

A Navigator's Odyssey

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Not so long ago, before the wonders of satellite navigation, the sailor out of sight of land had to navigate by the stars. To do this he (and it usually was a 'he') would use a pre-Copernican model of the universe with the earth stationary at the centre and all the heavenly bodies rotating round it on the celestial sphere. Of course, for many centuries everyone knew that this was not an accurate picture of the universe, but as a practical tool to navigate over the surface of the earth it was, and still is, effective. Only when we seek to navigate among the stars themselves is a more accurate representation required.

When it comes to navigating our lives, each of us is handed a model of the universe by our parents, teachers and peers. We might modify this model a little as we gain experience and education, but we tend to take it for granted that what we have been presented with is generally correct and we do not question the model once we find it more or less works, that is, the universe it describes more or less fits our experience of life. This is especially so when everyone around seems to have roughly the same map.

It was when I arrived at school that I began to realise that the particular model handed to me was somewhat different from those around me. This made me question the model I was working with, testing that it worked, and it did. Not only did it appear sound, but it also seemed to be capable of transforming experience in the most pragmatic way: not just emotional or physiological experience but physical as well. I found that it could heal physical ailments and transform negative situations or, better still, prevent them from occurring. I found I had no need of standard medicine. Just how different this model was became steadily more apparent as the years went by. Sixty years on it has been modified and extended to allow navigation into far distant realms, but it still works. In fact it seems to work better and better.

The point is that, not only is this model effective for navigating life's usual rocks and reefs, but it is also capable of transporting us far beyond familiar shores and into a different country. A country that is exhilarating to walk in, wonderful, awe inspiring and which reaches away in every direction beyond our gaze.

I have learnt that I cannot describe that country. Words mean nothing. It has to be experienced, and I now realise that the experience will be different for each individual who sets their foot upon that shore.

I can however describe the model of the universe that has been so useful in getting there. Of course no model is ever a true or complete representation of the universe. The reality, if there is in any sense an absolute reality, would probably somehow contain them all – even the discarded ones. But because this journey has been so exciting, fruitful and fulfilling I feel compelled to pass on the chart

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I have used, as modified and developed by a lifetime's use, on the off chance that others passing this way may find it, or parts of it, useful.

The first, and probably the most important, element in the model is what Carl Jung described as an "ever present archetype of wholeness" available in human consciousness. The presence and power of this archetype is the portal which allows access to the whole topography of the new landscape mapped out by the chart. This archetype has existed among many cultures in many forms and under many names. By a law of syntropy it acts through all life, resulting in ever more sophisticated forms of conscious awareness. The perception of this phenomenon has evolved in human consciousness through the ages and it is perhaps now time for it to emerge in a fuller form to take a more pragmatic, conscious and active part in the life of humanity.

In the model this archetype is the "guiding star of being" referred to by Jung in the last of his 'Seven Sermons to the Dead' "This star is man's guiding divinity" which nothing can separate him from "if man can only turn his gaze away from the fiery spectacle of Abraxus."

This is the navigator's first waypoint. Abraxus is the ancient Gnostic term for an active agent in collective human consciousness which brings to the surface that which we, individually and collectively, seek to hide. It embraces both light and dark, both the yum and the yuk of human experience. Although it was often depicted as an horrific looking monster, it is not necessarily terrifying. It can be considerate and even playful if listened to. So what does it say to us? A clue lies in the fact that it was often depicted as a monster bearing a whip and driving a chariot pulled by four horses: it drives us on to the realisation and experience of the wholeness and fullness of our essential being. Abraxus deals always in duality, in syzygies – opposites that need and balance each other. The four horses can be interpreted as representing the four basic functions of the human psyche which Jung identified and which have been made effectively useful in everyday life via the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. These operate in two pairs which can oppose each other and cause both internal and external conflict, and which need to be brought into balance if we are going to progress to wholeness, or individuation, as Jung called it. Although there are many such lively teams of horses in the human psyche, a key overarching duality that is relevant to our discussion is acceptance and resolution.

