancient builders aimed for specific objectives, not for ease, in constructing their sacred architecture. These objectives pertained to vantage-points of consciousness to which their priests and kings aspired. For they observed that telluric or geomantic energies have a direct effect on mind and consciousness. Stated more accurately, the phenomena of mind and consciousness are but the crest of the wave, which constitutes the undulations of the telluric serpent. It was the apparent achievement of the ancient magician-priests to ride and exploit these waves of consciousness in such diverse applications as feats of engineering, the obtaining of arcane knowledge, interdimensional travel, and the healing and recreation of mind and body.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the earth's magnetic field is estimated to have been much stronger in the past than it is at present. Still in the process of declining, it is projected to reach zero around the year 2012, when electromagnetic polarity is expected to reverse. This is profoundly relevant to our discussion, as electromagnetic alignment and polarity is fundamental to stability of mind. The decline of

the energy field, coupled with the increase in electromagnetic noise, is explanatory in part of the increase in neurosis and psychosis, as well as the ever more radical mutations of consciousness in the realm of ideas. As a correlate, the year 2012 is posited to culminate in the end of the current world-age cycle and the birth of the new, in accord with the sacred calendar of the Maya, as well as the Time Wave model independently derived by Terence McKenna from the King Wen sequence of the I Ching.

Symptomatic also of contemporary earth-changes are the increasingly reported extra-dimensional encounters, usually experienced in the context of alien visitation and abduction. The dimensional boundaries are dissolving, as the electromagnetic matrix differentiating the planes of consciousness is being progressively diluted and weakened. As a result the extra-dimensional or extraterrestrial encounters, which the ancients were capable of engineering through the manipulation of geomagnetic energies, are being thrust upon our unwilling and ill-prepared contemporaries. Appropriate magical defence, the practice of the Magic Circle on the etheric and astral plane, and conformity to the authentic will are the proper means of safeguarding against their negative occurrence.

Feng Shui is the auspicious ordering of the environment, cognisant of the subtle energies of the electromagnetic grid, and practised on different levels of scale. These range from the planetary to interior design, the construction of ornamental gardens, and other types of personal space. As such it is also the ordering of the mind. An ancient Chinese science, it is based on an understanding of geomantic principles, combined with an awareness of the energetic properties of materials, shapes, colours and sounds. Its aesthetic principles are regarded as derivative from the formative principle in nature, whereby good design is

seen to emulate the energetic and always functional patterns found in nature.

Cognate ideas are embodied in the Western Hermetic tradition, where they find expression in such concepts as sacred geometry, golden section, Fibonacci numbers and the music of the spheres. While primarily associated with the Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic heritage, we may cite Albert Einstein as a modern exponent of this school. For the insight which underlies his formulations is that the space-time continuum is after the nature of geometry. Geometry is the foundation of the formative matrix, the primeval shakti, whence derive the various forces of nature, and thus the phenomena of mind, space, and time. I shall here restate my personal conviction that the unified field theory which Einstein sought – ostensibly without success – requires that the concept of space-time be extended to include consciousness, thus obtaining the notion of a mind-space-time continuum.

This, I believe, was understood by the ancients, who applied the principle in a two-fold manner. Their first consideration was mental stability through harmony and deep correlation with the cosmic environment, reflected in an inviolate social order. Yet within the context of this stability, they were concerned to open and maintain a dimensional vortex, a gate to the Abyss, whereby the initiated elite might transcend the conventional sphere and attain to non-ordinary experience. This is the secret of ancient ceremonial centres such as Giza and Teotihuacan.

Astrology

The science of Astrology comprises the study of energetic patterns on the largest scale. That the vision of the ancients was cosmic in scope is

evidenced by their calculation of aeonic cycles, and the astronomical alignments of all their significant monuments. It has recently been argued, for instance, that Teotihuacan, the ceremonial city of the Toltecs, reflects a pattern representative of the order of planets in the solar system. The Egyptians likewise incorporated a rich superstructure of astronomical data in the design of the ceremonial centre of Rostau, now known as the Giza plateau. The groundplan of the three large pyramids of Giza has been demonstrated to correlate with the pattern of the three central stars forming the Belt of Orion. Shafts leading from the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid point to Orion and Sirius on specific significant dates. More recently, Graham Hancock has shown that there is a pattern correlation between the sacred city of Angkor Vat and the constellation of Draco. Indeed we are beginning to identify a global pattern in the astronomical alignments of ancient monuments. Similarly impressive are the calendric achievements of the ancient builders. Of the Maya it is known that they calculated world-ages in cycles of thousands of years. It is now clear that the ancients were aware of precession, a cosmic cycle of over 26 000 years, wherein the sunrise of the vernal equinox moves through the twelve signs of the zodiac.

One cannot do more in this place than provide a glimpse of the cosmic grandeur of ancient conceptions of man and his place in the universe. The emerging field of archaeo-astronomy is continually providing with new and astonishing insights concerning the astronomical sophistication of the magical empires of the past. However it is clear that the ancients saw their environment in a universal context. To their observational sensitivity the heavenly bodies represented not a far-off irrelevance, nor a mere aesthetic backdrop for mythopoeic elaboration, but the language of the gods, mediated in energetic terms, which set the

course for world-ages and civilisations.

Astrology in its original form is the observational science of the correlation of large scale cosmic objects – stars, planets, galaxies – with the local planetary environment and the dynamics of the human psyche. It is the study of the synergetic interplay of the cosmic whole, as experienced by the human organism. Contemporary critics of the theory cite the ostensible remoteness of the possibility that human affairs are influenced by astronomical events. While our ideas concerning the possible may of course be radically deficient, the actual rationale for the conception lies on a different plane entirely. Let the reader recall earlier remarks concerning the mind-space-time continuum, and the notion of an underlying energy grid informed by a hyperspatial geometry. Thus to the extent that we invoke causality, it is not in the sense of terrestrial events being caused by celestial ones, but of celestial and terrestrial events as parallel phenomena of a common underlying cause.

Yoga

Yoga means union, and in our present context this refers to conscious interaction and union with the energies centred on the human body. We speak of body-language, designating the expressive attributes of the human stance and behaviour. Another form of body language is the subjective language of bodily sensation, the infinite world of subtle somatic nuances, by which the body speaks to the mind which inhabits it. We may call it an interaction between different orders of intelligence – soma and psyche. We should note that the principle allows for accurate self-diagnosis of any condition, to the extent that we are self-aware, and posses a descriptive language commensurate with the complexities of the

relevant phenomena.

Yogic practice, in the broadest sense, consists of correct posture, movement, breathing, and corresponding disciplines in the sensory, mental, and emotional domain. These constitutes a language by which we inform the organism with patterns of creative energy, conducive to somatic health and exalted states of consciousness. Fundamental to yoga is the direct apperception of the kundalini shakti, the vortex of energy welling up from its psychosomatic depth, and its conscious direction to the realisation of any intended phenomenon. Broadly speaking, there are two distinct aims to which yogic practice may be devoted: the mystical aim of transcendence, and that of extraordinary ability in some area of engagement. Naturally these two may also be combined, and we observe the resulting confluence of science, art, and mysticism in the genius of Vedic culture.

Of interest to the materialist is the fact that many of the claims of Yoga are verifiable by scientific means. Clinical tests have demonstrated that accomplished yogis gain extraordinary powers of control over their psychosomatic functions. Feats of strength, of accelerated learning and healing, of pain-control and control over heartbeat, circulatory and respiratory function have been recorded. While there are no a-priori or experimental grounds for setting theoretical limits to the possible extent of yogic accomplishment, we have no reason to reject out of hand the claims of its more legendary developments – those of physical rejuvenation, of the siddhi or magical powers, of significant longevity and physical immortality.

The Healing Arts

Many of the well-known modalities in alternative medicine are based on esoteric principles. While modern medical science is principally based on a bio-chemical model of the body, esoteric healing practices are based on the view of the organism as a unit of electromagnetic energy. This energy is known as prana or chi in Vedic and Chinese medicine respectively, and is analogous to the vital essence or *elan vital* of earlier philosophers such as Bergson and the orgone energy of Wilhelm Reich. True to its pedigree, the esoteric tradition, as always, is founded upon principles of direct observation. While conventional science does not admit this energy, it is a fact of direct apprehension to any individual with a minimum of somatic awareness. Healing surges of pranic energy are experienced when, for instance, in moments of awe or aesthetic rapture, we feel our hair standing up, or the characteristic shiver up the spine.

More fundamentally, however, the matrix of pranic energy is the unit of psycho-somatic feeling as such, and this not merely with respect to the body itself, but also the environment. If we touch anything solid, its resistance is not due to the atoms colliding, but the collision of exclusive electromagnetic fields. Hence the Tantric assertion that physical reality is one of the veils of Maya, an illusion or epi-phenomenon created by our particular physiological stance of resistance to electricity.

The fundamental reality on the physical plane therefore is not matter as such, but the electromagnetic vortex or energy grid, which also constitutes the formative principle in nature. Disease, in the esoteric model, is the result of an imbalance or blockage in the etheric or subtle body, and it is to this domain of bio-electrical energy that many of the traditional therapies are addressed. Methods of stimulating prana or chi are diverse, including among others: healing song and chant, focused touch and massage, acupuncture, sound and ultra-sound, the vibrational

qualities of natural crystals and of flowers and plant essences. Properly directed, these ministrations dissolve blockages in the etheric body and stimulate the vital centres, or chakras, to produce such energies as are required for generating and maintaining radiant health.

A more dramatic healing event is exorcism – the casting out of an evil spirit. Here we are dealing with a malignant vortex of energy, a *standing wave* in the terminology of physics, which represents a foreign growth that thrives on the body's vital energies. Cancer is the prime example. We may cite, in this connection, the work of evangelist William Branham, who taught his students to defeat cancer and other diseases through faith in Christ. Here the approach is that of the high-level language of the Spoken Word itself, appropriately energised with faith to deliver the result. What happens in this case is that consciousness is realigned around an intuitive attractor the essence of which is health. The cancerous cells are henceforth deprived of nourishment and die.

Exorcism need not be the cathartic event it is usually portrayed to be on the movie-screen. Indeed it may proceed without any notable sensation or emotion being involved. A so-called healing crisis may follow later. In the case of a cancer, it is the *life* of the cancer which is cast out as somatic energies are restructured in a positive way. The tumour first shrinks, but then expands as infection sets in. The patient may now feel worse than before. But the tumour is dead, and it is for the blood stream to purify the system of accumulated toxins. This is the crisis referred to.

To conclude these remarks it may be observed that, while affluent economies are still pouring billions into medical research, there is every evidence to suggest that the knowledge base for the curing of all diseases, known and unknown, is already in existence. The question of the health

of the planet is therefore a question of political will.

The Spoken Word

In magical parlance, our word is our identity. In ancient and traditional systems of magic therefore, ceremonial speech held central place. Due to the pristine psychic environment of a relatively quiet Earth, oratory and focused ritual made a powerful impact on the astral light. This was the case, more or less, up until the industrial revolution. Now that silence on any plane is all but extinct, ritual is of limited utility. This is the main reason why ceremonial magic has largely fallen into disuse. The required banishing alone might exhaust the resources of the average practitioner. In the contemporary magical climate the cumulative weight of casual conversation is likely to overwhelm and cancel any ceremonial effort.

It was in response to changing world conditions, that a new magical aeon was declared, with a new magical motto or formula for the rule of life. Known as the law of Thelema, it is expressed in the dictum: *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law*. Under this formula, far-reaching in many respects, magic and / or religious practice can no longer be regarded as distinct from life, but every thought, word and deed must serve our magical ends, if we are ultimately to succeed. One cannot henceforth serve two masters. As God is one, so must our word be one. Spoken with conviction, free from doubt and internal contradiction, the word is irresistible. This is the secret of magical utterance.

Having assimilated this perspective however, we may look afresh at the ancient grimoires and sacred texts, to find out what they purport to offer. And whether we look East or West, the process we find is

essentially this: that the adept identifies with the higher principle in order to control the lower. That is to say, one petitions, appeases, worships, or becomes one with a particular god in order to control a particular legion of demons or a particular class of forces. The prototype of this transaction is the Abramelin Operation as previously outlined, wherein the knowledge of the Angel, confers authority over the elemental realm. In this, as in every other system of magic, there is a classification of the forces, a language of invocation and evocation, whereby specific intelligences are identified. This magical classification of the forces is arguably the basis of language itself.

The Magical Alphabet

Evangelist William Branham stated that the Word of God has been enshrined in three symbolic monuments – the Zodiac, the Pyramid of Enoch, and the Holy Scriptures. More broadly these correspond to (1) book of nature, (2) sacred geometry, and (3) the inspired word of prophetic utterance. The language of magic and mysticism therefore comprises the entire symbolic spectrum, reflecting the natural, moral and intellectual order observed in nature. Representing the range of sensory modalities, the magician's encyclopaedia is the sensible universe, codified in a magical alphabet, which includes numbers, letters, words, gestures, images, sounds, colours and perfumes. For specific purposes these elements may be assembled into aggregates such as mantras and mandalas, god-forms and talismans – verbal or iconic structures which embody some natural force. As a whole they usually comprise a unified system reflecting a particular view of the entire cosmos. Occult tradition of East and West present us with complex cosmologies created along

these lines. Magical cosmologies are based on a subjective and qualitative apperception of man's environment, both inner and outer. That is to say, they reflect and codify the universe of human experience. Familiar systems of this kind include the Hebrew Cabala, the Tarot, the Zodiac, the Enochian Tablets of Doctor Dee, the Runic Alphabet, the twelve tones of the musical scale, and the I-Ching.

In the post-Crowleyan era it has been customary for magicians to seek to unify the various traditional sources into their own individual and eclectic mega-system. This has been done with great success, owing to the fluidity of the symbols and the similarity of outlook which informs the grand esoteric opus. Practitioners are aware that this correlating of the global mindset results in many an insight, both commonplace and profound. Generally speaking, it is this correlation of the contents of consciousness and a grand synthesis in the realm of ideas which the adept must accomplish before he can attempt to cross the Abyss.

In addition to simple classification, these systems are informed by a complex web of affinities and correspondences, which link certain classes of phenomena while distinguishing them from others. This is the doctrine of signatures or natural affinities, which posits a connection between phenomena based on qualitative or sympathetic resonance. On the aesthetic plane, this principle may be observed in the creation of believable and consistent 'magical worlds', as in literature, cinema and the graphic arts. More generally it can be observed in any example of good design. All are instances of enchantment, the art of manipulating and arranging the elements of a particular domain to effect some result on the emotional or intuitive plane.

But what link is there between the elements of our symbolic universe and the corresponding facts in nature? Our concept of a true or

primal language suggests that this link should be primary, in which case it should be easy to conjure any kind of force, given the requisite formulae. Yet we know this is not the case. As the foregoing suggests, the link must be forged in consciousness; and, to the extent that the primal language has been lost, the link has been lost. This is most apparent in the most abstract of languages, that of mathematics. Equations on paper do not send a ship into space; it requires a complex structure of mechanical and electronic engineering to provide the link. Yet in the esoteric paradigm we largely dispense with external technologies, on the grounds that all the links are found within the energy vortex of the human organism. Thus we can look with fresh insight at the relevant yogic and shamanic practices, as it becomes clear wherein the appropriation of the magical alphabet and the primal language primarily consists. It is to gain conversational familiarity with the various natural orders of being, to establish and maintain creative dialogue with all aspects of the sensible universe. Defined in this way, we may consider *magic* as the attempt to contact entities of superior intelligence, while *mysticism* we may regard as the effort to raise ourselves to their level.

In practice, the uses of the magical alphabet are threefold: (1) the discovery of some hidden fact or principle by ratiocination, (2) to furnish the elements in a system of divination, and (3) to furnish the elements for thaumaturgic rites of ceremonial magic; or stated more simply: to gain knowledge, to navigate in magical space, and to create. Magical hyperspace, like cyberspace, is associative in nature. Theoretically it is thus possible to form a direct link between any two objects, locales, entities, or times. In practice, however, the facts are utterly opposed. The misconception, as cited above, is that invocation evocation is simply a matter of technical accomplishments. It is the element of grace or poetic

inspiration which characterises the authentic work of art and the magical arts are no exception. Stated in other words, one must satisfy the guardians of inner space of one's authority by right of initiation.

The Circle In Ritual And Symbolism

In the classical days of ceremonial magic it was customary for the serious magician to work in a dedicated temple, furnished in accord with ritual intent. The Temple or Magical Circle reflected the magician's cosmo-vision, enshrined in a language which included geometry, mantras, spells, and conjurations, ointments and vestments, potions and elixirs, the use of magical implements, amulets and talismans, incense and oils, as well as the dramaturgy of motion and gesture. It also included the observance of 'ritual time,' a sacred calendar based on seasonal, religious or astrological considerations. Considered as a whole, the ceremonial Circle was intended to summarise and announce the nature of the Great Work.

While this method still has its adherents, it is not how magic is generally done in the modern world. It is difficult to master, considered altogether too cumbersome, and may require the resources of a minor monarch. There are other factors which compound the difficulties, and make success via this approach seem much more of a miracle than a necessary and natural result. These have to do with the archaic nature of the symbols and formalities involved, which may appear quaint and possibly meaningless to the contemporary psyche.

In reaction to this conundrum evolved Chaos Magick, with its methodology of working, perhaps somewhat opportunistically, with existing circumstances and currents. Chaos Magick embraces the

opposite extreme of dispensing with symbolic and representational systems altogether, indeed of dispensing with systems of any kind. The emphasis is strongly on improvisation and a spontaneous, creative response to the challenge at hand. A nihilistic and iconoclastic ethos underlies this approach – a quasi-Buddhist appreciation that *all is change*, all aggregates are impermanent, and all codes and conventions arbitrary.

Between these extremes there is a middle path, wherein the temple is established on the astral plane, with perhaps just a few ‘anchors’ on the plane of physical phenomena. While this method requires great skill in visualisation, it has the advantage that it can be practised anywhere, at any time, and is therefore easily reinforced, with cumulative results over time. Nothing further is required, either extravagant or conspicuous. Sufficient is a quiet and uninterrupted space, conducive to concentration, and perhaps a few objects magically charged to serve as a focus or ‘magical handle’ for the forces employed.

Regardless of the nature of the ritual Circle, its principal function is to serve as a container for the forces invoked, a formally defined space which marks the boundaries of the work, and separates the sacred from the profane. Within this Circle the magician is God. This is to say that, as a matter of ideal, the reality manifest within the Circle is entirely under his control. The object of such control is twofold: (1) to exclude all such forces as are contrary to the work proposed, and (2) to manifest the intended reality as comprehensively as possible on all planes of experience in accordance with the will. The Circle may thus become a gateway to other dimensions or the means of ingress for magical entities into the local mind-space-time continuum, a permanent Stargate which the practitioner may open and shut at will, and which ideally provides a window or gateway to any point in mind, space or time.

Conjuring The Spirit World

Cabalistic ratiocination has furnished the western occult tradition with a vast hierarchy of thrones, angelic hosts, principalities and powers, and a commensurate demonology. From the twelve redemptive names of Yaweh to the elementals indwelling a crystal ball, every spirit or force in the universe has its magical name, by which it may be conjured.

There is confusion among theorists as to what precisely is meant by the invocation or evocation of a spirit, and how the relevant phenomena are obtained. A spirit may be defined as a manifestation of energy, capable of informing human sensibilities in some specific way. In the most complete of evocations the result would be a discreet living entity, capable of informing all the senses, and able to converse intelligently in a designated language. Such evidently are the contemplated results in the goetic grimoires attributed to Solomon. There are however many subtle degrees of success, and conjuration to visible appearance is generally regarded as less significant than the quality of the information obtained.

Invocation is distinguished from evocation as follows. The former involves the invitation or ‘calling in’ of some force into the *Circle*. This is the usual approach toward exalted types of energy – the gods with whom communion is sought with the intent of permanent spiritual union. The latter is the approach employed with respect to malignant and unenlightened forces. These are conjured into the *Triangle* (as the most stable of geometric figures) which is drawn beyond the confines of the ceremonial circle. More broadly, invocation exemplifies the tendency towards wholeness and inclusion, while evocation is the identification

and separation of a specific force from the cosmic whole.

As to the means of obtaining these ends, the popular imagination holds to the simplistic notion that it is merely a matter of pronouncing the appropriate formulae, in the appropriate setting, with the appropriate gestures, and so forth. There is a sense in which this is true, but for the beginner this idea is profoundly misleading. For it reduces magic to a craft at best, a notion which must strike us as incommensurate with the grandeur and dignity of the Great Work. While, in fact, we speak of a craft – to wit, *witchcraft* – the concept emphasises the purely technical side of the practice. Magic in the grand spiritual sense is more of an art as well as a science. It is driven by creative inspiration and intuitive insight, and as such cannot be divorced from spiritual attainment in the broadest sense. It is the process of initiation, which opens the gateway to the hyperspatial manifold wherein the appropriate links may be forged, a fact which is reflected in terms such as *yoga* (union) and *tantra* or *wicca* (to weave).

And yet, there are exceptions to this rule; the most notable cited being the magical system of Dr Dee and its associated language called Angelic or Enochian. According to anecdote, even beginners find that ‘things happen’ when they use this system. This, as Aleister Crowley pointed out, is an advantage or disadvantage shared by none other: ‘The rest need skill. This needs prudence.’

Concerning this most curious system we may briefly state that it was obtained in the sixteenth century by Dr John Dee, mathematician and astrologer to Elisabeth I, in collaboration with a sayer (seer or crystal-gazer) named Edward Kelly. The system comprises an exotic alphabet and a language unlike any other known on Earth, a set of talismans and tablets which chart the elemental forces of the cosmos, and forty-eight

calls or keys – invocations for conjuring the various powers of the Enochian universe. The system is called *Angelic* or *Enochian* because legend associates it with the angels with which the patriarch Enoch was said to have been in communion. Indeed there is a tradition which asserts that Enochian is the authentic language of creation, wherein all things are called by their true name.

This being as it may, on the point of theory occultists have, for the most part, been pragmatists, as illustrated by the situation concerning magical languages or the so-called ‘barbarous names of evocation.’ When asked, ‘does the magical hierarchy represent an objective fact in nature?’ most practitioners would probably consider the question meaningless. If, for instance, one invokes the god Jupiter and this being consequently informs one’s sensibilities in some respect – one is impressed with his attributes, hears his voice, or he appears visibly in some way – does this mean there really exists such a being in the illimitable ether? Or is it proper to suggest that the dramaturgy of ritual stimulates the mind, so that unconscious energies are activated in a manner productive of the relevant effect? Is there, in fact, a meaningful difference between these formulations, or are our rational explanations merely so much intellectual froth on a substratum of ontological verity which remains elusive to our conceptual grasp? These considerations ultimately apply not merely to paranormal phenomena, but to phenomena in general. The link between ideas and sensations, between the symbolic and the actual, and ultimately between mind and matter is shrouded in mystery, and we must delve more deeply into the Hermetic arcanum to elucidate the case.

Suffice it here to observe that *by doing certain things, certain results follow*. That is to say, if a magical result is obtained, say, an exaltation of consciousness, what matter if the angel is ‘real’ or a

projection of the creative imagination. And if one finds oneself blasted out of mind and sense, what odds if the demon exists in actuality or as subjective phantasm of fear? The correct philosophical stance, therefore, is the phenomenological one. Whatever the result in consciousness, the same pertains to the actual. Beyond that we should beware of deducing theories from apparitions, and of assigning ontological validity to the content of dreams. What, after all, is this phenomenal universe, but a protracted dream?

Music, Art And Mythopoeia

The arts, though marginalised in secular societies, are considered indispensable to the cultural domain. Across the wastes of atrophied sensibility it is still dimly sensed that artistic activity of any kind broadens and deepens our understanding of what it is to be human. For the arts preserve some aspect of the primal and creative language of the gods. They are a part of the matrix of meaning, which is the life-blood of the soul. This explains why certain individuals in every generation are called, indeed compelled, to devote their lives to the precarious task of opening some new window of perception for humanity, and why patrons of the arts are willing to support them.

Inspiration, the famous muse or daimon of the artist, is an expression of trans-personal intelligence. The genius involved may be of local celebrity or of cosmic scope. The human according to this conception is primarily a receiver rather than a store of information, analogous to a radio tuner which may be set to any number of frequencies, but which would be mute without a transmission. It is this mental ‘tuner-setting’ by which contact is made with specific realms of

inspiration, and which accordingly determines that one should compose the music of Wagner and another write the works of Nietzsche. However it is not merely the peaks of human achievement that are thus obtained, but experiential reality as a whole must be regarded as a function of a particular psycho-physical orientation within the realm of all possibility.

What then is that transmitter to which implicit reference is made? Here we can only point to the universal matrix of manifestation and meaning as a whole. This matrix, however, has centres or vortices which concentrate and radiate energy, such as galaxies, stars, planets, biological entities and neurological networks. The human brain, accordingly, is also a transmitter within the cosmic web. Meaning arises and is enlarged as connections proliferate within the universal nexus (again the concept of linking and weaving, yoga and tantra), wherefore all phenomena must be considered as partaking in the creation of meaning. This explains why certain idyllic settings are considered to be *recreational* and conducive to inspiration. In such settings, free from destructive noise, meaningful links can arise in consciousness. Relevant also in this context is the shamanic journey undertaken to specific centres of power, whether that be the Grand Tetons or the black hole at the centre of our galaxy. On the intrapsychic level it has been established that meditation (as well as psychedelic substances) bring sectors of the brain into synchronisation which are not usually thus synchronised.

In the arts, as in the religious domain, inspiration is the ability to hear what the spirit is saying. It is a function of the developed intuition to perceive in realms of inspiration beyond the scope of one's contemporaries. While the personality of the artist or shaman is a mediating factor, genius is usually understood and experienced as the *other*, the influx of the transcendent, which personality may obscure or

reveal. The personality may thus be constituted as a conduit or a hindrance, whereas genius, from the outset, appears fully formed. Unlike the mastery of materials and technique, inspiration comes as a gift, which one cannot command. One can only prepare oneself by cultivating the appropriate links, learning to navigate in realms of inspiration, and becoming a better channel for the energies encountered.

These considerations apply equally to art appreciation. We gain appreciation of a particular work through intuitive rapport with the consciousness which gave rise to the same. We know from history and personal experience that it may take time for an individual or a generation to understand a particular body of work, to ‘hear the music,’ and thus to appreciate the artist’s point of view. To experience genuine appreciation is to be touched by the same genius or inspirational muse which informs the work in question. This has nothing to do with the cognitive and philological skills of art critique. It is the ability to be moved, to experience rapture or ecstasy in the presence of a work of art, as also one may experience in the presence of nature. This is what it means to be open to the transcendent language of the arts, the acknowledged hallmark of the cultured sensibility. Art appreciation in this sense is on par in importance with artistic expression, in that the quality of appreciation, as the original work itself, enriches the nexus of shared meaning. This is why art and art appreciation must be at the core of any holistic curriculum.

The said domain of inspiration, experienced by any sensitive individual, suggests a trans-personal and quasi-objective realm of ideation, the so-called astral or akashic plane of the occultists. Cognate is the conception of Platonic archetypes and their function in consciousness as seeds of entire realms of ideation. The phenomenology is a matter of

common experience. A sympathetic reading of a literary text takes the sensitive reader far beyond the letter of conveyed information, opening an intimate world of rich associations and seemingly independent verity. Attuned to the original muse, one enters the same world of inspiration which guided the author. Again we are referring to the phenomenon of resonance, which also explains both the immediate rapport between certain individuals and the spontaneous antipathy between others.

Music likewise can open inner worlds for the receptive listener. It is arguably the most potent medium for tuning the mindset of an individual or an entire generation to a particular spiritual frequency. The sixties generation is a case in point. As an unfortunate aside, it is evident that the psychedelic revolution has failed in that music has largely remained a matter of fad and fashion. Yet every level of the spiritual universe, from the voodoo trance to the most rarefied of meditational states can be attained via music. The primary power of music resides in the fact, that music is a language of vibration. Music speaks directly to the pre-conscious foundations of the mind, structuring consciousness through formative vortices wherein emotional states and thoughtforms are conceived. Ongoing exposure to various kinds of music constitutes a permanent conditioning influence, sensitising and ennobling or blunting and debasing as the case may be.

Having thus touched on the question of critique, let us examine the question of merit and artistic quality. The esotericist opposes the notion that it is ‘all subjective’ or purely a matter of personal taste. At the same time we must reject the notion, as disseminated by Elisabeth Claire Prophet and the writer David Tame, that certain musical *styles* are inherently edifying, while others are subversive. This categorical approach to critique is nonsense which, in its prescriptive form, amounts

to aesthetic totalitarianism. *Style*, in any case, is what is most superficial in music. Music has emotional and intellectual *content*, and beyond that a spiritual *orientation* or point of view, which are communicated to the receptive listener. This applies to the arts in general. There is a universal canon of beauty and meaning, which is exemplified by nature in its healthy state. The value and meaning of a work thus derives from its relationship with the universal nexus of sensibility and meaning. Specifically the quality of a piece of music or work of art is commensurate with the quality of consciousness with which it is associated, that of the creator, which, through the medium of the work, kindles a comparable response among a receptive audience.

The saying, ‘as in art, so in life’ is apt. It may be observed, for instance, that individuals who are heavily in denial surround themselves with all things fake. Fake beliefs, fake relationships, fake music, fake art. The authentic in any shape or form makes them uneasy; its mere presence poses a challenge to their conceit. This they cannot abide, so they instinctively avoid any such confrontation. What holds true for the individual likewise applies to entire cultures. Censorship and the obscenity laws are primary examples of this mentality.

Good art is characterised by the following: *authority* (in the sense of being authoritative) *authenticity*, *originality*, *vitality*, *depth* or *mystery*, *rigour* or *fidelity*, *integrity*, *poise*, and finally that quality variously called *verve*, *elan*, *duende* or *spark*. These qualities may be subjective, but in their totality, I suggest, they comprise a fairly lucid image. Artistic quality, as previously remarked, is also commensurate with its influence on the mind. Bad art muddles the mind and leads to stupefaction. Good art clarifies the mind and produces insight. Great art liberates mind from the necessity of thought and leads to contemplation.

Mantra, Yantra And Mandala

The occult philosopher Gurdjieff is associated with the concept of *objective art*, referring to works which are universal in their effect on the beholder regardless of education or cultural background. If such works exist, and it must be conceded (at the very least) that the assertion is true for some works more than others, we are again in the realm of a primal language and a universal canon of meaning. This should not surprise us. The ubiquitous presence of nature, and the pervasive essence of which the human nature partakes, harbours a language of affinities, resonance and sympathies of universal verity. In its cultural dimension this language finds expression in the systems of codified sensibility we call science, art, and philosophy. To be viable, such systems must have some connection to that mysterious something we call nature, the universe, or reality. Indeed, some such connection is inescapable; it exists by definition. The question of cultural and philosophical import is, how strong and authentic is the link? In authentic cultures and so-called objective art that link is evidently strong; a work or culture thus characterised is grounded in deep correlation with the world of natural sensibility. This sensibility comprises the faculty of *appreciation*, the foundation, alike for artistic expression and the empathic response in the beholder. And this shared appreciation partakes of universal constants beyond cultural diversity, observed in nature and embodied in such works as comprise a statement of transcendent purport. Works thus characterised, by common assent, include the music of Bach and the great pyramid of Giza, to which we may add the fractal images of the Mandelbrot Set, and NASA's photographs of the Blue Planet taken from space.

The observational genius of humanity has mapped the cosmos on scales ranging from the trans-galactic to the sub-atomic, utilising technologies ranging from digital instrumentation and the yogic siddhi to gain a privileged point of view. By such varied means an appreciation has been gained of the creative language of nature, whether in terms of the genetic code of the DNA, or the energetic and formative principles of the electromagnetic world-grid – the etheric plane of occultists.

Specific artforms have emerged within the Tantric cultures of India and Tibet which map these subtle realms of perception, and employ an arsenal of sounds and images thus derived to inform the mind with energetic patterns conducive to enlightenment. Notable among these are the mantra, yantra, and mandala. These are visual or sonic structures, which hover on the borderline between the symbolic and the symbiotic, which combine the functional with the aesthetic, and which have their existence simultaneously in actual exemplars of their kind, as in archetypal form in the akasha. Their purpose is the sublimation or spiritualisation of matter, the alchemical process of rendering the material world conscious. As such they comprise fixtures or institutions within the grand mystic and magical opus which constitutes the crest of the evolutionary wave.

A mantra is a sound syllable, word, or short sentence, which is symbolic of the course of nature, or the goal of spiritual attainment. Examples are *OM* or *AUM* and the mystical phrase *Om Mani Padma Hum* (hail the jewel in the lotus). The Western equivalent par excellence is tetragrammaton, the lost Word of Hebrew mysticism, usually transliterated as Yaweh or Jehovah, the appropriation of which is said to confer the power to create worlds. The psycho-spiritual effect of mantra is communicated on at least three separate planes: *physically*, through

repeated vibration; *conceptually*, through meditation and contemplation of meaning; and *intuitively* through identification on archetypal planes beyond the realms of duality. Appropriately energised, a mantra constitutes creative utterance, a word of verity or truth, the tangible manifestation of the intended result.

A mandala is a graphic image, usually of circular and concentric pattern, which identifies psyche with cosmos in a single motive. Its chief characteristics include wholeness, order and balance, qualities which are communicated through meditation upon, and identification with, the design. While the mandala typically represents the cosmic whole, it may be given a specific emphasis, such as peace, protection, enlightenment or healing. Diverse types of mandala may thus furnish the contemplative centrepiece of rituals devoted to these respective ends. The similarity in concept and function to the magical Circle will be noted, although with certain practical differences. In the mystical traditions of the East, such as Tantra and Bon, sacred space is internalised. The mandala proper therefore exists primarily in the hyperspatial vortex of consciousness, of which mind, space, and time are considered projections or modifications. Indeed the mandala *is* the mind, its various generic types corresponding to various locales or states of consciousness in the spiritual heavens.

If the mandala mirrors the magical Circle, the yantra is the Hindu equivalent of the triangle of evocation. Similarly concentric in design, it constitutes a psychic matrix, defined within specific boundaries, in which a specific form of energy or spirit is made to manifest. It is therefore also quite similar in concept to a talisman; though with this qualification, that the yantra does not represent the active force, but the container wherein it manifests. The yantra is therefore female in nature, a magical chalice of which the vagina or womb is the natural archetype.

Zen And The Abyss Of Mind

The illustrious tradition of Zen decidedly deserves a mention in any discourse on language. An offshoot and refinement of Buddhism, it flourished notably in Japan, where it absorbed the ethics and aesthetics of Shinto. As a spiritual discipline Zen is unique. In its purest forms it refuses all theory and formal doctrine, focusing exclusively on the experience of enlightenment, or satori, and the methods whereby the same is attained. In Zen these methods take the form of simplicity, meditation, and a species of dialectical combat wherein the Master engages the disciple. Unlike the Western dialectic, after Socrates and Aristotle, where the rules of engagement and the conceptual frame of reference are defined by formal language, the discourse of a Zen master is informed from a point beyond the symbolic matrix. The mind of the Master does not inhabit, nor is constrained by, any particular conceptual frame. While thus he may have recourse to the conventions of language, he is not bound by their hypnotic spell. Language, as used by such a person, may function as a subversive tool, a means of jolting the disciple into a recognition of the limitations and absurdity of conceptual ideation, thereby facilitating direct insight into the nature of the mind. Zen is thus concerned with deconstructing the absurd and illogical duality of mind and world, which obtains whenever we insist on a particular conceptual and semantic construct of reality.

To this end it employs the additional device of the short epigrammatic story, in which the said conversation of the Masters is recorded, usually in a terse reporting style. A celebrated collection in this genre is the *Mumonkan* (The Gateless Gate). Its apparently cryptic style

is typical of such literature. Indeed, to the Western mind, schooled in logical positivism, it amounts to intellectual quicksand. As a literary experience it is unique. One is aware of a radical subversion of the conceptual plane, an influence strongly suggestive of madness, yet with the intuitive sense of an underlying order, an ontological sanity far more profound than that of the rationalist.

Looking For A Sign

When the natural language has fallen into disuse, we look for a sign. When we have lost touch with the universal nexus of meaning, we seek for a portent to point the way. Thus in our cosmic isolation we search for clues in ancient mysteries and scan the heavens for radio signals from space. Having lost touch with the near and the familiar, we open ourselves indiscriminately to the distant and the unknown, unwittingly making way for strange gods.

Information theory informs us that the information content in any message is inversely proportional to its probability. Thus defined, information is what we did not already know – the unexpected. This suggests that, in search of a hidden message in our environment, we should look for anomalies. And what we find in the contemporary world is that high anomaly abounds, both in bizarre behaviour and reported experience of a paranormal kind. Indeed the situation is such that, in the popular imagination, the anomalous has become a conceptual category, variously called *the unknown*, *the unexplained*, *the mysterious*, or *the occult*, with interest in this domain ranging from the scientific to the sensational.

It may be argued that each of these phenomena constitute a small

crack in the fabric of established reality through which penetrates a certain amount of light, a light of such blinding intensity that it seems as darkness to many of our contemporaries. As a result of this pervasive attitude ours is a culture of darkness; it is to the darkness of non-meaning that we are accustomed. For in our very midst something profound is occurring, and, as a culture, we fail to notice. We fail to read the signs of the times, because we have lost the true language of communion with the cosmos, with the nexus of meaning itself.

Our post-modern confrontation with the alien is the measure of our own alienation, both from our environment and ourselves. So-called normality is the cloak of denial which masks high strangeness. We suffer from what psychologists refer to as cognitive dissonance, the gap between expectation and experience, between ostensible theory and the rising tide of authentic affect. In our world this gap has become an abyss, and contemporary society is displaying the attendant clinical symptoms of confusion, hysteria, hypnotic fixation and catatonia.

In the world today, every possible sign is staring us in the face, and yet we seek for a sign. Our post-modern world, itself, is a sign. We fail to read the ominous roar, the rush in the streets, the spectres which haunt the imagination. Humanity is insane with fear and the collective response, seemingly the only remaining option, is to invest in denial. Removed from authentic engagement, the modern psyche instead invents bizarre scenarios for entertainment, scenarios which reflect our existential situation, yet which are projected elsewhere. Ontology, the science of the real, has become an intellectual game. Since the advent of television de-realisation has made rapid strides. Whatever is happening on planet earth could not possibly be happening to us. For we live as gods in airconditioned towers and switch between alternate realities at the flick of

a button.

And in our distraction we wonder, is anyone out there? Is anyone talking to us? We seek for a sign that we are not alone. And this, because we have lost our true capacity for language, in a universe that is teeming with language, life and meaning. In the words of the master of Galilee, a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign – *wicked* as not knowing the Angel, *adulterous* as in bed with every deceitful spirit.

Chapter Eight

GRIMOIRE AND PILLOWBOOK

The road to Parnassus leads past Mount Venus.

Observation made in quest of the Grail

In Search Of Erotic Culture

Sexuality is the most direct and likely way for the non-initiate to come into contact with forces subconscious or occult in nature. It is also the simplest way for the most individuals to experience ecstasy. The comparatively easy access to arousal and the sexual peak provides a powerful source of psycho-somatic energy which may be channelled in various ways. For the sexual impulse is a manifestation of the energetic and formative principle, the universal shakti, and as such is part of a continuum which comprises creative activity in every domain.

Among the traditionally cited reasons for sexual activity are procreation, pair-bonding and pleasure. For the initiate these extend into the more fundamental proposition of creative genius, cosmic union, and insight into the arcana of nature. Initiated tradition has ever asserted the vital role of sexual practice in matters of inspiration, health and longevity, and the fuelling of creative current. Woman, in the teachings of Tantra, is the archetypal embodiment of the universal shakti, pure energy and the reifying force in nature. In the temple sculptures of Khajuraho, and other cult centres of magical eros, she is depicted with broad hips, ample bosom and buttocks, yet with the lithe and sinuous

grace of a serpent, with ophidian allure and powers to enchant. On the philosophical plane engagement of the sexual mysteries is seen as a way of apprehending the mysteries of manifestation, polarity, union and transcendence. Sexual union, from the esoteric perspective, is an instance of yoga – the conjunction of complementaries, which gives rise to the manifest universe. This has inspired initiates in various ages and locales to devise pathways of transcendence, based specifically on the use of sexual energies. Of this there are four principal schools of thought: the Taoist, the Tantric, the Islamic and the Hermetic. The exotic cultures of tribal societies arguably constitute a fifth, in that the traditions of sexual magic can be found to some extent within all archaic cultures.

In this age of glib sophistication we regard ourselves as sexually enlightened and aware. This is a profound delusion, especially in the light of an initiated and cross-cultural perspective. The fact that we have dispelled the more bizarre of medieval superstitions and replaced them with a medical model does not mean we have drunk from the Elysian fount of wisdom. Indeed the casual nature of the sexual culture is indicative of a great miss. Let it be said at the outset that the cult of casual sex is a form of pseudo-emancipation, both wasteful and destructive. For, as a matter of ideal, the engagement of the sexual nature involves initiation into mysteries at once archetypal and profoundly practical. And, while easily summoned, the forces involved are both subtle and powerful. The relevant experiments are therefore best carried out in the context of an ordered domestic situation.

While this holds for the conventional use of sex in the companionate marriage, appropriate cultivation is of the absolute essence in the practice of sexual magic and mysticism. A puissant opus of the sexual kind represents an experience closest in nature to a powerful

invocation of the magic art, and as such may be disproportionate to anything hitherto encountered. A magical invocation indeed it is. For the energetic vortex of coitus has certain reifying powers with respect to energies of the more subtle realms. A human child is the product in the conventional and acknowledged course of nature. Where this does not obtain, the sexual act nevertheless is not without issue *on some plane of manifestation*. This is why sex is deemed a magical force, a force in nature which may be employed to various creative ends. Specific considerations along these lines are also the foundation of sexual culture as a means of eugenics. For it is the quality of the sexual vortex which is understood to determine the nature of the subsequent birth.

Because of the inherent fascination of the erotic trance and its powers of reification, it is necessary for the initiate (indeed for a culture) that this force be thoroughly mastered. Failure in this regard may lead to obsession, sexual addiction, and cycles of psycho-neurotic compulsion, such as underlie the shocking and brutal realities of the modern erotic wasteland. The successful deployment of sexuality, by contrast, confers innumerable benefits, as described in due course. It is for these reasons that a discussion of sexuality is here in place.

A culture of eros represents the worship of the kundalini shakti in its specifically sexual form. The relevant initiations bring the practitioner into contact with the unconscious and archetypal wellspring of attraction between the sexes; that is to say, the polarity between cosmic opposites in its most complex and profound manifestation. In addition the initiate confronts his or her own sexual identity, as determined by race, culture, clan, developmental factors, and the unique core of the individual soul. In a climate of repression and taboo this process is not without its dangers, for it may easily result in fixation, wherein psycho-social development

becomes arrested in a vortex of fetishism and sexual addiction. The prevalence of sexual pathology, dissatisfaction, and related violence and disease denotes the absence of a positive erotic culture and widespread ignorance of the essential issues, even among the supposedly educated classes.

The lack of sexual culture, moreover, is not confined to the subtle or esoteric domain, but extends to such simple matters as sexual economy and technique. At the core of this problem is the fact, that, for the majority of males, sexual activity consists of the impulsive release of nervous tension in the physical orgasm, to which they become addicted through solitary practices in their teens. Women, as a result, are left unsatisfied, and both partners fail to gain the benefits of sexual harmony, the symbiosis of pair-bonding on a physical level.