Acceptance comes first before resolution. Acceptance of what? Acceptance of our dualistic, fallible human experience and nature, in all its dark and light, its strength and weakness. Most of us are always striving for the 'good', although how 'good' is defined depends upon the chart we have chosen to adopt to guide us through life. One person's 'good' can easily be another's 'evil'. What we define as evil is often the rejected axis of duality, meaning there is always part of us we are trying to suppress. Abraxus works tirelessly for us to bring the whole of ourselves to light, although we often only see the result as if projected onto others.

Abraxus makes human life, both individually and collectively, more and more uncomfortable until we reach out beyond ourselves for help. Some resort to building shelters of power and wealth to shield themselves, but these are only temporary hiding places, often with cellars full of the pain of unresolved conflicts. Meanwhile, those who reach out beyond themselves often seek a greater power or god outside themselves and abasing themselves before it, acknowledging their darkness, become dependent on the forgiveness of this god for their sense of themselves as an acceptable being. Many others, often the happiest, just ignore the whole process and accept life as it is, enjoying its beauty as it comes to them. Unfortunately life can also be brutal and when collective darkness comes to the surface, as in the trenches of the First World War, the horror often encloses them in its cold

embrace. As long as we perceive our humanity to be the totality of our being there is no resolution to this process.

The chart which this navigator has found to be of such practical use reveals that our humanity is but one aspect of ourselves. What Abraxus is driving us to is the recognition and experience of our greater selves so that we are able to stand outside our humanity and experience it as a dreamer experiences a dream: Utterly real while it is happening, but none the less a temporary reality. The Greeks, and specifically Socrates, expressed their experience of this greater self as their daemon, their inner voice that both gave meaning too, and took them beyond, the human aspect of themselves. What is this daemon or higher Self? As always, any answer is bound to be partial and subjective. My own experience is that it constitutes my unique individual relationship with, and expression of, the Source of all Being, or Creative Principle of the universe, that which is greater than all and which cannot be fully known or described. This 'higher Self' is that aspect of me which remains when human life is over.

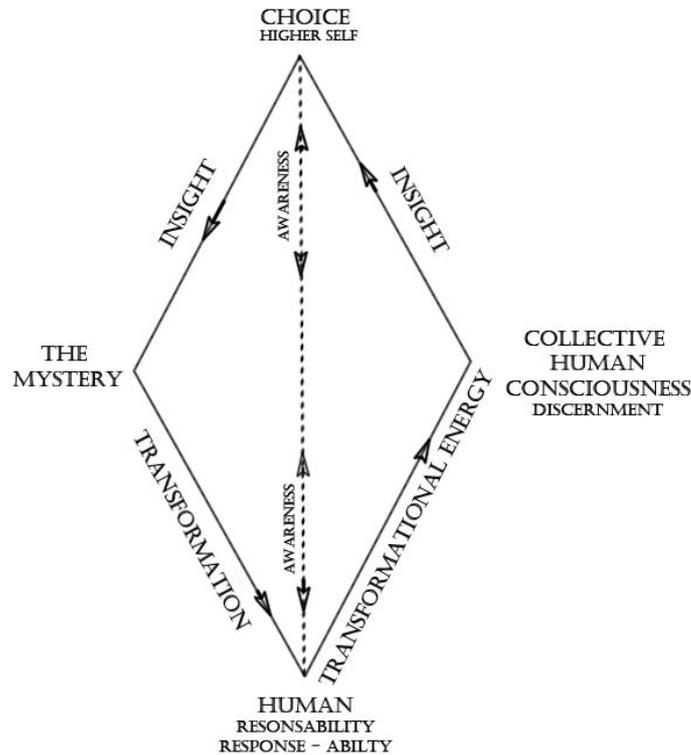
The Source or Creative Principle is often called the Mystery simply because it is beyond the reach of rationality. "The Tao that is spoken is not the Tao". It cannot be understood through concepts or visualised with the imagination for it is that in which all concepts arise. Nor is it a mystery that can ever be finally solved. We can, however, come to know the nature of the Mystery by experiencing its effects and we can formulate this experience into concepts using our rationality. This gives us an understanding of aspects of the Mystery's nature. Importantly there arises the understanding that our higher self, our understanding of, and relationship with the Mystery, evolves and grows through human experience.