The fact that a culture should get it wrong in something as simple as sex, ultimately speaks of its profound estrangement from the facts of nature. Moreover, due to the fundamental place of sex within the psycho-spiritual order, we are justified in saying that the culture which does not understand sexuality, does not understand anything. Insofar as most individuals undergo *some* form of sexual initiation, it is well that this be accomplished consciously and in the wider context directed psycho-spiritual development.

Intimacy And Solitude

The failure of the sexual culture is due to the absence of the principle of self-cultivation, broadly speaking, of a path of initiation. Educational systems are geared to foster lateral socialisation, while ignoring the vertical relationship with the self. This encourages the herd-

mentality, while, significantly, disallowing the concomitants of intimacy. For intimacy, the experience of depth in a relationship, can only occur to the extent that both parties involved have a capacity for introspection; that is, to the extent that they know themselves. Relationships fail because true intimacy is not established. Although there may be great passion, the resulting marriage is merely a conjunction of emotional surfaces, while inner worlds remain separate and unacknowledged. In occult parlance we say that union in such circumstances is unachieved on the higher planes – the aesthetic, the moral, the intuitive and archetypal domains of consciousness. When these disparate inner worlds manifest and collide, as they eventually must, irreconcilable differences may surface and separation becomes inevitable.

It should therefore be emphasised again that our capacity for intimacy, the capacity to know and understand another, is commensurate with our degree of self-knowledge. As to depth in this regard, a primary indicator is our capacity for solitude. Solitude is not loneliness, the void which results from a dysfunctional relationship with the self, and which even a companion cannot adequately fill. Creative solitude rather consists in a proactive relationship with the self, an ongoing journey of discovery, assimilation, and growth. Intimacy and solitude are a complementary pair, each necessary to enhance and deepen the other. The cultivation of solitude and the relation with the self is therefore necessary, both as a preparation for intimacy, and as a component within an intimate relationship.

Sexual cultivation in this context is part of the greater initiation into the mysteries of human nature. It is immaterial whether the resulting insights are applied to the practice of magic or mysticism, to the regulation of an ordinary sex life, or to the way of the ascetic. Sexuality

being the powerful force it is, it must be subordinated to the spiritual will of the individual. This does not mean its suppression, but its integration into the holistic matrix of psycho-somatic awareness. When this is achieved, the creative energies of the sexual drive may be channelled in accordance with the will of the initiate, whether this be the conception of a child, the psycho-sexual cultivation of the intimate couple, or the performance of any other creative act.

Psychic Centres And The Magical Force

Universal energy, the primeval shakti, manifests in seven primary rays or wavelengths, even as light is separated into seven colours when beamed through a prism. Within the microcosm of the human organism the shakti manifest through seven psychic centres or vortices, called chakras (Sanskrit: wheels or vortices). These are located in the etheric or subtle body along the spinal chord. Their function is to connect pure consciousness with the various levels of embodied psychosomatic awareness. The chakras are vortices of power, capable, in principle, of transmitting and converting every form of energy in the universe.

The seven chakras are connected by a central energetic current, associated with the spinal column, and comprising three channels: the *ida* and *pingala* on the right and left, and in the centre, the *sushumna*. In addition to these major centres there are innumerable minor points of concentration in the etheric aura, all connected by the *nadi*, pathways of pranic or bio-electric energy. The entire structure, it should be noted, is located in the etheric matrix of the subtle body, and is therefore not identified in Western anatomy. Its closest physiological correlate is the glandular and nervous system.

In Hermetic iconography, the etheric body represents the Tree of Life which is in Eden, the Pillar of Fire in the Holy of Holies, and the World-Tree or axis mundi at the centre of the cosmos. It is the universal energy vortex upon which all forces converge, the most intense concentration of energy in the cosmos. Initiation viewed in this context consists of entering into the Sanctuary of the human temple, and partaking of the Tree of Life. This Tree, to extend the analogy, bears seven kinds of fruit, of which we may partake in turn. For it is the chakras, which generate the cosmos of our experience, with its seven planes of manifestation. These we shall now consider individually.

1. The *Muladhara Chakra* is situated in the sacral region at the base of the spine. It is the root of somatic consciousness, and the gate of matter in the sensible universe. It represents the principle of embodiment or incarnation in its fullest sense. Here the shakti is said to be dormant as a coiled serpent (Sanskrit: kundala; hence the expression *kundalini shakti*). The magical powers, or siddhi, associated with this vortex are those of materialisation and acquisition.

2. The *Swadhistana Chakra*, situated at the level of the lower abdomen, represents consciousness on the etheric plane, that of the subtle or energy body. This comprises the unit of bodily feeling, of which sexual arousal is a specific instance. The siddhi associated with this vortex concern the transformation of the physical vehicle into the so-called light-body of the magical androgyne, the maintaining and restoring of youthful vitality, and, ultimately, the attainment of physical immortality. Related magical functions include the nurture of genius, the creation of the homunculus, that is, any artificially created humanoid lifeform, and, not least, the conception of a human child through sexual intercourse.

3. The *Manipura Chakra*, situated in the vicinity of the navel, represents consciousness at the emotional level. It is involved in the functions of digestion, assimilation, and circulation, as well as those of balance or poise, not only on the physical plane but also in the domain of their mental and emotional equivalents. The siddhi associated with this vortex are those pertaining to movement, travel, and transport of any kind, which, in their more legendary developments, are said to manifest in feats as walking on water or in the air. Closely related also is the exteriorisation of the subtle body in so-called astral travel.

4. The *Anahata Chakra*, situated in the heart region, corresponds to consciousness at the transpersonal level and the principle of relationship and understanding. This does not so much denote conversational skill (for which see the following), but rather the ability to form the underlying link, which is the basis of all communication. The siddhi associated with this vortex are those of altruism and empathy, the ability to experience oneself as intimately connected with all other beings, and therefore as one with the cosmos.

5. The *Visudha Chakra*, located near the throat, represents consciousness at the level of intellectual discernment. Here obtains the ability to conceive of, to recognise, and to distinguish objects, and the related accomplishment of language. The concept of language is here to be understood in its broadest sense, that of self-expression by any means, and the ability to understand the many ‘dialects’ of nature. The siddhi associated with this vortex are those of magical utterance, such as compels nature to comply with the stated directive, the reading of signs and portents, and subtle understanding concerning the meaning of anything. These are embodied in *Orpheus*, the mysterious figure at the fount of Greek mythology, whom legend credits with the ability to

understand every voice in nature, and to enchant all creatures with the sound of his lyre.

6. The *Ajna Chakra*, situated in the forehead between the eyebrows, represents self-awareness, the ability of consciousness to observe itself. This profoundly human ability enables one to criticise one's own ideas and point of view, which is the prerequisite for transcendence. The resulting capacity for an infinitude of perspectives, the infinite regress of reflective consciousness, and the infinitude of selves thus generated, constitute the abyss of ratiocination, which is the veil before the final illumination. The siddhi associated with this vortex are those of analysis, discernment, and emancipation from all forms of attachment. For the Ajna is the fabled Wisdom Eye, at the opening of which the universe ceases to manifest.

7. The *Sahasrara Chakra*, situated at the crown of the head, corresponds to pure or unqualified consciousness, self-luminous, self-existing, the primal reality, whose nature is *sat, cit, ananda* (Sanskrit: being, consciousness, bliss). The siddhi associated with this vortex are those of transcendent being, free from all necessity, partiality, and dependency.

Arousal on any plane denotes the activation by the kundalini shakti of the relevant chakra. The fact that it is the same basic energy which energises a connected spectrum of sensibility allows for the phenomenon of sublimation. This is the transformation of the energy from one plane of manifestation to another (higher) plane. While it is usually referred to in the sexual context, the principle applies equally to other domains, say, to the leap from emotion to intellect, and from intellect to intuition. It also explains the phenomenon of woman as muse, the female consort as catalyst of creative activity.

Sexual Polarity

Magical tradition offers numerous means of rousing the kundalini, among them chanting, drumming, rhythmic breathing, dance, massage, unguents, potions and elixirs, and the trance of sexual lust. A state, technically referred to as ‘far from equilibrium,’ is required for the magical force to manifest in a decisive manner. This involves a situation wherein dormant potential may be activated by means of certain connections or the removal of inhibiting factors. A primary example of such a state is the attraction of the sexes. For sexual polarity creates vortex of energy wherein the universal shakti manifests as the mutual desire for union.

Sexual differentiation is a mystery, which, like any authentic mystery, can never be exhausted or fully fathomed. This is what makes sexuality sacred and worthy of profound contemplation. Our appreciation of the inherent mystery, however, should not prevent us from taking an analytical view of the matter. And what we observe is that men and women are anatomically different, have a different physiology, and a different psycho-sexual orientation. As bio-chemistry is an aspect of emotional and mental functioning, we can expect gender differences in the higher psychological realms as well. These differences are culturally amplified, making it difficult to distinguish the influence of nature and nurture. Indeed from the perspectives so far developed it seems inane to seek for a clear demarcation in this regard. It is furthermore far from clear that we have grasped the essence of what it is to be male or female, as evidenced by the relevant crises of identity. If sexual polarity is a mystery, so also is gender identity, and it is appropriate for the same to be

celebrated in a context of appreciation with appropriate rites and observances.

This is to oppose the modernist trend, which manifests in the disparaging and attempted diminishing of gender differences. Carried out under the banner of equality, it would appear to have a noble motive on its side. Yet, while it has been associated with social reform of a positive kind, like all shallow revolutions it harbours the seeds of precisely that condition which it seeks to oppose. This is bad magic. The error is apparent in the motto of ‘equality’ itself. As commonly used in feminist rhetoric, it asserts that women are equal to (meaning, *as good as*) men. As such it is a continuation of the war on women in subtle guise. The result is an erosion of feminine qualities, the reduction of home and suburbia to a cultural wasteland, and the surreptitious transfer of values from the private to the public domain. ‘Equality,’ as an ideal, represents an adolescent state of ethical development, one which seeks social justice through homogeneity. A mature and healthy culture by contrast is one which is able to celebrate diversity, including the differences of the sexes, without the scourge of inequity or exploitation.

Initiates of the arcana of nature cultivate and cherish diversity, sexual polarity included. This necessitates a different curriculum for men and women as far as psycho-sexual development is concerned, with different rites of passage and a different formula of initiation. It is fashionable these days to speak of male and female mysteries, of ‘goddess’ and ‘warrior’ cults. These arise directly out of the biological differences between the sexes, and as such signify a return to primal and archaic sexuality. They involve a rejection of bland equality, and a renewed commitment to the quest for the sexual mysteries.

Sexual Initiation

Self-exploration is among the central tasks of the initiate, and this includes an exploration of the sexual nature. The objective is self-knowledge, understanding, and ultimate mastery of the various planes, the sexual included. We may distinguish three levels of sexual conditioning. The first is biological, comprising our species, gender and basic sexual orientation. The second comprises the influence of race and culture, which channels and modifies natural tendencies, giving them a certain form of expression. The third is the personal, which comprises that which is uniquely individual. In practice these categories tend to merge into a continuum which, as a whole, determines sexual identity.

In order to explore this identity, we may need to break through layers of ignorance, superstition, repression and taboo. For the dysfunctional society, as in other behavioural domains, imposes strong normative constraints upon sexual expression. Here it should be noted that Hollywood is as nefarious as the Church in telling us how we are to 'have' and experience sex. Sex education, like religion, is moral poison, if it establishes an external standard of conduct and experience. The sexual act in such a context becomes the perfunctory performance of an arbitrary ritual, rather than a subjective experience of inner significance. This is the natural correlate of false or hypocritical religion. Frustration, bewilderment, anger and explosive violence are the usual concomitants of such radical estrangement from the self. Sexual initiation, by contrast, involves the confrontation and appropriation of one's authentic sexual nature. And while this does not take place in a cultural vacuum, the process of socialisation needs to be balanced by one of individuation. The roles we play, including our sexual role, must be distinguished from the

authentic identity, and these two, the inner and outer, brought into harmony.

Naturally, the emphasis on self in these remarks does not imply a disregard of the other – the sexual partner – but rather identifies the proper foundation for any degree of intimacy and mutual concern. Given such a foundation, based on acceptance and a recognition of self and other, the volcanic energies of our sexual archetypes may safely be evoked and channelled in an appropriate manner. Without such a foundation, in the presence of arbitrary norms and expectations, the sexual encounter is likely to be either bland and shallow, or a minefield of potentially destructive triggers and traps. Hence the absolute necessity of at least elementary initiation in the appropriation of sexual energies.

It is of course to be admitted that, in a climate of innocence, elaborate preparation for the sexual union would not be a necessity. Boys and girls would encounter the mystery of mutual attraction and be taught of the mystery. However in a society insane on the subject of sexuality children's minds are poisoned with the perversions and taboo of adult sexuality while still in their infancy. (It is one of the naive notions of secular culture that children do not know what is going on. Yet, without necessarily being able to articulate the matter, their minds are shaped by the unspoken ethos that informs our culture.) Add sex education as now practised in most liberal countries, given the depersonalised approach of public education, and we obtain a crop of young men and women as unfit for sexual intimacy as it is possible to be.

In the course of self-analysis we separate the poison of morality from the authentic impulse toward sexual wholeness, regaining thereby the innocence of our original nature. This is not to be understood in any religious sense. Religion, as commonly understood in the West, is that

which confuses the matter, by imposing moral constraints upon a natural process. The result is repression, which leads to perversion and sexual addiction. State and Church moreover support the fallacy that sex, like certain drugs, represents a temptation too powerful for man to master, and which therefore must be controlled. This is a ploy to keep humanity in bondage. There is no force or substance in the universe of which man is not the rightful master. If the practice in this regard should appear to lag behind the theory, this is due to precisely the kind of artificial restrictions described. Nothing is so inimical to the moral nature as arbitrary constraint.

As the sexual nature is understood and integrated, the same becomes subservient to the will of the adept. To this end it is helpful first to banish all outside interference and constraint. Through appropriate analysis we identify the forces of prohibition, as well as those urging conformity to social norms of sexual conquest and indulgence. Now a curse on both of these. Then, being free to do as we wish, let us find out what it is that we wish to do.

In all forms of sexual exploration, desire is our compass and sensation or experience is our guide. There is no other rule. Care must only be taken in this regard, that awareness remains global with respect to the Circle, which includes any sexual partner(s). And while moral or ethical precepts have no place in this game, the moral and ethical senses do. It is a question of being authentic and of following the lead of the shakti, the serpent power of psycho-sexual initiation, to the wellsprings of inspiration. While arbitrary restrictions are counterproductive, refinement in this regard conserves energy and allows for its channelling in constructive ways. This is rather important. For, caught in the frenzy of sexual lust, an individual is temporarily insane, insofar as the intensity of

desire obliterates all other considerations. This, of course, is the rationale for the traditional safeguards of marriage. Their function is to provide a fortified Circle, wherein the trance of sexual intoxication can be given free reign.

Among the specific dangers of depth exploration in a taboo-ridden society are those of fascination, glamour, and obsession. Coming into contact with the underground streams of repressed ideation, with the sexual archetypes of our culture, with severed and dislocated parts of our psyche, we need to remain focused on the sovereignty of our godhead, the transcendent 'I'. The alternative is to fall prey to obsession by some partial aspect of the self, with the result of becoming enslaved and driven by unsated desire. Here, as in every other domain of the magical art, it is essential that we remain master of all we behold, conceive and experience. Emancipation in this regard consists of the ability to perform all manner of orgia, and to partake of any kind of trance, while remaining the master thereof. Being thus under conscious control, the energies we evoke shall bear us aloft on waves of creative ecstasy and power exercised in conformity with the will.

In our exploration it is appropriate that imagination and fantasy play a significant role in the quest for sexual beatitude. It is wasteful to pursue a path of leaning by experience what it is that one dislikes. We only have one life to live and the habit of distraction cannot but detract from our ultimate purpose. Fantasy therefore provides a convenient means of realising any scenario, no matter how exotic or grandiose, with a minimum of effort. It is a magic mirror in which we can observe ourselves in countless guises and situations.

While this is a legitimate and necessary process, in so far as psycho-social development is concerned, it is not without its own

inherent dangers. For the temptation exists, especially for the individual who is unusually gifted in this domain, to live permanently and exclusively in the imagination, the astral plane. Such a person will take imaginary or ghost lovers, who, in the nature of things, are mostly discarnate vampires, who subsist on the vital energies of their host. Individuals afflicted with such liaisons usually tend to listlessness and melancholia. They are also generally deluded as to the nature of their involvement. Their seemingly imperial power in the imaginary domain does not constitute actual mastery of the astral plane, as prescribed in the Neophyte curriculum of the A.:A.:. On the contrary, such a condition rather represents a form of downward transcendence, a narrowing of consciousness, and thus a form of bondage. This difference between creative and indulgent forms of astral involvement is significant and can be summarised thus: While the discovery of our authentic inner worlds is instructive and invigorating, the obsessional *fabrication* of inner worlds is ultimately limiting and devitalising. While both involve the creative faculty, the former derives from the fountain of genius, while the latter diverts the stream of consciousness to endless iteration of a compulsive theme. The magician, through astral contact, enlarges his nature, while the melancholic, through superficially similar contact, ends up depleted.

It is in the domain of sexual exploration that education and culture, erotic literature and art, has a role to play. These, in our secular culture, must take the place of temples of initiation, where heavenly houries oversee the transmission of the sexual mysteries. Through the creative use of the erotic imagination, the psycho-sexual energy is conserved and refined, giving rise to an authentic sexuality in accord with our nature. Having thus understood and accepted that nature, we are able to assign our various faculties and sensibilities their appropriate place. Free from

the obsessions of the sexual neurotic, we can subjugate and harness the relevant energies to serve our creative will. This allows for the cultivation of *virtue*, in the original sense of the word the conservation of energy and its concentration upon a primary and singular object of desire.

Sexual Attraction And Consummation

Having thus accomplished the purification of the sexual current, attraction becomes focused and we are in a position to recognise suitable sexual partners. From a magical perspective passionate attraction is the only justification for sexual union. All else is hypocrisy. This attraction must be mutual, in which case the resulting union releases a kind of ‘psychic heat’, which brings about a *fusion of the elements*, which constitutes the mystic marriage of man and woman on the material plane. The union, as previously remarked, should, of course, extend to the higher planes, if a complete and permanent relationship is intended.

The moralists have it wrong, who insist that sex before marriage is sin. Sex *without* marriage is sin, where ‘marriage’ is the essence of pair-bonding which accompanies the sexual act when properly performed. The ethos of casual sex is therefore based on a failure to understand the nature of the dynamics involved. For sexual union leads to the formation of a shared energy vortex; the man and woman are henceforth, in the words of Jesus, one flesh. It is for this reason that initiates tend not to be disposed toward promiscuous or indiscriminate sexual contact.

Mystical Marriage

The concept of marriage as legitimising and sanctifying the sexual

union is common throughout the world. Throughout the various traditions, moreover, the bond between man and woman is linked with types and symbols of religious significance. In Tantric iconography the union of man and woman is portrayed as the union of the universal Shakti and the god Shiva – cosmic forces respectively of manifestation and transcendence. Christian mythology portrays the Church Elect as the Bride of Christ. Mohammed, according to certain traditions, promises the least of the faithful of Islam the devoted services of at least seventy heavenly houries to sweeten the joys of paradise. Even in the mythology of austere Buddhism we find the gods and bodhisattvas attended by female consorts, one of the most illustrious of these being Tara, Mother of the Universe and patron of the faith. There is, in sum, a universal association of the carnal bond between man and woman, and the ineffable union of the soul with the absolute.

In the West, however, and specifically under the reign of apostate Christianity, a wedge has been driven between sexuality and religion. Regardless of how apologists try to rationalise the situation, even in the most liberal of evangelical circles a deep ambivalence toward sexuality remains, the legacy of a thousand years of Roman Catholic domination. At its most extreme it manifests in clerical celibacy, witch-burning and the destruction of the feminine qualities in general. From the moment that sensuality was pronounced incompatible with the spiritual life, and war accordingly declared upon all things sensual, woman, as the visible embodiment of sensuality, became the primary target for bishops and priests to vent their vengeance, while at the same time gratifying their passion in a variety of vicarious pursuits. Witness the confessional, the flagellation cults, and the torture of witches. Viewed esoterically, these are attempts to wring from the woman her vital essence in a forced

simulation of intimacy, while in the same instant absolving the satanic priest from guilt, by offering the appropriate human sacrifice – the woman. Necrophilia is the ultimate form of this perversion.

The Bible, the primary source document of Christianity, does not specifically support this stance. To mention but one minor point, even if the woman was (or is) guilty as charged, the Christian faith provides for the redemption, not the punishment, of the guilty party. Indeed we should not bother with the antics of clerical Rome, but for the fact that its poison has polluted the world. Even the secular domain is infused with the dysfunctional archetypes of the religious imagination, which for millennia ruled the collective unconscious of Europe and its spiritual descendants. As to the actual purport of the Bible as a spiritual document, ignorance and controversy reign. Firmly entrenched, by contrast, are certain popular notions, based on a folkloric understanding of the text. Some of these revolve around the primal scene in the Garden of Eden which led to the expulsion from paradise. Certain it is, that the myth of Eden has become part of the archetypal context wherein the interplay between the sexes takes place. It is for the reader to decide whether we are dealing with the confabulation of chauvinists or a mystical document which offers insight into the human condition.

What Happened In Eden?

In *Genesis*, the religious creation myth of the Western world, we find an account which appears to set the stage for the interaction of the sexes. As it is widely held that mystical documents contain spiritual mysteries, we shall devote some space to an initiated or esoteric reading of the relevant text. Note that certain key verses have here been separated

from the larger context, the second and third chapters of Genesis.

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden ... he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The nature and identity of the two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, has mystified theologians throughout the ages. But the initiated view is that the Tree of Life is *Adam*, the first man, which is also called the first Christ. For the Tree is

in the *midst* of the garden, and the midst, from any perspective, is the location of the mystical ‘I’, as previously discussed at length. The woman, Eve, is therefore that other Tree – the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Here it is to be noticed that both Trees are said to be in the midst – the middle – of the garden. Can both Trees occupy the same space? Are they identical in some sense? Indeed, they are, as viewed from the solipsist perspective, wherein every individual is subjectively the centre of his or her own ‘garden’ or universe.

Let us now consider the mystical Serpent. He is the most *subtle* beast in the field. Initiated tradition maintains that he is not a snake at this time. He was *turned* into a snake when cursed by God after the events here discussed. His original nature is similar to that of man – one who is able to mate with a woman and produce fertile offspring, and this indeed is what he does.

On being alone with the woman the Serpent commences his enchantment. He questions her concerning the commandment of God and begins to dispute its meaning. Notice that Eve, in speaking of the Tree in the *midst* of the garden, is now referring to the Tree of the Knowledge, the Tree which is said to bring death. No mention is made of the Tree of Life, Adam not being present. Clearly, for Eve the Tree in the midst is the Tree of Knowledge.

The serpent now emphasises the wisdom aspect of the Tree – its power to confer knowledge, while playing down its other aspect – the certain consequence of death. Being the enchanter he is, he soon has Eve convinced that the Tree is good for food, that it is good to look upon, and desirable to make one wise. It must have been an amazing sight. Eve, in her primal innocence, has never seen anything of its kind. Thus seduced, she allows the serpent to have his way, and thereby conceived him who

was later called Cain, he who killed his half-brother Abel, the son of Adam.

This, in essence, is the esoteric purport: Eve was seduced and initiated into the sexual mysteries by the Serpent, and Eve in her turn initiated Adam.

The result was that God drove out the man from the garden of Eden, saying: *Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever* Thus it is the man who obtains this knowledge, not the woman, though both are driven from the Garden. The way of the Tree of Life is henceforth guarded by a flaming sword. Death has entered the human race, for in the same day (a day being a thousand years) they died.

Universal Redemption

Is this *the* interpretation of the text in question? Are we to hold these events as literally true or figurative in some sense? As always, the reader is encouraged not to accept second-hand opinion concerning such matters, but to obtain personal insight through spiritual intercourse with the Angel of revelation.

It is however possible to say this: the above represents a non-trivial reading of what must otherwise be consigned to the limbo of mystical intransigence. For neither church nor theologian can enlighten us concerning the matter. It is also evident that this reading has a certain explanatory power with regard to the respective psychology of the sexes. It explains man's two main obsessions: knowledge and woman, and the fact that these two are related in a way which we darkly divine. Relevant

intuitions inform the expression ‘carnal knowledge.’ Our reading suggests why these are so mysteriously linked, and makes the point that all knowledge is carnal in nature. It also explains the *mystique* of woman, the mystery an attractive woman exudes from the male point of view. She appears to us as the embodiment of the secrets of nature. More, there is something about her which reminds us of paradise, a fact which is expressed by Goethe in his famous *Faust*: Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan. – The eternal feminine beckons us on.

Yet it is to be admitted that the interpretation here offered is neither unique nor far fetched. Versions of it have circulated for centuries and are espoused by teachers as diverse as Aleister Crowley and William Branham. And while it would appear that its main purport is intuited by the Judaeo-Christian imagination at large, the recognition thereof is not often explicitly stated. This is part of the ecclesiastical tradition of vagueness as to the meaning of a supposedly sacred text, where its ‘thornier’ issues are concerned. The difficulties are judged formidable, if not insoluble, and there is a cultural reluctance to face the matter squarely; to either come to authentic terms with the accepted scriptures or to be done with the matter once and for all.

Naturally the absence of a clear directive issuing from the Church has created a void of conviction, open to all manner of speculation. For the enemies of sexuality it has provided scope for the contention that it is sex itself, which is the cause of death, and therefore the root of evil.

This line of reasoning however is flawed, failing to take into account the greater balance of scripture. From the magical point of view, we may say that the Genesis account relates the first *break in the Circle* – the first influx of an alien will into the body of humanity. Viewed in this manner, the scenario is not so much about the discovery of sex, but the

abdication of sovereignty. Thus it was not sex itself but the manner in which it was appropriated which brought death. Specifically, it was the interference of a third party which handed the reigns of sexual power to the woman, and determined the nature of the interaction to follow. As a result, man was henceforth to rule the woman.

A further key is found in that Adam, after the events in question, could no more partake of the Tree of Life (... *lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever ...*). Previously we noted that the two Trees are closely identified so that they are, in a sense, the same Tree. The near inference is that they should be approached in the context of a certain relationship wherein they are one: the Tree of Life (which is Christ – the intuitive wisdom) redeeming the Tree of Good and Evil (which is knowledge of the material world). Yet after the said events, when Adam had become identified with the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life could no longer be approached. It was guarded by the fire of God and redemption henceforth required the atonement of a sacrificial death.

What can be known of God is evident in man, so the relevant scriptural tradition. In cabalistic lore the *Serpent of Knowledge* is depicted ascending the Sephirothic Tree from Malkuth towards the Crown in order to pick the fruit of eternal life. This Serpent is the impulse of knowledge, of which carnal knowledge is the primeval prototype. Its ascent equates with the rising kundalini in the state of sexual arousal, the energy ascending the spinal column toward the crown of the head. However from the Crown issues the *Flaming Sword* which intercepts the Serpent, blasting its head and scattering its fragments in the Abyss. This describes the male orgasm in its conventional catastrophic sense, and constitutes the reason why man is subject to death. The

apotheosis is imperfect and partial, the loss of vital energy greater than the gain. Yet in the ‘death’ of conventional orgasm, a seed is sown with the potential to perpetuate life. Symbolically this corresponds to the passion of Christ (note that his suffering and death is called his *passion*), in that the saviour was pierced through with the Fiery Sword to sow the seed of eternal life. Compare also his words, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up*. The Serpent of Moses was raised in the wilderness (i.e. the Abyss) in the form of a brass emblem, a symbol to Israel of redemption and divine healing. It equates with the Hermetic *caduceus*, symbol of the Great Work accomplished.

Sacred Sexuality

What the Bible paints in primary archetypal colours, finds practical expression in the philosophies of the East, especially the Taoist and Tantric traditions. These maintain that sex, depending on how it is appropriated, can be instrumental to immortality or hasten a man’s death. The relevant doctrines involve the control, the conservation and transmutation of the psycho-sexual energy known as ching or chi and its physical correlate, semen. The associated disciplines accordingly prescribe that the male should acquire mastery with regards to retention of his seed, while nevertheless experiencing full satisfaction in the sexual act. Sexually thus becomes a specific vehicle for spiritual cultivation, while procreation, if desired, becomes a conscious creative act.

Retention of the seed, therefore, is a point which is heavily emphasised by many of the Eastern schools. The relevant theory equates seminal emission with the loss of vital energy, which, in the long run, is

said to lead to irreversible decline. According to Taoists belief, the loss of one drop of semen is equivalent to the loss of a hundred drops of blood. While the average healthy young male may not register any notable depreciation in consciousness and even experience enhanced mental clarity as a result of sexual satisfaction, the initiate whose senses are attuned to the subtle realm is likely to notice a corresponding decline of his powers upon depletion of the ching. By contrast the said mastery of the ching, if acquired early in life, is said to confer significant longevity along with other unusual powers. Of the legendary *Yellow Emperor* it is said that he copulated with 1200 women and ascended to the realm of the immortals.

It is to be admitted that the sexual yogas oppose the acquired human tendency of aeons, which for a man is the urge to scatter his seed and for a woman the wish to bear children. It is therefore important to note that we are not contemplating the repression of these tendencies, but their inclusion and sublimation in a context of spiritual creativity. If desired, this may involve the conscious conception of a child, as well as the cultivation of the psycho-sexual energy to other creative ends.

The sexual philosophy of Taoism and Tantra is therefore one which aims to broaden creative options through the conscious appropriation, transmutation, and channelling of the kundalini. This has practical implications for the rules of engagement in the sexual act. Central is this regard is a species of ritual deliberation, which stands in stark contrast to the chaotic and compulsive manner of sexual activity, as so often portrayed in the West. A contemplative attitude is enjoined to offset the phenomenon of fixation, the narrowing of consciousness, which so often accompanies the sexual trance. This fixation, in many ways a cultural phenomenon, begins with the eye. The roving gaze of the

male first becomes focused upon a woman, then upon specific features of her anatomy. With physical touch and corresponding sensation it is the same. We speak of erogenous zones as areas of specific sexual interest and sensitivity to arousal. This tendency is reinforced by conventional sexology.

Within the esoteric tradition, however, it is specifically counteracted. Sexual cultivation after the yogic school involves the sensitising of the entire organism to sexual responsiveness, and the integration of the sexual response with the higher centres of conscious awareness. In this we are aided by the aforementioned separation and purification of the planes, whereby the various bodies – the physical, etheric, emotional, mental, and intuitive – are brought into harmony. The objective is an energetic economy wherein each aspect of the psycho-sexual organism is free to express itself in conformity with its nature, without interference in the form of inhibition or constraint. This does not in any way denote the abrogation of control, but rather constitutes the necessary foundation of mastery of the sexual force.

As the relevant functions and sensations are understood, they may be integrated into higher contemplative states in a marriage of sex and mysticism. The aim is to render the sexual trance conscious and to render all aspects of sexual functioning subject to conscious volition. Here it is instructive to view the erotic art inspired by Taoist and Tantric ideals, such as the temple sculptures of Khajuraho and Konarak and the depictions of sexual themes in classical Chinese and Indian paintings. In these every form sexual activity is displayed with utmost candour and in explicit detail. What strikes the modern Westerner most, however, is the serenity of countenance and the exquisite poise in the attitude of the celebrants, even in the most orgiastic of scenes. One gets the impression

that these are not mortals but gods, savouring each exquisite nuance of sensual delight with calm composure and unhurried contemplation. Yes, there is ecstasy, but the rapture is controlled, the bliss contained and turned inward upon some secret shrine of adoration. The comparison of this idyll with the impulsive thrashing of Hollywood sex offers a profound glimpse of what distinguishes sacred sexuality, the sexual cultivation of the ancient East.

Male And Female Cultivation

While most of the ancient classics of sexual yoga have for their primary aim the cultivation of male sexual energy, with the female being regarded as a mere accessory, the contemporary ethos is one of dual cultivation or sexual symbiosis, wherein the enlightened couple co-operates in the mutual accumulation and refinement of the psycho-sexual energy. The male and female role in this process are naturally dissimilar, reflecting polarity of the sexes, and correspondingly divergent formulae of initiation.

As previously acknowledged, gender-identity is a sensitive issue, owing to an infantile state of ethical development, wherein a contrived equality is regarded the touchstone of equity. To assign characteristics on the basis of gender is said to be ‘stereotyping.’ However it is not stereotypes but archetypes which form the basis of sexual polarity, thereby giving rise to the male and female form in nature. It is therefore without apology or qualification that I offer the following as an Arcadian or Platonic ideal.

Male sexuality is directed outwardly upon the ‘other’ – the woman, sexual object and primary focus of desire. The phallus, in

mythology, is accordingly portrayed as an eye, an arrow or a bird – things that soar, find their target and penetrate. The traditional archetype is that of the hero, the knight-errant who embarks on a quest, defeats adversaries, solves the cosmic riddle and returns to win the princess, who the while is waiting patiently at the castle, cultivating virtue in pursuits of sublime chastity.

The desire of man is to *know*, to have carnal knowledge of the woman. This is the prototype of the thirst for knowledge as such, for all knowledge, as observed, is carnal, the mystical fruit of the forbidden Tree. Due to the catastrophic nature of the male orgasm, man is aware that sex is death; in the dissolution of orgasm he has the foreknowledge of death. This is the insight relating to good and evil and the sense of expulsion from paradise. The woman is not so aware. For the woman sex is life. Her orgasms are undulatory in nature; she does not lose much of her vital essence and with every climax she gets better and better.

The man wants to know. Woman, however, wants to be known. Her focus is herself. She is interested in the man only in regard to what he can accomplish for her and inside of her. For female sexuality is directed inward. Her symbol is the locked case, a garden enclosed, a hidden treasure. Her secret is within, and it is inward she looks for the answer to the mystery of her sex.

It is said in this connection that a male star (or soul) is formed from the inside out, while a female star is formed from the outside in. This is reflected in the complementary dynamics of sexual intercourse. The phallus expands to fill the vulva. The vulva engulfs and contracts upon the phallus. For the man sexual apotheosis is infinite space. For the woman it is the atomic point. The quintessence of fulfilment is therefore the realisation of the opposite sexual polarity.

For the expansive and questing male sexual cultivation consists in maintaining a singular focus, preventing dissipation, and developing continence or self-absorption. The practical attainment is what may be described as the steady state, a condition of potency and arousal at will, without the catastrophic extremities of ejaculation and exhaustion. Hence the traditional insistence on manly virtue, vigour and virility, which is to be put at the service of a worthy cause and a worthy woman, the chosen one.

For the inward looking self-contained female cultivation consists of the protection of the Circle, warding off contamination and unwanted attention, and the accumulation and purification of the energy. Hence the traditional insistence on female purity. While she is awaiting a partner moreover, she must cleanse herself of the poisons of bitterness and malice, which is the psychic correlate of her menstrual bleeding, the cry of the womb unsatisfied. Concurrently she needs to develop faith and trust that she will be redeemed from her solitary state.

The Royal Rapture

It is in the context of true marriage that the man-woman symbiosis can unfold its unlimited potential. Stated another way, only within the devoted and exclusive bond of marriage, as prescribed by all major spiritual traditions, can sexual cultivation be accomplished to any significant degree. Within this exclusive state the sexual bond may become an energised and ascending vortex of consciousness and ecstasy.

This however does not obtain through nature unaided. It is necessary to bring art and cultivation to bear upon the matter. Here we may draw with benefit upon the ancient traditions of sexual culture,

especially of the Taoists and Tantrics, who made of sexuality a science of life and formulated a path to immortality. Here also we may benefit from the astral ministrations and instructions of Dakinis and Houries, of Valkyries and Voodoo Queens.

Sexual initiation is taught by a woman, the kundalini shakti (in Tantra, the psycho-sexual energy which vitalises the human organism), as embodied by the human female. The kundalini however is also identified with the serpent, a male symbol, as both the son and husband of the divine mother. It is the shakti which arouses the serpent, energises it and brings it to manifestation. The awakened serpent then seeks its complement, which is the witch's cauldron, an Hermetic vessel wherein it is seethed. This vessel moreover is alive, twitching and convulsing while the serpent is slithering in its depth. The dual vibrations thus created converge to form a unified matrix of bio-electric energy – the field of pleasure. As the waves of sensation intensify and peak, the cauldron contracts even as the serpent expands. A vortex opens up and ruptures the dimensional barrier, temporarily annihilating both cauldron and serpent. All is bliss, as only the shakti remains in an explosive release of energy and the resulting fusion of the elements. This is the opening of the Eye of Shiva, the dissolution of the universe and the transcending of dual consciousness.

One of the principal objectives of the sexual yogas is the indefinite prolonging of orgasm and the conscious channelling of the kundalini to magical ends. While a common theme of transcendence underlies the relevant ethos, there is diversity of means and ends, as of the language in which the aim is formulated. The Taoist sages of ancient China were concerned with the distilling of the elixir which confers immortality. The Tantrics of northern India sought to direct the kundalini to vitalise the

psychic centres, leading to the opening of the *ajna*, the wisdom eye, and the *sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head, thereby conferring liberation from *samsara*, the wheel of rebirth and death. Persian and Arabic magicians employed the sexual gnosis to contact a host of angelic and demonic entities, while the Hermetic school concentrated on the incarnation of the genius or godhead in a magical child. Here we shall distil some of the essential aspects of sexual cultivation as taught by the ancients, with the emphasis on such considerations as are fundamental to all of the various schools described.

Intimacy, Cultivation, Bliss

The boudoir, or bedroom, which may be referred to as the chamber of art, must be a consecrated Magical Circle. It must also be properly appointed to reflect the desired atmosphere. The altar, which is the head of the bed, should ideally be situated in the North owing to considerations of geomagnetic currents. Naturally, the space should be private, and free from all possible interruption.

The celebrants, often referred to as the god Shiva and the goddess Shakti, having bathed and robed with due decorum, enter and take their ease, sitting or reclining together. The first phase of intercourse is the harmonising of the spirits, whereby the celebrants synchronise their vibrational emanations and develop intimate rapport through the interpenetration of their auras. This may be achieved through playful dalliance or some familiar ritual potent to invoke the appropriate spirits. Erotic art or literature may be employed to this end, as well as soft sensuous music. In the ancient Far East it was customary to present the newly wedded couple with a pillowbook, usually a volume of erotic

prints or miniatures, with the intent that it might precipitate appropriate initiation.

Next is the arousal phase, devoted to the energising of the subtle centres, the chakras of the subtle anatomy. The objective is psychosomatic integration, with optimal sensory arousal. This is achieved through lascivious touching and erotic massage. This process should be languorous and unhurried. It is especially desirable that the woman be roused to the highest possible pitch by these means.

Concourse then is initiated in one of the four classical postures – woman supine, woman prone, woman kneeling, or woman astride. Vertically symmetrical postures are preferable to lateral ones, for reasons related to the said currents of telluric energy. When facing each other, the god faces North, the goddess, South. The alternative is for both to face North. Where this is impractical with respect to the geomagnetic points, let the celebrants be aligned with respect to the ‘North’ of the temple. The posture should be comfortable and constitute what is called a *yantra*, an interlocking unified energy field, comprising a closed circuit, wherein the sexual energy accumulates and circulates. This ‘closing of the circuit’ is an important part of magical defence, which on the higher planes involves what is usually called fidelity, the exclusive bonding between two stars. Where this does not obtain and the circle is compromised in some way, much of the energy may be lost to forms of astral vampirism.

Movement should be sedate and leisurely, and largely confined to the autonomous movements of the sympathetic nervous system. Instead of rushing toward climax, the couple should aim for the steady ascent of deepening interpenetration of sensibility on the various planes, the etheric, the astral / emotional, the intellectual and intuitive. This stabilises the energy flow, allowing for sustained rapture without going over the

brink of release. If mind is kept in the state called shivadarshana, also known as mahamudra, orgasmic bliss may be sustained in full consciousness for an indefinite period.

Unless conception is desired on the physical plane, the god will retain his seed for the same to be transmuted in the psychic heat of intercourse, the energy of which ascends the spinal column (or rather the *sushumna*, the conduit of the kundalini shakti in the subtle body) to vitalise the higher centres. While the full power of retention and the refining of the kundalini requires intense yogic training, even with relatively little effort a man may gain the continence required to engage in concourse for several hours, rather than so many minutes. This is significant for the woman, who by nature requires prolonged stimulation to reach full satisfaction. That she do so is absolutely essential, even from the ordinary standpoint. For if the woman consistently fails to obtain her climax, sexual energy stagnates and her spirits degenerate into bitterness, malice, and various forms of malignant witchery. The female orgasm differs from that of the male in that it is undulatory, rather than catastrophic. Her loss of energy is insignificant in comparison to that of the male, and if she has learned the subtle techniques of absorption and circulation of pranic energy, she may ride the bliss-wave of successive orgasm almost indefinitely. It is therefore the female orgasm, which should be regarded as the energetic foundation of dual cultivation.

It should be noted in this connection that it is not the female orgasm which is complementary in function to male ejaculation, but ovulation and her monthly bleeding. In the higher stages of sexual alchemy, therefore, where the emphasis of female cultivation is not the conventional one childbearing, but the formation of the magical androgyne, menstruation comes to cease. However, due to the essentially

involuntary and subliminal nature of the female cycle, the relevant yogic attainment is correspondingly formidable and regarded as less important to the process of dual cultivation.

The male retention of the seed is at once a more accessible proposition, as well as an attainment widely regarded as essential for the various reasons described above. As is the case for the woman with respect to ovulation, the intensity of pleasure must be dissociated from the habit of impulsive ejaculation. This may be achieved over a few years of practice with the requisite techniques, the elucidation of which is beyond our present scope. Suffice it to say that the essential attainment is one of psycho-somatic integration, the equilibration of energies of the subtle body, and the attitude of conscious deliberation in the realm of sexual functioning.

Sundry Matters Pertaining To Dual Cultivation

Erotic culture, as previously observed, is essentially the worship of the Kundalini Shakti. Every couple devoted to sexual cultivation thus constitutes a separate and individual cult of the Shakti, to the extent that its practice is private and exclusive. This is to say that every couple must reinvent the marital game. As there is no such a thing as a normal man or woman, there is no such a thing as a normal marriage. It is therefore incumbent upon both parties to recognise in marriage not merely the opportunity, but the absolute necessity of a pro-active and creative partnership. From the larger philosophical issues to the fine points of ceremony, in this complex and pluralistic world these matters do not, as a rule, settle themselves; they need to be settled. Communication is essential for agreement regarding major expectations, and these may need

to be periodically revised, as the relationship develops in depth. Here we shall concentrate on the specifically esoteric and sexual dimension of the marital dance, while it is taken as understood that the concept ‘marital’ includes all intimate relationships based on the principle of sexual polarity.

As the sexual activity of couples represents a domain of creativity, involving individual genius, every couple ‘writes’ its own pillowbook; that is, every couple invents its own repertoire of erotic delights. The said genius is the authentic impulse, the revelation or insight concerning that which is found desirable. For the more illustrious couple this process may include the elaboration of an actual grimoire, a spell-book of sexual charms in the form of a literary and graphic compilation. This concept reflects a specific instance of the Magical Record, the spiritual diary which chronicles the path of initiation. As the sexual mysteries provide a domain of initiation in themselves, the analogy is complete. In keeping with the magical traditions of the subject it is further advised that both partners maintain their individual Record, which is to be periodically shared for mutual understanding. The grimoire is after all merely a source book, a book of reference, while the Book of Life is written not in words, but in flesh and blood, the language of mutual experience. Nevertheless the Magical Record will provide insight, stimulate the imagination, and aid in the quest for the arcanum of nature, for erotic apotheosis and everlasting life. Sexuality, like all authentic mysteries, is an ongoing revelation, which can never be fully exhausted or understood. Sexual initiation is the process wherein we are taught of the mystery through cycles of desire and the fulfilment of desire, leading to contemplation and repose, the fruit of satisfaction.

Again we may emphasise in this connection the educational and

therapeutic value of erotic literature and art. Familiarity with such material from diverse cultures and historical periods serves to broaden the narrow sexual consciousness of modern cultural imperialism. It shatters the myth of normality or universal invariance in matters of sexual practice and the ideal of feminine beauty. Conceptions of sexual morality, too, are found to be utterly dependent on culture and clime, the sins of one society being the virtues of another. A pan-historical, cross-cultural grasp of such matters dispels the delusion that there is a right or theologically proper way to engage in the sexual act. There is that which is desirable, a universal canon of sexual beatitude, as this chapter seeks to demonstrate, but the idyll is not attained through formal prescriptions or any kind of normative edict. It is the emancipation, rather, from these superstitions which leads to sexual sanity and provides the antidote to all kinds of puritan poison and the obsessions attending the same. Through immersion in an authentic sexual culture hypocrisy is dispelled and reverence for the erotic mysteries restored.

Pornography, however, which is produced primarily for commercial ends, should be avoided as it generally lacks the humanity and mystery found in erotic art. For similar reasons the clinical and sterile sex manuals of contemporary ‘experts’ cannot be recommended. While they may contain useful information, they, likewise, lack the depth to communicate on a subliminal level and thus the capacity to initiate, as is the case with genuine art. This being understood, the material in question should certainly be chosen for its capacity to arouse and stimulate the erotic sensibility. Arousal, be it remembered, is the impulse of erotic initiation. And to this end, another type of talisman may play a central role in the temple of art: the fetish.

A fetish, also referred to as a charm, is an object to which adheres

a particular type of psychic energy, in this case the energy of sexual arousal. The principal charm in the world of eros is, of course, woman herself. Woman is the primary object of sexual attraction, the sex-object par excellence, a fact of psycho-biology to which attaches no moralistic import whatsoever. Next in importance as fetish object, are likely to be those things which pertain to her person, such as her intimate apparel or items pertaining to her toilette. Considered of particular potency are objects suffused with her odour or sexual secretions. Pride of place among such charms has, of course, the cloth stained with the blood of her virginity. In certain cultures it is a most puissant emblem, to be treated with profound magical reverence.

Next in line are such artefacts, charms or figurines, which portray the principle of male or female sexuality (say, Shango or Hathor), or the two conjoined (Shiva-Shakti, Yab-Yum). An appropriate spirit may be invoked into such an object, and the same periodically anointed with combined sexual fluids as a form of votive offering to the relevant deity. This however is potent magic and not for the careless or dilettante. The danger, of course, is that the fetish represents a secondary attractor vortex which may become the primary object of worship. Obsession follows, with the result that the demon will suck the energies which are thus diverted from the grand vortex of cosmic union. However, if the vibes are good – and this is the first test in magic – the use of fetishes is not to be feared.

If the bedroom is to have an altar or ritual shrine, containing simulacra of the object of adoration, this should be due magical North at the head of the bed. Subservient spirits and objects which primarily serve as repositories of magical energy may be placed in the South. An icon symbolic of arousal may propitiously be placed in the East, and, to

equilibrate the quaternary, an image suggestive of resolution and tranquillity in the West.

Sexual Magic And Mysticism

As the sexual force is cyclic in manifestation, the psychic power of eros is complemented by that of thanatos, the principle of dissolution and death. Freud drew attention to this dichotomy of affect in the human psyche, by contrasting *libido*, the will to pleasure, with *thanatos*, essentially the will to tranquillity and transcendence. Tantric initiates, likewise, recognised the polarity between sexual desire and the mystical quest and made it the foundation of their practical philosophy. For the principle of polarity, it will be readily understood, provides a matrix of magical possibilities, a field of energy which may be exploited in a variety of ways. We are moreover dealing with polarity of the most fundamental kind, the tension between the cosmic forces of life and death, of formation and dissolution, of sexual lust and the quest for transcendence.

Within all forms of practical magic this tension is utilised by negotiating the psychic continuum between these respective poles. A magical current is set in motion by linking the intended course of the work with the corresponding force in nature. The entire operation is summed up in the alchemical formula *solve et coagula* (dissolve and reformulate). In other words, to effect any kind of material change in an object, it is necessary first to dissolve its existing structure, so that the elements may be recombined in a new way. The critical challenge in works of this nature is the forging of the requisite link between the object in question and the desired force. Herein lies the essential attainment of

magical technique. Magic, in this sense, is the art of making appropriate connections, as is also suggested by the term ‘tantra,’ the literal meaning of which is ‘weaving.’ ‘Wicca,’ the anglo-celtic equivalent, I suggest, is semantically similar. Reference is made to ‘weaving the cosmic web,’ the restoration of the universal nexus of all conscious living entities as reflected in the perennial theme of redemption. A cognate meaning is found in the term ‘yoga,’ which means to yoke or join together. Finally, the same concept is expressed in the Latin ‘religion,’ which analyses into ‘re - lige,’ to bind again.

The secret of this art, as elsewhere expressed, lies not so much in the appropriation of esoteric formulae, but in the control of the powers of one’s own being. The objective of the manifold yogas, it will be recalled, is the mastery of psychosomatic energies and their associated states of consciousness. The magical control of the forces of nature is therefore predicated upon the control of the self. This notion is summarised in the Abramelin proposition, wherein power over the elemental energies (both angelic and demonic) is conferred through a conscious link with the Guardian Angel, essentially the divine genius of the authentic self.

The specific use of sexual energies in certain forms of magic and mysticism rests on the fact that sexual orgasm is, with little doubt, the simplest means to unity of consciousness, a local shortcut, as it were, to the cosmic singularity. Orgasm, in sexual magic, is thus the energetic vortex, the gate through which the invoked entity appears. In the sexual schools of Tantra the emphasis is on stabilising the orgasmic peak, and extending the translucent state to include all planes of consciousness. Needless to say, this enchanting proposition involves self-discipline of the highest order.

It is for this reason that the relevant practices involve an element of

asceticism. The objective is not abstinence as a virtue in its own right (which is where the Christian monastics erred), but simply the principle of control. Such control, moreover, is a two-fold. For it involves not only the powers of renunciation, of refinement and sublimation, but also the opposite capacity for vigorous engagement in all manner of orgia without becoming obsessed. The latter denotes the ability to perform any kind of ritual, to celebrate any kind of sacrament, to engage in magical intercourse on the various planes, without becoming fascinated or enticed by the energies thereby unleashed. As it is stated in Liber Al, *Be strong, then canst thou bear more rapture*. This, incidentally, is the meaning of Tarot Trump IX, The Hermit.

Given this degree of emancipation the initiate is able to ride the waves of magical current between the opposing poles of immanence and transcendence. By standing essentially apart (ecstasy = ex stase) from the psycho-sexual vortex which sucks the average man into the maelstrom of profligacy and death, the initiate is in the position to appropriate and employ these energies in conformity with his will. This is the arcane principle of a lever wherewith to move the worlds, a vantage point beyond mind, space and time from which to conduct one's affairs with the insight and omnipotence of a god.

Sorcery And Sexual Vampirism

The narrow focus of the sexual trance means that the associated practices, of all the magical and mystic arts, most easily degenerate into sorcery or black magic – technically speaking, the diversion of the shakti for less than universal ends. To guard against this possibility, practitioners of the relevant arts should also practice mahamudra, the

cultivation of the inclusive attitude.

The sorcerer, by definition an individual separated from the universal nexus of life, can only adequately sustain himself through vampiric practices. Because of the energies associated with sex, it is in this domain that the vampire finds his most fertile ground. Given its universal fascination, some background on this subject is here in order.

Vampirism may be defined as the attitude of self-aggrandisement through predatory practices. The stance is common enough, although its more occult aspects are a matter of controversy among the non-initiate. The essence of the matter, however, is simple. Vampirism, in the narrow sense, involves the pathological dependency for sustenance on the vital energies of another. Here the emphasis must be on ‘pathological,’ for all life is ultimately dependent for survival on other life. The boundary between symbiosis and parasitism is therefore necessarily indistinct. Given the complexity of human interactions, who can state categorically where pathological dependency begins?

The technical answer, which is not necessarily helpful in the analysis of social situations, is that an individual becomes prone to vampirism to the extent that he or she is estranged from the true self as previously described. The individual, thus deprived of authentic spiritual nourishment, is likely to become the victim of a predatory spirit and so develop neurosis. The latter typically manifests in one of two forms: that of violence against another or violence against the self – sadism or masochism which constitute the active and passive forms of vampirism. It is therefore through becoming the prey of a vampire that individuals are initiated into the worldview and practice of vampirism. Individuals who become active vampires are thus possessed of a discarnate demonic entity which educates and drives them in predatory pursuits and by whom

they are vampirised in turn. Co-dependency, in this sense, is a form of mutual vampirism.

While vampirism is thus attributable to a single cause, its manifestations are various, some of which have been socially respectable in certain historical contexts. In its most subtle form it involves the devious appropriation of emotional energy, whether through intimidation or more subliminal means. A notable institution for this purpose is the Catholic confessional, wherein the priest, starved of normal affect, vampirises his penitents. Next in the natural order is the vampiric proclivity for sexual secretions, either of men or women. These were identified by medieval clerics as the incubi and succubi, lascivious spirits which seduce the sleeper to nocturnal rites of vengery. Then comes the vampire of the blood-sucking type, most familiar from the Dracula legends. Above all of these in the infernal hierarchy is the arch-demon Moloch, the eater of souls.

The first of these is historically common. From the torture traps of the inquisition to the flagellation cults of the great public schools, all forms of institutionalised violence are more or less overt enclaves of sexual slavery and vampirism. The sadist, consciously or unconsciously, gluts himself upon the psychic energy wrung from his victim through fear or pain. Where the anguish thus caused is sufficiently great, the evil spirit may succeed in breaching the aura and gain permanent influence over the person thus abused. This, also, is the occult rationale for violent initiation rites. The religious and educational institutions here implicated are therefore rightly understood as centres of initiation into the dark rites of vampirism. It should further be apparent that many forms of institutionalised sadism are subtle and subliminal as well as routine, and so perpetuated quite unconsciously.

However not all instances of vampirism rely on force and intimidation. The cultured and illustrious vampire rather tends to achieve his ends through glamour and fascination, seducing his victims into willing compliance. Many questionable cults operate in this manner, persuading their devotees to lend their energies to whatever cause is ostensibly being espoused. Notorious in this regard has in recent years been the cult of the alien Greys, those inscrutable creatures from the other dimension, who, in pursuit of their mysterious agenda, float their abductees out of their bedrooms and into spaceships in the sky. While their activities are initially coercive – their magical and hypnotic powers are said to be formidable – it is interesting to note that most long-term abductees eventually identify with the alien agenda, rationalising its bizarre procedures, and regarding themselves as collaborators rather than victims. It is clear that these individuals are receiving initiation of some kind, while being used in experiments many of which are decidedly sexual in nature.

A cognate phenomenon is familiar from the annals of medieval witchcraft. Ecclesiastical writers recognised the influence of incubi and succubi, nocturnal spirits which induce lascivious dreams in men and women in order to copulate with them and thus appropriate their sexual secretions. In an exacerbation of such liaisons the ‘witch’ would be summonsed to an astral sabbath, there to copulate with the devil in return for certain favours.

While the identity or equivalence of the above scenarios is a matter of debate, the phenomenological continuity is evident. As has been pointed out, the incongruous and occult dimensions of human experience tend to find cultural expression through the prevalent mythology of a given age. Without a comparative methodology of the subtle realm, as

only found within the enclaves of esoteric knowledge, this is as close as we come to the enigma. Indeed it is this spirit of ignorance, of cultural taboo and repressed ideation, which renders humanity vulnerable to glamour and seduction in the spiritual realm.

Lastly it should be acknowledged that many quasi-vampiric relationships comprise amiable arrangements, based on mutual consent and open acknowledgement of the facts. Such instances tend to be in the nature of a bargain or pact, whereby specific favours are exchanged in return for patronage, sustenance, or some form of initiation. The ancient institution of concubinage exemplifies this type of situation. For certain young girls of abundant vitality some such service may actually be a physical need, considering that, biologically and historically, marriage and motherhood are not an anomaly for very young women. It yet remains for these matters to be regulated satisfactorily in the contemporary world; that is to say, a viable culture of eroticism and sexuality has yet to evolve.

Protection Of The Sexual Circle

The ease with which sexuality may be debased and its energies diverted for questionable ends emphasises the importance of magical protection. This is the rationale for the exclusiveness of marriage, as of the traditional rites of purification and taboo associated with the nuptial event. This also is the rationale of the harem, the traditional cloistering and seclusion of women, who were (and in many instances still are) considered sexual property. Given the modern ethos of sexual equity, it is nevertheless incumbent upon the initiated couple to observe vigilance in this regard. As the ordered relation between the sexes is fundamental to

the Great Work, the sexual bond between man and woman has been, of old, the target of the evil spirit. This is one meaning we may glean from the Genesis account, previously discussed at length.

While promiscuity and indiscriminate orgia are favoured in certain hedonistic quarters, whether for magical or recreational reasons, quality cultivation can only obtain within the context of sexual exclusiveness. Here it is to be admitted that for woman, because of her impressionable aura, the emphasis on purity must be the greater. For woman is the vessel which conceives; she represents the Magical Circle in actuality. It is therefore no use denying that the modern trend of casual attitudes in this regard is subversive of intimacy and the sexual bond. Magic, like art, is neither moral nor politically correct. Nor is it based on fads and fashions. Magic, and the marital art is a branch of magic, is grounded in respect for the biological and spiritual facts of life. The fact that their sanctity is so easily compromised should enjoin the highest of vigilance, both in the solitary ascetic as in the consecrated couple.

Chapter Nine

THE HIERARCHY OF HELL

Better to embrace the void than languish in the grip of ideology.

Advice of Selma Olanta to ISSCTSM

A Confusion Of The Planes

Mention has been made in these pages of a false angel, a Black Brotherhood, and a downward path of transcendence. In this and the following chapter we examine the pathology of the spiritual path, whereby the same is subverted to various ends inimical to the human quest. Here it is understood, resonant with much of the foregoing, that there is a universal hierarchy of values, a natural order which is neither arbitrary nor trivial, it's affirmation the prime postulate of *cosmos* over *chaos*. Thus, given any kind of order, the concept of subversion is not without meaning.

I emphasise this point in relation to the ethos of social relativism, of *laissez faire* or *do what thou wilt*, which has generated a certain amount of confusion, notably within the New Age community, where the idea that *evil is an illusion* circulates in various forms. This it well may be, but only at the far end of a very subtle philosophy, and (in practice) from the vantage point of unusual emancipation. Short of so exalted a perspective, the notion (of evil as illusory) is itself an example of that downward transcendence, wherein a truth, improperly appropriated, becomes a half truth, and eventually a lie.

This is part of a larger phenomenon wherein the mundane psyche, when confronted with the non-ordinary, is out of its existential depth. Extremist and fanatical cults offer an indication of how readily the non-initiate may lose all sense of proportion when invoking the absolute in any shape or form. The resulting mayhem, in magical parlance, is due to a *confusion of the planes*, the inappropriate mapping of one domain and its language upon another, specifically, in this context, the subversion of the supernal doctrine to the demands of intellect and emotion. This error, as will become apparent, has given rise to much unnecessary conflict as well as some of the worst atrocities committed in the grip of ideological fever. One may cite for instance the perennial war between Christianity and paganism, currently revived in the context of latter-day evangelical revivalists versus neo-pagans of the New Age. It is widely assumed that the conflict is a necessary and irreducible aspect of the respective positions, but consider: Christianity may be understood as conscious dialogue with the deity; paganism as conscious dialogue with the forces of nature. Where, one is led to ask, is the cause for conflict? Here I will pre-empt my later conclusions and state peremptorily that there is none, but that the perception thereof arises from the said confusion of the planes. Christians who imagine that Christ could be in competition with Odin or Freya have failed to know their God. Such error is inconceivable to them that know the Angel.

The phenomenon also has its lighter side. Amusing examples may be culled from the social history of *relativity*, that famous theory which made Einstein a household name. ‘Relativity’ was a word which America in the early parts of the new century wanted to hear. The reaction is best described as a species of hysteria. ‘Einstein proved that light follows a curve, and, anyway, *it’s all relative*, so that means I can sleep with my

neighbour's wife.' This, perhaps, is not too strained a caricature of what may obtain when ordinary conceptions are but slightly altered toward the exotic. And it is no wonder in this regard that in earlier intellectually more settled periods the means of initiation were a closely guarded secret. The rationale, ultimately, was to protect the ordinary individual from ontological over-exposure. Yet even in this, the start of the third millennium, we may appreciate as relevant Crowley's Victorian cynicism – that truth is a dangerous explosive.

The Problem Of Evil

It is concerning the question of evil that the traditional teachings are most divided. The three great pillars of monotheism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, tend to the position that it is a case of objective evil in the form of an arch-demon – the devil – a spirit-being which separated from the creator and became the enemy of God and man. The Torah, the Koran, and the New Testament speak of Satan (or Shaitan) as a discreet entity, a deceiver and murderer, king of legions of subservient spirits, tormentors which afflict the human race.

The philosophical religions of the East, notably Hinduism and Buddhism, take a less categorical approach, viewing evil principally as the absence of enlightenment, an exacerbation of the partial and separate ego. This despite the fact that, in their more populist manifestation, these teachings incorporate ancient shamanic and magical beliefs of the cultures in which they took root. Among these we invariably find an exotic pantheon of deities and demons, of spiritual heroes, sorcerers, vampires and zombies, of dakinis and mystical Kings. As a result the ignorant charge of idolatry has been levelled at these cults. However, as

previously remarked, the gods of the pagans are only the forces of nature personified.

Modern magical theory tends to be sophistic. Aleister Crowley flatly states: *The Devil does not exist. It is a false name invented by the Black Brothers to imply a Unity in their ignorant muddle of dispersions* (Book Four, Part 2). Yet during his astral explorations, as recorded in *The Vision And The Voice*, he encountered in the Abyss the demon Choronzon, a being polymorphous and lacking all consistency, vile and corrosive, the personification of chaos. This may be compared with the scriptural assertion of the fiend – *I am legion*. As to Satan, the serpent of scripture, Crowley defines this being as the first manifestation of the redeemer, as *Lucifer*, the Bringer of Light, he who first taught initiation. This coincides to some extent with the views of most modern Satanists, who regard Satan principally as the unfettered force of nature, a force certainly amoral in character, but not specifically associated with the idea of evil.

As the confusion is largely a matter of semantics, I shall adopt the conventional nomenclature, identifying the principle of evil with the personality and character of Satan. This, I submit, is consistent with usage in the original source documents whence the appellation *Satan* (Hebrew: adversary, hater, accuser) derives. I further propose that visible evil is a reflection of an invisible order, so that the evil empire, however it manifests, is informed by a subtle spiritual hierarchy, the *hierarchy of hell*. This chapter examines the relevant phenomenology, and addresses certain practical problems as regards the process of initiation, both individually and for humanity as a whole.

As conceptions concerning the nature of evil have differed, so also have prescriptions for dealing with the same. Varied also are the views

concerning prognosis, the relevant eschatology or final outcome. These roughly may be divided between the notion of the steady state and that of dramatic resolution. Exemplary of the former is the Manichean doctrine which holds that existence itself is predicated on the necessary confrontation between the forces of darkness and light. Within this cosmo-conception, good and evil – god and the devil – are evenly ranged in an eternal embrace of war, without either predominating in the ultimate sense. A variant of this doctrine, of good and evil as fundamental to manifestation, has made its abode in New Age thinking. Yet it is not clear that nuclear war must necessarily follow from the structure of the atom, or violence from the principle of polarity in nature. To take an argument from observation, if a community or a nation can persist in a state of relative harmony, then why not a planet or the entire universe? There is no logical or philosophical factor to pre-empt this possibility. Indeed, it has always seemed more remarkable to me that the universe could persist in a state of division and conflict, as compared to all-pervasive harmony. The curious fact that, historically speaking, the global level of violence has always remained fairly constant with respect to the size of the human population should thus be ascribed to the psychic constitution of humanity on the inner planes, rather than cosmic necessity.

In contradistinction to the Manichean heresy, as it is styled by orthodox theologians, most religious eschatologies contemplate an eventual resolution to conflict and the vanquishing of evil. According Islamic tradition Mohammed will rise again and lead the faithful in the ultimate jihad to conquer the world for Islam. In the Christian millennial conception Satan is bound and eventually cast into a lake of fire, referred to as the second death, a fate apparently also shared by the unredeemed

of humanity. The emphasis in Eastern teachings tends to be more positive. According to Mahayana tradition there is no speck of dust but what will eventually attain to Buddhahood. Hence the Bodhisattva vow, heroic as it is noble, not to enter nirvana until all sentient being have attained enlightenment.

As diverse as the ultimate ends are the practical prescriptions for curbing evil in the life of the individual. Most religions advocate the practice of what may be broadly termed *virtue*, involving various observances and abstentions. Within the esoteric enclaves of the various traditions these are augmented by techniques of psycho-spiritual purification. Christianity is a special case in point. While in its populist manifestation it is not notably distinguished from other exoteric religions, its esoteric or *royal* priesthood is characterised by the profession of *radical grace*, the principle of non-merited salvation, a divine gift appropriated by revelation.

Yet enlightened teachers agree that what is commonly understood as sin – essentially the assortment of human weaknesses – is not the scyla it is made out to be by the hypertrophied religious imagination. Indeed it is the preoccupation with sin itself that is regarded as the greatest part of the problem. The language may differ, but a generous and, by all conventional standards, radical freedom is enjoined both as the means and end of emancipation. Prophet and evangelist William Branham, espousing the said principle of radical grace, stated that the way to control a wild goat is to give him a large pasture in which to roam. Against this, but in similar vein, the devotees of Thelema will assert: *There is no grace, there is no guilt; this is the law – do what thou wilt.* Accordingly it is the enemies of mankind which advocate spiritual corsets.

Somewhat in the middle are those who admit the ideal of radical freedom, but, somewhat distrustful of the same, argue that it makes a world of difference whether the principle is espoused by a Lao Tse or a Marquis de Sade. The Marquis, whose proclivities (mostly confined to the literary domain) bequeathed to the world the term *sadism*, is a cogent case in point. For his writings reveal an embittered idealist, the product as much of a decadent Christianity as of a profligate social order. As such he embodied the antinomies of his age. His *Justine* contrasts with excruciating rigour, with equal passion and seemingly insurmountable patience, a merciless totalitarian profligacy with the voice of altruism and compassion. Invariably it is vice which is victorious, and to which, in an inversion of ostensible bourgeois values, is attributed a transcendent moral verity. Yet one may intuit in this the intention of holding a mirror to the face of his contemporaries, saying in effect – this, my friends, is what you truly believe. This, however, does not exhaust the relevant psychology. For the spiritually fettered a surfeit of imaginary indulgence is productive of quasi-transcendence, while only the most deprived (intellectually and emotionally) may actually need to act out their fantasies. But, as the initiate or saint is aware, we are all prostitutes, liars and murderers. For this reason the aspirant to the spiritual arcanum is eventually led to the shrine of abomination and confronted with its actuality. This, attended by the voice of the Angel, saying *this is how it is, but that's OK*, is profoundly liberating. It is the miracle of forgiveness, the basis of integration and healing. Initiation thus, in simple metaphorical terms, involves both growing up *and* down. While it involves sublimation and refinement in the ostensible approach to godhead, this is balanced by progressive acceptance of, and identification with, the human nature in its totality. In the words of prophet of Thelema,

‘My adepts stand upright; their heads above the heavens, their feet below the hells.’

Altogether contrary is the psychology of religious repression which seeks to banish the human nature, cultivating in its place a contrived self-righteousness. This, as the history of religious pathology attests, exacerbates whatever problems it is intended to cure, with the result that the most virulent of vices flourish in the context of religion. The notion, of course, may be broadened to include all forms of ideological constraint. The common factor is repression, which leads to fragmentation of the personality and commensurate intra-psychic chaos. This is the aetiology of neurosis and addiction, of neurotic compulsions as of the so-called *imp of the perverse*, the impulse to act against better judgement. When the authentic self is subverted, and its unifying direction lost, the fragmented psyche becomes subject to hostile and predatory forces within the Circle. This recalls techniques of forcible indoctrination, as of subliminal seduction, to manipulate through some partial aspect of the intended victim.

This has implications for self-initiation as contemplated in the magical systems of Abramelin or Dr John Dee. The Great Work is defined as the raising of the whole ‘man’ *in a vertical straight line*, the equilibration of the microcosm with the macrocosm. The implied emphasis here is that the process should be balanced both laterally and vertically. Any deviation from that line, according to Crowley, tends to black magic. All deliberate departures therefrom *are* black magic. The theory is thus clear. In practice, however, there are many shades of grey, and it is not always possible to say how or when a particular strand will be woven into the grand opus. Conversely, it is held by the initiates of the A.:A.: that only a Master of the Temple, a Grade which obtains above

the Abyss, is able to say with certainty whether any given act constitutes a crime. While ideological evil is popularly portrayed in primary colours – the witch-hunts, the crusades – the aetiology of such horrors is exceedingly subtle. Who would have thought that an apparently trivial theological error would lead the excesses of the inquisition? Significantly, the ‘white’ and ‘black’ adept are on the same path, and the final goal is not disclosed, until the necessity of the crossing of the Abyss in the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus. Only then, in the words of Crowley, are the goats, the lonely leaping mountain masters, separated from the gregarious huddling valley-bound sheep.

It may be noted that such inversion of the conventional (biblical) symbolism is typical of the Crowleyan opus, and though a potential source of much confusion for the beginner, it is a corrective to the fatal tendency of assigning metaphysical verity to mere symbols.

Confronting Our Demons

Angels, devils, heaven and hell, excepting an allegorical sense, terms such as these have largely vanished from the modern vocabulary. For better or worse, we have a different descriptive language, and it must be left to future judgement whether this language has served us better than that of our forebears. Along with the language, we have also changed universes. Instead of incubi and succubi – lascivious and oppressive demons of the night – we now have hypnagogic and hypnopompic imagery, and, *of course*, there is no hell. We know better than that. Or do we?

Let us try to define the term. *Hell* probably derives from the Germanic *helan*, to cover, and *hele*, a subterranean or concealed place.

The reference appears to have been to a realm of departed souls, those whose presence is concealed, yet without the specific implication of suffering as found in the Judaeo-Christian conception. The latter was probably coloured by the Hebrew *sheol*, which derives from Babylonian sources. Hence the idea, fostered by the Church, of hell as a place of damnation, where the souls of the unrepentant are tormented for eternity. In the latter sense, the term may also denote a state of spiritual pathology and attendant suffering. Here the reference is not specifically to a condition which attends upon death, but a state of separation from the sources of life and meaning, a condition referred to as spiritual death. It is in this latter sense that the term is here employed.

It is unfortunate that we lack an accepted epistemological basis, let alone a rigorous language, concerning these questions. Far from offering certainty with respect to the subjective and spiritual realms, science has simply disowned this entire domain, its hubris not infrequently extending to the peremptory denial of all that lies beyond its horizons. Let us therefore reflect again that religious or esoteric terminology does not invoke some other, mythical, universe, but it offers an alternative descriptive language with respect to the phenomenology of experience. And it is clear that we need a subjective and qualitative language as well as a language of mensuration. In addition we need to obtain objective distance with respect to conceptual languages as such, and to this end we may employ the technique of semantic dissonance, the ontological discontinuity which results from the deliberate juxtaposing of constructs divergent at the paradigm level. We see this in contemporary art, which is no longer concerned with questions of *style* or even *content*, but rather *point of view*, making *context* the primary aesthetic problem of the post-modern sensibility.

Confronting this problem in an earlier age we find the Flemish painter Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450 – 1650), whose allegorical paintings captured the late medieval worldview from a veritable god's-eye perspective. Perhaps best known of his works is *The Garden Of Delights*, a huge triptych, its left and central panel depicting idyllic scenes of an earthly and heavenly paradise, while its right wing comprises his vision of hell: In an eerie landscape of what resembles bombed ruins after an air-raid, littered with an assortment of infernal machines and other bizarre exfoliations, imp and ogre-like creatures are subjecting the damned to various obscene and exotic tortures. This is but one instance of the extensive and colourful iconography of hell which was loosed upon the collective imagination of christianised Europe from around the fifth century AD. The idea of hell as a place of torment is however not confined to Christendom. Eastern mythologies, including the Hindu and Buddhist, chart and describe the various hells as methodically as they do the more exalted states of consciousness. And while it is understood that it is *states of consciousness* which are the object of consideration, the language and imagery, like that of medieval Christendom, is literal and graphic.

Yet, having made this point, I must insist that the distinction we are wont to make between the literal and the allegorical are ultimately arbitrary. All conceptual languages are symbolic and metaphorical, describing phenomena which are but the attributes of some particular state of mind. This is implicitly recognised in great literature and art from the Hebrew prophets to Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*. The viewpoint espoused is altogether beyond the sophistic gyrations by which the modern sensibility seeks to abstract itself from its existential roots. The attitude further is reflected in Dante, who acknowledged Virgil as his

master, as well as later writers such as Swedenborg, Boehme, Milton and Blake. All were concerned to chart and describe the spiritual universe in which they saw humanity enthralled, and it adds nothing to our understanding of these writers – or human psychology – to suggest that their visions of heaven and hell are to be regarded as figurative. Hell may be a state of mind, but so also is every other experience.

States of consciousness, however, especially the less exalted, can also be said to have geographical co-ordinates. In folkloric tradition the infernal realm was said to be located under the earth beneath one's feet, while the heavens were thought to be beyond the stars. In view of the perspectives developed throughout this book, this need not be regarded as mere metaphor, so that the primitive intuition may embody a kernel of truth. The conception is that of mind or consciousness as universal matrix, supported by the quantum electrodynamic field, specifically the neural network of the stars. It is the material universe viewed as cosmic brain, the foundation of the mind of God.

As for the soul which ascends to the heavens, its neural network becomes commensurate with interstellar space, its transcendent source and centre being identified with the black hole singularity at the centre of our galaxy, a region acknowledged as beyond space and time. It is also a region beyond mind, literally and metaphorically, in that the known laws of physics fail at the singularity. The ascended soul is thus a hyperspatial being, transcending the conditions of mind, space, and time. Such a soul is also eternal, for it is identified with the creative fountain of the universe. When the manifest universe is withdrawn, it is swept up in the grand cosmic vortex, antecedent to a new creation.

As for the soul severed from the universal matrix of mind, its electromagnetic foundation is limited to the planet, its gravitational

centre the core of the earth. Relevant also in this connection is the misalignment of the rotational and magnetic poles, in esoteric lore, the physical correlate of earth's spiritual isolation from the galactic community. Because of this isolation entropy reigns in the spiritual domain, and aggregates disintegrate due to the lack of influx of information or energy. Such is the plight of the earthbound soul, in spiritualism the deceased individual incapable of ascension, and which therefore continues to haunt his familiar dwellings.

To return to master Bosch and his *Garden of Delights*, while his statements concerning paradise may have been visionary, his rendition of hell had a precise and very actual correlate in the contemporary torture-traps of the inquisition. Indeed one is tempted to suggest that it is the servants of the holy inquisition which are the object of his work. As such, there probably was little doubt in his mind that hell is a very real place. A similarly famous work of his is *The Temptation Of Saint Anthony*. Like the epiphany and many other religious themes it was taken up by numerous painters, so that it has become something of an archetype. The image is of an ascetic eremite whose aura is infested with grotesque malignant entities. Numerous other examples exist which portray the intersection between physical and mythological space, and it has been argued that the visionary artists in question were endowed with astral sight, the ability to interpret a subject's spiritual reality in concrete visual terms. This view was later taken up by the surrealists upon whom Bosch had great influence.

Whatever our contemporary view of the matter, the iconography of hell is embedded in the collective unconscious where it combines historical horrors with mythopoeic elaborations. A psychic reality, it is avoided both in the sterile language of clinical psychology as in the

sermons issuing from the modern pulpit. In deference to an ostensible scientific objectivity and the ‘good tone’ the omission comprises a tacit conspiracy not offend our shared sensibilities, to maintain, in effect, the illusion of our intellectual and moral ascendancy. The spirit of initiation, however, opposes the psychology of denial, bidding us to confront the taboo and to deconstruct the psycho-spiritual complex which, like a black hole, arrests and devours the greater portion of humanity’s creative energy. It bids us to face our individual and collective demons, and realise our sovereignty over any spirit that opposes the godhead of man. This is achieved not by disowning our psychic legacy, but through phenomenological rigour. Phenomenology is the science of enlightenment, wherein conceptual deconstruction is paralleled by phenomenological reification – the recognition that subjective categories represent realities.

Here some space may be devoted to the presence of Satan, or the devil, in literature and the folkloric imagination. In his crudest form he is depicted with horns, cloven hoofs, and of generally fierce and animalistic aspect. The attribution probably derives from early Christian missionaries, who observed the ancient fertility rites of pagan Europe and identified the horned god of magic and virility with the devil of scripture. The type recurs in the *Goat of Mendes*, the presiding deity of the witch’s sabbath, and in *Baphomet*, the alleged idol of the Templars. Its various forms ostensibly derive from a ubiquitous prototype associated with pagan worship and lycanthropy, but its identification with the biblical Satan is clearly a clerical invention.

Much more intriguing from a psychological perspective is the conception of the devil as exemplified in Faustian legend. It is of the infernal prince as illustrious and urbane, an artist and sophist with perfect

manner, appearing as a mysterious stranger or endowed with impeccable social pedigree. He appears to individuals in some form of distress and typically proposes a bargain or pact. Countless variants of this theme, for instance, are to be found in the collected tales of the brothers Grimm. The development in such narratives is far from uniform, emphasising the subtle complexities of the psychology involved. Often the subject becomes enslaved in some way, only to be set free through some redemptive process. Not infrequently, however, it is the devil who gets the worse end of the bargain, the outcome depending on the wit and spiritual tenor of the tempted hero.

Who is this mysterious stranger which haunts the pages of the relevant lore? Is it possible to link this figure with the mythical genius and polymath which stands at the inception of the great magical cultures of antiquity? This would again suggest some generic connection between the biblical serpent and the ancient gods, many of which appear as shape-shifting reptiles in the relevant myths. The devil of scripture, however, can only occur in a biblical context, for that context alone defines him.

Satan In Prophetic Lore

Satan, originally *Lucifer*, the bringer of light, is said to have dissociated from Yahweh Elohim, the self-existing life of the cosmos, ostensibly in the conviction of being able to better the creation. According to rabbinical tradition he succeeded persuading a third of the angelic host to join the insurrection. Isaiah, a prophet in Israel (c. 759 – 690 BC), wrote concerning this spirit:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground ... For thou hast said in thine heart, I

will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:
... I will be like the most High.

These verses make clear the cosmic nature of the insurrection. They reveal the underlying pattern to be found in the working of the evil spirit, which is to exalt his station above the stars – the suns, or *sons* of God, to impose his agenda, and be worshipped in the place of God. Originally the arch-angel *Lucifer*, the bringer of light, this angelic spirit, in his fall, became *Satan*, a deceiver.

The prophet Ezekiel (c. 595 – 500 BC) speaks of this same spirit on this wise:

Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering ... in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways ... till iniquity was found in thee. O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.

Expounding a similar theme, the verses indicate the original nature of this exalted angel. *Full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty*, and, *Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth* – these words reveal his function, which is to cover the spiritual idea in form, to furnish the coverings or vestments of nature in their intoxicating beauty. These attributes have not deserted the dark angel even in his fall, whence the extraordinarily fascinating and deceitful nature of this spirit.

Yet in his fallen condition, separated from the self-existing

fountain of life, the demon can no longer create. It can only subvert for its purposes what has already been created. For this reason its agenda is not unique, but constitutes an adaptation or inversion of the original intent. It is fitting to say that the *evil empire* is the *kingdom of God* inverted. There is a point by point correspondence of elements; on every point, however, there is a more or less diametric opposition as to intrinsic nature and purport. As a result the evil spirit in his archetypal form has ever been draped in the vestments of religion, with a liturgy of worship, an altar of sacrifice, and an unholy epiphany in lieu of the beatific vision.

It follows that demonic spirits, severed from source of life, can only sustain themselves through predatory or vampiric practices. Only by partaking of the vitality of humanity or other lifeforms can these spirits maintain a foothold in the world and prevent their being cast into the Abyss, there to be disintegrated by the forces of entropy. Their primary consideration, therefore, is the perpetuation of a captive humanity, that it might continue to yield its faculties in securing and establishing the satanic agenda. This is the driving motive of proselytism, of ideological warfare, and the tendency of totalitarian elements to legislate concerning the nature of reality.

The means of satanic subversion are typically two-fold: coercion and seduction. As the former of these can not be sustained indefinitely, it is the latter which has become its principal weapon. The nature of the transaction, however, is not that of the Faustian bargain, wherein the world-weary cynic sells his soul to the devil in return for certain favours. This romantic fiction may be the literary prototype of actual events, although the biographical evidence is uncertain. On the grand scale, in any event, the situation is altogether different – quite the reverse in fact. For it is the great religions and political ideologies which the evil spirit

employs to enslave humanity through its ideals and aspirations. The satanic plot is promoted by means of deception. ‘Worship at yonder shrine,’ is the seductive call of the deceptive spirit, and, lacking true initiation, multitudes are thus ensnared.

The Cosmic Conspiracy

The notion of an averse spiritual hierarchy gives rise to the concept of the *Black Lodge* or *Brotherhood*, a body of individuals informed by and serving the subversive agenda, whether of choice, ignorance or weakness. This group, in which not infrequently one finds initiates of some degree, is by no means a monolithic body or even a loose federation of organisations. Yet in this age of the *externalisation of the hierarchy*, the situation is tending in that direction. Historically, its factions were openly opposed and at war with each other, indicative of the chaotic and conflict-ridden empire of Satan. Nevertheless, it is possible to speak of a body inspired and informed of an identical spirit, and thus, in the final analysis, with an identical agenda. In many respects this agenda is far advanced, which enables us to speak, with justification, of an evil empire. In accord with its totalitarian tendencies and the absolutist ambitions of the infernal prince, the aim of the Black Lodge is nothing less than global dominion, to establish the unholy empire on every plane and over every aspect of human interaction.

Variants of this plot are of course familiar from the *Brave New World* scenarios of writers such as Huxley and Orwell. As these were writers of serious purpose, it is appropriate to ask whether their projections are still a matter of legitimate concern. Or has their fictional treatment, by some perverse psychology, closed the door on serious

consideration of these matters? Opinion, or, more appropriately, temperament is divided concerning these questions. Depending on one's point of view, the subversive agenda is either a fact of observation, a possible likelihood, or a paranoid delusion, far-fetched and hysterical.

Let us first consider the popular interest in conspiracy theory. Web-surfers and aficionados of a certain literary genre are aware of several scenarios, advanced in apparent earnest, to the effect that the reigns of political and economic power are being concentrated in a centralised conclave, intent on establishing one-world government under a totalitarian theocracy – the modern antitype, as it were, of the Babylonian empire. Aliens, secret government organisations, bankers, industrialists, and quasi-mystical organisations like the Freemasons and the Club of Rome are supposed to be involved in this plot.

The psychology of the convinced conspiracy buff is simple. It is the fascination of being the victim of a conspiracy of cosmic scope. An expression of sublimated masochism, it provides the means of infusing an otherwise mundane existence with archetypal meaning. Yet, all other things being equal, this explanation does not negate the possibility that we are confronting actualities. The initiated view is that popular obsessions have a basis in fact. The core of the matter is intuited within the collective unconscious, whence it finds expression in myriad elaborations within the cultural context. Sensational confabulations like the *X-Files* thus provide a form of catharsis, a means of circumventing the psychic censor, the ubiquitous cult of the mundane. Viewed from this perspective, all the fictional elements are reflections of an authentic prototype, raising the possibility of an actual conspiracy, a functional star-gate, and an alien agenda. The image in public view may be grossly distorted, but it reflects an actuality. Extrapolation from first principles,

and the key of spiritual typology, suggest that all we have heard in this connection is true. It may not be true in exactly the way it is imagined, but it is true in essence, as we shall see one of these days.

From the historical perspective schemes to rule the earth, or the known world, are nothing new. From the campaigns of Nimrod and Alexander the Great to those of Napoleon and Hitler, the spirit of world-domination finds expression wherever an individual and a group can be harnessed to its ends. The Third Reich (Nazi Germany) is here of interest in that it exhibited the trappings of a religious crusade: the revival of Nordic mythology, the mystic notion of a master race, pagan symbolism of the swastika and the runic insignia of the SS, eugenics and the obsession with racial purity, and finally the dream of a ‘millennium,’ a thousand-year reign. From the esoteric perspective we are here considering the externalisation of an inner-plane warrior-cult, centred on the worship of savage deities, as invoked by the Nazi elite and the German people in response to whatever contingencies they imagined to be their plight.

It is further a tenet of the secret doctrine that spirits ordinarily do not die, but migrate from individual to individual, from generation to generation, and from age to age, following the line of least resistance in the resonance field of the psychic continuum. This explains why history repeats itself, why virtually identical and irrational scenarios of conflict are played out again and again wherever there is fertile soil for the virus to take root. It explains why indicted war-criminal General Mladic felt himself called upon to settle a thousand-year score, incurred when South-Eastern Europe was swept by the Turkish armies and the rose of Srebrenica carried off to the Sultan’s harem. We must therefore assume that the spirit of world-dominion continues to captivate suitably placed

individuals, even as the conclaves of power and privilege habitually convene to safeguard and further their interests.

Now let us consider the following: If the cosmic conspiracy were a fact, how could it best be kept hidden, especially while it is already well advanced? Arguably in today's climate of open reporting and instant communication it could not be hidden by the conventional means of secrecy. However, given saturation coverage in fictional style, with every sensational nuance exploited, it can be safely assumed that very few will give the subject serious consideration, even as the final pieces of the jigsaw are falling into place. To paraphrase Lao Tse, *he who parades himself is not conspicuous.*

Babylon The Great

An extensive literary and theological tradition identifies the principle religious and ideological subversion with the hierarchy of papal Rome. The relevant assertions may be traced back at least to Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), Augustinian monk and later professor of biblical exegesis at Wittenberg, who denounced corruption in the Catholic Church and became the catalyst of the Protestant reformation. The charge, throughout history, has remained fairly constant. It identifies papal Rome with the draconian empire of ancient Babylon, with *Mystery Babylon* of the Apocalypse, and the pope as the biblical antichrist. In theory, this stance remains part of the Protestant profession, although the present spirit of ecumenism has effectively blunted its militant edge. Nevertheless, it retains a central position among the more fervent of evangelical circles, thus forming part of a global and impassioned controversy of which the world is largely unaware. Yet criticism of the

Catholic Church has never been exclusively confined to coteries with a theological axe to grind. Secular historians have extensively documented its collusion in major crimes against humanity, such as slavery and genocide. While one hears much of the Nazi holocaust, wherein some six million Jews were murdered, one hears much less of the *seventy-eight million* slain of the Roman Catholic Church, as recorded in its own martyrology (see William Branham, *An Exposition Of The Seven Church Ages*). Not least among its critics are Catholics themselves, motivated by a concern to purge the temple of iniquity.

However the spirit of deception is necessarily a universal phenomenon, not exclusively tied to any specific church or cult. Yet the argument can be sustained that in the doctrines and institutions of the Roman Church it has attained its fullest expression. It is for this reason that this system is herein singled out for scrutiny. It should be noted however that the biblical *whore of Babylon* was called a mother of harlots. Here the prophetic spirit is not concerned with women engaged in the oldest profession. *Women* (virgins, harlots) in the Apocalypse are symbolic of *churches*, the one virginal unto the Angel, the other in bed with every false and deceptive spirit. One brings forth Christ, the other the antichrist. Insofar as the Protestant churches came out of Rome, and to Rome they are returning, these are the Harlots, the spiritual daughters of the Whore.