As soon as this understanding dawns, the significance and purpose of human experience in the universe begins to come into focus. If the fundamental nature of the Mystery is oneness, the nature of which I experience as love, it can only know itself in the experience of duality. Why is this? In their book *Jesus and the Goddess* Tim Freke and Peter Gandy relate how the ancient Gnostics described the Mystery as the dazzling darkness. Light which has no object to fall upon cannot be known as light. It needs an object to illuminate before its nature can be manifest. Likewise the Mystery cannot know itself without there being a subject/object relationship. As soon as there is a knower there is also that which is known, in order for there to be a lover there must be a loved, as soon as there is subject and object there is duality. There is also a shadow.

As stated previously, the nature of the Mystery can only be known by its effects. There are many microcosmic and macrocosmic entities in our universe that are beyond the means of our limited senses to detect directly, physics can only know them by their effects. To say that I experience the nature of the Mystery as love, as stated earlier, is a leap of assumption that is fundamental to my own experience of the validity of the model I am describing. My life has to some extent been an ongoing experiment to explore the validity of this chart. I have taken this assumption as a working hypothesis and found it to be true in my own experience, while recognising that I cannot speak for or be responsible for others' experience. I have found the model based on the assumption of this love to be effective in my human life at all levels, mentally, psychologically and physically – I have experienced the transmutation of the base metal of human existence into the gold of divine awareness, understanding and relationship.

A useful image for the purposes of describing in my chart the relationship between our human and higher self is to be found at the centre of one of the medicine wheels sacred to the indigenous people of North America. The medicine wheel is called the 'Sacred Twenty Count' and, in the story

where I found it, an elder is teaching the children. He places children round the circumference of the wheel at each inner and outer point of the eight spokes, to signify 16 channels of wisdom available to humankind. In the centre is a diamond. He places one child on each point of the diamond, hence the 20 count. This leaves one small child by herself outside the circle. When she asks where she goes he takes her by the hand and leads her to the very centre of the diamond and places her there – and then he starts his teaching. Our interest is in the diamond. We will leave the little girl in the centre for the moment and consider the diamond:



While we are in the state described above where our human aspect seems to us to be the entirety of our being, we are unaware of most of the rest of the diagram. Our consciousness is completely absorbed in the ‘Human’ at the bottom of the diamond. It has to be said that many feel drawn in the direction of the Mystery, and this can cause them to reach in that direction for help in times of trouble. Meanwhile others, often called psychics or shamans, are aware of and explore the nature and contents of the Human Collective. Both paths may lead to wholeness, but they are not ones I have yet explored. The human is the province of the rational mind and its constant chatter is one factor that cuts us off from the higher Self or daemon. If we are able to still the rational mind, perhaps in meditation, we may begin to hear our daemon speak to us. Many have heard it in a fleeting moment; in a flash of stillness when suddenly “everything has a significance beyond itself”. These instances are experienced by most people and were called moments of peak experience by the psychologist Abraham Maslow. A moment when, in the words of Martin Buber we speak to the universe in our inner being with the primary word ‘I Thou’. If these moments are recognised and nurtured they grow in strength until a coherent Voice begins to be heard.

The temptation when this begins to happen is to reject the human. Those who reach directly for the Mystery have often found themselves in this position down the ages. Only as we begin to recognise and experience our divine nature can we perceive, value and love the human for its service to our wholeness.

And this is the key: acceptance and love, unconditional love. Only as we learn to hold our whole being in this love can we really find our relationship to the Mystery whose nature is unconditional love. It is a relationship that is, always has been and ever will be – that nothing can destroy. But we have to find it, and in the finding we grow and as we grow the universe grows. In this we find our place in the universe and, returning to our starting point in human living, ‘know it for the first time’. As the Sufi poet Rumi put it “I spent my life knocking at the door, and when it opened I found I had been knocking on the inside”. All experience is valuable, all is loved, the highest and the lowest, the darkest and the lightest, for without the one the other would remain unknown, and humanity bears the tragedy and the glory of holding both for All in the circle of Love. Again the Sufi poet says, “The beloved is in fact the lover”. But we can only love our human aspect if we see it in its true light.