The significant conclusion is that organised evil is religious at its core, and preferentially presents itself in religious garb. The obverse holds equally true; organised religion is inimical to the best interests of humanity, and this as a matter of necessary default. For true religion is inspirational in nature, and as such cannot be institutionalised. Attempts to do so involve a reduction of the supernal doctrine to a code or creed,

the worship of which constitutes idolatry, the equivalent of spiritual death. The point to emphasise is that the antichrist is not fascism or communism, although these are antichrist in principle, but the antichrist proper is a religious spirit. In *The Vision And The Voice*, a mystical document which describes the spiritual universe of humanity, the Master Therion wrote:

And Satan is worshipped by men under the name of Jesus; and Lucifer is worshipped by men under the name of Brahma; and Leviathan is worshipped by men under the name of Allah; and Belial is worshipped by men under the name of Buddha.

This verse is consistent with the said agenda, which is to depose the authentic Angel or Magus, to take the place of God, and be worshipped as God. In the context of the argument so far this amounts to the deposing of the authentic self and the insinuation of an alien will. It is evident that this phenomenon equates with false religion as identified in previous chapters, the worship of the imaginary and conceptual *god-out-there*, wherein the evil spirit gains ascendancy over the human soul.

We further notice that the satanic plot (as in the verse above) is considered as *fait accompli* – an established fact, and this, as religious history demonstrates, with due justification. While the greater part of humanity languishes in the grip of subversive ideologies, the saint, true mystic or enlightened adept, represents a minority, minute to the point of vanishing. Satan is rightly called the prince of this present world; he is its ruler by virtue of the said deception. His victory, however, although far-reaching is neither complete nor final. Ultimately it must fail, as there is but one source of life in the universe. Yet the evil spirit has survived thousands of years and built a formidable empire in the earth. It is to the

manifest character of that empire, its institutions and modus operandi that we shall now turn our attention.

The Course Of Subversion

As the leading cause of human servitude I cite *ideology*, an arbitrary set of beliefs which takes precedence over experience, intuition, and human or humane sensibilities in general. In extreme cases it is appropriate to speak of ideological intoxication, a radical estrangement from nature and the essential facts of life. Ideology, as unfounded assertion, is the root-cause of ignorance and thus of superstition – dysfunctional belief which disempowers those it afflicts and generates arbitrary dependence on experts and authorities. In a climate of ignorance and superstition further flourish irrational fears, such as give rise to lynch-mobs as well as the totalitarian machinery of organised terror. *Ideology, ignorance, superstition, fear* – such is the aetiology of evil, the course by which humanity is enslaved.

In the religious context the subversive ideology is defined as the catechism, the creed, or the articles of faith. It may be formalised in official documents, or arise spontaneously in the context of collusion within any closely-knit community. Invariably it is quasi-mystical, defining the goal in abstract terms, such as the good of the collective, the Church, or the heavenly cause. This enables a call for sacrifice to be made with apparently noble and altruistic intent. However what the faithful may be called upon to sacrifice, besides their labour and their lives, is their humanity. For human beings in such a system are always the means to an end, not ends in themselves.

Religion, as the force which shapes belief at the archetypal level,

produces the most passionately held convictions. History demonstrates that it is possible for people to believe almost anything on religious grounds. It takes, after all, a certain heroism of faith to believe unswervingly in each of the prescribed articles of faith (as of, say, the Roman catechism), the infallibility of a long line of popes, each contradicting the other, with new revelations added now and then at the whim of the pontiff. The more absurd the belief, the greater often the fanaticism with which it is held. It is this psychology which renders the religious person the most easily exploited. Such a person will actively participate in his or her own exploitation, thank the persecutor, and count it a privilege. It is for this reason that the subversion of the religious sensibility has always been the first consideration of the Black Brotherhood.

It is clear, furthermore, that any belief-system which places the essential reward for sacrifice in the afterlife is capable of nigh unlimited abuse. The literature of religious pathology informs us that the most bizarre claims imaginable have, at various times and among various peoples, enjoyed the status of divine sanction. The cynic in this regard has history on his side. The catalogue of religious perversion is extensive and ranges from the ludicrous to the tragic. Religious sensibilities of course differ widely. However I contend that we should seriously question any religious teaching that bids its followers do violence to self or others. We should also beware of any system which is essentially sophistic in nature, and which trivialises the mystery by reducing it to a formula. All forms of fundamentalism fall into this category. As to the violence done by exploitative cults, it is a slippery slope of subtle degrees from debasing oneself in the confessional, and dragging oneself on one's knees for miles up to some shrine, to psychological and physical self-

mutilation. From the individual to the global scale the worst of atrocities toward self and others are committed in the grip of ideological fever. Such, at the extreme end of exacerbation, are the dangers of succumbing to the false religion.

Yet, while it is thus easy to demonise the apostate clergy, it is well to remember that these hapless individuals are themselves victims of deception. The majority, no doubt, enter religious life with noble intentions. It is the regime to which they submit which disparages their ideals and undermines their moral integrity. Thus we find the process of spiritual initiation mirrored by its antitype: initiation into the hierarchy of hell. The correspondences between these respective systems extend into unimagined detail, in that, as previously remarked, the tree of evil is not a separate creation; it merely represents an inversion of the original. Specifically, there is a close correspondence between the two major crises of the respective paths: the Angel and the Abyss as against the Dweller On The Threshold and the Towers of the Black Brothers. Thus every spiritual truth has its falsifications – misrepresentations both subtle and not so subtle, which mask the original intent. This prompted Heru Raha to remark that all spiritual texts are infested with demons who are assigned the task of darkening counsel, and this the more so, the greater the intrinsic value of a particular text. This is part of a larger phenomenon, the subversion of language as such. Therein lies the danger of mystical treatises, from the Bible to Liber Al Vel Legis, wherefore any serious concourse with such Books should only be undertaken under the aegis of the Angel. This becomes clear by comparing the process of initiation within the two opposing systems – the Angelic and the Satanic.

The Angel represents the creative Word or universal logos – a spiritual seed which quickens the soul, raises it to the pinnacle of human

potential, and from thence to the brink of the Abyss, wherein it is sown (again) as a seed, thereafter to be raised in the likeness of the Angel, which is Christ, the perfected soul. Those who have undergone this process are called initiates of the Third Order, in biblical language, kings and priests, the royal seed of Abraham.

In the satanic school of initiation the false angel presents an ideology or creed as the essential truth. Acceptance thereof may lead a man to power, but at the price of unbalanced growth, through the suppression of the authentic self and the ascendancy of the conditioned ego. Such an one is likewise led to the Abyss, where he is asked to sacrifice his soul to the demon he serves. Here let it be remembered, that the pact is rarely presented in such terms. Only in the uppermost echelons are Satanists are thus clear about their position. The ostensible context and associated rhetoric is more likely that of ostentatious sanctity and the high moral ground. Having made the sacrifice, the individual accedes to the Towers of the Black Brothers and becomes a high-priest of Satan.

In both systems the process is irreversible to the extent that it is complete. The mystic, having consummated the marriage with the Angel cannot fall from grace. He can still be led into error, even considerable error, below the Abyss, but he will eventually conform to the likeness of the Angel, as the spiritual seed unfolds in accord with the laws growth. Should he die prematurely, his soul is nevertheless sown in the likeness of the Angel, for that constitutes his authentic self, and as such he rises in the resurrection.

As for the adept of the averse hierarchy, there also comes a point of no return, which is the complete severing of the link with the Angel, referred to as the loss or death of the soul. This is the so-called unpardonable sin, also referred to as the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost –

the dismissal of the authentic Angel, and the acceptance of another in his place. Yet it should be understood that it is irredeemable only in so far as it is maintained to the end. A flirtation with the Black Lodge, even a spell in the Towers of the Black Brothers, does not inevitably entail the death of the soul. For the soul, recognising its error, there is always way of return, of redemption and release from former bondage. It is those souls which are *incapable* of recognising their error, and thus have no wish for repentance that are irredeemably lost. This is an important distinction to make. For there are many of the religious persuasion, who believe, often with profound conviction, that they have committed the unpardonable sin, usually through misinterpreting the relevant doctrines and the events of their lives. It is a ruse of the evil spirit to foist such a belief upon the hapless believer, both as a means of torture and of keeping that person in bondage. It is also a typical challenge encountered by the saints of God, those who are destined for the highest, and against whom in consequence is loosed the entire infernal machinery of deception.

The inexperienced in the spiritual path can have little conception of the sophistry and depth of cunning which characterises the spirit of deceit. One must accept the categorical impossibility of out-manoeuvring the fiend on his own ground. From the foregoing it will be apparent that the deception is necessarily coextensive with the realm of intellect as such, wherefore a superior faculty – the intuition – is required to break down the bars of conceptual bondage. Only the revelation of the Angel can pierce the darkness and quell the arrows of deceit. Revelation is the basis of authentic faith, the intuition and appropriation of spiritual truth. Without such revelation faith is impossible, and the inspired teachings are misappropriated. The result is spiritual blindness, for without the mediation of the Angel the believer is blinded by the light of the

incommensurate. As there is a light in the natural realm too bright for mortal eyes, spiritual truths likewise cannot be steadfastly beholden by unregenerate humanity. Thus the truth which gives light to one is that which blinds another. Every spiritual manifestation accordingly gives rise to a twin set of phenomena: the saint and the religious hypocrite. The former is crucified with Christ, raised from the dead, and ascends into heaven. The latter creates religious institutions, patterned after this present world.

Infamy And Sophistry

The identity of Satan with the biblical serpent is mostly implied in the prophetic literature, but in the Apocalypse it is explicitly stated. This is suggestive of a specific revelation concerning the exposure of the evil spirit in the eschatological or final phase of the prophetic timetable. It also implies that throughout history the nature of evil has remained something of a mystery; its defining characteristic being one of sophistry. We notice that the serpent of Genesis used *theological arguments* to get the better of Eve. In the contemporary world we need not look to terrorists or totalitarian regimes for clandestine evil, but it is the world's most powerful liberal and egalitarian governments which are steering the planet towards ecological holocaust, social disintegration, and economic collapse. Similarly it is the self-appointed spiritual shepherds of this world which are leading the soul of humanity to the brink of desolation. To return to our example, the Roman Church claims the highest moral sanctity in identifying itself with the Christian faith. Yet even the casual observer must needs be led to ask, what remote connection is there between the political intrigues of the Vatican and the gentle philosopher

of Galilee? Of course, there is none. Not spiritual but temporal power is the abiding objective of the Roman Church and its Protestant satellites, while the cloak of religion serves to compel obedience and to cast an aura of respectability.

Yet through centuries of totalitarian conquest, followed by a wave of education, the deceptive spirit has imposed itself upon the religious sensibilities of the planet. As a result the spiritual perceptions of humanity have been powerfully subverted toward the satanic ideal. Those who would follow the authentic Christ, or engage in any path of spiritual cultivation, thus inevitably confront the demonic egregore of the organised Church. To overcome in this context means to recognise the deception and the corresponding truth. As both are ostensibly based upon the same source documents, in this case the Bible, the contest becomes a matter interpreting cryptic and archaic phrases. Intuitive insight or revelation is pitched therein against the psychological weight of religious tradition.

It is my intention here to examine the doctrines of satanic religion by contrasting them with universal truths of the initiated tradition as revealed by the Angel. The essence of the apostate doctrine is summarised in a series of statements, each followed by a simple response. It is not my intention to argue any point at length, but to commend the matter to the intuitive faculty, the appropriate sensorium in the spiritual domain. Some of the following statements are broadened to reflect the situation not merely with respect to the Roman apostasy, but spiritual error in general.

Subversive doctrine (1): God is elsewhere. God (the truth) is out there – in the desert, in the secret chamber, in this book.

Response: God is present. Indeed God *is* presence. Consciousness, the self-aware ‘I’ is God. In the magical motto of Heru Raha, *I am the soul, source and centre of time space and mind*. In the Words of Jesus, *I am the resurrection and the life*. In the words of Yahweh Elohim, *I am that I am*.

Subversive doctrine (2): God exists in three persons.

Response: Seemingly innocuous, the trinitarian heresy is upheld throughout most of Christendom. Suffice it here to say that the separation of God and Christ entails a corresponding separation between God and the worshipper, with the Holy Spirit serving as a kind of middleman. Such a doctrine clearly erodes the entire foundation of genuine spirituality as espoused in these pages. It marginalises or deposes the authentic Angel, and admits a host of dubious entities which impersonate the trinity. The idea, furthermore, that God is a person (whether one or three in number) is itself profoundly misleading. God is a spirit. The personal aspects of divinity, which are not to be denied, derive from the fact that the Angel expresses itself through the human soul – always and only – regardless of the medium of revelation.

Subversive doctrine (3): God demands sacrifice.

Response: This has ever been the pretext for extortion, from ecclesiastical taxes to maidenheads. This has also led to witch-burning and every other kind of burned offering. Historically the conception is based on the Old Testament model of the *blood atonement*, instituted under Moses. From the beginning, however, it was foretold concerning the same, that it would cease. For in the fullness of time Messiah would appear to make the perfect sacrifice, the sacrifice to end all sacrifices for

ever. As it is written in the Hebrew Law: *Jehovah Jireh; the Lord shall provide for himself a sacrifice.*

Subversive doctrine (4): God must be appeased.

Response: This is a variant of the previous claim. It falsely puts the burden of religious duty upon man and it distorts the nature of that duty. Salvation is in every respect the work of God (i.e. the Angel), for it the revelation which sets the believer free. The Church has confounded this truth by preaching salvation by works, innumerable and mostly trivial acts of penance, which keep the individual distracted, in a state of perpetual dept, as well as in continual doubt as to the sufficiency of the sacrifice. God requires neither sustenance nor succour; it is demons which need to be thus appeased and which exact all they can in terms of servitude, suffering, and sacrifice.

Subversive doctrine (5): God has instituted the priesthood to mediate between God and man. God has provided the Church to guide mankind.

Response: Every individual is his own priest before God. Man and woman is appropriately guided by the Angel, the revealing Spirit of God.

Subversive doctrine (6): There is no salvation outside the Catholic (Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.) Church.

Response: There is no salvation *in* the Church, whether Roman Catholic or of any other persuasion. Salvation is knowledge of the Angel. All other factors are irrelevant.

Subversive doctrine (7): The Church is the voice of God and has

the God-given mandate to interpret, and even change, the scriptures.

Response: The Angel is the authentic voice of God, the Angel which *is* God. None other has any lawful concourse with the inspired scriptures, which are called the Word of God.

Subversive doctrine (8): The essential requirement for salvation is being a communicant of the Church (confessing the creed, speaking in tongues, paying tithes, etc., etc.).

Response: Salvation involves an existential death and rebirth, through the inception of a spiritual seed, the Word of the Angel, which, upon maturity, produces Christ. Outside of this there no intrinsic merit in any rite, spiritual practice or gift.

Subversive doctrine (9): The sexual bond is incompatible with the life of the spirit.

Response: This has been of old a ploy of the enemy put an obstacle in the path of man and woman. Celibacy is a matter of personal calling or vocation. It is not a requirement of God, not for the priesthood nor any other spiritual office. Clerical celibacy has been enforced to ensure that the property of deceased priests would be deeded to the Church rather than to descendants. It has also ensured the corruption of manners and morals wherever papal minions held influence.

Subversive doctrine (10): The ministers of the Church, the pope, bishops and priests have the power over life and death, to forgive sin, to open and shut the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Response: Popes, bishops and priests have no power. All spiritual power belongs to the Angel.

Subversive doctrine (11): The Pope (the Guru, the Spiritual Master) represents Christ on Earth.

Response: Any such claim must, by definition, be regarded as the deceptive ruse of the evil spirit. *Christ* represents Christ on Earth.

The above represents a core sample of the subversive doctrines which characterise the Catholic Church and traditional mainstream religion in general. The social consequences of these beliefs might be much worse if they were taken seriously or if they were enforced by totalitarian means, as was the case for nearly a thousand years. Yet thankfully it is relatively rare, even among devout professors thereof, for these doctrines to be accorded great dignity. Where they comprise the accepted creed a deep religious ambivalence is the norm, with a robust pagan intuition taking precedence in practical affairs.

Of course a wedge is driven thereby between ordinary life and the religious sensibility, and the human psyche is split with respect to its allegiances. The more sensitive among those thus afflicted, aware of this ambivalence, are prone to doubt their own sincerity, and thus their salvation. This becomes part of a demoralising spiral whereby that wedge is driven deeper, effectively undermining personal integrity. Esoterically speaking, the dissonance causes a breach in the magnetic aura, becoming the means of ingress for disease and all manner of psycho-spiritual affliction. As anyone who has studied the phenomenon is aware, the quiet fallout in terms of human suffering is immense. To gain a sense of perspective we must weigh cult-related suicides and sectarian violence against the barren and frustrated lives to which millions are sentenced by their religious persuasion. At the very least there is a coarsening of

sensibility and the atrophying of true spiritual aspiration. To the extent that a dysfunctional worldview becomes the primary existential reality, there are no bounds to the potential for pathology.

The result is the death of religion as a redeeming influence. For the apostate teachings are aimed at destroying the link with the Angel, by sowing distrust of the self and preaching reliance on another. Their effect is to deny and subvert the original birthright of man and woman to intimate union with God, imposing a mediating hierarchy between the deity and the worshipper. The path is thus cleared for a deceptive spirit to take possession of the soul, to banish the Angel, and to fashion the soul after the image of the idol, the proffered object of worship. Because the idol or creed contains no life, the soul which approaches thereto approaches spiritual death. The ultimate aim on a global scale is the destruction of reflective consciousness and forging of a zombified humanity, possessed of intellect, but devoid of the creative or intuitive faculty, the instrument of transcendence.

Considerable discernment is required in this age to penetrate the mystery of the false religion. It looks so harmless, a lamb among wolves, its figurehead, John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła), widely regarded as peacemaker and saint. Only by referring to prior ages, when the Roman Church combined political with ecclesiastical powers, and thus displayed its authentic colours, does one obtain an accurate view of the phenomenon. This is to emphasise that nothing effectively has changed, other than the political status of the papacy. It has not otherwise relented from its dogma, and it is only kept in check by the separation of church and state. Allowed free reign, the deceptive spirit would manifest with all of its erstwhile ferocity, for it is a spiritual law that identical seeds bring forth identical fruits.

The Dweller On The Threshold

Mention has been made in these pages of that mysterious being, the Dweller on the Threshold. The exotic appellation designates the psychic censor or reality-structurer in the common or unenlightened sense. It is the set of all demons, the set of assumptions and misconceptions which keep humanity in spiritual bondage. His anti-type, of course, is the solar Angel. The Dweller as such comprises the ring-pass-not of any mindset and that which informs the same. It comprises and determines what is actual, what is possible, and what can or cannot be contemplated. The arbitrary nature of that ‘ring,’ also called the Magical Circle, is apparent in that it differs among individuals and cultures to a nigh unimaginable extent, the ceiling of one man’s heaven being the floor of another man’s hell.

On the trans-personal level, the Dweller constitutes an ensemble of egregores reflecting the worldview of groups, nations, and humanity as a whole. As an example of the obstinate nature of the Dweller we may cite such intractable political situations as obtain in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. What appears as stark insanity to the outsider apparently represents necessity for the factions involved. What, one wishes to ask the players involved, could be worse than pitched battles in the street? The justification of the madness invariably involves insistence on a few parochial and insignificant divisive issues, against a backdrop of overwhelming common ground. Out of the infinitude of creative options for peaceful resolution, the ideologically enflamed mindset remains fixated on the one or two perceived obstacles in the way.

The perversity of the Dweller is further apparent in that individuals

and groups invoke their calamities *with open eyes*. As such the gates of hell are clearly sign-posted, yet the relevant mindset, driven by unexamined forces, is compelled to press on. This is part of the relinquishing of responsibility at an archetypal level, the fatal tendency of submitting to fates as a necessary given, though positive alternatives may be in plain view. And as far as non-initiate humanity is concerned, though it be possessed of an Angel, its future still lies largely in the hands of the Dweller. This is significant with respect to what has been termed the apocalyptic impulse, in this context, the idea that mankind will face a final conflagration before renewal and the awaited millennium. Those with an ingrained belief in this scenario are presumably prepared to acquiesce in its inevitability, and might even be disposed to precipitate the same. This makes it imperative that mankind examine its beliefs at the archetypal level.

There is a crisis which we must necessarily face, in magical parlance the *crossing of the Abyss*. This crisis is upon humanity now. And while it constitutes a necessary part of every spiritual career, mankind has a choice concerning its form, as the remaining chapters of this book make clear. The prophetic essence of the Apocalypse and similar eschatologies has never been widely understood, the relevant texts emanating from the supernal realm above the said Abyss. A superior faculty, the enlightened intuition, is therefore required to elucidate their purport. Their mysteries are revealed by an Angel which indeed is also their author, and none other has legitimate concourse with these texts. It is the prophetic Angel which poses the existential challenge (of the great religious texts), that mankind might become initiate. But it is the same Angel which alone is qualified to meet that challenge.

How we read a prophetic text or the book of life itself is therefore

determined either by the Angel or the aforesaid Dweller on the Threshold. The remaining chapters of this book explore our destiny in following the Angel across the Abyss, wherein humanity as a whole assumes its authentic calling in the cosmic context. Such, as I have tried to show, is not a fanciful invention, or even an option, but the necessary unfolding of the grand cosmic opus in which humanity plays an as yet undisclosed role.

This Is Hell

In the foregoing, hell is equated simply with suffering as such. Now we are in a position to deepen our understanding with respect to the psycho-spiritual dynamics involved. Hell, in the theological sense, is a state of separation, wherein mind is severed from the authentic self and the open-ended matrix of reflective consciousness. It is a finite universe, a closed system in the thermodynamic sense, subject to the law of entropy and ultimate disintegration. In psychological terms it equates with a mindset ruled by an ideology or creed regarded as absolute and final, wherein learning and growth – the influx of information – is no longer possible. As there is no such thing as stasis in nature, the individual so afflicted necessarily reverts to lesser states of complexity, leading ultimately to the dissolution of the vortex which constitutes the individual soul. Hell, therefore, is separation and attendant psychic fragmentation, while heaven is organic integration and meaningful connection with the cosmic whole. This is reflected in the etymology of words such as the Indo-European *yoga*, *tantra* and *wicca*, and the Latin *religion*. The reference in each instance is to a subtle attitude and art of weaving, linking, joining or connecting, a process of restoring not only

the integrity of the organism but also its deep correlation with an evolving cosmos. Our universe, the magical garment of the soul – like the robe of Christ – is woven throughout without seam. The consciousness of that primordial unity, in accord with legends of the ‘fall,’ was at some point discarded. Hence the universal symbolism of the Great Work, wherein redemption is defined as the return to unity – in terms of the Hermetic opus, the joining of the microcosm with the macrocosm.

In the said state of disunity and fragmentation the individual faces the walls of an ideological prison, the proscribed universe of the reductionist mindset – *reductionist* here in the sense of the infinite being reduced to a finite set of variables. Hell in this sense is concentration on the specific, severed from the continuous and open-ended aspect of consciousness. It is finitude and finality, a consciousness fettered by fixation on form. While there may be provision for endless iteration of a kind, nothing more can really happen, for genuine novelty is intrinsically impossible. Cognate on the cosmic scale is Nietzsche’s vision of the eternal return, a variant of the Abyss. In the existential realm it is the cultural iteration of the post-modern era, another sign that the Abyss has opened up for humanity.

The stance described is that which is usually designated as fundamentalist, and while often associated with religious belief, the concept equally applies to the scientific and philosophical domain. Inescapably it characterises the present intellectual condition of humanity as a whole. Yet for most individuals the redeeming factor lies in a certain humility, essentially the realisation that their understanding may be less than perfect. Not so the convinced fundamentalist; his primary need is for certainty, and he *knows* he is right. Convinced of the exclusive superiority of his beliefs, he is equally convinced of the falsity and

wickedness of all contrary assertions. Creativity for such individuals has ceased, whence the destructive tendency eventually comes to predominate. The mindset is characterised by a worldview which is fixed and finite; fear of depth and spontaneity in the realm of ideas; opposition to knowledge and the spirit of open enquiry; reliance upon and deference to external authority; an arbitrary, humourless and non-philosophical attitude; subjection to dogma and unexamined belief; and the worship of form over meaning. Typically there is also a lack of charity toward self and others, with a disposition toward the *apocalyptic impulse*. It is exemplified in the burning of books, in the witch-hunt and the ideological crusade, in the destruction of cultures and cultural diversity, as well as the destruction of bio-diversity and the natural environment. Ultimately anything spontaneous and alive is, by its very nature, an affront to the fundamentalist mindset. Hence its inherent tendency toward global holocaust as a means of atonement and universal absolution.

This mindset, it must be understood, is not mere efflorescence at the extreme of the lunatic fringe; it saturates the entire ethos of a humanity at war with nature, and thus with itself. The attitude is enshrined in classical science concepts as it is in religious fantasies. Concerning the outcome there can be no doubt – this *is* hell, and the infernal apocalypse will of necessity be unleashed on a global scale, *unless* humanity becomes attuned to an attractor vortex based on universal life and understanding. While in places of the third and forth world the catastrophe is already apparent, industrialised nations are inured to the consequences of their actions, owing to the subversion of a sustainable economy and the relinquishing of responsible attitudes within an arbitrarily sheltered cocoon, abstracted from the nexus of life. The mutated growth, like the demons of the insurrection, can only be

sustained by predatory means – means abhorrent as they are terminal.

A native tradition of the central Americas has it that pre-Columbian shaman-prophets warned their rulers that, if the expected visitors from the East would come bearing the sign of a Cross, this would be a bad omen, foretelling death and destruction. The acceptance of the Cross as the central emblem of Christianity is, of course, incidental in one sense and telling in another. In the context of the latter, one can imagine a very different history for the Americas, had the visitors come in ships with, say, a dove emblazoned on its sails. The archetype of the Cross, in Christian nomenclature an engine of torture and death, has thus cast its defining shadow over Christendom and its annexed empires. Whether as root cause or as a symptom, the exaltation of the Cross exemplifies the essentially negative preoccupation of apostate Christianity, evidenced from the earliest appearances of Christian monasticism. Already in the first century AD the notion had gained currency that salvation is obtained through the mortification of the body and the subjugation of the soul by the spirit of asceticism. The idea was, of course, imported from the pragmatic asceticism of the East. Yet when married with the intuitive plane of ostensible revelation, the result was an unfortunate confusion of the planes. Deprived of its empirical roots, the methods of asceticism became subject to whim, caprice, and unfounded superstition.

This was not primarily due to a failure of scholarship, but of the more fundamental error of relying on scholarship where the same is impotent. That so innocent an error can have horrendous consequences is historical fact. Here it is necessary to understand that the judges of the Roman inquisition, who condemned their victims to death by torture, were themselves the victims of the said spiritual error. As souls in hell, their sensibilities ravaged by the poison of their creed, they imposed upon

others the physical equivalent of their own tortured spiritual state. Concurrently, and in so far as the inquisitorial engine functioned as an instrument of conversion, the attempt to extract confessions of heresy involved a projection of the inquisitors' spiritual condition upon their victims. In the phenomenology of the witch-trials this correspondence between the substance of accusation and the psychology of the accuser is evident in extraordinary detail. Whence, one wonders, derives the imagery of the obscene sabbath, of copulation with the devil and the betrayal of humanity in the satanic pact, until it becomes apparent that it simply reflects, clothed in exotic garb, the spiritual state of the apostate church.

Extremities of this kind, therefore, are but secondary attributes of a spiritual principle, the concomitants of the psychology of hell. Its defining characteristic is the rejection of life-giving truths, issuing from the sanctuary of the soul, and its substitution with a lifeless ideology or creed. While all are to some extent tinged with the brush of fundamentalism, there are some for whom its hold is absolute. These are the souls in spiritual prison, the souls which are in hell. For such individuals, removed from the source of spiritual sustenance and the redeeming flow of information, there is nothing further which can happen. Infinite space has become confined; eternity is reduced to sterile duration. Time itself has ceased after a manner, arrested and frozen in the static mind. Only the forces of entropy continue their slow but relentless work of dissolution and dispersion, as the star without spiritual centre is disintegrated in the Abyss.

The Way Out

For those who have been trapped in one of the hells here described, regardless of how, for what reason, or how long, *there is a way out*. Those who wish to escape their spiritual prison are appropriately counselled to discard their mindset and religion as false, and live an ordinary life, taking care of the natural things. *Man needs God like a fish needs a bicycle*, is the appropriate attitude

For those who are deeply emeshed in a particular ideology or creed, having burned all their bridges as it were, this is necessarily a fearful step. Indeed, it constitutes a temporary leap into the Abyss, and as such cannot be undertaken arbitrarily. It requires a leap of inspiration if the same is to be effective and safe, centred on a different psychic attractor vortex, initiating a new kind of current.

For humanity as a whole the necessary transition is equally sensitive, in that it requires not merely a therapeutic immersion, but the crossing of the great Abyss as the final step of its initiation into the order of sentient beings. This can only occur under the aegis of the Angel, wherefore the question remains that of recognising the angelic voice, the attractor vortex of the authentic self. Giving this recognition, the Earth will presently emerge into an unprecedented golden age. Failing this, it will plunge into the darkest yet of ignorance and superstition.

Chapter Ten

ACROSS THE ABYSS

**When falling, laughing, into hell,
do not cling or hold to the fixtures;
for the pit is bottomless and the fall but an instant –
for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, etc.**

ISSCTSM, *Liber 888*

Skycastles In The Void

Initiation admits of three major crises or turning points: the original commitment to the Great Work, the knowledge of the Angel, and the crossing of the Abyss. Concerning the last, much has already been said in passing, and it is now time to consider the subject in depth. There are three questions we shall address in the course of our enquiry: (1) what the term actually denotes, (2) what it means to confront the Abyss in psychological or existential terms; and (3) what is meant by the successful passage or crossing of the Abyss.

The Abyss may be defined as the gulf between the finite world of concepts and the infinite world of experience. It is that which stands between the *intellect*, at present the planetary focus of polarisation, and the *intuition*, the next step in the initiation of humanity. As such, the Abyss is identified with the reason itself, in that the latter opens upon infinite regress. For rational analysis, as is now apparent, instead of yielding foundational truths, fundamental principles, or bedrock

certainties, leads to a void of indeterminacy.

Scientists and philosophers have become aware, especially from around the early nineteenth century, that the reason represents an inadequate tool for elucidating the mysteries of our experience. Science, as a consequence, has had to re-evaluate its position and set itself more modest aims, usually expressed in terms of approximations or theoretical models of limited application. Academic philosophy meanwhile turned to the analysis of language, and thus the analysis of itself. This image, like a serpent chasing its own tail, is exemplary of the intellectual impasse we confront. The quest for Truth in the greater sense has, for the academic world, become the romantic diversion of a bygone era. From Kant's *The Critique Of Pure Reason* to Wittgenstein's *Tractacus* and beyond, modern intellectual endeavour has been concerned with the exploration of its own limits. The mood is summed up in the famous last lines of the *Tractacus*: *Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent.*

In the natural sciences, the situation has been similar. We could cite numerous results, among them the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, the boundary imposed by the *quantum limit of measurement* or Planck-length, Gödel's *Incompleteness Theorem*, and the singularities encountered in Einstein's equations, all of which demonstrate curious limits of our ability to analyse the structure of our rational universe. There are the paradoxes of the sub-atomic realm, echoed by paradoxes on the cosmological scale, notably the incompatibility of the two main theories – quantum electrodynamics and general relativity. While elucidation of these concepts is beyond our present scope, they are the subject of much popularisation (see Bibliography). In all of these examples, individually and collectively, the basic impression is one of having reached an *impasse*. One has the sense of confronting, again and

again, the same barrier in various guises, a barrier somehow inherent in our way of thinking itself. And instead of showing signs of the required leap, present endeavours merely elaborate this conceptual edge, bringing it into ever sharper focus.

It has long been realised that our common-sense intuitions concerning the world may be profoundly in error. Science, therefore, as a system of refined common sense, may be in the process of uncovering the limitations inherent in its metaphysical foundations, long held as articles of faith. We are further coming to recognise the inutility of combining faith and reason in one formal system, in occult terminology, a confusion of the planes.

Let us consider an example of the manner in which mundane intuition is profoundly at odds with our scientific understanding. From the perspective of quantum physics, we do not move through space; we dematerialise in one location, and rematerialise in another. The process simply takes place on a scale too small for us to notice. Or would we notice if we thought of it that way? Do we actually *notice* that we are moving through space, and, for that matter, through time? Or are these simply convenient formulations for a process altogether mysterious?

It is evident that the conceptual mind requires an image or model, and that any such construct requires an intuitive foundation. A supra-rational and creative faculty is therefore required to generate a meaningful universe, although that faculty may be buried among the pre-scientific roots of the rational endeavour. Without a foundation of faith we immediately plunge into the abyss of reason, all-embracing doubt, and infinite analytical regress, with the intimation that the rational mind, as tool of deconstruction, is merely engaged in explicating its own inherent structure. This process leads to a conceptual void – the said Abyss – a

kind of mental entropy, wherein all conventional thought is void of meaning.

However if we can grasp the nature of this void, we shall come to recognise that our cognitive and conceptual orientation is the product of a creative act, and the creator is the self. We are the ones who invest the universe with meaning, we are the ones who invest in the gods and project the attributes of the deity, even as we project the so-called laws of nature – we, or more precisely, that mysterious entity we refer to as ‘I,’ acting in its plural manifestation, in mystical lore, the *Elohim*.

Of course this is heresy from the point of view of certain religious orthodoxies. I am also aware that this thesis can be invoked in support of the atheist proposition, but erroneously so. (This is the reductionist fallacy again – ‘religion is *nothing but* projection, wishful thinking, etc.’) What my analysis does present is the deathblow to dualism, the idea that God is in any significant sense separate from the universe as a whole and the totality of what we call human. It banishes every idol and false deity that ever commanded human worship. I also maintain that in this it is consistent with the most authentic religious traditions.

By deposing the assumed external hierarchy, the God *out there*, we gain unprecedented religious freedom, and with it primary responsibility for the act of creation at the archetypal level. Accepting this freedom, we realise that it is given to humanity to determine what the meaning of life shall be. Exercising this creative choice in a conscious way, it is likely we shall also be able to create utopias commensurate with our dreams. The limits of the possible are shrouded in mystery. In the absence of definitive limits, whether of space, of complexity or the imagination, let us therefore doubt the necessity of restriction, and entertain the notion that all things are possible.

This, the emancipation here described, comprises the essential step toward spiritual maturity – for the individual as for humanity as a whole. It leads us from religious fixation to a conscious and creative dialogue with the mystery, a dialogue in which we take full responsibility for the constructs we accept as real or valid.

Enfants Terrible

Perhaps the clearest evidence of our collective confrontation with the Abyss is encountered in literature and the arts. Around the turn of the twentieth century the visual arts, in the hands of painters like Picasso and Kandinsky, suddenly plunged into abstraction. At around the same time the long-established structures in music gave way to atonalism, a system, associated with composers like Schönberg and Webern, wherein the traditional relationship between musical notes is suspended. Cognate in literature we find the nihilism of Becket and Sartre, the latter's concept of *nausea* describing the attitude of the unprepared psyche in confronting the Abyss. His play *No Exit* goes further. Set in hell, it is prophetic of the claustrophobic and self-referential bent of twentieth century intellect. For hell, as previously shown, is a state of finality, where no new information can obtain. It is thus a state of entropy or disintegration. While analysis proliferates, and conceptual elaboration provides the illusion of progress, even as deconstruction reaches its apex and we are closing the epistemological loop, realising the circular and self-referential nature of our endeavour, structure disintegrates in dialectical dystrophy, and meaning converges to zero.

The life and work of Friedrich Nietzsche is an interesting case in point. An artist by temperament, rather than an academic philosopher, he

captured his confrontation with the Abyss in verse. In the haunting poem *Der Geheimnisvolle Nachen* (The Mysterious Barge) he speaks of his accustomed opium trance, and its failure on one particular night to provide him with a good night's sleep. There is an ambivalent reference to a 'good conscience' – he cannot sleep in spite of one, or because the same is absent. He goes down to the beach instead. There, under the stars, he muses:

Eine Stunde, leicht auch zwei,
Oder war's ein Jahr? – da sanken
Plötzlich mir Sinn und Gedanken
In ein ewges Einerlei,
Und ein Abgrund ohne Schranken
Tat sich auf : – da war's vorbei!

translated:

One hour, easily two,
Or was it a year? – suddenly
Mind and thought dissolved
Into eternal indifference,
And a void without obstruction
Opened up: – and it was gone!

Here we confront a classic account of the Abyss experience in existential terms. The German *Einerlei* provides some difficulty for the translator. It is similar to the German *egal*, from which we derive *egalitarian*. The idea conveyed is of the absence of judgement or discrimination, with shades of *will-o'-the-wisp* and *fancy free*. There is the sense of having shed a burden, and thus of transcendence, but the

immediately following *Abgrund ohne Schranken* (void without bounds) is resonant with terror.

This illustrates the ambivalence of the rational intellect toward the imperative of the Abyss. Where intellect *is* identity, the experience is necessarily perceived in terms of loss and utter subversion. The conditioned tendency is to ‘hold on,’ ultimately, perhaps, out of a sense of loyalty to the rational proposition, the idea that rational problems should be solved on the rational plane. From the supernal perspective, however, rational intellect *is* the problem; the philosophical problems are the consciousness thereof, the original price for the fruit of knowledge.

To the mystic or psychedelic explorer it is clear what transpired on that Mediterranean shore. Indeed the psychological event here portrayed is not altogether uncommon. We may regard it as the prototype of the psychedelic experience, manifesting in a spontaneous manner. Typically lasting for a few seconds, it involves the momentary dissolution of conceptual structure, accompanied by ego loss and a confrontation with naked sensory reality. To the unprepared mind this sudden confrontation typically comes as a profound shock. Nietzsche, to judge from his subsequent career, never recovered. He was awed, to be sure, but, like so many of his contemporaries, he recoiled from the experience. This is made clear in the fourth and final verse, not here quoted, which plunges from sublime inspiration to a forced closure of brutal and banal contrivance. Only a Magister could have written the final verse.

Yet a further indication of the waters of the Abyss lapping at the foundations of the intellectual edifice is the phenomenon of post-modern deconstructionism. This is a belated attempt in literary theory to keep abreast with the developments in the arts and sciences, including psychoanalysis, of fifty to a hundred years ago. It calls into question the

fundamental assumptions of the social contract, traditionally underlying all forms of cultural activity, and attempts to describe language in terms of its formal or phenomenological elements. The obvious casualty of this approach to critique is meaning, which is reduced to an epiphenomenon, much in the same manner as is consciousness in modern neuro-science. It is the search for bedrock certainties through the process of reductionist analysis in yet another arena. But, as ever, the approach yields analytical quicksand, as there is no bedrock, and there are no certainties.

In political theory the call of the Abyss is represented by the lure of anarchism. The rise of the egalitarian ethos and the rights of the individual set the appropriate stage for a creative post-historical society of free spirits. All arbitrary restrictions of personal liberty are of course intolerable, and represent a degradation of the human spirit. Specifically they constitute the major obstacle to the smooth transition into a millennial utopia. This is why conservative political elements, instrumental in maintaining the neurotic split between society and the individual, are so profoundly irrelevant. They are the fifth wheel on the wagon, the spanner in the works, for civil and personal liberty in the widest sense is the first precondition of a self-responsible sanity.

Yet despite the thought police, public education, and tranquillisers by the ton, the rising tide of consciousness has propelled humanity of the late twentieth century en masse toward the edge of the Abyss. Social relativism and the deconstruction of meaning are a fact of the post-modern sensibility. The very fact that we speak of *post-modernism*, as it were, through lack of any other designation, is telling in itself. The connotation is that of an afterthought, a coda to history. It suggests that we do not know where we are, except at the end. The handwriting for modern civilisation is on the wall. Everyone knows it, or is at least

subliminally aware of it. Monsters are stalking the psychic footpaths, and there is nothing we can do. Scientists told us decades ago that we have past the point of no return. The beast has a right to be there, for we invited it in. Better forget about it and get on with business as usual. In the abrogation of responsibility a conspiracy of denial has taken hold – denial which has generated the collective stupor we call modern civilisation. Humanity is plunged into the Abyss blindly.

Even if we do not know from personal experience what the Abyss is, it will now be apparent what it must be. It is the void beneath our ontological foundations, and the vastness beyond the normative sphere of cultural sanity. It is the infinite regress of analysis and reason. It is psychological chaos, the realm of all ideas, and the infinite space beyond. It is the irrational in the structure of reason, and what lies beyond our projected reality.

Thus it is the mind itself, the realm of all possibilities. It is the gulf between the rational and the incommensurate, between intellect and intuition, between the actual and the ideal. But it is also negation, the dissolution of all aggregates, the abrogation of sense and meaning, stark insanity, and the dark night of the soul.

False Crowns And Fool's Crowns

The response and attitude taken toward the Abyss experience determines the further career of the initiate. For the Exempt Adept, having reached the sum and summit of the known universe, and exhausted to his own satisfaction the possibilities of sophistic elaboration, this experience comprises the way forward. It indicates the way beyond the present impasse, both individually and culturally, and in embracing

the same the initiate relinquishes the finite for the infinite and becomes a *Babe of the Abyss*. This is not a magical Grade, but refers to the passage between two Orders, the Second and Third, leading to the Grade of Magister Templi in the sphere of Binah, the spiritual home and resting place of a redeemed humanity.

To the mindset, however, which regards its finite conceptions as commensurate with the real, and the symbolic representations thereof as universally valid, the Abyss must seem a tragedy, madness, and the negation of all cultural values. An individual thus conditioned will necessarily recoil from the experience, rejecting it as aberrant and pathological. Such an individual is nevertheless thrust out into the Abyss by the accumulated momentum of the collective psyche, and attains to the so-called Towers of the Black Brothers.

The ordeal of the Abyss thus constitutes the final crossroads in the initiation of the individual as for humanity as a whole. While success equates with a final enlightenment, the fruits of failure are ideological insanity and global suicide. In the latter case, caught between the Dark Towers and the Abyss, the failed initiate may likewise opt to escape the psychic reality by taking his own life. A further, less dramatic, variant is that of dementia, manifest in the childishness, forgetfulness, and abrogation of responsibility observed in ageing tyrants, who cannot otherwise escape the outcome of their tendencies. As to the Dark Towers themselves, their inhabitants are characterised by blustering dogmatism, ironclad denial, and the fundamentalist stance as discussed at length. Because these pathological variants are so common, we shall consider the relevant psychology in some detail.

The adept, who recoils from the incommensurate and shrinks from the brink where his angel has led him, has no choice but to return to the

world of his fathers and mentors. Yet, upon his brush with the Abyss, he is aware that its orthodoxy is a *skycastle*, an arbitrary construction in the void, without valid ontological foundations. Depending on the intellectual acumen of the adept, this may be more of a disquieting intimation than a reasoned observation. In the heavily conditioned and defended personality the terror of the Abyss may precipitate a psychotic breakdown, and psychiatric intervention may be sought to artificially restore the status quo. In any event, the known world may be radically undermined, values and meaning swept away in an instant, and the conditioning of a lifetime undone by one good dose of the ontological *other*. The appropriate response, of course, is *good-bye, Jonah* and *good riddance*. This is expressed in the words attributed to acid guru Timothy Leary, and chanted by John Lennon:

*Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream;
it is not dying, it is not dying ...*

However, without appropriate preparation and initiated guidance, a common response to the experience is one of profound pessimism and despair. The descent into the Abyss may be observed in the life and works of the Flemish painter Vincent Van Gogh. We see the gradual dissolution of pictorial conventions as the artist's vision became ever more sensitised to the energetic aspect of material reality, and his canvasses increasingly portrayed a universe of fiery energy. Trees convulse, buildings heave, the heavens explode. At the same time he was oppressed by his Protestant God, which persecuted and tortured him. This God, in the psychodynamics of this particular case, represents the conservative counterpole to the evolutionary flame of initiation, the so-called *dweller on the threshold*. The latter equate with the set of all

demons and represents the concerted effort of the Black Brotherhood to subvert the universal conquest of the Abyss. This is why any work of evolutionary charter kind meets with the fiercest opposition. The strain on Van Gogh of these opposing forces led to his hospitalisation in a sanatorium for the mentally ill. Here he continued to paint, but he found no respite. And while he was out in the fields one day, the savage deity took his life.

The suicide of Van Gogh exemplifies the most dramatic response to the impasse of the Abyss, yet it is not an uncommon one. Madness or insanity, as stated, is another. Schizophrenia, in its various forms, involves the intrusion of the incommensurate into the measured world of social discourse, the eruption of subconscious ideation, which ruptures and ravages the ordered terrain of symbolic reality. The madman is a person who knows too much. But he is the victim of this knowledge, not its master. Ostensibly clinging to the constructs of conventional reality, he vents upon them his scorn and derision in a frenzy of deconstruction, alternating with the elaboration of grandiose fabrications, both vain and futile. This is the typical nemesis of the raving type of lunatic, the road taken by Nietzsche, as also his brother in arms, the Swedish playwright August Strindberg. A different response is that of the catatonic. While the raving maniac obfuscates, the catatonic sees the situation with pristine clarity. He or she is aware that the dreadful has happened. There is nothing which can be done. Words are superfluous.

These are examples of what it means to be on the wrong side of the Abyss, of experiencing the same as a horror, madness, or final negation. The third type of negative response, after suicide and insanity, is that of the Black Brothers. The adepts of the Black Lodge deal with the existential crisis of the Abyss by pretending that it does not exist. To this

end they tighten their grip on their particular symbol system, and adopt inquisitorial measures to suppress any form of dissent or creative chaos within their realm. These are the fundamentalists. Their idea of salvation is to close the door to the Abyss forever, and live happily ever after in the skyscastle of their imagination. This does not mean that their vision is necessarily evil; their aspirations may be grand and lofty. However, when elevated to absolute verity, any merely human system becomes idolatrous. This is the lesson of Calvary. In refusing the Abyss, which also is the Cross of Redemption, the Black Brothers make their system into God. This then provides the ostensible justification to impose their often monstrous schemes, not only on others, but, not least, on themselves.

These are the idolaters, who make God in their own image, the image of their partial and conditioned selves, rather than submit to the Angel, which raises the adept to the spiritual Crown by first leading him *through* the Abyss. Their dwelling-place is the false Sephira *Daath* (Knowledge), a solitary vortex within the Abyss, wherein also their Towers are raised. Their God is that knowledge, and of knowledge they make themselves a false crown. Theirs is the abomination of desolation in the temple of humanity. (Knowledge is an absurdity. As the Master Therion showed, all propositions invariably boil down to the assertion $A=A$.)

Such individuals may flourish a while, but their position cannot be sustained. As the apostle stated, where there is knowledge, it must perish. For it is impossible to stem the flow of ideas, the evolutionary tide of rising complexity and depth of meaning, whereby obsolete concepts are subsumed within the new. Yet this is what they aim to achieve by making their conceptions their absolute. Thus to the extent that they succeed, they

isolate themselves from the flux of energy in the form of new information. Deprived of spiritual nourishment, they become subject to the law of entropy. This is a physical law, which has a correlate in the psychological domain. Referred to as the second law of thermodynamics, it states that, without influx of energy, things disintegrate. This is evident in the developmental phases observed in individuals of fundamentalist hue. Although initially pompous and vain, they become increasingly infantile, often developing a maudlin sentimentality, as their sophistic structures disintegrate under their own weight, and the banality of their position becomes apparent.

This may be nature's last call of mercy, as simplicity supervenes and the stark realities of the case become apparent. At this stage the bewildered adept may have a lucid moment, and, in desperation and perhaps even against hope, may take the plunge into seeming madness, a leap from the Dark Towers into the unknown, to be received and revived by the nourishing chaos of the Abyss. This was the final refuge of Shakespeare's King Lear, when confined to the dungeon with Cordelia. Such also was the refuge of Nietzsche and his spiritual kin. The adept, however, which hardens himself in this situation, stands to lose his soul. Such are the souls in spiritual prison, the souls which are in hell. Despite all attempts to defend themselves against the inevitable, the waters of the Abyss will lap at the foundations of their mental fortresses, as the slow but inevitable attraction of the rest of the universe take its course. As their sanity disintegrates, they but dimly realise that they have cut their link with the Angel.

The usual cause of failure in this most significant stage is inadequate preparation and the misinterpretation of relevant experience, due to a lack of initiated teachings. Powerful intellect alone, as we have

seen, is sufficient to propel an individual to the frontiers of the Abyss, in that such intellect, exactly and precisely, bears within itself the seeds of its own antithesis, no less and no more. At this point the reason is powerless and a higher faculty, the intuition, must come into play.

The consequences of failure in this regard are reflected in the culture of modern pessimism or nihilism, and the paradoxical inability of the human genius to solve its simple logistical problems, like securing universal peace along with wealth and happiness for all. It is interesting to note that thinkers who escaped the moral turpitude became magicians, surrealists, or cosmic conjurers in their respective ways, and whose ranks have become legend: creative giants like Aleister Crowley, Salvador Dali, Buckminster Fuller, and Carl Gustav Jung. These men shared an intuition that the next step for humanity lies beyond the rational domain, that there is a realm of god-like inspiration and creativity. Their lives, furthermore, exemplified this claim.

The Voluntary Renunciation Of The Exempt Adept

For the solar initiate of balanced attainment the crossing of the Abyss represents a natural turning point. It may also be a process in which conscious volition plays a considerable role. And, previous remarks notwithstanding, the process need not be catastrophic. Where natural process is accompanied by trauma it is apparent that form of pathology is involved. The well-informed initiate in this situation has several advantages: He is armed with appropriate theory and knows what to expect, at least in principle. His acquired values and point of view provide the grace and wisdom to follow the Angel and the course of nature. And concerning the ‘trance of the Abyss’ he is likely to have had

considerable experience through success in meditation and magical invocation.

The fruit falls when it is ripe, and the appropriate time for the initiate to confront the Abyss in earnest is likewise in the fullness of ripeness. There comes a time when, under the guidance of the Angel, the adept has achieved individuation or self-actualisation, the full flowering and fruition of creative attributes in the service of humanity. The adept knows *who he is*, and has established an authentic identity among contemporaries in the world. There is congruence between the adept's inner and outer world, between the conscious and unconscious dynamics of thought, and any serious complex of conflicting energy in the aura has been resolved. In the task of self-analysis the adept will have reached the point of diminishing returns, a point where further effort will only result in minor elaborations on the theme which has been disclosed. The affairs of life are ordered, and the adept is at the height of creativity. This phase should be enjoyed for as long as possible.

Sooner or later however, even at the pinnacle of achievement, dissatisfaction sets in. A sense of futility clouds the horizon. Gradually, or with startling suddenness, it is realised, that no matter how far one moves in a particular direction, one is not actually progressing any further. When the adept has come to a place such as this: when the limits of the conditioned personality have been realised, when the path of analysis has been exhausted, when he can say with the writer of Ecclesiastes, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, when the incommensurate looms at every turn, and high paradox has taken the saddle – then, and only then, it is time to turn the inner gaze upon the Abyss.

Folkloric wisdom has an inkling of the phenomenon in the concept

of the mid-life crisis. In natural terms, this inaugurates a phase of initiation into the mysteries of death and transformation. The individual, having extended him or herself outwardly, now turns the gaze inward, cultivates wisdom, and prepares for the passage across the proverbial river. From the initiated perspective, however, this is actually seen as initiation into a wider life, as exemplified by the so-called *Books Of The Dead*, both Tibetan and Egyptian. While traditionally associated with funerary rites, their more esoteric intent is to facilitate a conscious transition from immanent to transcendent planes of consciousness.

If this process involves existential death, it also involves rebirth, and no birth follows exactly the textbook pattern. While magical and mystical tradition has sought to formalise the course of nature, the crossing of the Abyss included, nowhere is an understanding of principle so important as here. For, on the practical level, most difficulties arise from arbitrarily and unwisely interfering with what is essentially a natural process, an authentic and inevitable transformation at the deepest level of the psyche. Its momentum can neither be accelerated nor stayed. While the initiate cannot remain an Exempt Adept forever, he cannot legitimately pre-empt the course of nature. Any considerations to the contrary are here out of place. For we are coming to a place, as a matter of ideal, where conscious volition is coming into synchronisation with universal process, and vice versa.

The Stargate Ascension

In every age hitherto the ordeal of the Abyss was seen, at least in part, as a preparation for death and dying in the natural sense. In this age, however, the emphasis has shifted to the conquering of physical death,

through consciously ascending the hyper-dimensional vortex at the centre of the universe, elsewhere called the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden of Eden. And here is the mystery of the dimensional gateway, of ascension, and rapture of hyperspatial transport; as it is written in the Book Of The Law: *Every man and woman is a star* – the stargate is within.

It is approached by entering the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies in the living temple of humanity. It is to pass the Veil of the Abyss, and the Flaming Sword erstwhile guarding the way of the Tree of Life, but now the agency which conveys the sacrifice into the presence of God. Thus it is the rending of that Veil and the revelation of the Shekinah Light, wherein stands the perfected image, the Pillar of Fire, the theophany or body of God. As it is written in the book the prophet Joel:

... as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like ... A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness ...

To ascend the stargate is to step into the vortex of the Fire of God. This also is that which is written in the Apocalypse of St. John:

After this I looked, and ... a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard ... said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and ... a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

The door is the dimensional gate, and the voice is the voice of the Angel. The summons to *come up higher* is the call of the supernal spheres above the Abyss. It should here be noted that the passage is

instantaneous. This is an important point, for where this does not obtain, it is a sign that something is very wrong (see below). *Immediately* the seer is in the spirit, which is the body of light. The vision is archetypal: a throne is set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

In the magical instructions of the A.:A.: the passage of the Abyss is described as the resolve of the Exempt Adept to separate from all that he is and all that he has forever. This is the archetype of the mystical sacrifice, and for those who understand its true nature, it is not the terror it appears to be. The symbolic anti-type in the Old Testament is the burned offering, with which the worshipper is spiritually identified. If offered correctly, upon the prayer of dedication, the fire of God would descend upon the altar, and, *in an instant*, consume the sacrifice in its entirety. However the true sacrifice is the self or soul of the initiate, of which Christ is the prototype. The cherubim, as the wardens of the Supernal Eden, represent the Fire of God which consumes the sacrifice, and conveys the essence thereof into the presence of God.

A further Biblical type is the crossing of Jordan and the conquest of the Promised Land. This again symbolises the crossing of the Abyss and the initiation into the supernal spheres above. Hence also the ritual of baptism, which likewise symbolises the death of the self, and the subsequent rebirth in the baptism of fire, which is to say, of the spirit of God. All of these symbolic types follow an identical pattern, reflecting the universal themes of death, burial, and resurrection.

Imitations Of Christ

In profane inversion of these truths, many individuals, some of them regarded as saints within sections of the Church, see themselves

compelled to replicate in their own bodies the sufferings of Christ. The idea, which attaches to this carnal display, is that the suffering undergone will sanctify the individual, making the same worthy of spiritual grace. The types of injury, self-inflicted under this delusion, range from the trivial to the serious, and tend to exacerbate over time, if unchecked. From self-neglect and privation to self-flagellation and mutilation is a path of steady increments, trivial at each step, but horrendous in their full extent. Notorious end-results of this dubious path are those of the monk who took literally the injunction of Christ, *some make themselves Eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God*, and the nun who followed suit by pouring a vat of boiling oil over her pudenda.

Such individuals are the prey of religious demons, which are leading them on a path of downward transcendence under the aegis of the false angel. One should be under no illusion that behaviour of this type has anything to do with the spiritual path. Yet the desperation, which alone could drive an individual to such extremities, testifies of the sincerity involved. It demonstrates that, in all sincerity, it is possible to be profoundly misled. We are invited to follow Christ into the human temple, not to duplicate his sufferings.

There are other, more subtle and symbolic, forms of this deception. Notable among these are the stigmata, the bleeding wounds which spontaneously appear (and disappear) on the body of the alleged saint. Supposedly an indication of spiritual grace, it is another satanic manifestation which detracts from the simplicity of the spiritual path with a veil of glamour. Such phenomena, along with weeping statues, cloaks that rise into the air, and rosaries that follow their owner unbidden, are naturally at the centre of much sensational interest, both secular and religious. They are, as paranormal events, worthy of appropriate

scientific scrutiny, but to accord them reverence is to worship at the shrine of strange gods.

In addition there are many unspectacular examples of this kind of self-deception. These, of the closet type, constitute no doubt the overwhelming majority. While ostensibly avoiding the sin of pride, the facts of the matter are diametrically opposed. For the ego, committed to self-mortification on ascetic grounds, is hypertrophied with exaggerated self-importance. It is a futile course in that the nature the worshipper seeks to overcome lies on the same plane as the carnal weapons employed to this end. The attempt necessarily strengthens the false or partial ego and creates a deep division in the person thus afflicted.

In such cases of the controlling ego (Freud's superego) is identified with God, while the passions are demonised. The result is one of perpetual civil war within the psyche. Moreover it may be observed that the ostensible dividing line between good and evil is entirely arbitrary along cultural lines. Gluttony, a grave sin in prior ages, nowadays hardly rates a *Hail Mary*; whereas whipping one's servants, once an excusable indulgence, would these days invoke ecclesiastical censure. The partiality of the matter is however lost on the person thus afflicted. Absurd trifles assume cosmic proportions. The individual is convinced that his or her religious obsessions are the sanctions of the almighty. Yet despite this ostensible belief, the partial ego is usually impotent to quell what it perceives as its sinful nature. What one opposes, one strengthens; such is the applicable law of nature, with results predictably opposite to those intended. In the absence of success, the individual, fearing wrath and the fires of hell, may resort to more drastic means. Alternatively he may begin to rationalise his failure and invest in denial. Thus religious hypocrisy is born.

This psychic split, which typically afflicts the religious individual, is the cultural legacy of Christianity in the West. It is diametrically opposed to authentic spirituality, which tends to wholeness and integration. The so-called problem of sin, the supposed evil in human nature, is the product of a hyperbolic righteousness, the figment of a perverse imagination. Actual manifestation of evil, such as gratuitous violence and cruelty, tend to be proportional to this obsession with righteousness, and arise as a direct consequence thereof.

Compare with this malaise the Taoist saying: *If you want the plain truth, forget all about right and wrong. The preoccupation with right and wrong is the disease of the mind.* The attitude expressed in this saying would of course be branded as indulgent by the repressed religious hysteric. On the contrary it implies the highest discipline, that of ridding oneself of robotic behaviour, and confronting each moment with a conscious and authentic mind. The absence of moral strictures does not denote the absence of the moral sensibility. On the contrary, the moral faculty can only flourish in a realm of spontaneity, while a highly structured moral code actually precipitates moral disintegration. To quote the Taoist (Lao Tse) once more: *When rules appear, disorder sets in.*

The Art Of Dying

The various failings here described are symptomatic of a general misunderstanding with respect to the nature of the Abyss. Such misunderstanding, in turn, derives from a dysfunctional relationship with the Angel, or failure to recognise the Angel altogether. The Angel in these instances is either misunderstood or its place is taken by another, one espousing some ideology or creed, for every individual, excluding

the *Babe of the Abyss*, is persuaded of something. The result is a misapprehension of the meaning of death, and, by corollary, of spiritual sacrifice and the Abyss. The demon teaches a catastrophic view of death. Sacrifice means loss, and the Abyss, ultimate negation. The Angel, however, teaches the preservation of information. Aggregates may be impermanent, as the Buddhists say, but they may always be reconstituted in their original, indeed, in their perfected archetypal form. This is the mystery of the resurrection. Death, as the crossing of the Abyss, is the planting of a seed for immortality. And if the seed is sown, it will rise again.

Not so in the pathological cases here discussed. Under the influence of the false angel, the adept makes a *partial* descent into the Abyss, consistent with the psychic split into a divine and demonic self. The adept may indeed divest himself of all physical and spiritual possessions and attainments; however *that part of the self which has been deified is retained*. This is the sacrifice of fools. In consequence the deified part of the personality, with nothing to oppose it, expands unchecked to dominate the individual entirely. This is the beginning of the end, insofar as the demon, now deprived of further sustenance, begins to turn upon itself, ultimately to be devoured by a superior of its kind. The Black Adept will observe the disintegration of his personality, and his latter state will assuredly be worse than the first. At the same time, if he is of the religious persuasion, he will identify his sufferings with the cross of Christ. This is the false hope, held out (and often believed) by the deceitful spirit, that at the end of the road of self-annihilation lies the goal of enlightenment. But the end of this road is never reached.

This false or partial surrender is quite a common spiritual error, and although serious, it need not be final. Especially in this age, in which

psychic tides are reaching saturation levels, and the Abyss has opened up for humanity as a whole, it is not unusual for the initiate to be catapulted into the vast beyond at the very outset of his or her career. In this post-historical age, an age *beyond time*, the groundwork, the Angel, the Abyss and the supernal initiations, instead of being sequential, tend to be engaged simultaneously.

Central in to the entire process is the recognition and prosecution of the *true will*, the attractor vortex of the soul I have called the Angel. For it is the Angel which leads the adept to the summit of the *Rosy Cross* (the Second Order) whence he or she may adventure the final ordeal. In contrast to the religious hypocrite, the solar adept has thus attained to unity of volition in all essential respects – the fruit of *do what thou wilt* accepted as the rule of life. As a result of this emancipation, at the moment of the supreme crisis, the Exempt Adept accepts surrender of the self, with a clean-cut gesture making his or her self-annihilation complete. The adept thereupon is stripped of self, of all attainments, and, yes, even of the Angel. From the unpublished diaries of Heru Raha I quote:

*in the abyss there is no God
man is forsaken of his essential self
nothing to do and nothing to be
the abyss is hell of analysis
there is sight and seeing in the eye of the hawk
there is the clear audition of amenta
yet there is no one there
nothing nowhere never*

Having thus become a Babe of the Abyss, the same does nothing but grow in the womb of its Mother – in Thelemic iconography the

supernal Babalon (a variant of *Babylon*), for the Christian mystic, Jesurun Jerusalem – to be reconstituted in the likeness of the Angel.

Psychosis As A Path Of Healing

Here we should not fail to address the relevance of this discussion to the experience of schizophrenia. Supposedly a disease without a cure, schizophrenia is a symptom of cognitive dissonance, a major disjunction between experience and ostensible belief. Chief in its aetiology is a rigid and repressive belief-system, which requires the individual to deny a valid and significant part of his or her experience. The result is the formation of an artificial social self, adjusted to the expectations of the environment, but cut off from the sustenance of meaning which derives from the authentic self. The authentic self, in such a case, is completely unacknowledged. Indeed it is an unknown quantity, relegated to the subconscious mind, whence it usually manifests in the form of psychosomatic symptoms, quirks and eccentricities. It is that part of the self, as in the case of religious pathology, which is demonised. As such it tends to be anathema, absolute taboo, and the ultimate affront to the established order. This is the state of the pre-psychotic personality. Its defining characteristics are a shallow, ‘wooden’ personality, a bluntness of affect, and a noticeable rigidity of attitude and behaviour.

The so-called psychotic breakdown occurs when the suppressed energies of the authentic self erupt in an uncontrolled manner to assume rightful possession of the organism. This, very obviously, is the beginning of a healing process, a *breakthrough* rather than a breakdown, with the reasonable prognosis of integration. However to the repressed individual and the dysfunctional social circle the experience is terrifying.

The reason is obvious; for in whatever form the suppressed ideation emerges, it will be the epitome of blasphemy to the false and repressive ego. Distorted and demonised, it is moreover likely to emerge with great violence. The resulting ‘psychotic’ symptoms constitute various ways of the psyche to cope with the eruption of unconscious energy.

In extreme cases the individual is compelled to disown these manifestation of the authentic self, in which case they are projected upon the ‘other’ in the form of hallucinations. *Hearing voices* is a common form of psychic projection, although the hallucinations may involve any other sensory modality. In addition the psychotic may be flooded with uncontrollable ideation of the fearful or fascinating type. Propelled beyond the normative mensuration of the social nexus, the individual confronts the exigencies of heaven and hell.

Conventional psychiatry tends to label such ideation as paranoid and delusional, in short, as mad. However it has been demonstrated by Scottish psychiatrist and philosopher R. D. Laing that the ravings and artistic effusions of the psychotic patient, when its symbolic content is understood, constitute an eloquent articulation of his or her existential reality. Laing was brilliant at elucidating these realities, as he demonstrated in the compelling reconstruction of psychiatric case histories in meaningful existential terms. In the fifties and sixties, before the psychedelic era got well under way, he was a shamanic traveller in two worlds, equally at home in the formal precincts of academia as in the shadowy landscapes of lunacy, madness and alternate realities. His work gave the lie to the assertions that schizophrenia is an illness and a condition without cure. His therapeutic methods, humane as they were original, met with excellent results (see Bibliography). They centred on allowing the patient to move *through* his psychosis, as through an

initiatory journey, while providing a safe environment and compassionate companionship.

The response of the psychiatric community was predictable. Laing was denounced, derided, and finally dismissed as a lunatic himself. This, no doubt, he was, in that he invoked and engaged his poetic genius, the trans-rational mystic intuition which lurks in us all. Yet in confronting the psychiatric establishment head-on, documenting its betrayal of humanity, he emerged as one of the sanest men on the planet. While many of his revolutionary ideas have now been incorporated into mainstream psychiatry, albeit in a non-committal and perfunctory manner, it is astounding how quickly he was forgotten within the citadel of power. His name nowadays hardly rates a mention, and it is an open secret that many psychiatrists, while paying lip service to his brilliance, hated him with a vengeance. Disillusioned, Laing turned to drink in his later years, and died a mere parody of his former self. Yet we have no hesitation in pronouncing his life as one of the last lucid moments of the late twentieth century.

What Laing demonstrated, both theoretically and in his work with his patients, and what we also assert, is that the psychotic episode represents the inauguration of a healing process. This process, if allowed to proceed in a reasonably supportive environment, will re-establish psychic equilibrium and facilitate integration. This is a universal truth, attested not least by the individuals who have traversed this path. Carl Gustav Jung supports the same, stating that psychosis is the most direct, if also the most perilous, path to integration. Both Laing and Jung, in contradistinction to most modern psychiatrists, engaged his patients on personal existential terms. For they understood that it is meaningful relationships, empathy and love, which are the external concomitants of a

psychiatric cure. Nature will do the work of healing, as the various aspects of the fragmented psyche are reintegrated in the vortex of the authentic self.

As a further significant point, the integrated post-psychotic personality invariably is larger, more complete, and more fully human than the pre-psychotic self. This suggests, as Jung surmised, that psychosis may be regarded as an unusually dramatic, but often necessary, path of individuation. It is the hallmark of a dysfunctional culture that for so many this path is one of trauma and tragedy. It further explains why among tribal cultures, whose rapport with nature is intact, there exists a tradition of respect for the lunatic. Such an individual is accorded certain honours as an emissary of other worlds, and may be regarded as a candidate for shamanic initiation.

The tragedy is that modern psychiatry, on the whole, does not recognise, let alone apply, this model. In simple terms, the psychiatric stance is to regard the pre-psychotic as mentally healthy, and psychosis as an illness. The strategy therefore employed, especially in the hospital setting, is to arrest the psychotic development by invasive and destructive means. These include psychotropic medication, insulin coma, electroconvulsive treatment and psychosurgery. While the latter may have fallen into disfavour, anti-psychotic drugs are prescribed in ever greater quantities. The fact that these are *at best* ineffective, except in a first-aid situation, suggests that it accords with certain interests not to cure mental illness, but to *manage* it. The predictable result is that for many psychiatric patients admission to a psychiatric facility is a one-way trip into the Abyss.

There are of course wider socio-political issues to be addressed. Within the liberal tradition, associated with names such as R. D. Laing,

Thomas Szasz, and Robert Anton Wilson, the psychiatric profession is regarded as a contemporary form of the inquisition – the means enforcing conventional norms and covering the cracks in a dysfunctional society. While many individuals in the relevant fields, no doubt, are doing excellent work, their efforts are proscribed by an ideology-ridden and unethical system. It is clear that the psychiatric model which provides the set of working assumptions is one which tends to maintain, even deepen, the split in the individual and collective psyche. Given this circumstance, it is evident why it has become an article of faith, that schizophrenia is incurable. For, as one clever wit put it, psychiatry is the disease for which it claims to be the cure.

Psychedelic Experience

A temporary though profound confrontation with the Abyss and the supernal spheres of consciousness may be obtained via the psychedelic experience. I am here specifically referring to the forms of extended awareness, obtained through the ingestion of LSD, a naturally occurring agent such as the psilocybin mushroom *Stropharia Cubensis*, or the Amazonian ceremonial brew, ayahuasca. Locales on planet Earth are increasingly found where this experience can be obtained legally in a religious, therapeutic or recreational setting. It is worth the pilgrimage to perform the relevant experiments, as to do so in secrecy and contravention of the law does not accord with the dignity and sublimity of the psychedelic experience. Because of the sensational and hysterical press on the subject it is difficult for the inexperienced to form an unbiased picture. I will therefore try as much as possible to describe the nature of the psychedelic experience in neutral and objective language.

The single most defining characteristic of the psychedelic experience is enhanced awareness. This typically involves all of the sensory modalities, as well as the purely mental functions like memory, imagination, reason, and intuition. Equally enhanced is the moral and aesthetic sense. The environment, internal and external, is experienced with greater clarity, immediacy, and in greater detail. Some writers have suggested that the psychedelic focus may be extended all the way to the quantum realm, and, in the realm of mind, to the atomic elements of thought, the quanta of consciousness referred to in the Tantras. Beyond these, according to some exponents, is the clear light of the void, the realm of pure or unconditioned consciousness. The latter is said to be attainable, given large doses of the said substances, coupled with appropriate preparation and discipline.

Where the experience is less intense, the phenomenal world remains in place, but various ‘windows’ are opened to wider realms of association. The world becomes larger and deeper. It also becomes more mysterious. This is due partly to the novelty of the experience, which causes one to take a fresh look at familiar things, but also to the encounter with regions of the mind beyond the usual range of psychosomatic awareness, and thus unconditioned by conventional thought. This may lead to insight and creative activity in the aesthetic, philosophical, or scientific domain. Mental efficiency, in some respects, appears greatly enhanced, with associative thought proceeding at phenomenal pace in domains of great complexity. There is the perception of thought extending beyond the verbal plane, and the impression of synchronisation between ‘disparate’ functions like ideation and eidetic imagery. The synthetic, like the analytical faculty, is greatly enhanced.

The subjective response to such an experience is said to be

dependent on *set* and *setting* (Timothy Leary's phrase). Very simply, this denotes the physical and psychological state of the individual, both in broad terms, and at the time of the actual experiment. There is consensus among researchers that the psychedelic substance does not in itself determine the intellectual content or emotional tone of the experience, except in a secondary way, through the *response* which is engendered. There is no typical mood or feeling associated with the psychedelic experience, no typical state of consciousness, except to the extent that a degree of conformity may have arisen through cultural conditioning. Psychedelics, therefore, are not 'feel good' drugs, like the opiates. They are not narcotics, like the poison alcohol. They are neither stimulants nor sedatives, like the drugs in the psychiatric arsenal. Psychedelics, in physiological terms, are neuro-transmitters, or substances which enhance neuro-transmitter function, thus enabling the brain to do what it is designed to do with greater fidelity. Provided due consideration is exercised with respect to set and setting, there are no specific dangers associated with the psychedelic experience. The relevant substances tend to be minimally toxic, and their effects on consciousness, from all reports, universally benign.

It is nevertheless important to exercise responsibility for the direction of mind in the psychedelic state, as one does in ordinary life. The difference may be illustrated with an analogy: Ordinary life, one might say, means getting around in an ox-cart, while a psychedelic dose of LSD places one at the helm of a superluminal hyper-dimensional spaceship. As a typical response, one is likely to be awed by the terror and splendour of the experience. This also can have implications of negative consequence, namely the possibility of being overwhelmed with fearful and delusional ideation. This is where mental and emotional

health is of the issue. Considerable resources for sanity are required of the psychedelic explorer, wherefore individuals with psychiatric disorders should take psychedelics only under appropriate supervision. A further necessary caution concerns the physical setting for the experiment. While normal mind-body functions are not necessarily impaired under psychedelic influence, it should be remembered that the average individual is used to an ox-cart, not a spaceship. It is therefore suggested that one explore the inner planes of consciousness in safe and simple physical surroundings. One's private dwelling or a peaceful natural setting are recommended as ideal.

Under favourable conditions the psychedelic experience is likely to be profoundly therapeutic, as well as conducive to creativity and personal growth. Available studies of therapeutic applications under medical supervision are impressive, and should lead to further research in any enlightened community. Self-administered and recreational use of psychedelics, in communities where this can occur in conformity with the law, likewise tends to be a safe and socially benign activity. The illegal use of psychedelics cannot be recommended for reasons outlined above. Activism and / or periodic migration are the legitimate options. A vast literature now available on the subject, and the novice in the field should begin his research in the library. It should also be mentioned here that there are surviving and reviving traditions where initiation may be sought in the shamanic use of psychedelics.

The Abyss In Ceremonial Magic

By the skilled magician the Abyss may be invoked ceremonially. To this end there are three available methods. The first is the banishing of

the *gates* of the Abyss, of the psychic censor, and the conceptual bounds which define conventional reality. The second is the consecutive banishing of every familiar phenomenon in consciousness, so that only the Abyss remains. The third is the direct invocation of the Abyss itself. The last conception involves paradox, for the Abyss, not being a positive entity, cannot be invoked as such. What may be invoked is the *chaosphere*, a state of consciousness akin to the psychedelic experience, with its extended perceptual and associative matrix, and its concomitant dissolution of conventional thought.

There is a tradition in esoteric lore of that curious and exotic appellation: The *Great-Word-To-Go-Mad-And-Plunge-Into-The-Abyss*, and its literary variant, the *Great-Word-To-Go-Naked-And-Eat-Grass*. The reference is to the generic idea of a word or thought, the contemplation of which will unhinge the reason and plunge the subject into madness. This Word, of course, exists, but it is not usually divulged until the adept has fully crossed the Abyss. Its function is to erase all cultural conditioning in an instant. According to rabbinical tradition this was the word spoken by the prophet Daniel before King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, whereupon the latter was driven into the wilderness to ‘eat grass like an ox’. He was not restored, so the holy writ, until his hair was grown like eagle feathers, and his nails like bird-claws, and his involuntary initiation had run its course. What such legends do suggest is the utter insignificance of cultural conditioning as compared with the biological and psychic foundations upon which it rests.

The Abyss In States Of Trance

The Abyss may be obtained in meditative trance by the adept who

has mastered concentration, that is, the ability to focus attention upon an object at length and without diversion. While a vision of the Abyss may arise spontaneously, under conventional circumstances the ego soon asserts itself – usually within seconds – to re-establish the status quo. Through meditative ability, however, this tendency may be circumvented, and consciousness maintained at length in a state free from conceptual ideation. The result is the dissolution of the manifest universe, which is thus revealed to exist purely as a phenomenon of thought.

As the celebrated mystic Ramana Maharshi observed, in deep sleep, when there are no dreams, the universe does not exist. Accordingly the summit of meditation known as *samadhi* (Sanskrit: with the lord) is a conscious state, free of the dreaming mind which conjures the world of experience.

Even the habitual experience of this particular trance, however, is not to be confused with the crossing of the Abyss in the full existential sense. Yet it serves as a signpost, indicating states of consciousness and points of view to be attained and integrated into life as a whole.

A Journey Without A Path

Having discussed various forms of spiritual pathology, along with certain temporary ways of entering the Abyss, we may now enquire as to the nature of the passage by right of initiation. There is a tradition to the effect that this passage is necessarily confrontational and cathartic in nature. This notion has been fostered to a large extent by the legacy of the Beast 666 (one of the magical personae of Aleister Crowley), whose magical personality and combative style permeate his writings on this, as on any other subject. The reader may recall that Crowley, invoking the

Abyss in a ceremonial manner, encountered the demon *Choronzon*, the epitome of everything violent, vile, and subversive. Such, however, is neither the norm nor the ideal. It rather suggests a temperamental bias, the intrusion of the dramatist, and an exacerbation of the partial ego, of which the demon is the shadow and reflection. It is this particular flaw in the Beast, which leads us to suspect that his crossing of the Abyss was not accomplished in fullness, and that his embodiment of the supernal Grades was therefore imperfect. The tragedies and failures of his later career, and the ideological axes he persisted to grind, further suggest as much.

The Magical Record of the Beast may profitably be contrasted with the testimony of Benjamin Rowe, arguably the first qualified writer in modern times to confront Crowley on the magical plane. In the career of this illustrious mage the passage of the Abyss is represented as non-dramatic and quiescent, a simple matter of ripening intuition and insight. This also coincides with the experience of ISSCTSM, whose unpublished Record I have at my disposal, and represents a situation altogether nearer the ideal. Nature being deeply functional, there is no reason why any natural process should involve gratuitous drama.

Given appropriate preparation, the passage of the Abyss is an event both simple and inevitable. It may be compared with ripe fruit falling to seed the ground, or a drop of water dissolving in the ocean. The dominant image is of the partial merging with the greater whole. And although the process is volitional, the impulse and direction does not come from the partial ego, but as a result of the attractive force of the authentic self, with its roots in the Supernals. Thus it is not by the laborious ascent of the lower nature to the higher, that the Abyss is crossed, but by the illumination radiating from the intuitive realm, its influence permeating

the rational mind, until the latter is quietly and seamlessly absorbed within the larger sphere of consciousness.

The result is a shift in perspective, in perceptual focus, and in the sense of identity. While the perspectives of the partial self, the separate ego, are not lost, they are subsumed into a larger frame of reference. Thus the initiate of the Third Order consciously attains to his place in the authentic, though informal, and universal Order. Such a person knows *who he is* and *where he is at*, having attained to understanding in the grander sense. The world, moreover, holds no practical secret beyond the powers of a Magister Templi to divine.

How does one attain to that resting place above the manifest world? As the metaphor illustrates, the fruit falls when it is ripe – it can neither precipitate nor prevent the plunge. Accordingly it is the momentum of progressive initiation, and the gradual illumination emanating from the supernal spheres which opens the way. And though it be a lifetime in preparation, the actual crossing of the Abyss occurs in a timeless moment of inspiration, the moment of recognition. Thus the gulf of the mind, the vast void of potential ideation, is overcome and traversed in an instant, a point in time without duration, and therefore beyond time. And although there may be many such moments, extending possibly over years, they are but one, partaking of the nature of present eternity beyond the passage of time. The immensity, if it is traversed at all, is traversed in a single moment. Such is the only way of reaching the distant shore.

Yet from that other shore the distance will appear illusory. The journey, we realise, has brought us where we always have been, only without our being so aware. The Great Quest is therefore a path to the recognition *I AM HERE NOW*. This is analogous to the insights of Zen, wherein the path to enlightenment has been described as the *Gateless*

Gate (Mumonkan). In like manner, the passage of the Abyss is a pathless path, a fact recognised in the symbology of the cabalistic Tree of Life, in that there is no path from Chesed to Binah, from the sphere of the Exempt Adept to that of the Magister.

This correlates with the psychology involved. As previously mentioned, it is enjoined upon the Exempt Adept, embracing the Abyss, to swear an oath to separate from all that he has and all that he is forever. Thus, in the austere language of the A.:A.:, the adept is stripped of all his attainments, including his Angel, on becoming a Babe of the Abyss. The same then does nothing but grow in the womb of its Mother, until it is reborn in the Third Order as a Magister Templi, a Master of the Temple.

Words of this kind, as I have shown, have been profoundly misunderstood throughout the history of ascetic monasticism, and thus has it been with all transcendent truth that originates above the Abyss. The idea of renunciation or sacrifice, as one of the central themes of religion, has been altogether misappropriated, resulting in the said sacrifice of fools. For it is the rational mind which must be transcended, and it will not do to set the mind against itself as the means of emancipation. Nor can the mind use itself as a stepping-stone, or lift itself by some bootstrap method. We must recognise that the rational mind is altogether impotent in the matter here proposed. Were it not so, there would be no Abyss and no need for transcendence.

The spiritual sword cuts far more closely to the Alchemical Stone. For the initiate must renounce not merely what he considers to be his partial or conditioned persona, but the Great Work itself. The spiritual sacrifice is of every thought, tenet, and belief, of so-called reality itself. This, to the unprepared mind, is the terror of the Abyss. Yet for the

seasoned adept, who has exhausted the possibilities of the rational plane, and understands its limitations, it is the path of emancipation and attainment. It is the surrender of symbolic ideation for the direct apperception of truth. Where intellect is embarked on a quest without end, intuition goes straight to the heart of truth as the transcendent unity of the supernal spheres comes into view. This emphasises the need for grace, the influence of the supernal consciousness in attaining to the same.

The Void Vanquished

The successful crossing of the Abyss constitutes initiation into the Third or Inner Order of the Great White Brotherhood. This is an ongoing process whereby the perspectives of intuitive vision are gradually assimilated, and the human personality, refined in the forge of meditation, is integrated into the authentic self. In this process the partial and relative nature of every subjective point of view is exposed. Specifically it is revealed that every assertion of the rational intellect contains within itself an absurdity, or paradox, whereby it invokes its own contradiction. This has been expressed by saying that nothing is true below the Abyss. Yet above the Abyss nothing is true *except* by virtue of its contradiction. Thus, where below the Abyss contradiction means division, above the Abyss it implies unity.

Below the Abyss, furthermore, man is the slave of his mind. Above the Abyss he is its master. For, as in the Abyss all mental aggregates are disintegrated into their constituent parts, they no longer appear, manifesting, as they do, only in relation of one to another. Thus the semantic nature of the cosmos becomes fully apparent. A thought is

recognised for what it is, a transient wave on the surface of the ocean of mind, having its own unique contour, differentiated for a moment, but ultimately to be reabsorbed, and without real existence apart from the universal consciousness. Thus the relativity, the dependent arising, of all propositions becomes apparent. Philosophical antinomies are revealed as nothing more than the excitation of the brain through various localised stimuli. This is not to invalidate the products of the reason; it is to assign them their proper place. As previously demonstrated, reason without an intuitive basis becomes lost in infinite regress. Reason is thus without foundation; ultimately there is, so to speak, no reason for anything. But where reason leads to the Abyss, intuition leaps into the existential void and closes the breach between the rational and the actual.

While the symbolic icon of intellect is the Sword, a cutting tool signifying division, the emblem of the supernal Understanding is the Chalice, the Grail, symbolising the gathering of all impressions in a single cup. It is also the cup of sorrow, that of which it was said, *If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me.* For the mystery of Binah is designated the mystery of universal sorrow, wherein ‘all creation is in travail even until now, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God.’ However, while the Cup of Understanding distils the sorrow of the world, it is open to the higher principle, the supernal Wisdom, which is the joy inherent in the powers of creation.

In the crossing of the Abyss, moreover, the duality of the Magical Circle is resolved as the microcosm is absorbed within the macrocosm, the seed of a star in the seedground of souls. The Circle thus transformed is commensurate with the universe, wherefore the initiate of Binah is called a Master of the Temple. The meaning of this designation is fully discussed in the following chapter. Here it is merely to be noted that the

adept, having made his self-annihilation complete, is reborn as star in the heavens of his or her particular sphere of influence and experience. This is to say that the lower faculties, being thus without their accustomed master, are now informed of the energies of the Order to which the adept has attained. In his or her human manifestation the same becomes a veil of the divine light, a channel of energy from the supernal spheres into the worlds below.

As the supernal initiations proceed, the Abyss is slowly but surely vanquished. For, as the Abyss is essentially an artefact of the reason, commensurate with the extent of its depth, its existence is abrogate with the demonstration of the falsity of the reason. The existential void of all-embracing doubt is thus answered by meaning, deriving from creative Wisdom and manifest in the world through Understanding.

The works of a Magister are manifest in the great masterpieces in whatever field human ingenuity has been exercised. They hide, and reveal to those with eyes to see, the pure light of creative genius, the godhead of the creator which is man. Thus all true science and art is divine, a manifestation of the creative force in nature, the principal essence of a conscious and evolving universe.

Chapter Eleven

THE SUPERNAL INITIATIONS

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Psalms 27 : 6

From Intellect To Intuition

To provide the necessary context, let us briefly review the esoteric doctrine concerning cosmic planes of consciousness. In Chapter 1 we analysed the human constitution to comprise seven discreet modalities of perception, designated the *physical*, the *etheric*, the *astral*, the *mental*, the *intuitive*, the *archetypal*, and the *transcendent*.

The physical plane comprises the objects of somatic, sensory, and space-time awareness, involving the familiar five senses.

The etheric plane involves the consciousness of the energetic properties of physical bodies, as made apparent by various yogas, and expressed in concepts such as, *prana*, *kundalini*, *duende* and *chi*.

The astral plane comprises the repository of images by which the human imagination visualises the world. It is cognate with the akashic records, the cosmic vault of memory wherein every impression in the history of the universe is recorded.

The mental plane refers to the faculty of reason in its dual mode of analysis and synthesis.

An incommensurable gulf separates these four lower functions

from the three which obtain above the Abyss. At least, this is so at present for the bulk of humanity.

The intuitive plane comprises the totality and unity of the contents of consciousness. It is the consciousness of the universe as a single phenomenon.

The archetypal plane is the realm where the universe, as a fact in consciousness, is created.

The transcended plane refers to pure or unqualified consciousness, self-existing, eternal, without subject or object.

It is to the latter three modalities, that we shall now turn our attention. Collectively, they comprise the *Supernal Triad* of the cabalistic Tree of Life, comprising Chokmah (Wisdom), Binah (Understanding), and Kether (the Crown), a trinity which loosely corresponds to the Hindu conception of *sat, cit, ananda* (Sanskrit: being, consciousness, bliss). It is the supernal realm, whence emanates what we call intuition or inspiration. Any creative breakthrough, any conceptual advance in thought originates in this domain.

The intuition, although a familiar phenomenon, is still a largely unknown faculty. It comes to us seemingly out of nowhere, and we are not always sure of its sagacity. Yet we rely upon it to a far greater extent than we realise. The rational stance is almost invariably a pretext. We largely decide our course on the basis of intuition, and rationalise after the event, persuading ourselves that we are acting rationally. For settling the innumerable affairs of life, there is indeed no viable alternative. For, as already noted, the rational method leads to infinite regress, and, carried to its logical conclusion, would result in mental paralysis. Its inutility is further apparent in all areas of controversy and conflict, which centuries of rational effort have failed to resolve.

Intuition differs in this regard, in that it produces its resultant in a single trans-dimensional leap. We may call it trans-dimensional, to borrow a popular metaphor, as it traverses the gulf of mental space in the manner of an interstellar craft, by collapsing the intervening space, and creating in the abyss of ratiocination a conceptual singularity. In this way we receive an intimation of ‘what is the case’ in a single defining image. In psychological terms, this singularity is the unit of conscious awareness, which is fundamental to human perception, and of which rational intellect is a but specific mutation.