However, all this can raise some tricky questions. If all human experience is held in love, where does that leave morality, rules and consequences? The ancient Gnostics response to this question was that they were free from rules, but ‘prisoners of love’. What we put out we get back. Abraxus does have a karmic element in him, although we need to be alert not to be trapped by belief systems of karmic law and time lines found in some traditions.

It might also be reasonably pointed out that, if this is so, then everything is as it should be. What therefore is the point of working to elevate the human experience? The answer is that everything is not as it could be. The desecration of the planet, the trenches of the First World War, the killing fields of Cambodia, the genocide in Rwanda, the Gulags of Siberia, the gas chambers of Auschwitz, the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, the intransigence in Palestine, none of this intense suffering needs to be accepted as part of the design of love. Nor can we look outside ourselves for rescue: “Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise from outward things, whate’er you may believe,.....and to KNOW rather consists in opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendour may escape, than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without.” (Robert Browning *Paracelsus Part I*). Human experience can only be redeemed as it is aligned to the syntropic force of the archetype of wholeness described above.

As the diagram shows, the key to evolving human experience is to take responsibility for the entirety of that experience, to recognise that we always have a choice of how we respond to what life throws at us, and it is in this choice that we know ourselves. As we learn as humans to know ourselves more fully and love every aspect of which we become aware, including those we would like to surrender, we learn to build our relationship with our higher Self and step onto our power as unique individual expressions of the Creative Principle. This is no inconsiderable journey and we can only make progress as we reach psychological wholeness because the nature of the Self is whole. Abraxus is always at hand to help!

Much of the work is in removing the accuser from our consciousness. The ever present accuser which tells us we are not worthy, that what we do is no good, that we deserve and need to suffer, that we are sinful beings who must abase ourselves, that we cannot create our reality from our dreams. It heaps up all the evidence of past thoughts and deeds and calls as witness for the

prosecution time honoured beliefs in humanity's frailty, mendacity and sin. While we are in the grip of the accuser we are forever severed from our daemon.

Help, though, is at hand. As we build our relationship between our human and higher selves, we find we can come into relationship with the 'Archetype of wholeness ever present in human consciousness' mentioned earlier. Through this relationship we place ourselves under its syntropic law and are able to find escape from the continuing loop of repeatedness in which we get stuck. We connect with this powerful presence by acceptance of it as the truth of our being. As we reach for this understanding to be experienced within us, we are 'born anew' and our old perception of ourselves drops away to reveal the Royal Image. Our chart has led us to the deeper meaning of the many dying and rising god mythologies and ceremonies which existed among the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean two thousand years ago. These seem to have originated in the rites of Osiris which were already some two thousand years old at the time. In the raucous ceremonies where his image was carried through the streets, those who went beyond the pomp and shouting of the spectacle found a deeper journey than the one taken by the effigy. One they had to make within the silence of their inner being.

As stated earlier, the Archetype we are dealing with has had certain recognition in many cultures. P'an Ku in Chinese culture was the perfect Cosmic Being from which all existence stemmed. In Hindu philosophy, Purusha relates to the absolute truth at spiritual core of every person, which is made manifest in the Atman or Higher Self, Purusha personified. In Egypt the original name 'Tut-ankh-atum' of the last true ruler of the 18th dynasty carries this meaning 'the pure, whole, complete and perfect image in this life of the One creator and giver of life'. It is interesting that his successors, who ruled by 'blood and iron', tried to make this king an unperson, eradicating his name from inscriptions and burying him in a small insignificant tomb upon which a much greater tomb was later built, so that he could never be brought to light. Of course brought to light he was, almost one hundred years ago now, when global media was ready to record the event. The end result is that today this ruler is the best known and most iconic of all Egypt's kings the world over. In Jewish mysticism Adam Kadmon is the primeval man, our true essential nature. To the pre-Christian Jewish Gnostics it was 'the great Seth', this relates to the third son of Adam and Eve born after the Cain and Able mythological incident and once again born in the image and likeness of the Creator, as in the first chapter of the Judaic creation myth. In later post-Christian Gnostic texts, such as the Gospel of Judas, this Seth is expressly linked to the Christ. For many people from western traditions in the current age the concept of the Christ Consciousness contains the essential nature and power of the Archetype. I will refer to it as the Archetype of our Highest Essence.