Intuition may therefore be defined as the supra-rational and pre-conscious faculty, which synthesises our various impressions, and produces a coherent world-image. Without this faculty, I suggest, our impressions would be discontinuous and discreet. The unity of the world would be broken up into myriad fragments, which are disintegrated under the analytical gaze, and all distances would be infinite. It is this perceptual stance which characterises the condition known as autism. In other words, autism is the (premature) consciousness of the Abyss, the open eye of Shiva, which annihilates the universe with the gaze of infinite analysis. The analytic reason, it may be recalled, is identified with that Abyss.

The intuition, however, traverses the abyss of mind in a single bound, and goes straight to the object of contemplation, the resultant of the combined tendencies of consciousness acting in concert. Its continual influence goes usually unremarked, because the universe it reveals is largely one of shared meaning, reflecting a worldview we imagine to be rational. It is only when someone produces an insight out of the ordinary, that we speak of genius or inspiration. Yet this quality, as I wish to demonstrate, is fundamental to human perception. Each subjective

universe is the result of a unique conjuring act, which is of the nature of genius. The perceived difference in these respective cases is therefore arbitrary.

We may note, for instance, the avowed facility of genius to see simply, to see what is actually there, rather than what was *thought* to be there. This presupposes a degree of individuation, of differentiation from the collective mind, the attribute of genius in the passive sense. What distinguishes the creative individual in the active sense is the facility of conscious individualised control over mind, and thus over reality. Those, supposedly not thus gifted, presumably see themselves as subject to reality as a given. Indeed much of so-called reality is widely considered as ‘given.’ Fundamentalists, whether scientific or religious, speak of the immutable laws of God or nature. In the course of this chapter we shall examine whether these laws really are immutable truths, or simply the game-rules of the relevant mindset.

We observe that the world appears to us ready made. While we laboriously construct conceptual maps, the world of primary experience appears finished and whole. So also is it with the products of inspiration in the more specific sense – works considered to be informed by the influence of genius. Examples abound in familiar anecdotes from the annals of science and the arts.

It was said of Mozart (on the strength of his manuscripts and his own testimony), that melodies came to him fully formed. Stravinsky, concerning his *Rite Of Spring*, remarked, ‘I heard and I wrote.’ Among scientists, Einstein – one of the greatest, was emphatic about the importance of inspiration or intuition. A further haunting example from the arts concerns a painting in the New York Museum of Modern Art, *The Persistence Of Memory*, by Salvador Dali. Concerning the genesis of

this work the artist wrote, ‘I knew that the atmosphere I had succeeded in creating ... was to serve as the setting for some idea, for some surprising image, but I did not in the least know what it was going to be. I was about to turn out the light, when instantly I ‘saw’ the solution. I saw two soft watches, one of them hanging lamentably over the branch of the olive tree.’

Everyone engaged in creative work knows the ecstasy of such moments of recognition; it is the sense of being in the presence of something otherworldly and profound. Subjectively it thus appears that the creative act is really a process of discovery. It seems that the *music*, the *image*, the *idea* is already ‘there,’ existing in some illimitable supersensory Platonic realm. This is consistent with the esoteric view, which asserts that the visionary artist, scientist, or philosopher is in contact with intuitive and archetypal planes of consciousness. Cognate is the notion of ‘objective art,’ which involves the idea that certain works, like the Mandelbrot Set or the melodies of Bach, comprise a statement of transpersonal verity, and thus embody universal truths. Speaking more broadly, we may state that all true art derives from the supernal consciousness, especially if we apply a definition derived from information theory, that information (or art) is that which make a difference. It is this influence, which determines the difference between the specific and the diffuse, between cosmos and chaos, between the authentic and the contrived. Creativity thus depends primarily on the ability to navigate realms of inspiration; only then facility of expression comes into play, whereby visionary insight is rendered sensible by means of some particular medium.

Modern theories of inspiration are based on the concept of lateral specialisation of the cerebral hemispheres, and / or the vertical division of

the mind into the conscious and unconscious. When a novel idea emerges fully formed to startle the awareness, it is proposed that ‘it’ ‘wanders’ from the unconscious right hemisphere to the conscious left. Recent conceptions place more emphasis on the holistic or holographic properties of the brain, wherein consciousness is linked with the subtle and interpenetrating electrical fields, created by the synergy of neuronal firing. Consciousness is thus explained as an epiphenomenon of electro-chemical processes within the human nervous system, wherein new ideas and perceptions are linked with novel connections in the neural network.

However the connection between mind and brain (or mind and matter) remains one of the great unsolved riddles of nature. Indeed, from the reductionist point of view, we have not so much as begun to formulate a science of consciousness. And it is not likely that this will change. The esoteric paradigm differs from that of science in that it does not reduce consciousness and its phenomena, like memory, reason and imagination, to intra-cerebral activity. It regards mind as a higher dimensional phenomenon (not specifically localised in space or time) wherein the universe of experience appears as a single momentary point or singularity. To the esoteric conception consciousness is primary, and it is the physical universe which is regarded as an epiphenomenon, a projection or modification of the mind. Science insists that it is the other way around. However, instead of waxing dogmatic on the subject, let us concede that both positions are potentially useful.

The Dark Side Of The Moon

If the intuition thus be the ‘higher’ faculty that is claimed, what of such instances where the same spawns monstrosities? What of the

diseased imagination, the evil genius, of hysteria and superstition? Are these not the characteristics of a pathological archetype, obsessing the consciousness? Indeed they are.

As a matter of fact, the intuition, among the non-initiate, is far from infallible. The historical parade of intellectual fads, fashions, and dysfunctional belief bears witness to the assertion. Thus it is altogether possible, for individuals, communities, and the human race as a whole, to fall for arbitrary and groundless conceptions with horrendous consequences. The witch-hunt, genocide, war – all these are due to the aforesaid triad of ideology, ignorance, and superstition, with their resultant – fear.

The intuition, as was noted, goes straight to the object of its surmise, whether that be the beatific vision or a phantom of dread. It is not subject to the checks and constraints of the reason, nor of ethics or morality. It requires no justification to pursue the good or evil of its intent. Supported by adequate conviction, it creates the context of its own validation, whether the resultant be a fascist state or a psychedelic utopia. For it is the intuitive archetype which determines how all other sensibilities, the senses and the reason, are deployed. It determines how we look at things, what questions it is possible to ask, and what kind of thoughts may arise in consciousness.

In his book *The Demon Haunted World* the late Carl Sagan warned of a return to non-rational belief, which he associated specifically with the revival of the archaic paradigm. Yet non-rational and dysfunctional belief is not exclusive to those worldviews judged as unscientific; it may equally be found within the culture of science. For, as previously observed, the rationality of science operates within certain peculiar constraints, within the bounds of the thinkable as determined by the

prevailing paradigm. The danger that a particular view may become unexamined dogma, raised to transcendent verity, is inherent in all areas of thought. Thus it is not specifically the paradigm (any paradigm) as such which is problematic, but rather a misjudged conservatism. As also pointed out, the fruits of reason are perfectly valid on their own plane. Similarly there is no a-priori reason why we should reject the fruit of non-rational sources of knowledge. But, like the products of reason, they should be regarded with a critical eye, the more so as the stakes are infinitely greater when we enter the domain of intuitive belief.

This ‘testing of the spirits,’ so the Master Therion, is the most important branch of magic. For the intuition, like the reason, is a two-edged sword, which may serve as an instrument of enlightenment, or degenerate into a source delusional obsessions. And while the recent history of emancipation (of Europe since the Middle Ages) equates with the victory of the reason over non-rational belief, this is no argument against archaic methodologies, only against their degeneration in the context of religious ideology. The intuitive health of a particular paradigm thus depends on the rigour, the vigour and the vigilance, with which is maintained. As a matter of inescapable fact, as long as we subscribe to any worldview whatsoever, we are ruled by certain beliefs. The more reason, therefore, to render conscious the process of belief-formation, by opening the door of initiation onto the supernal realm of consciousness. For, while the intuitive foundations of the ruling paradigm remain unconscious and unexamined, a culture has no ultimate means of determining the value of its operative beliefs.

We may therefore conceive of a healthy intuition, exercised by continual creative dialogue with the incommensurate, as of its opposite – fixation, superstition, and ideology hardened into dogma. There is a

trained intuition, its fidelity proven in the vagaries of the existential engagement, and there is an *initiated* intuition, informed by that Understanding and Wisdom which are the subject of the present chapter.

Dawn Of The Supernal Consciousness

There is something mysterious about the nature of belief, which becomes the more apparent, as our discussion proceeds to the higher (or more fundamental) levels of the mind. It is the creative power of consciousness. As the philosopher and researcher John Lilly stated:

In the province of connected minds, what the network believes to be true, either is true or becomes true within certain limits to be found experientially and experimentally. These limits are further beliefs to be transcended. In the network's mind there are no limits.

What Dr Lilly appears to be stating, is that the universe is open-ended, with respect to the possibilities of consciousness, and that belief determines what is, or becomes, true. This, of course, is the rationale of thaumaturgy or ceremonial magic, the art and science of altering reality through the orchestrated control of the content of consciousness. Nobody doubts that man has some control over reality, but there is controversy concerning the question of how far that control extends. Lilly makes the bold claim that there are no limits in the network's mind, meaning, as I read him, in the collective mind of the universe.

We observed in Chapter 3 that cultures, differing in their defining paradigm, carve out for themselves a different ontological niche in the mount of all possibilities. We noted that 'what is true' in these various cultures differs radically, and that there are no ordinary means of

determining the verity or validity of any particular worldview, especially from within that view. Peremptory statements in this regard, like those of Dr Sagan, are usually no more than reflections of the speaker's prejudice. The closest we may come to a qualitative assessment is to observe that some cultures are more functional than others, in terms of sustainability, the quality of life, and so forth. And what we find, apart from obvious regional pathologies, is that human culture has flourished under the most diverse of belief-systems. Presumably many such cultures would have continued to flourish, and reached their respective apotheosis, had they not been subverted ideologically or through superior firepower.

There is an implicit belief today, fostered through vulgar education, that our scientific worldview has brought us into possession of the one true reality, and that our view of the universe is both fairly complete and accurate. While, in my experience, no truly great scientist entertains this view, the relevant mindset has become intrinsic to much of our culture. Technology is the usually cited reason for such hubris. The success of our technology, it is argued, proves the validity of our theories. This means that stone-age man had equal justification to argue for *his* cosmological theories on the grounds that he had the flint axe and the use of fire. Strangely, it appears the universe is content to accommodate, support, and provide confirmatory evidence for a very wide range of differing beliefs. It seems that, once a particular paradigm is in place, it may theoretically be elaborated or 'mined' indefinitely. We have, therefore, no basis on which to assert the ontological pre-eminence of the scientific paradigm. Nor do we have the means of assigning a position to our present state of knowledge against some universal standard. For there is no way of quantifying the known against the unknown. Nor, in the absence of a comparative and universal canon of sensibility, do we have

the means of assigning a value to the quality of our knowledge. Given the extended ontology here discussed, the notion of a mind-created universe and open-ended possibilities, it is clear that, fixated within any one paradigm, we are, philosophically speaking, very close to nowhere.

For the paradigm, largely unchallenged and partly unconscious, provides the context or frame of reference, which determines reality in a way not hitherto imagined or understood. Only when we step outside the paradigm is it possible to imagine that perhaps fifty years hence, we may have advanced beyond our present position, as far as we are presently beyond the medieval world of five hundred years ago, and that not merely quantitatively but in the quality of our understanding. As Ralston Saul pointed out, civilisation since the Renaissance has but taken a single step, the espousal of the rational paradigm. Yet there is every indication, that we are presently emerging into a wider sensibility, associated with the collective initiation into the Abyss, and the dawning of the supernal consciousness. With the appropriation of the intuitive and archetypal planes of consciousness, we realise that we have a choice of paradigms, and therefore a choice of alternate realities. Stated another way, the process of paradigm formation is recognised as a creative function at the intuitive and archetypal levels of consciousness. It is the appropriation of these levels of consciousness, that is the objective of the supernal initiations.

The Realm Of The Masters

Upon successful crossing of the Abyss the adept is received into the Third or Inner Order of the Great White Brotherhood, the A.:A.: proper, which we designated the *Astrum Argentum*, the Order Of The

Silver Star. This, in all essential respects, constitutes the consummation of the Great Work. While there are further initiations to be obtained, the adept of this or cognate attainment cannot fall from his or her estate, and the corresponding ascent to the highest is assured.

Within the A.:A.: there are two manifest Grades on the supernal planes, designated Magus and Magister Templi. These pertain to states of consciousness in the archetypal and intuitive sphere. There is one further Grade above these – that of Ipsissimus – which pertains to the realm of unqualified consciousness. These constitute the male and female polarity of the supernal consciousness, and that which unites and transcends them. On the cabalistic Tree of Life they are referred to as Wisdom and Understanding, the male and female archetype of divine parentage. Above them is the Crown of the system, identified herein as Point Omega, the pinnacle of the known and knowable universe. Together they comprise the Supernal Triad, a trinity of attributes to which all true Gods are assigned. These being above the Abyss, it should moreover be understood that their unity is primary, and their distinction formal. The corresponding concept in Eastern thought is that of *yin* and *yang*, represented thus ☯ as inseparable complementaries, which together comprise the Tao, the Way.

This is the realm of the Masters, the inspired teachers of mankind, such as Lao Tse, Gautama the Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth, and that individual variously known as Enoch, Osiris Ra and Hermes Trismegistus. Here Wisdom speaks, and the Understanding is perfect. This is the Plane on which the truth – the authentic purport – of the sacred teachings is manifest. It is also the realm of faith, in the original sense of spiritual revelation or direct insight into truth. This is the Pure Land of the Buddhists, the Christian Heaven and the Garden of Eden. It is

Arcadia, Elysium, and the Dreamtime. Here the initiate converses with the Masters face to face. Here the secret teachings are revealed in their full extent. Here all manner of miracles do obtain. Here worlds are created – and destroyed.

The Temple Not Made With Hands

Upon crossing the Abyss, the Exempt Adept is reborn as a Magister Templi, or Master of the Temple, in the sphere of Binah. This is the aforesaid realm of Understanding, whence emanate inspiration, revelation, or intuitive insight. The Master of the Temple is a being who is fully identified with this principle and its various attributes. Having transcended the human personality, the Magister represents a consecrated vessel, a living incarnation of the teachings of the Order to which he has attained. The task of the Magister is to reflect and transmit the essence of these teachings in a manner suitable to the prevailing conditions of time and place.

The Temple to which reference is made is, of course, the Magical Circle as discussed in Chapter 2. However, as the Circle is dissolved and the Great Work abandoned in the crossing of the Abyss, a new and superior state now obtains. For the Temple of the Magister is commensurate with the Universe itself. The microcosm has been absorbed in the macrocosm and the duality of the formal circle is discarded, as the boundaries have been extended to the infinite. The analogy is that of a seed, symbolising the formal circle of the Exempt Adept which is sown in the Abyss. There it dissolves, but the revelation or *true will* at its magical core fertilises the world-egg, thus reproducing itself in the macrocosm.

This, again, reflects the course of redemption. The adept, thus crucified and raised, enters the ‘temple not made with hands.’ As it is written in the prophetic books of the Hebrews, *the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple*. While the reference is to the universe as a whole, the emphasis here is on the human temple, the body. For within this temple is the true sanctuary wherein the mystic marriage is consummated, the Holy of Holies where stands the Pillar of Fire which is the Tree of Life in the Supernal Eden. This also is that which is written in the Song of Solomon, *I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse*. This mystic marriage, the identification with the core of consciousness in the human heart (the soul), also makes for identification with the universe at large. The Magister is therefore a being which includes the world in his idea of self, who regards the physical universe as his body, and for whom there is no distinction between self and other. Fully realised, this exalted point of view represents the essential accomplishment of the Great Work, the identification of the microcosm with the macrocosm.

This identification translates into an attitude of responsibility, expressed in the Oath of the Magister. In accordance with the formal instructions of the A.:A.:, the candidate accepts the mantle of this Grade with the following words: *I swear to interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my soul*. Far-reaching as it is, this responsibility, it will be noted, is of the passive kind, pertaining to that which is perceived or heard. The Magister therefore embodies the visionary task, to see and hear in the spiritual realm, and to interpret the sacred Word, the oracles of God. He does not originate that Word – that is the province of the Magus – but the office of the Magister determines the form which it takes. The Magister is therefore a prophet of the Magus under whom he works. This is exemplified in Exodus, wherein Yahweh

Elohim instructed Israel, saying, *let Moses be God, and let Aaron be his prophet.*

It is said that any neophyte, or any person whatsoever, may claim the Grade of Master of the Temple, by simply swearing the oath of that Grade. Needless to say, for the unprepared to assume such a burden, is likely to result in penalties, commensurate with the nature of the presumption. We are aware of the tragic fact that the psychiatric wards are crowded with individuals who receive messages from *cosmic central*, with Jesuses and Magdalenes. And, more generally, is it not the acknowledged tendency of the crank and crackpot to see a hidden significance in all phenomena?

Yet there *is* a secret significance in all things, in so far as all phenomena are the expression of an underlying reality, as well as part of an holistic nexus, so that any part of the universe ‘speaks’ of all others. Here, again, we run into infinite regress, the potential of analysis ad infinitum. Engagement with the incommensurate must therefore take place in the context of appropriate initiation, specifically the transition from intellect to intuition. Those, either presumptuous or misguided, who plunge into the Abyss prematurely, are likely to lose all sense of perspective. Thus they are bound to gravitate to the loony levels of the Dark Towers, rather than the bountiful shores of Binah. As the structure of this book suggests, there is a proper path to be followed – first the Angel, then the Abyss. For it is the ministry of the Angel which prepares the mind for the supernal revelations. These are grave mysteries, awesome of augury, and not lightly to be born.

It may be mentioned here that the ‘distance’ between the Grades increases steeply after the initiation into the Adeptus Minor Grade, which confers the Knowledge of the Angel. Up to that point the differences

between the Grades tend to diminish, so that progress becomes progressively easier until the voice of the Angel is manifest. Yet after this turning point, and especially upon crossing the Abyss, the distance between Grades increases exponentially. A comparison may be gleaned from the astronomical realm – first in the increasing distances of the outer planets; then in the discontinuous leap from the planetary to the interstellar scale. The analogy may be extended further. Speaking in symbolic terms, the solar adept lives in the Sun, while the adept of the Silver Star lives in the black hole singularity at the centre of the galaxy, which is the secret Sun beyond the Sun. As will be apparent a little later, the astronomical metaphor is revealing in other ways.

There is a further significant development which attends the manifestation of a Magister. To the extent that the Abyss has been crossed, and initiation in the sphere of Binah is proceeding, the Angel ceases to manifest as a separate being. For the adept is becoming identified *with* the Angel, which is of course his authentic self, the seed of an eternal spiritual idea. This shift in identity, from the conditioned personality to the spiritual soul, is the chief result of the transition, and the effect on the adept may be bracing. After, possibly, years of dialogue with the Angel, the adept suddenly finds himself alone. This is the meaning of the words spoken in Crowley's record of the Enochian Aethyrs – *The Vision And The Voice*, the 5th Aethyr: *There is no god*, with emphasis on the word 'there.' This also is that which was written by Isaiah: *Is there a God Beside me? yea, there is no God: I know not any.* Yet there is a sense in which the Magister is still essentially 'female' to the Angel. The truth, foreshadowed in the Magister Grade, becomes full reality in the terrible secret of the Magus mystery. It is the price to pay for spiritual maturity.

The Supernal Understanding

The object of initiation in the Grade of Binah is Understanding, a term which has technical significance in this context. Understanding dawns when the limitations and logical absurdity of the reason have been grasped, and the intuition begins to manifest as a viable and superior instrument of knowledge. Understanding unfolds when the conceptual and perceptual filters of reality are removed, and the adept comes face to face with the totality that constitutes the human experience. Understanding is realised when the subject-object dichotomy of mind is transcended, and all is experienced as oneself.

Three discreet steps are here outlined, as comprising the relevant initiation: (1) the transcendence of the reason, (2) the release from conceptual and perceptual constraints, and (3) the unification of subject and object of consciousness in the state of samadhi. By means of this process the adept is released from the great illusion inherent in all world-systems, the idea that *such-and-such* is truth. The fullness of this attainment dissolves any partial frame of reference, and brings one into cognisance of universal boundary conditions. These are congruent with the extent of the manifest universe, comprising all possible worlds of experience, and thus constitute the ring-pass-not of human consciousness in the present cycle of existence.

There is therefore no phenomenon which is outside the conscious Circle of a Magister, no phenomenon which is not part of his Temple. The mindset is one of infinite expansion in all dimensions. Including all phenomena of time, space, and mind, it constitutes the world-egg or womb of ideation, in magical parlance, the Body of the Goddess Nuit. It

is the magical sphere whose centre is *here*, and whose circumference is congruent with the limits of perception, which is to say, nowhere. The mind of the Magister is therefore immersed in the infinite, and his consciousness is the consciousness of bliss. To such a being the cosmic mystery speaks as an open book. There is no secret in nature beyond the reach of a Magister to divine. Nonetheless, the nature and extent of his grasp is still a matter of individual determinants, specifically the nature of the personality transcended and the thoroughness with which the Great Work has been accomplished.

The Understanding of the Magister, however, is of an essentially qualitative kind. It is called the mystery of sorrow, and refers to that universal sorrow of existence, wherein ‘all nature groans in travail for the manifestation of the sons of God.’ This sorrow, so the prophetic text, informs all phenomena. It is the universal sorrow of separation, and the longing for redemption, the return to primordial unity. The Master of the Temple, aware of the nature of suffering, is he who addresses and alleviates the situation.

Here we meet a paradox, such as characterise the supernal realm. For it was stated that the consciousness of Binah is bliss, yet the initiation thereof is into the mystery of sorrow. While it is true that above the Abyss all opposites are reconciled, it is possible to explain the situation without appeal to supra-rational conceptions. For the bliss of which it is spoken is not an airy euphoria, but equates with depth of sensibility. Sorrow is coextensive with this depth, and to the extent that feeling may suffer, it must first know the depth of sensibility which is bliss. As it was said on one occasion, *give me the poet who knows only the sorrow of the most exquisite joy.*

The opposite of feeling, to pursue the matter, is neurosis.

According to psychologists Wilhelm Reich and Arthur Janov, the neurotic individual is armoured with defences against feeling in the form of muscular tension and the attitude of denial. Such armouring, to the extent that it prevents the consciousness of pain, prevents the individual from feeling altogether. This, of course, is the disease of civilisation. While the average man may think of himself as embodied and in touch with the world, this is only marginally the case. Until the reality filters have been removed in the crossing of the Abyss, he can have no conception of who he is and where he is at. The initiate of the Inner Order, by contrast, has passed through the refining fire that is the sword of the God, and entered the sanctuary of the human temple. Thus exquisitely aware, he is alive to suffering, both his own, and that of the world. It is the inherent universality of consciousness, and the corresponding ability to minister to human need, which is enshrined in the designation *Master of the Temple*.

Masters Of Initiation

In *The Vision And the Voice*, the 13th Aethyr, it is stated that the principal task of the Magister is to tend his garden of disciples. This is not to be construed as a teaching task in the conventional sense, for the mind of man is such that he cannot be taught spiritual things. Accordingly it is written in the Thelemic Law: *The truth may not pass the gate of the Abyss*. Wisdom may speak plainly, and Understanding faithfully transmit that which is heard, but the minds of men remain in darkness. For most there remains a vast gulf between intellect and intuition, between the actual and the ideal. The above metaphor is in every way apt; the mind of a Magister in relation to humanity is

comparable to that of a gardener in relation to a bed of flowers.

The Masters are misunderstood, not because they speak in riddles, but because the supra-rational insights of the spiritual domain cannot be conveyed in the conceptual languages of duality. For this reason, the Magister avails himself of subtle means to raise the consciousness of humanity to the intuitive realm. His work, in effect, is to initiate mankind, by seeding the collective consciousness with the appropriate archetypes. While necessarily misconstrued on the rational level, the supernal doctrine becomes the agency whereby the equivalent faculty is awakened in the receptive mind. It is a seed which, over time, produces the state of consciousness from which it derived. The Magister is therefore the agent of initiation. His type is depicted in the fifth major trump of the Tarot – The Hierophant.

To the world, such as being remains essentially unknown. He may be recognised as a teacher, but this does not mean that he is understood or known for what he is. To recognise the Master in his human temple, is not the equivalent of spiritual communion. The latter can only occur on the planes of intuitive insight. In other words, the aspirant must traverse the same path of initiation as the Master before him, in order to attain to the conversation of the supernal spheres. And while the relevant vocabulary is soon acquired, initiation is a matter of spiritual experience. Only then it is realised that the Masters speak a language altogether different from the common tongue. And yet, their language, once appropriated, is profoundly simple and lucid. If it baffles, it does so *because* of its simplicity. The resulting tendency for the educated and rational mind is to look ‘over the top’ of the simplicity of the esoteric paradigm. Expecting something grandiose, it loses itself in abstractions and fails to see the wood for the trees. This is the mindset addressed by

the master of Zen, who challenged: *why put on a hat when you are already wearing one?* Seeking a rational model, the student fails to grasp the truth which is prior to any conceptual frame or formulation.

The mysteries cannot be explained in rational terms, partly because they are inexhaustible, and partly because they transcend the categories of conventional thought. The Understanding which obtains above the Abyss does not provide conceptual maps or models as objects of truth. Instead, it has obtained accommodation or engagement with the mystery. It may speak in parables – *the kingdom of heaven is like a seed which a sower sows*, and so forth – but these are given and understood *as* parables. This explains why art is more successful than science in relating the supernal mysteries. It avails itself of the universal language of types, of metaphor and analogy, thus retaining something of the primal language to which reference has been made. This is the language of the Masters, a language primal and objective in that it is grounded in a transcendent and universal sensibility. Their every thought, word, and gesture – indeed their very being – speaks Truth, for they *are* the Truth. The Masters are One with the Mystery.

To the world, therefore, the Magister represents the mystical bridegroom, the fountain of knowledge of the divine. To the supernal Wisdom, however, the Magister is Female and Bride, indicating that there is a secret spring behind the fountain, a positive pole to the passive and reflective nature of the Magister, which is the archetypal source of his Understanding.

The Supernal Wisdom

Beyond the sphere of Binah, but on the same cosmic plane,

cabalistically speaking, lies Chokmah, commonly translated as Wisdom. While Understanding is the bedding-ground of the spiritual Seed and its clothing in form, Wisdom is creation at the archetypal level, the Seed itself. It is the spiritual logos, the creative Word. He who attains to its mysteries is called a Magus, and is a master of Magic in the greatest and fullest sense. As such he is described as a being, whose will is internally without division, and externally without opposition.

The Magi are the lawgivers of mankind, those who inaugurate, and overthrow, world-ages. Historical individuals in this category, as cited in the documents of the A.:A.:, include Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Zoroaster, Gautama, and Lao Tse. In modern times we may cite The Master Therion (Aleister Crowley), the prophet of Thelema, and William Branham, identified with the Seventh Angel of the Apocalypse, as fulfilling the necessary criteria. These are prophets in the grand cosmic sense of the word, their doctrine determining ‘what is true’ for entire generations.

The Magus, therefore, is effectively God. He stands in the place of God and acts as God; his word is the Word of God. In assuming the mantle of this Grade, he must therefore do one of two things: He must either depose the existing God and set up another in his place, or identify himself with the God that *is* God. It should be noted however, that no man ascends to this Grade, without some original message of universal significance. The universe does not produce such beings gratuitously. The fact of the attainment denotes the essence of the prophetic calling. Or, more accurately, the prophet is nature’s way of charting a course through the realm of possibilities in humanity’s evolutionary ascent. Of particular interest in this connection are the turning points, those moments in history where deceive change occurs, and (as a test of

initiated insight) one might seek to pinpoint the *real* (or inner-plane) turning points before the appearance of symptoms. A prophetic message may thus inaugurate an entirely new epoch or involve a further stage of revelation of that which is current. It may involve new teachings, or a correction in the understanding of what has already been given. In either case, it will make a decisive difference to someone somewhere.

Thus when a prophet arises, he declares war on the prevailing dogma of his age. Representing the living fire of God, he will necessarily be against the religious orthodoxies upon which his contemporaries have become fixated. The pattern is described in the Apocalypse of Saint John. This book speaks of *seven churches*, *seven angels*, *seven seals*, *seven trumpets*, and *seven plagues*. The *churches* represent seven world-ages. The *angels* are seven historical manifestations of the one Angel of which we have spoken. The *seals* denote progressive stages in revelation. Thus when a seal is opened, a revelation unfolds. The Angel, which is the messenger to the age, ‘blows a trumpet,’ declaring spiritual war. A ‘plague’ then falls on those who rejected the message. As for the messenger, having declared himself, he continues for a space to present his message to the world. Eventually he is cut off, and in his death he is sown as a seed in the Abyss. The Word of his message is that seed, which, planted in the receptive soul, *produces its kind*, the flowering of the truth contained in that Word. The body of individuals thus receptive becomes the evolutionary spearhead of the new spiritual age, the ‘guardians of the secret flame,’ and the representation of humanity in the presence of God. It is the presence of such individuals which prevents civilisation from disintegrating into chaos.

Examples of the influence of a Magus are available in our present age. From 1909, with the Appearance of *The Equinox*, Aleister Crowley

(1875 – 1947), who became the Magus *To Mega Therion*, taught the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, as the next step in the initiation of mankind. His Angel taught, *Do what thou wilt*, the assertion of the authentic self, as the means to success. Concurrently, in the context of a tradition quite unrelated, arose the seer William Marrison Branham, (1909 – 1965), identified by his disciples with the spirit of Elijah and the Seventh Angel of the Apocalypse. William Branham likewise taught the Knowledge of the Angel, which he identified as the spirit of Christ. Both men opposed religious dogma, and taught revelation or spiritual experience as the means of attainment – Crowley in universal terms, Branham in a specifically biblical context. The essential principle, furthermore, is echoed by spiritual teachers throughout this age – experience over dogma, the inspired over the derivative, authentic engagement over meaningless ritual. As a result of this apocalyptic seed, individuals in unprecedented numbers have attained in this age some knowledge of the Angel with a corresponding degree of individuation, a privilege once reserved for sages and kings. Our age, in the process, has become the age of the individual par excellence, its ethos that of self-realisation, individual rights, and personal fulfilment.

One might have imagined this state of affairs to gently slide into a rose-coloured New Age utopia. Yet in less than a century the emphasis of the initiating current has shifted from the knowledge of the Angel to the prospect of the Abyss, in so far as humanity as a whole is concerned. Crowley himself did not anticipate this rapid development. In line with the precessional doctrine of world ages, he expected the Law of Thelema to rule the planet for 2000 years. Evidently he did not reckon with the exponential acceleration of the evolutionary current, as became apparent in the latter half of the twentieth century. Yet the acceleration of process

in dynamical systems, as they approach apotheosis in the omega point, is a ubiquitous fact in nature.

Based on these considerations, it has been suggested that the prophetic aeon of the *Crowned And Conquering Child* may be short-lived, giving way to the so-called aeon of *Maat*, the magical aeon of justice and truth. This correlates with the apocalyptic notion of divine judgement, a definitive adjustment in the karmic ledger of humanity, and the righting of the spiritual balance on a cosmic scale. The Apocalypse, in this connection, is regarded as a book of judgement, with mention of tribulations which most commentators regard as the necessary outcome of present global tendencies.

What meaningful construction can we place upon such prognosis, both concerning the future, and historical tribulations of the past? According to prophetic charge, a ‘plague’ befalls those who reject the spiritual revelation of the age. While this could be construed as the vengeance of a wrathful deity, we may simply be contemplating the inevitable consequences of a misguided choice. (I trust that the arbitrary nature of such distinctions is now understood.) For the revelation in any age provides *the way* for humanity, that which has become imperative. Nature has a way, which is not arbitrary, and cannot be arbitrarily set aside. While a mutated growth may derive its energy from the tree of life and flourish a while, it is bound for extinction if it does not derive from the original seed. The revelation – the *Tao*, the *Dharma*, the *way* – is therefore that which keeps humanity within the path as implicit in the original seed. It is the *Triumphal Chariot* (as of Basil Valentine) wherein it is assured of its cosmic destination.

It is therefore the revelation of the age which enables those who receive it to meet the challenge of the age. These are not static, but,

consistent with our organic metaphor and the exigencies of an evolving universe, there are successive prophetic dispensations. It further appears that the initiatory emphasis, in the latter part of the twentieth century, has shifted toward the ordeal of the Abyss. In the collective imagination this Abyss has taken on graphic and tangible qualities, through projections of nuclear or environmental holocausts among a whole range of doomsday scenarios. Yet the thrust of the grand prophetic opus is that humanity need not go down that path, if it heeds the message it has received. This message is the revelation of the Angel for the present age. Religious traditions and the revelations of previous ages are therefore of no avail. It is a matter of hearing what the Spirit is saying today. This Spirit is the messenger which speaks from the sanctuary of the human soul, the authentic Angel which alone has the true interests of humanity at heart.

Thus in every age the watchers (the apocalyptic Angels) that preside over the initiation of mankind have provided a way of escape for those that seek such a way. *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.* So wrote the psalmist some 3000 years ago, expressive of a universal truth. Of the same rock it was later said, *on this rock I will build my church.* It is the rock of revelation. And the thrust of present revelation is upon the transition of the Abyss, interpreted in terms of rapture and ascension, a perfected body, and communion face to face with the ultimate mystery. The supernal initiations in ‘full flower’ are thus transcendent of physical reality as we know it. Hence the relevant tradition that, to the Magus, the laws of nature are but the game rules of a particular cultural mindset. Able to side-step its hold on belief, the Magus walks on water, rises into the air, or performs other so-called miracles by invoking a higher law – that of the mind-manifested universe. This, it

should be noted, does not revoke the principle of universal law as such. The universe is not arbitrary as chaos magicians propose, and scientists object when mention is made of miracles.

Here I wish to recall an earlier observation, that of the miraculous nature of all phenomena. All objects and events, even the most mundane, pose unfathomable mysteries, to which we simply have become inured through the normative effect of scientific generalisations. The fact that *will* can translate into the ability to raise one's hand is therefore as great a mystery as any alleged miracle. Among the results of initiation is that we regain innocent vision, and thus the capacity for utter astonishment at the ordinary and familiar. Given this change in perspective, the 'paranormal' ceases to produce the disproportionate awe which it normally inspires. To rise in the morning, to slay a legion of demons, to transcend space and time, these become but ordinary incidents in a connected tissue of marvels, all perfectly natural, all indeed inevitable.

The Magus Initiation

In order to become a Magus, so the relevant documents of the A.:A.:, the Magister must do two things. He must renounce his enjoyment of the infinite, giving way to a specific idea, and he must acquire the practical secrets of governing his proposed universe.

This may be regarded as a matter of concentration in the yogic or magical sense. Within the body of the goddess *Nuit*, which is infinite (mental) space, congeals *Hadit* the atomic, yet omnipresent point, which impregnates the cosmic womb with the creative Word of a new world age. The Word of the Magus is that seed, which brings forth a universe in conformity with his will. Thus it may be expressed in the exotic

iconography of Thelema.

In simple philosophical terms, the Magus is that principle in nature whereby the universe, as a fact in consciousness, comes to be thus and not other. Here we meet with the remarkable fact that every man is *in essence* a Magus, in that his mind conjures a universe in accord with its defining archetypes. Yet to the ordinary individual reality appears as a given, and the universe of perception as independently real, as the process of archetypal creation occurs on a level prior to conscious awareness. To the initiate in the sphere of Chokmah, however, the volitional nature of the process becomes apparent. The universe for such an individual is an intentional construct, manifesting in accordance with his will.

On this exalted plane, furthermore, doing is equated with being. The Magus exists and acts in accordance with his intrinsic nature. This nature is one of intrinsic necessity, for which reason also the universe is not arbitrary. As one advances in initiation, one accordingly conforms to the original nature of the spiritual seed, the individual and universal logos. In this way the initiate inexorably conforms to his destiny. While the beginner in magic may find himself working all manner of capricious miracles in half a dozen fields, as he advances within the Order, especially upon the Knowledge and Conversation of the Angel, his actions become more proscribed, and it becomes increasingly impossible to do anything but his authentic will. In psychological terms the Magus may thus be defined as (unconscious) will at the archetypal level, and the relevant initiations as the process by which that will and its creative function is made conscious.

From the foregoing it is further evident that the Magus is, by definition, omnipotent. Fundamental to this Grade, accordingly, is unity

of will. Without such unity the Magus would be disintegrated by his own powers. Such also, in the relevant lore, is the fate of those who rashly invoke unknown gods, who seek handle the fire of God without appropriate initiation, and who presume to oppose the Magus that stands in the place of God. The forces invoked tend to recoil upon such individuals, usually to their moral and mental ruin, and, not infrequently, a violent end for themselves and their followers. Such, as born out in recent history, is the likely outcome for an individual – say, a cult leader – who takes on the prophetic mantle without having made complete his self-annihilation in the crossing of the Abyss.

The Magus is called the Lord of Illusion, because, as seen from below that Grade, the world of his conjuring appears to be objectively real. Thus every man is the captive of his own illusion, a universe of his own making, yet which appears to him as given. This is the theme of Crowley's rendering of Tarot Trump I – The Magus. In Eastern mysticism this principle is called Maya or Mayan, a demon which must be overcome in the quest for the ultimate illumination, the realisation of that which is beyond form. This is expressed in the cryptic saying of Zen tradition, *If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him!* It must also be clear from the foregoing that, in acceding to the Grade of Magus, the incumbent must effectively slay the existing God and assume his place. He must overthrow the existing universe, the outworn and dysfunctional order, and establish the new and superior. Thus in the birth of a Magus a demon is deposed and a God is created.

The Supernal Mysteries

In the *Apocalypse* it is spoken of a Book sealed with seven Seals.

Though theologians throughout the ages have tried to divine its secrets, their efforts have been without avail. Not scholarship, but prophetic insight is required to elucidate its mysteries. Such insight has been emerging in this our apocalyptic age, which makes it possible to address the matter in a meaningful way. I acknowledge, in this connection, the work of William Branham, a teacher who's influence has been pivotal in bringing these matters to light.

This Book of Seven Seals is to be understood as the Book of Redemption. It's function is to restore sovereignty over creation to a redeemed humanity through the revelation of certain mysteries, said to have been hidden since the foundation of the world, but now to be revealed. Some commentators have equated this Book with the Bible as a whole, believing it to be sealed in a manner which prevents its contents from being understood. But the mention is of *a little book*. No one, according to the vision, could open the Book to read therein, a cause of great sorrow to the seer (the evangelist St. John) who realised that this Book was Life itself.

But as the vision progresses, *one* is found who is thus able. Announced as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, he appears a Lamb. This Lamb, which appears to have been slain and is made alive again, now approaches the throne of God and *takes* the Book from him that is seated on the throne. Who is this Lamb, but he who was pierced with the fiery sword, who opened the Way of the Tree Of Life, and entered the temple not made with hands. He alone prevailed to look upon the Book and open the seven Seals thereof.

So what lies beneath these Seals? The full extent of the revelation is necessarily beyond present surmise. But already there is enough information on the subject to overburden this chapter, and we must be

content to highlight the essential points. Let it be understood, that the relevant symbols – the *Apocalypse* is a book of symbols – can only be meaningfully appropriated in the context of existential engagement with the mysteries addressed. Though the truth be told ever so plainly, I reiterate that scholarship is here of no avail.

First a brief overview: Of the seven Seals, the first four reveal in turn the four so-called horse-riders of the Apocalypse. The fifth Seal speaks of souls under the altar of God. The sixth Seal presages the interruption of the usual course of nature, for the text speaks of the sun becoming black, the moon as blood, the stars falling from the heavens, and the heavens departing like a scroll. The seventh Seal is the most mysterious. When it is opened, the text merely states, *there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*. We shall have cause to return to this silence.

The four apocalyptic riders denote historical manifestations of the antichrist, agents of subversion in the battle for supremacy over the soul of humanity. The fourth of these is an amalgam of the previous three, as signified by his pale colour, a mixture of the white, red and black which precede him. They are called forth sequentially by the four cherubic powers of God, symbolised respectively as a *Lion*, an *Ox*, a *Man*, and a *Flying Eagle*. These are powers of redemptive grace, respectively signifying the kingship of Christ, the spirit of sacrifice, the genius of man, and the gift of prophetic vision.

But what is the significance of the riders? Why is the exposure of the antichrist – the *false Christ* – accorded central significance? The rationale is that initiation, up to a point, may be regarded essentially as the overcoming of the relevant deception. The cherubic powers thus represent the Angel in various historical manifestations which counters

the spirit of deceit. Here we may observe that the antichrist in this age combines the cunning and terror of the accumulated past, in a last effort to subvert the unfolding of the spiritual revelation. The spirit of revelation is therefore ranged against the spirit of deceit in a final confrontation as both attain to apotheosis or fullness of manifestation. This, as the text makes clear, is the meaning of *Armageddon*, the fabled final battle of good and evil.

The souls under the altar, revealed in the fifth Seal, need not here concern us further. These are they that gave their lives in pursuit of the truth, without actually attaining thereto. They are given white robes, signifying righteousness, and are advised to be patient until the end of the age, when they, too, will receive their reward. The symbolism of the altar, however, informs us that we are now on holy ground. The demon armies being vanquished in the opening of the first four Seals, the remaining three pertain to the supernal mysteries above the Abyss. Here it is to be understood that the Altar of Sacrifice is also the Mercy Seat of spiritual grace. The difference in portent hinges on spiritual insight or revelation, which determines one's way of approach to the Most Holy. And the way of divine providence is the Angel. It is the Angel which opens the way into the Holy of Holies and appropriates the Seven-Sealed Book. Thus with the ascent into the heavens and the opening of the Book, the deceitful spirit is forever deposed.

The scene is henceforth set for *judgement*, which is the mystery of the sixth Seal. The vision, as mentioned, seems to indicate the end of nature. This theme is again taken up a little further, where it is stated, '... I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.' Here we come to the central mystery of the Magus, the abrogation of

natural law, and the referring of everything to a first cause, the will of the creator.

To illustrate this point, let us consider the frequent biblical allusions to the effect of, *the Lord did so-and-so, he caused it to rain*, and whatever more. There the matter stood, until science demonstrated that natural causes could be regarded as explanatory of any effect observed. As more and more of the universal process was thus explained, there appeared to be less and less for a creator to do, until Carl Sagan eventually declared him out of a job. The bankruptcy of this argument has been exposed in the course of the book. It is the reductionist fallacy of regarding as absolute some particular level of description. It further fails to consider that, with every mystery explained by science, there are several more lurking underneath. Thus we obtain an infinite chain of causes.

But now is the chain of causality abruptly cut short by confrontation with the first cause. Here we confront the core of the Magus mystery, which is creative will at the archetypal level. As the same becomes manifest, judgement is passed on every agent not in conformity with that will. The judgement, moreover, is death, which is the original price to pay for initiation, the death of the Cross, in the crossing of the Abyss. And here is the mystery, that the one who *ascends* into the heavens, is he that *descended* from the heavens, even the Word of God which is slain on the altar and sown as a Seed into the Abyss, whence it blossoms into a pylon, a Tree of Life, and a way for the wayfarer to pass in safety.

Let us contrast these exalted conceptions with the populist notions of divine judgement. Contemporary mythology is fixated on the idea of universal conflagration as the necessary outcome of human tendencies on

this planet. Even the word *apocalypse* (Greek: revelation, unveiling) has been debased to signify a global holocaust. For the indicated mindset, naught else appears to be the apotheosis of its metaphysical aspirations, to regard itself as the object of divine retribution, thus to obtain catharsis at any cost. The serious implication is that an idea, appropriately energised, is a seed which produces its kind; it manifests the designated object. The aim of this book, accordingly, is to point out that there is a choice of paths in this matter. As an alternative to the spectre of annihilation, humanity is offered initiation.