This Archetype then is key to the operative and pragmatic power of the chart I am mapping out for use in navigating life. It exists outside time and space and is our identity as the Image of the Mystery. We are at every moment free to choose it as the truth of our being and by this act we are capable of connecting with our higher self and continually evolve the relationship between our human and higher aspects. In the diamond illustration the human and higher aspects of ourselves are linked across the centre by awareness. Once awareness is established in both directions we are no longer stuck at one point of the diamond or the other, but are able to join the child in the centre and become the observer. We are enabled to come into unity with the Mystery observing itself, evolving in its own awareness of itself, which I understand to be the telos of the syntropic law previously discussed. Because of the strength of identity we have developed in expelling the accuser, we are able to retain our unique, differentiated aspect in the presence of this Unity of Being. Finally we now see the purpose of the accuser in the circle of love. It teaches us how to know what we are

through experiencing and understanding what we are not, and ensures we are strong in that knowing.

The development of this strength is the product of our human struggle to know ourselves more fully. In the first of Jung's Seven Sermons to the Dead we read " We must separate ourselves from these qualities (*of opposites*).In the Pleroma they cancel each other out; in us they do not. But if we know how to know ourselves as being apart from the pairs of opposites, then we have attained salvation."The Pleroma was the Gnostics' term for the undifferentiated One, the Mystery.Notice he is not saying salvation comes from overcoming or unifying the syzygies, but in knowing how to know ourselves as being apart from them, while retaining our essential differentiated nature in which they do not cancel each other out. In this process we become the Image in which the Mystery beholds itself. The yum and yuk of duality is the dark backing of the mirror which throws up the Image. The psyche is like the glass in front of the dark backing, in which the Image actually appears. Psychological awareness, acceptance and clarity are needed so that this glass is not distorted to give a distorted image. With nothing to twist the light, it will be its true self – the clear glass in which the Face may see itself. It is now that we come to realise that we ourselves are the observer and at this point we recognise the Image we are observing.To return to the First Sermon: "Our essence is differentiation.....We die to the extent that we fail to discriminate....We submerge into the Pleroma itself, and we cease to be created beings. Thus we become subject to dissolution and nothingness...From these things you may readily recognise why the undifferentiated principle and lack of discrimination are all a great danger to created beings." Examining the chart once again, the navigator can see that the forbidding rocks and reefs previously thought of as evil and darkness, now properly charted and understood, serve to guide us in the direction of our true identity. From this we learn that what we called evil and darkness are simply there to show what we are not, so that we may know more certainly what we are and thus acquire the strength of that knowing necessary to stand in the wholeness of our connection to the Mystery.

The process works like this: Linked by awareness, the human and higher aspects of ourselves experience one and other. When the yuk strikes the human, who lives in time, the higher self reaches for expanded awareness of the Mystery through the understanding of its Highest Essence outside of time, and, in reaching out with the whole of being, receives the insight which expands awareness.Transformation of the human experience comes from the energy released by the Mystery's expanding awareness of itself. The human situation is healed and thereby transmuted into the gold in which the divine Image, the nature and power of Spirit Love, is seen and experienced in health, well-being, joy and abundance.Notice that it is the Yuk of human experience, which stimulates evolution while it is in the yum, the beauty, and joy of life, that we rejoice and experience the Image. The outcome of this astonishing interaction is healing at all levels of human existence, including the physical.This pragmatic aspect, so widely denied, is of fundamental importance.It grounds the experience, it demonstrates real movement of the divine relationship in understanding and experience and unifies the human and divine in the circle of love which is the true nature of the universe.The journey requires that we leave many of the anchors of rationality behind, and this presents a very real danger of being engulfed by fantasy.The pragmatic aspect grounds our experience and is essential to prevent us falling into this trap.

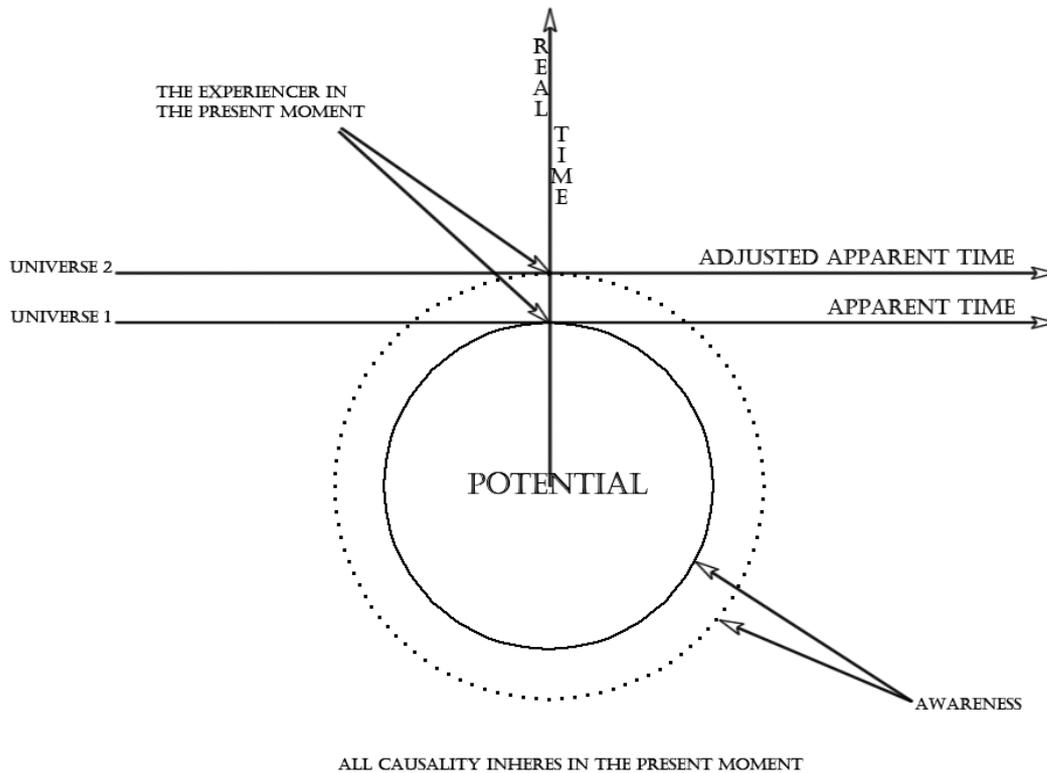
This 'physical intervention', seen by some as magic, has often conflicted with rationality.It has ever been part of that counter current of insight which has run beneath the surface of western spirituality for the last two thousand years and which has thrown up the froth of superstition and legend that Dan Brown wove into his storey.

We mentioned the human rational mind as identified with trapping consciousness in the human experience. This is very true and often leads to the demonising of rationality as something to be escaped from if we are to experience our divine nature. This is not the case. Rationality is a pivotal part of the whole process, it is how we allow it to operate that matters. The concepts of rationality give us the only tools powerful enough to transform human existence. Through the application of rationality we might begin to understand in physical terms how the transformation takes place. Rationality is objective, its essence is duality. It understands the universe through concepts and events which have a before and after. It therefore exists in time and by itself cannot see outside time. It is that aspect of consciousness which intrinsically exists in separation, in fragmentation. However, as we have seen, it is also that aspect of consciousness whose capability for objectiveness allows the Mystery, whose essential nature is unity, to become aware of itself. It is in the power of its conceptual forms that the purpose of the syntropic process is realised.

The key to understanding the whole process in terms of rationality is to revise our understanding of time.