Our God, it is written, *is a devouring fire*, and initiation, symbolically speaking, denotes a return to the fire of stars. Resurrection, rapture, ascension, translation: on the physical plane these are said to involve a change at the atomic level of the organism. The relevant information, so the angelic transcript, is conveyed in the intuitive appropriation the Book of Life, originally sealed with seven Seals, but now offered for the taking. For in the crossing of the Abyss the spiritual veil is rent, and the Ark of the Covenant with its Mercy Seat has come into view. *As for the alternative*, the knowledge which derives *from* the Abyss has generated its own means of atomic change by releasing the energy that lights the stars. A thermo-nuclear device or the subtle starfire of revelation; I like to think that we are clear concerning our preferred mode of transformation.

The opening of the seventh Seal, it may be recalled, was greeted with silence on the spiritual plane. Silence in heaven denotes the quiescence of the Angel, the ceasing of the voice of revelation. Repose now obtains, as the seventh Seal contains the final mystery and there is nothing to be added to that which has been spoken. But there is more to this silence. It is a silence of awe, as well as a pregnant silence. For it is

understood that, immediately upon the revelation of the seventh Seal, the dimensional barrier dissolves and time is absorbed in eternity. This is made clear in the following vision as recorded in Chapter 10 of the *Apocalypse*. Christ appears as the messenger of the covenant (signified by the rainbow over his head), and he holds in his hands a little Book *open*, signifying that the Seals have been released. Focus then shifts to the seventh Angel, the prophetic voice of the present age, and the thrust of the message.

And I saw another mighty angel ... clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head ... And he had in his hand a little book open ... And [he] cried with a loud voice ... and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices ... and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel ... lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever ... that there should be time no longer ...

There is, at present, much speculation concerning the seven Thunders mentioned in this text. *Thunder*, in the symbolic canon, denotes the voice of God. It is therefore believed that these Thunders refer to the angelic voice in the revelation of the seven Seals, which were not to be vouchsafed at the time of John's writing, but sealed until the time of the end. This brings us to another point – the fact that there is very little said directly concerning the seventh Seal. It appears to be the sum and culmination of the previous six, while also opening the door (so to speak) to another realm altogether. As such it is the capstone of grace, which descends from heaven to crown the spiritual temple.

The Transcendent Object At The End Of Time

Let us now broaden our language of discourse. The evolution of consciousness may be viewed in the traditional manner, as driven by antecedent causes, and it may be regarded in teleological terms, as a process *toward* a point of closure. Omega-point theory, as a scientific construct, envisages a singularity at the end of the universe, to complement the big-bang singularity of the beginning. The singularity of classical physics, a point of zero dimension and infinite density, generates such a powerful gravitational field that nothing in its vicinity escapes its attraction. Singularities, for this reason, reside at the centre of black holes, astronomical objects so named because all that passes beyond their event-horizon gets sucked into the gravitational vortex, to disappear from space-time as we know it.

Transcending space-time, and taking us to the edge of current laws of physics, the singularities mentioned, are conceivably not several, but one and the same. Singularities, I suggest, are such that it is appropriate to speak of them – in the singular. That being as it may, the omega-point hypothesis allows us to envisage space-time as a matrix, suspended between two polarities, the past and future singularity, with the flow of events impelled by one and attracted by the other. If these two points, let us call them the *Alpha* and *Omega*, are indeed one, it suggests that causation is identical with the principle of teleology, the notion of universal process aimed at a specific goal.

It is further possible to regard the magical formula of Thelema – *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law*, and, *Love is the law, love under will* – as a formulation of that cosmic process. ‘Will’ is therein identified with the ‘arrow of time,’ whereby things take a certain course which is thus and not otherwise. ‘Love’ is that which gives the ‘arrow’ its

direction. It is the principle of attraction, the desire for fulfilment in the union of opposites. This is further expressed in Liber Al, I : 29, where exults Nuit, the goddess of infinite space, *For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union.*

Granted the validity of the Hermetic Key – *as above, so below* – it is entirely appropriate to draw analogies between the cosmological and moral domain. A similar analogy may be drawn between the space-time singularity and the event in consciousness, known as samadhi. Both phenomena signify the end of the universe, the collapse of space and time, and a state, respectively, of matter and mind beyond ordinary comprehension. Here we may recall my thesis concerning the mind-space-time continuum as the fundamental unit of ontology. Within the context of this conception, these analogies are no mere poetic devices. Their substance rather concerns universal types (may we call them archetypes?), variously apprehended and expressed in the language of science and mysticism. The isomorphism between scientific and mystical conceptions was first given wide exposure in Fritjof Capra's groundbreaking *The Tao Of Physics*, which has remained the object of controversy since its publication in 1980. Yet, given the understanding of the universe which has emerged in recent decades, it would be more astounding if there were no correlation between the cosmos of science and that of the mystical paradigm. Both, be it recalled are based on observation: the one of the physical universe, the other of the mind.

The fact that a correlation does exist allows us to read the book of nature in a comprehensive and, significantly, human context. It permits us to regard universal process in terms of consciousness, and the omega-point as the apotheosis of a cosmic or collective mind, a scenario espoused by cosmologist Frank J. Tipler in his recent *The Physics of*

Immortality. The concept finds expression in the *noosphere* of Jesuit scholar Teilhard de Chardin, while philosopher Terence McKenna speaks of the *Eschaton*, the transcendent object at the end of time. McKenna is the originator of the time-wave theory of history, a mathematical construct, based on the King Wen sequence of the *I Ching*, which models the ingress and conservation of novelty into the universe. Significantly, the model projects a point in the space-time matrix at which novelty becomes infinite – a strange attractor upon which the universe is converging at an accelerating pace. In Mircea Eliade’s evocative phrase, McKenna speaks of this point as *the total rupture of the mundane plane*, musing that we shall internalise the universe and externalise the soul. Cognate to these conceptions is the alchemical ‘spiritualising of matter,’ and the simultaneous reification of consciousness in the Philosopher’s Stone. What is this Stone, but the world as a fact in consciousness, the universe as grasped in the attitude of mahamudra. In occult iconography the concept is ubiquitous. It is the atomic point of Hadit, the Winged Disk of Egypt, as well as the Eye in the Triangle – the Capstone of the Masonic Pyramid. As for that other mystery of the alchemists, the Elixir or Universal Medicine, it is consciousness itself, realised as the essence of all phenomena. From the union of these two – the Elixir and the Stone – derives spiritual grace, which is the alchemical Gold. The trinity thus obtained is equally represented throughout the relevant traditions. It is *tao te ching* and *sat cit ananda*. It is the *lingam*, *yoni*, and *shakti-yantra*; the point, the circle, and their conjunction.

This brings us back to our major analogy, that between the culmination of universal process in the omega-point and the consummation of the Great Work in a transcendent state of consciousness. From the integral perspective, the correlation is more than

a mere matter of analogy. It rather appears that the great mystics which have transcended the human condition represent the evolutionary spearhead of the universe, those who are first to realise our cosmic destiny. Such a notion is totally consistent with the language of mysticism, which may be mapped upon the cosmology of the omega-point, without doing violence to either. The only difference between these respective conceptions lies in the passage of time. Yet in the transcendent consciousness of the singularity, time separations, like separation in space, are revealed as illusory; mental projections which are integrated into more inclusive states as illumination is attained. From the transcendent perspective all time is *now*, the eternal present. There is no essential difference in the mind thus enlightened between the personal attainment and the culmination of the universal process. Both are to be regarded, not as events *in* time, but as a fact of universal boundary conditions wherein mind-space-time is suspended. This recalls the language and imagery of initiation on the *after-death plane* (the Egyptian *Duat*, the Maya *Xibalba*, the Tibetan *Bardo*), as of recently published accounts of so-called near-death experience. It suggests that the ascendant soul upon death, as the mystic in his samadhi, is immediately drawn into the great vortex at the end of time, and so into a state of bliss referred to as heaven. The earthbound soul, by contrast, continues to haunt the regions of time. Similarly, the moment of creation cannot be regarded as an event in time, and that for identical reasons. Like the end-time singularity, the big-bang singularity is a transcendent object, which defines the context of possibility, the asymptote of universal process, and thus the limits of conventional understanding. Hence the esoteric notion that the point of creation and consummation, the beginning and the end – is now.

Yet from the temporal perspective the universe is seen as a process, following an exponential curve in reaching for its asymptote. ‘Exponential,’ in this context, means acceleration or increase at an increasing rate, expressed in a rising curve which gets progressively steeper until it meets infinity in a tangent with the vertical. As a means of modelling natural processes, the concept has many applications, observable on many levels of scale. It becomes most evident when we compare the momentum of the ingress of novelty from cosmological and geological to biological and cultural time frames. Another application may be found in the expansion of the universe, as based on the observation that all galaxies are rushing apart from each other at phenomenal velocities, which, likewise, are themselves increasing.

Controversy exists as to whether this expansion will continue indefinitely, or whether the universe will eventually reach a point of maximum extension and contract again under the force of its own gravity in a ‘big crunch.’ Present estimates suggest that there is not enough matter in the universe to halt the outward rush, which means the universe is set to continue expanding forever. As an aside, I suggest that this model is aesthetically superior, as well as congruent with other natural processes which involve growth. A tree or a person does not grow young again after growing old. Nature rather provides for perpetuity by a mysterious process involving apotheosis in a seed, in death and renewal. In isomorphism with the cosmological scale, the evolution of consciousness towards the omega point is paralleled by the process of cosmological expansion. Observation has shown the most distant of astronomical objects to recede at rates approaching the speed of light. As the speed of light is attained, these objects disappear from our space-time universe. At this point, according to relativity theory, we encounter a

space-time boundary, even as we do at the singularity. For according to that theory an object accelerated to the speed of light reaches infinite mass, even as the singularity attains to infinite density. Thus in the manner that we conceived of the past and future singularity as one, we may consider infinite expansion and infinite contraction as likewise identical, or inversely related. Perhaps infinite expansion in one realm of manifestation equates with infinite concentration in another. And perhaps that other realm is consciousness, in which case the infinite expansion of the outer universe equates with apotheosis of consciousness in the omega point.

In metaphysics as in science, in quantum physics as in cosmology, we invariably come to a point where we reach the boundary conditions of the discreet and sensible cosmic system and confront trans-rational infinities. At this point the common sense notions that comprise reality become redundant, and we get a profound sense of the insufficiency of our conventional understanding. Indeed all our operative conceptions seem makeshift when confronted with that central mystery, which is ever receding with the so-called advance in knowledge, yet at the same time becoming ever more urgent and immediate.

The material here assembled suggests that the mysteries and paradoxes of cosmology, of quantum physics, as of the metaphysical domain, are different facets of a basic limitation in human understanding, specifically of the rational mode of mentation which seeks to understand the universe by modelling it. In the language of the occult, human knowledge has reached to the frontiers of the Abyss, and only a quantum leap in the *quality* of our understanding can bridge the gap which intellect has created.

The Mystery Of The Actual

The *many-worlds* hypothesis of quantum physics was developed, ostensibly, in response to certain difficulties in the domain of the very small – on a scale smaller than the atom. For it has been observed, and verified in innumerable experiments, that sub-atomic particles do not behave according to the logical expectations derived from the familiar realm of human experience. Such particles do not appear to be subject to causality, but behave in ways that seem random and unpredictable. While this allows for a statistical description of such particles en masse, the particle as such remains elusive. The difficulty lies in assigning it the classical Newtonian co-ordinates – where it is and how fast it is travelling. Experiments have shown that the more we know about its position, the less we know about its velocity, and vice versa. This is the fact alluded to in the famous Heisenberg uncertainty principle.

Until a measurement is made, there is nothing which we can say about such a particle, in the way, say, that we can determine the position of the moon by computing its known orbital data, without once more pointing a telescope at the sky. In the sub-atomic realm a different world of contingency seems to hold sway. For, until a measurement is made, a particle, say an electron, is said to exist in a variety of states. Michio Kaku refers to it as a *nether state*, the sum of all possible states. This sum of possible states is expressed in a *wave function*, a mathematical construct which determines all possible outcomes in a given situation. The wave function is said to collapse when a measurement is made, and a particle emerges with certain characteristics from the cloud of probability. Particles may thus appear as discreet entities, having mass, location and velocity, *and* as probability waves, showing *tendencies to*

exist within a matrix of possibility.

So here is the paradox: Without a measurement or observation the wave function does not collapse, and the system exists in a variety of states with a variety of different futures. A number of interpretations have been offered to reconcile the situation with classical notions of a single reality. One of these posits a universal consciousness which observes the world in every detail, thereby investing it with actuality and definition. Another view, the Copenhagen interpretation, associated with Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr, questions the validity of the classical notion of an objective universe, independent of the observer. A third response is the many-worlds model, developed by physicist Hugh Everett in collaboration with John Wheeler. It proposes that wherever multiple outcomes are possible (which is to say, at every point, at every moment throughout the cosmos), the universe divides into slightly differing replicas of itself, so that every possible outcome of every situation exists concurrently in some parallel universe.

All this, as Robert Anton Wilson quipped, said with a poker face, while, incidentally, this same Everett castigated the parapsychologists for being weird! Although Everett has more recently dissociated himself from the many-worlds model, it *is* taken seriously within the physic community, with Stephen Hawking being cited as one of its adherents. We are contemplating, in other words, a branching tree of an infinity of parallel universes, a theme also explored in literature. In *The Garden of Forking Paths* Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote, ‘time forks perpetually toward innumerable futures.’ Many of these parallel universes, no doubt, would be very self-similar, differing merely in the position of a single particle. But, given the cumulative effect of possible mutations, the theory also provides for an infinitude of universes which

are utterly remote and alien. It posits, in short, the existence of every possible world, as defined in the context of quantum indeterminacy.

From the esoteric point of view, these interpretations are not so fundamentally different from each other, but each can be said to provide a glimpse of the mystery from a slightly different angle. In occult philosophy the universe does not exist apart from a defining intelligence, but *cit akasha*, the mind-stuff, is said to be in a state of latency, equivalent to the quantum realm of all possibilities, while the eye of cosmic consciousness is closed. The creation of the universe is accordingly viewed as an act of concentration (*dharana*), whereby chaos is reduced to cosmos in the mind of the observer. The many-worlds model comes into its own, in that there are many observers, or, in the language of Thelema, infinitely many points of view. For, insofar as the universe is mind, every atom, every point-event partakes of the nature of conscious. Phenomena, in this sense, come into being by virtue of their relation one to another, a scenario expressed in the Tibetan doctrine of *dependent arising*. Yet philosophy also insists that the system as a whole should possess unity. Cosmic mind is therefore viewed as the trans-dimensional hypersphere comprising all actual points of view.

While we hold to the philosophical position that the universe is one by definition, it appears that once we invest this universe with properties and say it is such-and-such, we are speaking of one out of an infinity of universes. Yet the inescapable fact that consciousness has unity and focus, means that one universe – the observed universe – is ontologically different in that it possess actuality. And at this point in the evolution of consciousness, as of the present argument, it is necessary to emphasise the *mystery of the actual*. If the universe exists as the superimposition of all possible states, how does the observed universe, in Whitehead's

phrase, undergo the formality of actually occurring? The key to this enigma, I suggest, lies in the phrase ‘observed universe.’ We must distinguish conceptual space of categories and constructs from the existential imperative wherein consciousness manifests – always and only – in the singular. From this perspective the question of multiple universes becomes semantic. One universe or many – it depends on whether we speak the language of experience or of Platonic types.

Approaching the notion of other worlds in the *psychological* sense, it becomes apparent that this is dependent on the degree of strangeness we are prepared to tolerate within *this* world. We notice that individuals inhabit differing moral and aesthetic worlds, a fact which does not seem to necessitate the notion of separate universes. What of a situation then, wherein the laws of physics are different for different observers, or the laws of psychology? What of a world in which meditators levitate and tantrics walk unharmed over glowing coals? Perhaps we can agree that, for most observers, psychological differences mark the borderline of the conceivable.

Take, for instance, the reports of alien encounters as recently documented by Jacobs, Mack, Hopkins et al. While many investigators concur that there is a significant psychic component involved in paranormal events of this kind, the serious assertion that a *physical* reality may be involved produces culture shock, and sharply divides the academic as well as the lay community. Aliens with hypnotic powers, who float their victims through solid walls into floating laboratories in the sky – if they are real, can the phenomenon be conveniently explained in terms of intersecting realities, of encounters with other dimensions or other worlds. What are the explanatory options in this situation? One may ascribe their cause to the myopic nature of conventional reality, a culture

of denial of the totality of what is experienced to be the case. One can opt for the minimalist interpretation, that the human mind is subject to persistent and highly complex patterns of hallucination, an assertion probably correct as such, even if not so very minimal. Or one can accept that, at a profound level, the world is stranger than we think, whether that strangeness involves parallel universes or a set of superimposed realities in the same universe.

From the esoteric perspective, of course, the controversy concerning the reality of phenomena is a non-issue. When it is charged that alien visitors are hallucinatory in nature, the occultist may well smile his most congenial assent, understanding that so also are all other phenomena. The operative question, as pointed out in Chapter 1, concerns the modalities or planes of awareness, and their synergetic confluence in conjuring our reality. Specifically we confront yet again the question concerning the relationship between mind and matter.

Minimalist interpreters of otherworldly encounters, such as Michael Persinger, have successfully demonstrated a correlation between the anomalous experience and certain physiological and neurological states. This, they claim, is evidence of the hallucinatory nature of the phenomenon. Persinger has further refined his position with a theory involving tectonic stress, whereby electromagnetic anomalies in certain locales impinge on brain functioning such that, subjectively speaking, a vortex opens onto an alternate reality. All this, of course, is in essential accord with the views advanced in this book. Only I would point out that some electromagnetic or neurological state likewise obtains when we meet, say, our family and friends, and this, I take it, does not diminish their reality status.

It is at any rate to be conceded that events which can powerfully

alter a person's perception of reality, and, by implication, that of an entire culture, ought to be taken seriously, regardless of their perceived ontological status. The point was made that the incidence of high strangeness in our times is the result of denial, our refusal, as a culture, to consider the totality of what is the case. The incidence of the 'paranormal,' therefore, may be seen as the intervention of the larger mind, to prevent a society from becoming a 'closed system,' self-referential and severed from the universal nexus of information and meaning. The formalism of science, arguably, is a recipe for such a closed cultural system.

The intrusion of aliens, along with innumerable other factors which blight the outlook on humanity's future, is due to our continuing insistence to regard ourselves, so to speak, at the receiving end of reality. The growing existential challenge constitutes a wake-up call, issuing from the larger mind. It is the clarion call of initiation, the call to self-responsible cosmic maturity. In the sense that evolutionary leaps are regarded as due to mutation in response to environmental stress, our situation is a case in point. For the quantum leap required of humanity is the leap of the Abyss: from intellect to intuition. With the flowering of the intuitive paradigm will come the recognition of the creative power of consciousness, and the defining factor of *mudra*, or stance, in creating the world of experience. Within the context of such a paradigm the scientist sages of the magical millennium may then devote themselves to the discovery of the universe we seek, rather than that elusive chimera, the real universe. Thus we shall realise that it is given to humanity to determine what the meaning and purpose of life shall be. In the sphere of Binah, or Understanding, the great *mudra*, the perceptual stance, is recognised. In Chokmah, or Wisdom, it is created. In Kether, the Crown

of consciousness, perception and creation are one.

Mastery Of Mind-Space-Time

While the parallel universes of quantum physics are generally inaccessible to each other, the theory which provides for singularities and the space-time boundary defined by the speed of light also permits so-called *wormholes* in space. The wormhole, or Einstein-Rosen bridge, is a mathematical construct which models a connection, which can be visualised like a tunnel, between parallel universes. Alternatively the wormhole may connect two distant regions of space in the same universe, occasionally cited as the rationalisation for interstellar UFOs. Parapsychologists, likewise, have drawn on the metaphors of quantum physics and relativity theory to explain those strange space-time intersections which are the object of anomaly research.

While scientists are generally reluctant to export their formulations into the wider, existential domain, it was inevitable that the connection would be made. For parallel to the exotica of the new physics runs the tradition of magical invocation, of encounters with other worlds and conversations with trans-dimensional beings. These, so the literature, may occur spontaneously or as a result of deliberation by a Magus, one having attained mastery of mind-space-time, as conferred by the supernal initiations. The nature of the attainment may be visualised as follows.

In the passage of the Abyss the initiate transcends the necessity of identification with his conditioned personality and the local universe wherein that personality is embedded. He becomes an heir to cosmic consciousness, the great ocean of all possibility, wherein the various individual and collective worlds exist as island universes. His perspective

becomes universal, and that not merely in the abstract, but through actual experience obtained in the course of initiation. Here it may be mentioned that the supernal attainments are by no means uniform. While the initiates of the Third Order invariably enjoy the kind of emancipation described, their powers differ with the nature of the incarnation transcended, and the thoroughness with which the various aspects of initiation have been mastered. Last and above all, they depend on the adept's magical will, the mandate or charter by which he has attained his place.

But let us brush these differences aside and consider the ideal of absolute mastery on every plane; such as is expressed in the magical motto of ISSCTSM, *I am the soul source and centre of time space and mind*. Clearly the being so designated is God, Master of the Universe and Lord of Creation. From such a being no secret is withheld, no sanctuary barred; there is no place within the ten thousand worlds, either in heaven or hell, which is to him inaccessible. He has, in Eliphas Levis' phrase, omnipotence at his command and eternity at his disposal.

The theory of magical power in this, the grand traditional sense, is that individual mind, raised to its apotheosis, is universal mind – that the concerted will of any individual is the will of the universe. While the wave function of universal consciousness comprises all possibilities in mind-space-time, without insistence on anything definite, experience of a local and specific universe derives from concentration within the cosmic mind. The act of concentration produces the *cosmic mandala* a focal point or attractor vortex in the undifferentiated void, while *mudra* is the point of view which defines the nature of the world thus created.

'Mudra,' as already indicated, is a far-ranging concept. In the human context it denotes, firstly, the fact of the human body with its particular senses and sensibilities, and thus, by implication, the cosmic

context which produces and sustains this body. Secondly, it denotes the racial and personal characteristics of any such body, as well as its cultural conditioning. Thirdly, it denotes the location of that body in space and time, as also its ‘location in mind’ – its mode of engagement and field of awareness. These, I submit, are the determinants of experience from moment to moment.

Consciousness is therefore a dual phenomenon in that it partakes both of the local and the universal, the specific and the diffuse, the actual and the potential. The analogy to the wave-particle duality of matter is apt. And while the human mind is ordinarily polarised in the local and specific, it certainly partakes of the larger wave-like aspect of consciousness, which manifests in the religious sensibility, in aspirations of transcendence, and the capacity for invention. It is this larger, indeterminate dimension of the mind, which gives consciousness its characteristic feeling of openness, the sense that it is without boundaries.

As to the initiate of the Third Order, such one has direct access to the unconditioned and transpersonal realm of consciousness that obtains above the Abyss. Indeed it is his place of rest. However, so that he is with means of manifesting in the world, a ‘star is born’ in the heavens of human consciousness, centred on one of the ten Sephiroth, which in cabalistic lore represent the categories of sensibility. Able to manifest in any time and place, and in any chosen form, the adept creates a human context consistent with his mission to the world. Partaking equally of the conditioned and the absolute aspects of the mind, he is able to abstract and withdraw his form from physical manifestation and reconstitute the same in accordance with his will. We may witness, in this connection, the legends of bi-location in the biographical literature of accomplished initiates, as well as their apparent longevity and often indeterminate age.

Time travel is less often noted for the obvious reason that it is less likely to attract attention. No obvious telltale signs inform us that our interlocutor was a contemporary of Louis XIV. Yet centuries and millennia, according to legend, have been, of old, the temporal home of the Masters.

A Paradox And Its Solution

Long considered an impossibility, time travel has more recently become the subject of scientific scrutiny, and several papers have now been published in prestigious physics journals which lend theoretical support to the concept. Predictably the solutions espoused are of the high-tech variety, often requiring energies on a galactic scale. Yet, as Terence McKenna pointed out, the really interesting transactions in the universe – those of the human nervous system – involve comparatively low voltages. In this latter context the adept of the alchemical arts creates a singularity using energy differentials commensurate with those of the human energy vortex. According to one theory, the ability to abstract oneself from the phenomenal universe, a process in which bodily electrical resistance is reduced to (near) zero, provides access to a so-called *zero-point energy* – the quantum potential of ‘empty’ space. Here, in latent form, at this substratum of creation, exists most of the energy of the universe. As the physical correlate of the universal wave-function of consciousness, the manifest universe is only a minuscule condensation within its illimitable sphere. The supernal adept, identified with this wider realm, is no longer tied by necessity to any particular time or place, except by reason of his will. Drawing on the said energy he creates a universe in accordance with that will, and as such may appear throughout

the centuries in various capacities and guises.

Here I would like to draw attention to a certain paradox, long associated with the notion of time travel, and sometimes cited as means of discrediting the idea. It is the so-called grandfather paradox, which may be formulated like this: If a man travels back in time and persuades his grandfather to become a celibate monk while still a youth, the time-traveller could not have subsequently been born. The logical paradox, it is claimed, undermines the validity of the concept of time-travel as a real possibility.

While interesting in its usual context, this hypothetical case opens a window on the nature of reality in a much more profound sense. The fallacy in all arguments of this type is that it arbitrarily posits *two* different pasts for *one* observer (the grandfather in this case): (1) the past as it actually occurred, and (2) the past with our subject intruding to alter the course of events. Yet if we assert the necessity of a single history for the said observer, the subject going back into that past constitutes an integral aspect of the relevant history. Stated another way, if an individual, some time in the future, travels to the fifteenth century, it follows that in the fifteenth century he did (or does) exist.

It will be evident that this solution involves a dimensional leap into a trans-temporal domain, wherein the passage of time is identified with the transcendent moment *now*. In so doing, we again invoke the singularity, the trans-dimensional object wherein all time is *now*, all space is *here*, and all possibilities *I am*. This singularity, which I designate Point Omega, is the *Philosophical Stone*, and that Stone the condensation of the *Elixir* which is consciousness. It is the mysterious lever of Archimedes whereby the worlds are moved. Where then is this mysterious object to be found? Not in space, for at the singularity, space

is sucked into oblivion. Not in time, for at the singularity time abruptly ends. Is it to be found in consciousness? Nay, for it *is* consciousness. This is the mystery of mysteries. It is the mystery of creation and of existence itself.

Chapter Twelve

POINT OMEGA

King Jesus whispered, it is not so far.

And the Buddha declared, it is right where you are.

Robin Williamson, Celtic minstrel and bard

Eternity Now

We observed the mind-space-time continuum we call the universe as an n-dimensional hypersphere without external boundaries. Its boundaries, we noted, are at the centre, and that centre is always the ‘point of view’ of any conscious point event. Called the singularity, it is everywhere, and the universe in its entirety is ultimately identified with that singularity. Here, then, we approach the mystery of the cabalistic Crown, which is the mystery of the One.

There is an ancient and universal glyph which depicts a serpent with its tail in its jaws. This strange symbol is a hieroglyph of the human condition, which depicts the interface of consciousness with the world as grounded in an imaginary duality. It is imaginary in that the serpent, comprising the subject and object of consciousness, is in actuality one. The question is, can the serpent devour itself – head and all? Reducing the idea to a geometrical abstraction, it is possible to demonstrate that the loop might become ever smaller, as the serpent continues to contract inward towards a dimensionless point. As long, however, as the interface persists (the fangs closing on the section being devoured), the point is not

reached, for a point cannot have parts.

In modern times this serpent has resurfaced into consciousness in many areas of research. Notable among these is quantum physics, wherein it is now accepted that the observational stance generates the outcome of any experiment. The nature of the questing consciousness (as informed by its biological and technological hardware) determines the nature of the reality observed. The full implications of this realisation are so awesome, the light of potential recognition so intense, that the academic world has retreated into denial, an attitude of pragmatism, a tacit conspiracy not to confront the facts head on. For, clearly, the recognition that reality is a construct of consciousness would determine the end of science as we know it.

Another area of relevant research is that of AI, or artificial intelligence. While there is no question that machines can perform mechanical and computational tasks, that they can be fitted with sensors to negotiate various environments, furnished with memory, enabled to learn new facts and procedures, and supplied with programs to simulate language behaviour – while all this is acknowledged, the controversial question remains: can a machine be conscious? *Yes*, say the materialists. *No*, say transcendentalists, ultimately revealing two very different conceptions of what consciousness is.

In his famous book *Gödel, Escher, Bach* Douglas Hofstadter argues that consciousness and creative intelligence is essentially a function of complexity in a system's hardware-software configuration, and that therefore artificial intelligence, in the full sense, is at least a theoretical possibility. For him, therefore, it is essentially a problem of engineering. Fundamental to this view, shared by most proponents of the 'strong' AI position described, is that human beings, likewise, are

hardware-software systems. The idea is that the brain (hardware), runs programs, like memory, reason, imagination, and consciousness (software). Is there any justification for this belief, or is it merely a necessary projection of the dualistic materialist ethos, and thus of the Cartesian divide?

The initiated position, for one, is far otherwise. According to the esoteric view, human organisms do not *generate* consciousness. It would not even be correct, from this perspective, to say that humans *are* conscious, in the sense that there is an object, the human organism, which possesses a certain attribute, namely consciousness. Its view is that the body *is* consciousness. Consciousness is the body. The suggestion, in other words, is of an irreducible monism wherein psyche is identified with biology. But, I hear a chorus of detractors, does not the alleged survival of the soul contradict this assertion? Not so, for, according to all mystic and magical traditions, the departed soul is *not* disembodied; it has only discarded or changed the outermost sheath of its constitution. While it is thus possible to speak of *planes* or *modalities*, there is but one order of nature. And while the human organism is appropriately regarded as information, the *theophany* or morphogenetic vortex, while atoms and molecules are freely exchanged with the environment, that information cannot be meaningfully abstracted from the cosmic whole. *We are stardust, we are golden ...* as Joni Mitchel chimed. This in itself does not suggest that true artificial consciousness is theoretically impossible, but that any solution would have to overcome the hardware-software dichotomy intrinsic to present systems. One would have to proceed in an organic manner, as did the alchemists in their search for the homunculus. This again would lead into a realm beyond science as we know it.

There are many other contemporary formulations of the serpent

loop, from Gödel's *Incompleteness Theorem* to the work of artists such as M. C. Escher and Renee Magritte. All of these deal with paradox and the unexpected limitations of an objective universe as defined by a particular frame of reference. What these works expose, is the core objective of human striving, namely to capture reality within some conceptual frame. This is the implicit agenda of science, art, and human culture in general. It explains, for instance, the fascination of games, and the perverse allure of television, the ideal of reality in a box. What is wrong with his idealised conception? It is simply this, that we wish to contain reality inside a frame and remain ourselves outside, unaffected and transcendent, like an observer floating above the world.

If the cultural legacy of modernism has been the breaking of conceptual frames, the post-modern world has opened the door onto the uncharted void. Yet few, it seems, are the observers which recognise our position in the evolutionary calendar, unaware, so to speak, that there is new land beyond the great ocean, the supernal intuition beyond the abyss of reason. There is still frantic activity in all areas of science at the subject-object interface. It seems almost like a redoubled effort, in spite of the light shining through the philosophical cracks in the dualistic worldview, an effort, in effect, to close the serpent-loop by reductionist means, whether in formulating the unified field theory, in the creation of life, or the building of a spiritual machine. I believe that the impossibility of the scientific proposition, as things presently stand, has been demonstrated. Yet the light of the void is of such brightness, that to many it seems as darkness. And many, it appears, are blinded by the light.

The spatial paradox of closing the serpent loop demonstrates the necessary 'dimensional' or 'quantum' leap required in consciousness for a culture to emerge from this relentless pursuit. Compared to the

unending elaboration of sophistic superstructure, it would be a small step, albeit a step perpendicular to the general current of thought. A small step for man, yet a great leap in consciousness, as we step from time into eternity, from history into perennial presence, from the post-modernist void into the magical millennium.

Here we face the ultimate crisis, the last judgement or final ordeal in the initiation of mankind. Yet regardless of the direction taken by humanity as a whole, the spiritual challenge is to the individual, with an individual destiny outlined accordingly. We noted that, to some extent, individuals have always inhabited a dimensional vortex uniquely their own, and thus slightly at variance with that of their contemporaries. It is therefore possible to project a scenario wherein the separation becomes so great that there remains no connection *on any plane*. Here we return to the legend of Babel, wherein obsessional idolatry led to individuation without corresponding cultivation of the inclusive attitude. The attraction centres on a false singularity, one which is rent from the universal nexus, and thus without the power to sustain life. Failing to dissolve their individuality in the absolute, the idolaters establish their separate ego as a fortress in the Abyss. Thus in their lonely Towers they tend to isolation and eventual extinction through the law of entropy.

Conversely it is possible to explain the extraordinary communal bonding of monolithic tribal cultures, in that these share a collective dimensional vortex. We further understand that in powerful group rituals a collective vortex is established temporarily. Ultimately it is this dimensional convergence which brings individuals into communion with one another, and which is not only the essence of telepathic or subtle rapport, but the basis of communication in the most generic sense. Heaven, therefore, is the inclusive attitude, wherein the approach to the

singularity is characterised by the submersion of the microcosm in the macrocosm. The dwellers in the Pure Land, in the Holy Mount of God, accordingly share a common language which is love. This love is the principle whereby opposites unite with ever extending depth of intimacy.

Concurrently there is a process of individuation, the generation of complexity and meaning, insofar as individuality and the individual viewpoint in the attainment of universal consciousness are retained. Here we depart from certain Eastern – notably Buddhist – conceptions, indeed from analytical schools in general. Buddhism, arguably Asiatic thought at its most refined, is akin in this sense to the quantum conception of modern science, with insistence on the impermanence of all aggregates. But the quantum domain, as we have seen, is only the gate of the Abyss. Beyond is the attractor vortex of the Supernals, a vortex not of dissolution but of self-sustaining creative life.

This World Or The Next ?

I spoke of a small step, and such, indeed, is the step between this world and the next. As one bright spirit wrote, there are always aleph zero (infinitely many) possibilities that at any moment our reality might be radically transformed. With the dissolution of dimensional barriers, the merging of the cosmic planes, the distinction between this world and the next is becoming abstract, and it is possible to envisage a tipping of the balance, for the individual as for humanity, wherein the discreet moments of revelation congeal into a seamless whole, and the mundane plane dissolves in visions of beatitude.

The prophetic charge is that, on archetypal and intuitive levels the transition is already upon us, unfolding as a seed in manifesting its reality

from the inner planes out. And like the opening of a seed, or the unfolding of a flower, the apocalypse, or unveiling of God, need not be catastrophic. Indeed the more thoroughly the Great Work is realised, the more ordered, and, in a sense, ordinary, will be every step along the way. As it is written concerning the Angel: *All his ways are peace.*

The religious world, by contrast, is presently poised in expectation of some revival, some revelation or manifestation of the extraordinary. This holds true for the evangelical realm as for the acolytes of the New Age. It is the overwhelming conviction that *something* must happen in a world so remote from equilibrium, a world poised so precariously on the edge of an abyss, a conviction which is perfectly well founded. Yet while the world, accustomed to glitz, glitter and glamour, is looking for the grandiose, the revelation does not come in that manner. It won't make headlines while it is yet a seed. Rather it will be an event so quiet on all planes of consciousness, that the world at large will pass it by without an inkling of awareness of anything significant. Only in the sanctuary of the gnosis, visionary advance guard of humanity, will the light of revelation be apparent as lightning which lights the sky from East to West. And while the beatific vision may eventually percolate through the wider sections of the spiritual body, by such time the light of revelation is already manifesting in new heights and depths of spiritual communion.

Observation tends to bear this out. The whole world is religious. More and more people appear to be genuinely spiritual, in the sense of recognising the presence of spiritual agencies in their lives. Yet very few are they which are attuned exclusively to the voice of the Angel. If it were otherwise – if, as the evangelists are telling us, thousands upon thousands are coming to know Christ – if the feigned spirituality of this world would be real, the global village would be the City of God, instead

the contemporary Babel that is the New World Order. What *in the world* is going on? From the supernal perspective, humanity is still engaged in the elaboration of churches and cults, when the time has come to cross the Abyss.

A seed is not large compared to a tree, yet the life is transmitted through the seed. And in the top of the tree, where the most sunlight is obtained, the seed ripens first. The analogy is of humanity as the Tree of Life and as the Spiritual Temple. As the Tree concentrates its life in a seed, the Temple, which has the form of a pyramid, ascends toward a solitary apex – a singularity, so to speak. In this age we are again converging on the attractor vortex of the cosmic seed. We are not concerned with the base of the structure, nor the tapering mid-section, but the lone and rarefied pinnacle. It but remains for the Capstone to be unveiled – Christ, the spirit of grace – which is to descend from the heavens to crown the aeonic Work. Even so, while the religious world is craning its collective neck for a messiah, prophetic insight knows that he's here. For he is the spiritual revelation, the word of the Angel made manifest in the life of the saints. Let us pause for a moment and ask, what else could we be looking for? Some personage in a robe? That sort of thing we have aplenty, and let us remember, whatever we seek, someone or something will answer the call.

Now not only is *he* here, but *they* are here as well – the aerial races of mythology, which appear as angels, aliens, and spirits of deception. The dimensional boundaries, as stated, are dissolving. We are warned, accordingly of false messiahs and false Christs, and the ministers of Satan disguised as angels of light. While Christ is unveiled in the sanctuary of revelation, antichrist, the false angel, is unveiled in Babel, the city of confusion. These co-exist throughout their stages of growth. But in the

approach to apotheosis the Fiery Sword that descends from the Crown divides the authentic from the deception. The one is bound for cosmic epiphany in dimensional ascent; the other is bound for collapse in the false singularity of the Abyss.

The City Of God

It was said, the kingdom of God does not come with observation. If the magical millennium is upon us, if the spirit veil is dissolving and we are beginning to see face to face, if we have passed from time to eternity, what are the signs? *Are* there signs to that effect? There are, but signs can also be misleading, subject to emulation by the agents of deceit. To reiterate, we are coming to the fine edge of the feather of truth, and only the supernal intuition is infallible in this regard. This being understood, it is possible to identify specific attributes of the City of God.

In this City good sense and good faith prevail. People wear their original face and state their case simply and openly. The people, moreover, are illustrious and of a spiritual largesse. One makes the acquaintance of those who, perhaps without even knowing it, one has always longed to meet. Synchronicities – favourable and meaningful coincidence – are the norm, and the world seems to function as it should. People mind their own business, but with care and concern for others. Good things happen as a matter of course, and there is no reason for anyone to be afraid. In this City one finds one's way, the distances are not unreasonable, and things get done in a simple and straightforward manner. Inspired and creative activity flourishes and always finds its intended niche or application to benefit those in need. There is a proliferation of marvellous inventions and 'miracles' are not uncommon.

The divine teacher in this City might be an ordinary individual one meets at night, taking his family for a meal at a restaurant. There is mental clarity wherein one can reflect in depth, words are healing and comforting, and in the pristine silence music and joyful sounds can be heard. The people are content and naturally inclined to cultivate depth, for at bottom, at the core of consciousness, there is the apprehension of absurdly good news.

When we reflect on the inevitability, the logical necessity of utopia, it is perhaps more remarkable that the universe can persist in a dysfunctional state, which is essentially a state of disunity. Given the sublime perfection of the universe as a whole, it is nigh inconceivable how or why humanity could fall short of its cosmic high calling. The explanatory theories having been reviewed, let us continue to focus on the contemplated idyll. Let us concede, that there are pockets of human civilisation where the attributes of spiritual grace, of a beatific vision are in evidence. Let us further concede that many attributes of transcendent promise are being manifested, many of these quasi-miraculous. Let us finally concede that in many unexpected quarters there are high ideals and great sincerity.

Yet when all is said and done, beyond all manifestations and signs, there is a secret that remains, pertaining to the state of authentic grace. For, to recall the previous chapter, when the Seventh Seal was opened in heaven, there was silence. Nothing, apparently, was revealed. Concerning the mystery which lies beneath this Seal, as expressed in the oracle of the Seven Thunders, the scribe of the Apocalypse was directed by the Angel not to write. While, therefore, all manner of spiritual and occult secrets are openly disseminated in a prodigal manner, rendering them subject to impersonation and appropriation without due authority by right of

initiation, there is a secret which cannot thus be profaned. For this secret is not in the public domain. Although it has been plainly stated, and is, for all intents and purposes, in open view, and though it is possible to formulate the same in various ways, it cannot be seen or heard for the spiritual noise that obtains below the Abyss. Only in the silence of magical equilibrium, as obtains in the City of the Pyramids, the sphere of Binah, is this secret known.

Beyond Mind-Space-Time

Recalling the principle of mind-based cosmogenesis, we realise that any world is a magical reality, projected by consciousness through the formative aspect of the mind. On this basis we concluded that the one creating this universe is the self, the transcendent 'I.' Initiation is defined as the course by which we come to identify with this secret self and appropriate its creative agency. We saw that, in the analytical domain, mystery persists throughout endless ratiocination, and that this mystery is ultimately identified with consciousness. Being ever the observer, consciousness, the primary fact of existence, is not susceptible to objective scrutiny. Yet it is subject to appropriation through the release of the self from identification with the *products* of mind in the paradox of crossing the Abyss. In the course of the supernal initiations we become aware of the identity of intuition and creation, or perception and the will, thus laying the foundation for the final illumination, the unity of consciousness in Kether, the cabalistic Crown.

Having arrived at this pinnacle of realisation, or simply being able to conceive thereof, we are able to consider the process in reverse. Recognising consciousness as the fount of existence, we observe its

bifurcation into subject and object, the knower and the known. With the birth of this dualism, mind becomes manifest in self-awareness, the recognition of itself. This is the first thought, the universal logos, and the creation of the cosmos. Initiation, in other words, is cosmogenesis in reverse; it is the return to the source. Following the stream of consciousness all the way to the supernal spring, we reach the omnipresent point, which is present in every atom and at the core of every star, yet beyond duality and essentially above and beyond the mind-space-time universe. It is Point Omega, the secret of creation and the open-ended universe. Consciousness is the open window onto eternal life – infinite sources of energy and information.

Humanity lost sight of this fact in its fall from grace, henceforth failing to recognise the world as of its own creation, a projection of its archetypal attributes. Reducing its self-concept to the physical organism, it became estranged from the universal nexus of sustenance and meaning, and saw itself naked in a strange and alien universe. Instead of retracing its steps to the fountain of life, the unbroken wholeness, it then proceeded to seek transcendence through knowledge of the subject-object type – the knowledge of the world perceived as ‘other.’ This also is the impulse of ‘carnal knowledge,’ in that all objective knowledge is carnal, the fruit of the Tree, the taste of which is death.

Here enters the mystery of redemption, whereby the return to the supernal Eden involves an atoning death as exemplified in the passion of Christ. For the way of the Tree of Life was henceforth guarded by a Flaming Sword, which turned in every direction to ward off any contender. And this Sword is the brilliant light of consciousness, which was darkened in that man turned his gaze upon the Tree of Knowledge. And here is the mystery of the prophetic charge that, *no man shall look*

upon the face of God and live, in that the separate and partial ego, accustomed to a world of darkness, is blasted by the light that emanates from the Crown, wherefore man born of woman must be reborn of the spiritual seed. Therefore, as it is also written, *if your eye be single, your body shall be full of light*.

In the reclaiming of the Supernal Eden, creative sovereignty over the universe is restored to humanity. And this not after the manner of those who destroy the earth, but through the power of eternal life. Here is the fulfilment of the millennial promise, and the seventh day of Eden, which was disrupted by the entrance of death, but is now restored in the revelation of the godhead of man. Fully realised, it is the gift of eternal life in the presence of the mystery, the *sat, cit, ananda* of Vedic lore, which is existence-consciousness-bliss, or, slightly rephrased, life-consciousness-meaning. The atomic, yet omnipresent unit of consciousness, which I have labelled Point Omega, is therefore not only the goal and destiny of all life; it is also the Alpha or Aleph, a cosmic seed, the information and energy potential of an infinite series of possible worlds.

Attributes Of The Omega Point

The following summary provides an overview of the attributes of consciousness, raised to the power of the omega point, as revealed in the light of intuitive vision. It represents the magical consciousness, released from all limitations and restrictions, a consciousness which is one with the universe, while also being above and beyond all manifestation. In the latter sense it is the lever beyond the world, the switch of power, at the flick of which the universe turns on and off. The material here assembled

is not so much new, as a concentrated synthesis of the essential insights from the foregoing chapters.

- All points in space, time, and mind are in intimate communion.
- Mind-space-time forms the unified field geometric of reality.
- Mind-space-time exhibits the attributes of a dimensionless point, the singularity. The universe is thus identical with the singularity.
- At the singularity the familiar laws of physics break down. This is the opening of the wisdom eye and of the magical universe.
- All phenomena are real. Everything is true. This is the self-referential matrix of meaning.
- All events are possible. This is the mystery of mind and manifestation.
- The possibility matrix provides for: (1) instantaneous travel to any point in mind, space, and time, (2) instantaneous manifestation of any object, and (3) instantaneous change of any kind, without going through intermediate stages.
- The reality-matrix is electromagnetic in nature. In cabalistic language it is Yesod, The Foundation, which equates with the electromagnetic spectrum or cosmic light. All phenomena are modifications of this light.

- The boundaries of the universe are at the centre. This centre is the vortex called ‘I,’ which is the transcendent godhead. This is why the ‘I’ cannot be observed. It is not part of the phenomenal universe. Yet this ‘I’ is at the centre of all things. As it is written by ISSCTSM: *I am the soul source and centre of time space and mind.* And thus is the universe both matrix and vortex, both open and closed, yin and yang, shivalinga and shaktiyantra, red lion and white eagle. This also is the equilibrium of the magical androgyne, yielding the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone.

- The universe is alive, intelligent, and conscious. It both speaks and responds to the spoken word.

- Inner space extends inward forever. This is the dimensional vortex, the gateway to hyperspace. In mind it is the quality of depth of perception and meaning. In the stellar cosmos it is the singularity at the centre of the black hole.

- The cosmological analogy to the crossing of the Abyss is stellar collapse into the black hole singularity. From ‘outside’ it appears as annihilation.

- When consciousness becomes self-aware it generates the point called ‘I’ – Hadit in Thelemic language – the godhead singularity. The ‘I’ is the vortex of consciousness in the body of Nuit – the goddess of infinite space and matrix of universal mind. The conjunction of these two infinities produces Ra-Hoor-Khuit – any instance of the manifest

universe.

- There are three vortices, or points of ingress of novelty into the world, located respectively in mind, space, and time; these are called: ‘I’, ‘Here’ and ‘Now.’ Their analogy in physics is the space-time singularity). These are beyond conventional understanding, gateways to the enchanted circle – The World.

The Secret Of Creation

The Angel spoke to Heru Raha and said, *faith or intuition is a bootstrap method*, meaning that the higher principle uplifts and absorbs the lower into itself. The adept then saw visions of perpetual motion engines, of which the universe is one, and the many curious and ‘impossible’ devices attributed to the alchemists.

Of the riddles of philosophy, the greatest mystery is the fact of existence – that anything should exist at all, that motion is at all possible. The adept further realised that the Magi, to the extent that they had accomplished the Great Work, somehow got hold of that central mystery and applied it in a practical manner. They had become one with the mystery. Through initiation they conformed to *that which is*, journeyed to the centre of mind-space-time, to participate in the creative process. Thus also they were able to remove the veils or frames of perception, by which a universe appears as a given and objectively real. What they recognised as real, however, is the act of perception. ‘Universe,’ they realised, is as a verb, rather than a noun. *Universe* is what happens, and the agent, the prime-mover, is the transcendent ‘I’.

There are other ‘perpetual motion’ devices in existence, notably the

atom and the sub-atomic constituents of matter. Electron orbit is not observed to decay, and in so far as the universe is eternal, so is motion at the quantum level. While the universe is said to be subject to entropy, understood as the inevitable decline in energy differential, this view does not explain how anything came to be energised in the first place, or how the original and unlikely far-from-equilibrium state of the big bang singularity arose. Fact is that it did arise, or *something* which allows for the concentration of energy necessary to create a world. It is further a scientific axiom that any natural process is repeatable; what nature did once, she can do again. Here, then, we reconnect with the Vedic vision of the cyclic universe. While it does not address the final mystery – how or why anything should exist at all – it posits as a universal given, presence rather than absence, infinite possibility rather than necessary closure, life rather than death, where life is the infinite and ongoing potential of the universe to generate form and meaning.

We notice then the concomitants of eternal or perpetual motion at the very large and very small end of the visionary spectrum, at the cosmological and quantum level. It is the intermediary realm, the world of familiar experience and the world of classical physics, that appears to be in deviation from what may be regarded a cosmic norm. Yet even nature, the biosphere taken as a whole, is indefinitely self-perpetuating. Life at the simplest level, where replication occurs by cell division, is intrinsically immortal. With sexual replication enters the mystery of death, and the transmission of life by way of a seed. It is arguably the consciousness of death which has given us a view of the universe in terms of finality and closure.

The transcending of death is the attainment of the supernal initiations, for death is conquered in the ordeal of the Abyss. Its crossing

constitutes the death of the separate self, of the partial and limiting personality, and the birth of a star in the supra-rational heavens of primordial unity. Once received into the Third Order above the Abyss, the initiate converges upon the unity, the singularity which is Point Omega. That approach, moreover, is a matter of inevitable necessity. It is, by cosmological analogy, the gravitational collapse of a mega-star that has burned up its nuclear fuel and is in a state of gravitational free-fall inward forever. It is also, by similar analogy, the expanding universe, in that the galaxies, rushing apart at the speed of light, disappear from the universe as we know it. The result in either case is the singularity, the trans-rational apotheosis of all tendencies in mind, space, and time. Here we observe the cosmological equivalents of the two main methods of mysticism: object concentration (or devotion), and mahamudra, the dissolution of all conceptual frames of reference.

With the attainment of the singularity, a new world is born. It is the entrance to the magical universe. The formal qualities of the omega point here become the experiential realities of life. Enchantment, miraculous powers, and the creative faculty of mind are here in full evidence. Yet there lies a deeper secret in the consciousness of the Crown. Being after the nature of the unity, it is the mystery of existence itself. For phenomena ordinarily manifest only in relation of one to another. Nothing exists alone or in isolation. The unity is therefore appropriately identified, on the one hand, with *nothing*, and on the other, with the proliferation of *all things*. In the consciousness of the Crown, therefore, being and non-being are reconciled. This allows us to write the philosophical equation $\text{Zero}=\text{One}=\text{All}$. The singularity, the One, is therefore the pivotal point between latency and universal manifestation. Approached, as it were, from below, in the process of initiation, it is

attained by the methods described, whereby multiplicity is reduced to the unity and beyond. The result, in Buddhist terminology, is Nirvana, usually translated as extinction or cessation. Yet once attained, the singularity, by a cosmic law, becomes a seed of universal creation, and in this manner the universe propagates itself in a branching tree of myriads upon myriads of worlds.

The philosophical or cabalistic Zero, therefore, does not denote ‘nothing’ or ‘absence’ in the vulgar sense. Rather it constitutes the cosmic womb in waiting, as also suggested by its glyph (O), the circle. This womb, while dormant and unmanifest, is yet seething with the potential of all possibility. An analogy exists in the physical sciences. The quantum vacuum of empty space is not simply ‘nothing.’ Space possesses dimensional properties and is teeming with particles which spontaneously come into existence and annihilate each other. ‘Empty space’ is thus a cauldron of energy, the so-called zero-point energy, which has been calculated, per unit of volume, to exceed the nuclear force. While no scientist, to my knowledge, has ventured as much, let us propose, in keeping with my thesis, that the entire energy of the universe is concentrated in every point.

Does the concept of the cabalistic Zero solve the mystery of existence? I suggest that it does, and this not by mere sophistry. It demonstrates rather that the alternative, the notion of ‘nothing’ or ‘absence’ in the vulgar sense, is a philosophical nonsense. While the experience of absence or lack may constitute a psychological or economic reality, these pertain to that ‘middle’ realm of common or communal sense, which has somehow been wrenched from the deeper matrix, observed in the quantum and cosmological domain. Existence is thereby demonstrated to be a matter of necessity. And while this does not

dispel the mystery, it alters its contour.

For it is possible to keep asking ‘why thus’ indefinitely. It is simply an attribute of the rational mindset, the infinite regress of analysis, which allows for endless ratiocination. Here there are two observations to be made: (1) There comes a point of abstraction where the question ‘why’ loses its edge. As even the most profound and complete explanation may always be followed with a ‘why,’ it is the act of questioning which becomes sophistic. And (2) the fact that the question may nevertheless continually be asked on a strictly logical basis, suggests that *all explanations are ultimately pseudo-explanations*. In the words of Liber Al Vel Legis: *Reason is a lie*. An explanation, therefore, is simply something which imparts a certain quiescence to the questing mind, a degree of contemplative satisfaction, more or less temporary, with the vantage point attained. The best one can hope for from a philosophical explanation is that it should bring the mind in contact with the limiting boundary conditions of the relevant domain of discourse, thereby exposing unwarranted assumptions and shifting the frame of reference, so that the question either becomes meaningless or answers itself. Such is the appropriate way to deal with the great questions of philosophy, which otherwise remain intractable or the subject of endless sophistic elaboration.

Initiation, to resume our main line of thought, is in essential respects the reverse or mirror image – the inverse current – of universal creation. It is the reduction of the manifold to the unity and beyond. The creative process may accordingly be viewed as the elaboration of natural number in the opposite direction, beginning with zero, and reaching the manifold by a process of internal transmutation.

Zero is the cabalistic void, the universe unmanifest. This void, by

concentration, produces the unity, the cosmic seed or logos, the One.

Becoming self-aware, the One, through the process of introspection, generates the dyad, the subject and object of reflective consciousness. This is that which is written in Genesis, *the spirit of God hovered above the void*.

From the union of the Two, a Third is born, thereby giving rise to the triad. Identified with this triad are the many archetypal triplicities, such as *Father, Mother, Son; Consciousness, Wisdom, Understanding;* and *Life, Light, and Love*. Partaking of the Supernal Triad, these are one in a manner which transcends the reason. Philosophically, we are yet in the realm of the abstract and incommensurate.

Only with the number Four, the first below the Abyss, do we admit form and mensuration. We note that the simplest of geometric solids, the tetrad, has four triangular sides and four points. The Four also denotes the four Hermetic elements (*Fire, Water, Air, Earth*) and thus tetragrammaton (yod, he, vau, he), the Hebrew appellation for God as Lord of creation, a magical formula signifying *seed-in-the-womb*. This is expressed in the *Grimoire Selma Olanta*, which states:

The nature of the wand is joy.

The cup is filled with sorrow.

*The aim of the sword is dispersion,
and chaos its essence.*

*The elements are in the whirling disk;
the seed within the winged globe.*

The Four constitutes the crux, the critical phase, in any magical operation. It is the moment of reification, when the idea begins to take on concrete form. In the Four, moreover, the entire course of creation is

foreshadowed, in so far as Ten, the numerical basis of cabalistic elaboration, is the sum of the numbers one through four.

Five is the Pentagram, the rule of spirit over the four elements. Thus it is also the glyph of man, the microcosm, and of the elements in motion.

Six is the perfection of the Supernal Triad mirrored in the realm of form. It is therefore the macrocosm, represented by the Hexagram which consists of two interlacing triangles, the apex of one pointing upward, that of the other, downward. A glyph, denoting the union of the chalice and the wand, it also signifies the Great Work accomplished.

The cabalistic Seven is the exuberant imagination of nature, its luxurious abandon, while the Eight constitutes its rigorous formal and mathematical structure.

The Nine is called the Foundation and denotes the quantum electro-dynamic matrix, underlying all phenomena of mind, space, and time.

Pendant to the system is the Ten, which signifies the realm of appearances – the world as apprehended by the physical senses.

Whether we refer to this idealised view of cosmogenesis, or avail ourselves of any other descriptive language, it is evident that the universe does not attain complexity through accretion, but by a process of internal metastasis, the differentiation and specialisation of individual parts. Nothing is, or can be, added, and nothing is taken away. This much is axiomatic in physics in so far as matter and energy are concerned. But what of complexity or information, that which makes the universe interesting and a desirable place in which to live?

World Without End

Here, once more, we have cause to contrast the esoteric paradigm with the position of academia. The scientific view is that the conditions supporting life and consciousness came into being gradually, and eventually will again dissipate. According to this scenario life arose on the basis of random variation, and the persistence and propagation (natural selection) of those forms and processes adapted to advantage within a given environment. This is the theory of evolution. The process is said to be driven by two factors: the state of the universe ‘at the beginning,’ and the ‘laws of nature,’ which determine the bounds of the possible. These, respectively, are referred to as initial and boundary conditions.

The alternative proposal, consistent with the secret doctrine and the thesis here developed, is that the primordial singularity is identical with the future singularity at the end of time. This is in keeping with the notion that the singularity, being *beyond* space-time, is One, in whatever context it is apprehended. It is the supra-rational, hyper-dimensional unity, which is Zero, One, and All. Accordingly the total information content of the universe is thought to be contained in that original seed.

From this perspective, cosmic evolution may be seen not merely as driven by initial and boundary conditions, but also as impelled toward the future singularity by way of attraction. Universal process may thus be regarded as a current surging from past to future singularity, and vice versa, wherein the distinction between driving and attractive force is arbitrary. From the temporal perspective any event is thus part of a matrix, equally determined by the future and the past. Yet from a higher perspective that influence is singular; indeed it is more than influence, for the universe is but the manifestation of the attributes inherent in the

singularity. A singular force thus may be said to inform evolutionary process, a force not mediated through a chain of antecedent causes, but by a single cause beyond space and time. Consider in this context the statement of Christ – *I am the alpha and omega*.

This permits us to posit a single will which informs the universe, and that not merely with respect to the great design, but in every particular. The perceived antinomy between freedom and necessity thus appears to be an artefact of the uninitiated psychology, which regards human will, aspiration, and desire as separate from, and potentially opposed to, the universal context. But, given the scenario described, *what is willed is that which is determined*, and vice versa. The notion of conflict also, of warring gods, cults and factions, appears to be but a product of that partial and conditioned view. Mathematical logic insist that, regardless of how many forces are at play, it is always possible, at least in theory, to calculate the resultant. More to the point, there always *is* a resultant, a specific outcome in every instant, irrespective of our ability to calculate or measure the same. The quantum limit of measurement, esoterically speaking, only takes us to the frontier of the Abyss; hence the appearance of chance and indeterminacy at the smallest observable scale. Random or spontaneous behaviour is again observed in living organisms, systems comprising a high degree of complexity. Between these two domains – the very simple and highly complex – lies the realm of causality, the idealised world of classical physics, where identical causes always produce identical results.

However the illusory nature of the causal model is patent in that it deals exclusively with local causes and effects; in other words, a variety of formal scenarios, abstracted from the universal nexus. The model breaks down in the domain of the complex and the simple for the same

reason – the impossibility of obtaining the requisite level of abstraction, which is to say, the resistance of the system in submitting to reductionist analysis. In living organisms this is due to the inherent integrity of the system, its organic unity, which requires a holistic language of description. In the quantum domain the same is due to the fact that subatomic particles are close to, and embedded in, universal boundary conditions. Like complexity and consciousness, they are nigh the singularity, and thus cannot be abstracted from the universal nexus, similarly resisting analysis in local or isolated terms. For the particle, be it recalled, may also be seen as a wave. This wave has field properties, and the field is ultimately conterminous with the universe as a whole.

This brings to mind a previous point, that the singularity may be attained either by concentration (gravitational collapse) or by inclusion (escape velocity at the speed of light). In evolutionary terms, therefore, universal or cosmic consciousness constitutes the singularity of the projected future, the omega point upon which the universe is converging. In nature we see higher level of consciousness correlated with greater levels of complexity or organisation in living organisms. The human form is one wherein consciousness may be perfected; wherein cosmic consciousness also may be reconciled with a singular point of view. The universal aim is therefore to concentrate the all in a point (in every point, in *the* point), and to exalt the point to inclusion of the all. This, again, should not be regarded as a dual, but a single, process. As the ‘current’ of universal process flows between cosmic polarities, from the past to the future singularity, from the point to full expansion, it is reasonable to postulate a reciprocal action whereby the equilibrium of the universe is maintained.

Thus to the forward passage of time, we may postulate an equal

and complementary retrograde current, more of which later. The outward expansion of the universe is complemented by motion inward, as observed (in physics) in the formation of space-time singularity, and (in consciousness) in the deepening of meaning. These various currents, to emphasise the ‘point’ again, are not to be regarded as separate processes, but as manifestations of one and the same process, that of universal self-actualisation. It appears fragmentary and disconnected only in relation to a fragmented and arbitrarily categorical psyche. The universe may therefore be viewed as the realisation of an intrinsic nature, the unfolding of a seed. Consciousness, supposedly the end result of a long and arduous process, is thus inherent in and throughout that process. Indeed it is foundational to the process, in so far as consciousness is a dimension of the plenum wherein the cosmic odyssey unfolds, a fact to which we are alluding in the formulation ‘mind-space-time,’ as the conceptual basis for a possible unified field theory.

It further follows that the notion of entropy, the gradual degradation of the energy differential in the universe, and the inevitable disintegration of structure and meaning, is based on too narrow a view. To the principle of the conservation of matter and energy, we therefore need to add a further proposition as axiomatic in nature, the conservation of information. The universe, accordingly, does not decline in value or meaning, or even remain static. Instead it gains, and that gain takes the form of experience. By way of experience, moreover, the universe develops a certain character, specifically the point of view attained in consciousness. And this attainment, I propose, is the point and purpose of existence. For in the formulation of the future singularity the attained vantage point of wisdom, insight, and compassion, is retained, and becomes the basis for further growth. Far from running down, therefore,

the universe is on a rising curve – an exponentially rising curve. On reaching the cosmic asymptote in the singularity, the process recommences, but on a higher plane, in more inclusive domains of consciousness. And so on forever, in an infinitely ascending spiral of benevolent intelligence.

Here I wish to address a certain contradiction, which may be noted in the above, exemplary of the types of paradox one invariably encounters when confronting the absolute. Universal process was portrayed as current between cosmic polarities as manifest in the singularity. Given this self-contained view, where the end is known from the beginning, where indeed the end *is* the beginning, the ultimate outcome must be stasis. Yet immediately subsequent I make the point that, if information is conserved, experience, and therefore meaning, is cumulative.

Theologians circumvent this difficulty by positing the *Father* and *Son* aspects of God. *God the Father* is that which remains eternally unchanged, as well as unmanifest, and, therefore, unknown. *God the Son* is the logos, the Word, a projection of the Father, manifesting his attributes in a manner subject to apprehension. The Son is also he who ‘walks the way,’ and who is ultimately identified with that way. He is the manifest aspect of the universe, that which indeed undergoes change, or, to use the word in its cosmic context, initiation.

This is reflected in the distinction between mind and consciousness which is further analogous to the distinction between space-time and the singularity. Mind is the changeable manifestation of thought, and therefore synonymous with the world of experience. Consciousness is the unchanging ground whence mind manifests, which, as stated, is both intrinsic to and transcendent of the manifest universe. The mystical

trances are thus characterised by a shift of identification from the conditioned mind to unconditioned consciousness. Yogic theory posits two discreet stages in the requisite attainment, referred to as *atmadarshana* and *shivadarshana*. Atmadarshana is the annihilation of the partial ego, the absorption of the microcosm in the macrocosm. In cabalistic terms it is the initiation into the Grade of Magister Templi in the sphere of Binah. Shivadarshana is the withdrawal of the macrocosm into universal pralaya, a state of non-manifestation called the Night of Brahma, which is an aspect of Parabrahm. The cabalistic equivalent is the consciousness of Kether, The Crown, as represented in the A.:A.: by the Grade of Ipsissimus. This, the highest attainment, is also designated *nirvikalpa samadhi* by the Hindus, and *neroda sampatti* in the canon of Mahayana Buddhism.

Freedom, Chance, Necessity

Here it is useful to enquire how the notion of an entropic universe – one that is subject to ultimate dissolution and death – came to be held. Not least among determinants is human psychology, as embedded in the consciousness of limited economic resources and the idea of death as a finality. The defining image is that of a closed system in the classical sense, like Watts' steam engine, which, when the pressure is gone, can no longer perform any work. In this vein it has always been the presumption of minds not so very great, to regard the universe as an exalted version of man's latest invention. In Newton's day it was a giant clockwork. With the rise of computers, cybernetic models of universal organisation came into vogue. Now it is an n-dimensional hologram, the interference pattern created by waveforms in hyperspace. To paraphrase R. D. Laing, what

fetish will we shake tomorrow to soothe our radical incomprehension? There is, of course, a way of looking at nature without comparing it to a toy of man's designing, and that is the way of mysticism, a way which refuses conceptual models, and seeks direct apperception of truth.

There are other ways in which science has handed us a fictional universe. One of these results from the quantum limit of measurement, which imposes a limit upon our analytical view of any system. In simple terms, it is that point in the realm of the very small beyond which we are unable to distinguish any variation by scientific means. Of the consequences we already noted that in the quantum domain we can only obtain a statistical description of the behaviour of particles. Beyond their erratic and unpredictable behaviour, sub-atomic particles, of whatever class, are not otherwise distinguished. Thus all electrons (for instance) in the universe are considered to be totally identical, whether they are part of a physicist's brain or floating in interstellar space. We shall develop this point in a moment.

Let us first consider another limiting factor in the acquisition of the scientific worldview. It is the scientific method of abstraction whereby, in any experiment, an idealised scenario is considered in isolation from the total context. While this is the only way that science can operate, it should be noted that the method determines the type of picture we obtain of the universe. It is a view which consists of generalities, those alleged principles which are thought to be universal and invariant. Again we obtain a statistical view, an idea of what happens in broad terms, without any intimation of the unique and specific circumstances of any situation. It is telling in this context to recall Einstein's observation, that in the formal language of science, the present moment does not exist.

Due to the emphasis placed on scientific knowledge, the view thus

obtained has become definitive of our world. The cultural legacy is a random universe, a universe essentially governed by chance, in which meaning is incidental, and phenomena adhere to statistical norms which are neither remarkable nor possessed of mystery. Have we not all heard versions of that soporific mantra: ‘We live on an average planet, orbiting an ordinary star, in an undistinguished galaxy.’ This is demystification by means of a psychological trick. The method is to banish primary experiential reality, and engage a contrived and derivative secondary reality; one that is subject to manipulation in terms of a finite set of variables, and to assert that this secondary reality is born of the true way of seeing. As a result of this stance we have lost touch with the experiential manifold. The educated mind, conditioned to perceive in types and categories, imposes the normative and composite veil of memory, which obscures at once the nature of present reality. This is also the attitude which lies at the root of the secular and the mundane.

Two factors thus constrain the scientific worldview: the horizons of knowledge whether in the quantum or cosmological domain, and the description of the world in terms of generalities, which introduces the concept of *chance* as a determining factor. Chance makes its appearance when identical causes produce variable and unpredictable results. Yet it will be apparent, that ‘identical causes’ are only obtained by disregarding most of the known universe, and focusing on a minuscule part thereof defined as relevant to the outcome of a particular experiment. The notion of a holistic matrix, however, precludes the validity of this approach. As no two moments in the history of the universe are alike, identical causes can never be replicated. The supposedly random outcomes in certain experiments may thus be seen as the necessary and inevitable correlate of the universe at that moment as a whole.

The notion of chance or probability is a curious one in other respects. It suggests that in situations supposedly governed by its laws the outcome *could* have been other than that observed. Let us examine what this ‘could’ actually means. If we are about to flip a coin, probability tells us that there is a fifty percent chance that will come up heads and a fifty percent chance that will come up tails. Let us now imagine we flip the coin and it comes up heads. The probability that it is heads is now a hundred percent, and the probability that it is tails, zero. Let us then perform the experiment without looking at the result. In this case, which is it: fifty – fifty either way, or a hundred to zero one or the other? Without any ESP we are perhaps compelled to say that there is a fifty percent chance that it is either. Then we take a look, and, as if by magic, the situation is radically altered. It is tails; one hundred percent tails, zero heads. The simple act of looking has altered the probability situation.

So what does it mean to say that it ‘could’ have come up heads? *How* could it have come up heads? Well ... if the coin had been flipped by a different person, if it had not bounced off the chair – under different circumstances, in a different environment – the outcome, indeed, might have been different. But how could these antecedents have been different? Very simply, by reason of *their* causal antecedents also being different, and so on, all the way back to the primal cause of causes. Thus, in a universe altogether different, verily and surely it could have come up heads.

Does this perhaps suggest that there is something profoundly wrong with the notion of probability? Or are we juggling universes every time we flip a coin? Its demonstrable rationale is the so-called law of large numbers. This law is based on the observation that the larger any statistical sample, the more the probability distribution tends to the

statistical norm. In other words, if I toss a coin ten times, it will come up heads *approximately* five times in ten. But it may easily be six times or seven, in which case there is a ten to twenty percent deviation from the norm. If I toss a coin one hundred times, that deviation is *likely* to be smaller, and if I toss a coin a thousand times, it is likely to be smaller still. The law suggests that in any infinite set of throws the distribution will always be exactly fifty – fifty, obviously an untestable claim, and one of questionable ethics and aesthetics. For it marginalises the universe of infinite variety and invokes a standard model as the touchstone of reality.

The scientific worldview, by tacit admission, is an approximation, and to approximate, no matter how closely, is to miss the mark. And while the approximation may conform ever more closely to the ideal, the scientific quest, by definition, remains a path without closure. In this sense, a near miss is as wide off the mark as any, if indeed, in a universe of infinite depth, one can legitimately speak of a near approximation. To the extent, therefore, that any culture is informed by the scientific paradigm, it must remain in the wilderness of unrequited aspiration. In this context it is neither quaint nor inopportune to reflect that ‘to miss the mark’ is the meaning of *sin*. And in the words of Liber Al, *the word of sin is restriction*, where ‘restriction’ may be equated with the limited and proscribed methodology of science. Specifically it is the reduction of the incommensurate to the domain of number. But, again to quote Liber Al, *every number is infinite*. Any sensible quantity, in other words, is susceptible to infinite analysis. The random and statistical universe is thus an artefact of abstraction, of viewing idealised object-events in isolation from their determining context. We found ‘quanta’ – basic particles of matter and energy – because that is what we were looking for. Only the particles did not turn out as basic as we thought, and it is a mere

matter of time before further realms of complexity and abstraction will become viable.

What quantum theory has illuminated is the potentially infinite regress that obtains in any Cartesian space characterised by the mind-matter, subject-object dichotomy. This recalls the paradoxical symbol of a serpent devouring himself, by which the ancients depicted the infinite regress in the abyss of mind. From our vantage point, as derived from ancient and modern perspectives, we intuit that no point of closure is to be obtained by drawing the ostensible serpent-loop ever more tightly. A loop, in short, will always remain, with a discontinuous junction at the mind-matter interface.

On far side of that diaphanous and ultimately unreal barrier is the mystery of the ‘other;’ on the near side, the mystery of the self. The notion that this should be so for eternity, or as long as the human race persists, casts a mote of futility upon the scientific quest. Psychologically we have adjusted to the situation with the stoic idea of ‘quest for quest’s sake,’ arguably an appropriate attitude in a creative and evolving universe. However, given the esoteric thesis, it is wasteful of the ultimate opportunity, to accept that humanity must forever remain in the outer courts of conceptual approximations, excluded from intimate communion with the mystery. It is to miss the opportunity of initiation. Whatever the objective of the scientific quest, I do not suggest that it is unattainable, but that, in all probability, it is unattainable by scientific method as presently understood. It is thus unfortunate that academic culture has blinded many minds to the possibility of a viable alternative. That there *is* a viable alternative – the inclusion of the mystical paradigm – has been demonstrated by this book.

Against the random and incidental universe of science we are able

to posit a universe that is intentional and specific in every detail. Nothing in this universe happens by chance, in the sense that any outcome could have been other than the one obtained. The notion that it could, has been shown to be meaningless, as even the most trivial change would necessitate change in the universe as a whole and in every part thereof. We are then considering an altered history of the cosmos, as well as altered initial and boundary conditions. The universe, in a word, is not arbitrary. Thus we hold with Einstein, whose intuition insisted that ‘God does not play dice,’ and who, accordingly, considered the quantum theory to be incomplete; though ultimately without being able to demonstrate the way forward.

The idea of multiple universes in the naive pluralistic sense, moreover, must be regarded as an ad hoc hypothesis. Without experimental verification, it is the arbitrary refuge against the inevitable conclusion of a mind-created universe. While we may posit infinitely many worlds of subjective experience, the context is psychological, and it seems necessary from a philosophical standpoint that these be reconciled in a single meta-system. It merely remains for the question of nomenclature to be settled; should we adopt terms like ‘mega-verse’ or ‘multiverse,’ or adjust our definition of ‘universe’ to incorporate the notion of many worlds? In any case, the many-worlds model of quantum physics has no explanatory power, in that nothing follows from it, and its alternate universes are, by definition, undetectable.

The idea of random or chance behaviour in minute particles has been demonstrated to rest upon the scientific method of abstraction, the study of object-events out of their embedded context. There is, as Einstein suspected, a hidden variable in the universal space-time equation. This variable, I suggests, is the ubiquitous presence of the

singularity, whereby every point-event is embedded in the cosmic whole, which is identified with the singularity. It is the singularity which determines both initial and boundary conditions, broadly speaking, the point of origin, the path, and the ultimate destiny, and these, from our vantage point, must also be regarded as one.

It was stated that explanations in terms of an antecedent causal chain are pseudo-explanations. All point-events in the universe are rather directly and immediately attributable to the *first cause*, which is the ubiquitous singularity, present everywhere and everywhen, yet also transcendent of the universe as pure undifferentiated consciousness. For the singularity *is* consciousness, wherein all events transpire in accordance with the omnipresent will of the first cause. Here, then, is the reconciliation of free will and determinism, in that freedom is conformity with intrinsic nature, and necessity is identified with the creative will.

This is to confront a core mystery of the Magus initiation, the mystery of transcendent freedom. Freedom, in the ultimate sense, is not something that can be contrasted with a condition of servitude, as on the planes of duality. Above the Abyss, freedom is the non-arbitrary course of the creative will, as grounded in the original seed, the individual and universal logos, the attribute in the mind of the creator. The question whether the deity or demiurgos could have formulated itself in terms of a different set of attributes, giving rise to a different universe, thus becomes meaningless. It can only arise in the hypothetical dialectic grounded in the frivolous notion of an arbitrary and random universe. However, the language of the Masters, which obtains above the Abyss, is one of actuality. It is the primal language which states that which is, and constitutes the grounds for the mystery of the actual. Moreover, as the vehicle of the creative will, it informs cosmic process as a whole and in

every detail. There is therefore but one law in the universe, which is the *law of liberty* manifest in the exercising of that will, and it is incumbent upon initiates everywhere to proclaim the law, and to assist all beings in attaining thereto.

This recalls a further point, that universal creation is not to be situated somewhere in the distant past, but in this present moment right now. From a temporal perspective creation is ongoing, the universe being created afresh out of primal chaos in every moment. The necessary absurdity of temporal beginnings and endings is thereby alleviated. The intuitive convention of time as a line segment (whether finite or infinite), involves irreconcilable paradox. Time thus can only be properly regarded as a point, and that point being the present moment. The eternal present is all that exists. The subjective experience of temporal sequence, like the experience of three-dimensional space, must therefore be regarded as a condition of mind. Hence the conception of mind-space-time a single holographic projection of consciousness, and thus of the singularity which is both immanent and transcendent.

The Kingdom Of Consciousness

We have shown that there is a point beyond mind, space, and time, yet at once omnipresent, where all information and every possible type of experience is accessible. In the scientific and philosophical literature of the omega point it is called an *aleph*; as also in a story, titled *The Aleph*, by Jorge Louis Borges (the Greek *alpha* is the Hebrew *aleph*). It is therefore both alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, although not necessarily in a naive temporal sense. It is the point of origin and convergence of all phenomena, both in terms of universal

process and the journey of initiation. In the Hermetic opus it is identified as the Stone of the Philosophers and the Universal Medicine, the Elixir of Life. It is the cabalistic Crown and the Capstone of Grace that descends from heaven to crown the pyramid of the spiritual temple. It is the final secret of the Magi, the grail and the alchemical gold, the summum bonum of wealth and immortality.

What is this mysterious object, this desideratum of the human quest? It is consciousness and the universe which consciousness projects. The distinction here made is simply that of the wave-particle dualism observed in nature, respectively the energetic and formal principle, consciousness as an amorphous fluid and concretised in specific experience – the Elixir and the Stone. This secret, as we are now aware, is not specifically found in remote deserts, in exotic temples or underground caves, for we know that it is everywhere. Right here and now is a vortex wherein converge a trans-finite number of dimensions or possibilities of consciousness. Here and now the ‘I’ is not subject to dimensional constraints, but the familiar four-dimensional space-time continuum is but one of its many mansions.

As we step into the transdimensional vortex, time and distance, in the conventional sense, are abolished. Instead we find that the conscious realm has a *semantic* structure. Concepts like near and far, intimate and remote, alien and familiar, in this sphere are based on the principle of sympathetic resonance or vibrational affinity. The right thought, the right word, the right gesture – these will unlock the secret sanctuaries and arcana of auspicious augury. As in cyberspace, a link can be made in consciousness with any world or domain of experience, an analogy which was not lost on the leaders of the psychedelic revolution like Timothy Leary and Robert Anton Wilson. In practice it is the forging of the

magical link which has occupied the pioneers of consciousness, the link to wider realms of awareness, wherein other worlds might be made to manifest. From strange synchronicities and psychic occurrences to the full-blown rupture of mundane reality as experienced in dimensional ascent, all these are indications that the conventional world is but a tiny bubble in an ocean of possibility. The bubble, moreover, as many are aware, is presently about to burst. Reality in its hyper-dimensional manifold is impinging more and more on the collective consciousness. Many are now claiming their spiritual birthright to an experiential reality in conformity with their creative will. They recognise themselves as citizens of the kingdom of consciousness, as heirs to a legacy, and thus a destiny, of cosmic scope.

Immanence And Transcendence

How is it possible, we may ask, for all-inclusive consciousness to be consistent with manifestation in form, with an individuated point of view, with specific and local experience? Reference has already been made to the quanta of particle physics, whereby the manifest world proceeds at discreet ‘leaps’ or intervals, instead of a continuous curve. On the sub-atomic level energy is transmitted in discreet packets (quanta), while particles (like electrons) transit from one orbit to another, without moving through the intervening space. This situation may be viewed as a pulse-like aspect of consciousness whereby all experience manifests in temporal pulses, extremely short-lived bursts of illumination, comparable to the frames in a moving picture. The quantum of modern physics is thus analogous to the *thought-moment*, identified in Tantric and Buddhist psychology, a temporal unit of the shortest possible duration, arguably

the natural pulse of time.

Esoteric theory further asserts that in the space between the pulses of world-manifestation, appears the singularity, which is to be identified with universal and unqualified consciousness. The conception is expressed in the well-known glyph of the Tao ☯ depicting the symbiosis of polar opposites, as in the *double wand of power* of Thelemic lore, referring to powers respectively of immanence and transcendence. It provides a model wherein all-inclusive consciousness may be reconciled with a particular human-centred point of view.

While in ordinary consciousness awareness of the singularity is subliminal, its eternal presence nevertheless constitutes the necessary and fundamental backdrop of experience. It provides the primary and pre-dimensional Platonic ‘space’ wherein the time, space, and mind of human experience does manifest. Thus it also constitutes a supra-dimensional point of reference whereby space-time concepts such as duration and direction become viable. ‘Direction’ implies a centre, and ‘duration’ a still-point against which the passage of time is subjectively measured. As such it is that which provides the primal and supra-sensory condition of unity which characterises the sensible universe, and constitutes the nexus of meaning.

In certain states of pathology and extreme duress, in schizophrenia and the dark night of the soul, consciousness of the singularity is lost through exclusive fixation on the actual, with the result that the universe disintegrates into meaningless fragments. This is the essence of the hell-experience, as described in the mystical literature of the world, a condition usually more or less temporary, but permanent with the loss of the soul, whereby the ego becomes disengaged from the cosmic singularity.

It may then be observed that the approach to heaven consists simply in rendering the experience of the phenomenal world transparent (in a manner of speaking), so that the consciousness of the singularity may come to the fore. Indeed certain aspects of the relevant experience are not altogether unfamiliar. Most individuals, I believe, experience moments of profound and inscrutable meaning, or moments which possess an eternal or timeless quality. These should be recognised for what they are – intimations of the still-point in time, of the centre of all possible worlds, the transcendent home of the soul. Heaven is all-inclusive presence as experienced in the ubiquitous omega point. It is the vortex in consciousness where all things are gathered together, the fountain and summit of existence, yet also the transcendent object beyond the manifest.

From a mind-space-time perspective, absorption in the omega point can be conceived in terms of transcending the cosmic boundary identified in Einstein's equations as the speed of light. We know that conventional experience is mediated by the finite speed of light, as of electromagnetic radiation in general. In other words, a signal from anywhere in space takes a certain amount of time to reach us, so that we perceive distant objects not as they are at present, but as they were some time in the past. Light from the sun takes about eight minutes to reach the earth, which means we see the sun as it was (or is) eight minutes ago. Interstellar distances are measured in light-years. Our nearest star, Proxima Centauri, is about 4.3 light-years from the earth. Our distance from the galactic centre is about 26 000 light-years. Our local group of galaxies extends to a radius of about two to three million light-years, and the horizon of the visible universe some 25 000 million light-years. Beyond that galaxies recede from us at the speed of light and vanish from

our sensible universe. Thus the further we look into space, the further we see into the past. At close and familiar range the time delay becomes negligible but it exists. It even exists with respect to somatic sensation within the human body, for nerve impulses, an electromagnetic phenomenon, likewise travel at the finite speed of light. Thus we do not even experience our own bodies fully in the present. And this is not all, for the time lapse extends to purely mental phenomena. As a result, experienced simultaneity is a relative concept, as is the notion of the present itself. Under conventional circumstances we are therefore never totally ‘recollected’ in the present, but the moment, as embedded in mind-space-time, extends into the indefinite past. It is this time-drag, I suggest, which results in the subjective experience of the passage of time. It also accounts, I suggest, for the perceived *arrow of time*, whereby events in nature appear irreversible, the arrow of entropy, wherein nature tends to death and dissolution.

Recall in this place that negotiation of the dimensional vortex involves a kind of superconductivity, a reduction of all resistance to zero. In this context it comprises the superluminal – indeed instantaneous – connection between all events in mind, space, and time in the experience of the eternal present, Point Omega, the singularity beyond the phenomenal universe. The transcendent realm, therefore, as all spiritual teachers have asserted, is neither alien nor remote, but, in a very fundamental sense, something from which we have never departed.

In another sense, however, the distance involved is infinite, as expressed in concepts like the *Abyss*, the Hindu *Maya* (Sanskrit: illusion), or the Sufi notion of the *fifty thousand veils of the Truth*. What are these veils, the veils of Maya, but the exquisite and finely woven filaments of the robe of nature. When approached analytically, as we saw in previous

chapters, nature gives way to a void of infinite regress, cognate with the abyss of the mind. It is for this reason that the esoteric tradition posits another instrument of knowledge, the enlightened intuition, which alone is able to pierce the void, and *zero in* on the transcendent object of desire.

Thus it is a train of motion, as it were, perpendicular to the usual inclination of mind; a direction in space neither up or down, nor North, South, East, or West; a stance that is neither active nor passive; a time that never comes because it always is; something that cannot be found because it was never lost; which cannot be thought; beyond magical equilibrium; beyond the zero-point; the gateless gate; the pathless passage – which is the way of life. Expressed in the language of magic and mysticism, it is by banishing the three great illusions of mind, space, and time, that illumination is realised.

It is for this reason that the great spiritual teachers have warned against fixation upon this present world, not in that it is intrinsically opposed to enlightenment, but in that the noise and glamour of the sensory and affective domain obscure the subtleties of the extended sensibility and render the gate invisible. It is the object of the yogas to banish the noise of interference, to render the manifold veils transparent, and to turn the sensate matrix into a trans-dimensional vortex. This is the model reflected in the mystical path.

In the magical paradigm the essential dynamic comprises spiritual birth involving a transcendent seed, as described in Chapter 4. The foundation and cornerstone is the revelation of the Angel, while the summit is attained in the crossing of the Abyss, the subject of Chapter 10. Spiritual birth involves a redemptive death, wherein the inferior principle is absorbed in the superior, the microcosm in the macrocosm, the partial in the whole. This was depicted under the rubric of the fall and

resurrection of a spiritual seed which is Christ, the logos or creative Word. The realisation of the manifest atonement opens the way of the Tree of Life, enabling the initiate to enter where previously it meant death to trespass. With the opening of the way, of the transdimensional vortex, it is further imperative for the initiate to enter the Pillar of Fire that is upon the Mercy Seat in the sanctuary of the soul, for without reigns spiritual death.

Epilogue: A Summit Of The Gods

The festival of Olympus, in Greek mythology the concourse of the gods, has in modern times become a sporting and arts event. Yet, as I have tried to show, there will again be a summit of the gods in the drawing together of all things in one. Not dispersion and disintegration, but synthesis and self-recollection, I suggest, is the ultimate goal of the universe. The resulting unity, I further suggest, is both omega and alpha – ultimate synthesis and the seed of a new creation. As the visionary writer exclaimed in his exile – *I saw a new heaven and a new earth*. In the consummation of the ages, in the asymptote of the evolutionary curve, in the apotheosis of the human quest, our cosmic destiny is realised in consciousness. Further owing to the exponential acceleration in the realm of consciousness, we may be much nearer this point than we realise. A long time coming though may seem, it will manifest with startling suddenness.

What can we say concerning this concourse? Of necessity it constitutes universal affirmation in the realm of meaning, authentic representation of the human cause, a gathering of the fruits of the aeons, and an intimation of universal destiny. For the present cycle of existence

it is consummation and closure, the resolution of every unrequited impulse, and the ending of the quest. It is absolute presence, peace, and communion face to face. As such it also involves the conception and recognition of a future in a new creation.

I commenced this book with the observation that mystery is the primary ontological fact, and I have shown how and what meaning might be derived therefrom, given human attributes and aspirations. Humanity, as I have further shown, is intimately involved in the creation of meaning, revealing an intentional universe, commensurate with our hopes and dreams. It is a universe of wonders, wherein universal beatitude is nigh as the one authentic option. The flowering of the beatific vision, moreover, appears prerequisite for humanity to meet its cosmic high calling. It is the keeping of the original tryst, the vindication of meaning, which is the longing of the human soul. Thus, in this state of authentic grace, of communion with the eternal mystery, we are partakers of the hidden manna, the revelation of universal verity. As such we also are part of the vortex which is heading up in apotheosis, Point Omega, the original and future seed.