The Hermetica, that text of ancient wisdom whose discovery gave inspiration to the Renaissance, makes the observation that time was created so that change could happen. What is this change that can happen in terms of the Mystery – that which is outside of time, which always is, always has been and always will be: Pure potential for all being? The rational answer must be, that the only change that can occur is the Mystery's awareness of itself and the realisation of pre-existent potential. In such a context true time is a measure of the expansion of divine awareness. As stated, the rational mind deals in events and concepts which it perceives as linked by laws of causality, and time is measured by the progression of this causality. This aspect of mind exists in very low states of entropy where objects and concepts are defined and have discrete form. Aristotle identified the essential nature of number as having parts external to each other. The rational mind numbers and measures the Universe. The insights that reveal the Mystery arrive in conscious awareness through intuition, in an instant whole and complete. The difference between these modes of consciousness and their interaction can best be expressed graphically:

HERMETICA: "TIME WAS CREATED SO THAT CHANGE COULD HAPPEN THE ONLY CHANGE THAT CAN OCCUR IS THE INFINITE POTENTIAL EXPANDING AWARENESS OF ITSELF. THEREFORE THIS DEFINES REAL TIME"



The horizontal lines represents the line of physical and mental causality along which the rational mind looks.

The circle represents the infinite Mystery, which can be known in its entirety only as pure potential. This potential does not have form as we know it and it exists everywhere at all times. This concept is not as obscure as might be at thought. Consider for example the science of mathematics. The whole of mathematics exists outside time and space; its equations always have been and always will be available at any point in the universe. They await the rational mind for them to be known and their potential realised. Furthermore, there is infinite mathematics yet to be known, no one has ever suggested we shall come to the end of mathematics. Mathematics also reaches into areas beyond our powers of visualisation and imagination when it deals in negative numbers and many dimensions, and yet it returns with concrete results to the physical world.

In the diagram the present moment is the only point of contact between apparent time and the Mystery. As indicated in the diagramme, causality inheres in this present moment. In its effective action it brings potential into manifestation. In this it is acted upon both by the patterns of the past, described by Rupert Sheldrake as a morphogenetic field in his book *A New Science of Life*, and

the syntropic field emanating from future form. This navigator has experienced transformation of physical life in violation of physical causality as follows: When an insight, an understanding of an aspect of the nature of the Mystery, is held in the rational mind as a concept with complete focus in the present moment, that insight, or concept, becomes known within by the whole of one's being. It is usually impossible for the rational mind to do this alone, it needs the whole person, the emotional part and the gut as well, to focus in the present moment. This happens at moments of great fear and trauma. In these moments, if the link to the Archetype of Highest Essence is known and trusted and is the first resort (not the last!) transformation or healing occurs. It happens also in moments of intense joy and unity with all being, sometimes experienced in deep meditation. The experience of orgasm when we make love is the most common experience of the nature of such moments. When linked to expanded insight of the Mystery, of Love, this is the Gnosis, transformational understanding where we understand with our whole being. We are connected in that moment of Now to the essential nature of the universe, and its potential is realised.

In the diagram, we have moved along the axis of real time, orthogonal to apparent time. The universe has expanded its awareness of itself and we are on a fractionally different 'apparent time' line. Both the past and the future will be slightly different. Ones in which this expansion of awareness has always been.

Our rational mind is continually replaying the past and planning, looking forward to or fearing the future along apparent time. While our consciousness is thus spread out along apparent time we are trapped in this time line, which is why the rational mind must be stilled or focussed by emotion. Emotion can only be experienced in the present moment and when emotion takes over, this focus is possible. This, of course, is usually anathema to the rational mind, but not if it has a store of insights ready to be realised. In such an instant apparent time shifts into a fractionally alternative time sequence and physical adjustment of the situation can be experienced.

So this is my chart as it stands with me in the present. As I described, it has been developed and amended over the years and I have no doubt it will continue to be so. It is my chart and it gives to me some rational grounding to undoubted experiences I have encountered. If others find it useful they must be aware that they will almost certainly have to make their own modifications. I make the chart known because I believe it offers great hope for humanity. It indicates that each of us is able to take creative charge of our experience of life, enabling it to be a mirror to us of our relationship with the Mystery and thus entirely of our own creating. The power of the Mystery, of Love, to manifest its nature to us through the Archetype of our Highest Essence is infinite and can only act for the greatest good of all being. It is a power that is therefore safe to rely on and work with, it does not and cannot 'belong' to any human ego and so cannot be misused. In no way does it depend on us and our perceived state of grace, or personal goodness. It is always fresh, always 'new' and always everywhere available for each and all of us to choose, and therefore realise, in our own experience. It is the greatest message of hope I can conceive of and I offer it with my love to any and all who wish explore their choice of being.